

Literary Writing, Print Media, and Urban Space
in Modern Japan, 1895-1933

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ABSTRACT

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The first decades of the 20th century saw the radical transformation of the ways in which literary media was produced and consumed in Japan. A new mass readership and a widening market for all manner of typographic print formed a rapidly changing ground upon which writers and critics reassessed how, why, and for whom they created works of literature and social thought. This dissertation examines a selection of fictional and critical texts from the turn of the century through the 1930s to demonstrate how mass-produced typographic media both served to produce mass consumer society in this period and functioned as sites for its critique, extending the aesthetic, linguistic, and political horizons of modern Japanese social life. I contend that an engagement with the commodity character of printed text enabled authors to develop experimental practices of writing that problematized the nexus of mutual interactions between printed text, visual media, urban space, and the human body.

Chapter 1 traces the rise of magazines and affordable books through the late 1920s to show how new forms of print media served as forums for the dissemination and discussion of alternative models of literary practice and social organization. In Chapter 2, I examine the journal *Bungei Jidai* (*Literary Age*, 1924-1927) to explore how a generation of authors born into the age of mass-market print established literary networks, evaluated existing paradigms of reading, and experimented with new forms of writing. In the third chapter, I examine an array of fictional texts, sociological studies, schemas of

urban planning, and other representations of modern city life in order to analyze how authors and critics understood the mutual mediations between municipal space, the printed text, and the human body in this period. Finally, in Chapter 4, I identify a shift in the understanding of printed language concurrent with the changes to urban and discursive space that I discuss in the previous chapters. I follow discussions of language reform policies, literary formalism, the economics of the publishing industry, and the project of proletarian literature in the late 1920s in order to demonstrate the emergence of a sense of “literary materialism” precipitated by the proliferation of typographic text. In a brief conclusion, I address the importance of this crucial period for understanding the present shift from print to digital text.

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Introduction: The Many Reconstructions of Print Media

Now is a time of unprecedented great social reconstruction. The world must be lifted up and reconstructed from its roots. This reconstruction concerns all aspects of society. Politics, economics, industry, the production of goods, the system we live in, cultural production, manners, customs, and not a little bit more will be reconstructed in a manner for which there is no precedent. Our own lives must be reconstructed from the bottom up. Thoughts, feelings, tastes, fashions, beliefs, and all our ideas must be totally reconstructed.

-Tsubouchi Shôyô, "Social Reconstruction and the Theater," 1919¹

A book is a machine to think with, but it need not, therefore, usurp the function either of the bellows or the locomotive.

-I.A. Richards, *Principles of Literary Criticism*, 1928²

In August 1919, Tsubouchi Shôyô (1859-1935), one of the first theorists of modern Japanese literature and drama, published the above statement on reconstruction in the pages of a new magazine called *Kaizô* (*Reconstruction*, 1919-1955). Shôyô's words outline an image of a society in transition, as nearly every aspect of individual life and social organization in modern Japan were transformed. The recent end of the Great War (1914-1918) had left the Japanese empire on near equal footing with Western powers and served as a dynamo for the rapid development of a domestic consumer economy that increasingly resembled that of its British, American, and European partners in the League of Nations. Fifty years had passed since the Meiji Restoration of 1868, and life for the quickly urbanizing population existed in a state of perpetual flux. This age of transition

¹ Tsubouchi Shôyô, "Shakai kaizô to engeki," *Kaizô* vol. 1, no. 5 (Aug. 1919), 91.

² I.A. Richards, *Principles of Literary Criticism* (London: Routledge Classics, 2001), vii. *Principles* was first published in 1924 and revised and updated several times over the following years. The preface cited here is dated 1928 by the author.

and reconstruction was also a time of turmoil. Industrial labor strikes shook the cities, rice riots raged in the countryside, and the tide of leftist activism rose following the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the establishment of the Soviet state. For many in modern Japan, everyday life was characterized by the constant confrontation of new types of people, products, ideas, and mores.

Like many intellectuals writing at the turn of the third decade of the 20th century, Shôyô advocates working from the ground up and the inside out to continue the project of remaking modern life. In the 35 years since the publication of Shôyô's major treatise on the writing of modern literature, *Shôsetsu Shinzui* (The Essence of the Novel, 1885-1886), the literary realm itself had seen dramatic changes to techniques and styles of writing, who was writing, how literature was being sold, and perhaps most of all, how literature was being read. Compulsory education, widespread literacy, newspapers, numerous magazines big and small, and a robust market for all manner of printed text had transformed literature in Japan from a project for a limited domain of intellectuals into something for consumption by the masses. By 1919, Shôyô himself had turned to drama as a means of "social reconstruction," but the project of remaking the "thoughts, feelings, tastes, fashions, [and] beliefs" of the Japan's modern masses occupied the minds of a new generation of authors and critics.

In this dissertation, I examine a variety of attempts to reconstruct "all aspects of society" in early 20th-century Japan through the writing, translating, and publishing of literature, criticism, and social thought. These include the magazine *Kaizô*, the Iwanami Bunko book series, the avant-garde literary journal *Bungei Jidai* (*Literary Age*, 1924-1927), works of urban fiction and sociology, writings on language reform, and political

texts from Japan's proletarian movement. I argue that the execution of these projects could not be separated from the medium through which writers disseminated their work – mass-produced typographic text. The period from the mid-1870s through the late 1920s saw not only unprecedented changes at the levels of lived experience and social institutions, but a revolution in the media ecology of modern Japan. The many forms of print media – from major newspapers and mainstream general interest magazines (*sôgô zasshi*) to literary journals, political circulars, photographic gazetteers, philosophic treatises, maps, and more – proliferated to the point of near ubiquity, constituting new horizons of popular discourse for mass consumption. Newspaper circulation reached the hundreds of millions per annum, each month saw the release of countless periodicals on subjects spanning from home economics to historical materialism, and newly affordable books helped make 20th-century Japan a world saturated with typographic text. Further, as print approached a point of near ubiquity, the printed word simultaneously became one of many media making up a new landscape in which photography, film, and radio joined writing as means for expression, communication, entertainment, and critique.

In addition to the mutual imbrication of print with these new audiovisual technologies, the rise of typographic text in Japan took place in tandem with the development and expansion of an urban consumer economy based on industrial mass-production and international trade. Literature, as printed in magazines and books, was also sold as a commodity, a material product like any other mass-produced good on the market. Earlier generations of authors had depended on patronage, regular employment by newspapers and schools, or other means of financial support for their writing, but the proliferation of print opened new economic possibilities for making a living through

writing. In the 20th century, “professional authors” (*shokugyô sakka*) came to sell manuscripts by the page, peddling to publishers and working with, and as, editors to facilitate the distribution of literary and critical work for sale to a widening audience. Literary magazines, general interest magazines, popular entertainment magazines, women’s magazines, and smaller coterie journals provided ample venues for exchanging the written word for cash; the wages of wealth further increased with the popularization of hardcover (*tankôbon*), one-yen (*enpon*), and pocket paperback (*bunkobon*) books in the 1920s. The capacity of the market for typographic print products only continued to expand over time – Marxist circulars ran advertisements for department stores, and literary magazines marketed avant-garde fiction alongside soap, perfume, and harmonica sheet music. The emergence of a new discourse network in modern Japan based upon mass-produced print was intimately intertwined with the flowering of consumer society, and those who came of age as reader and writers in this era could not but recognize themselves and their work as products circulating within this new socioeconomic system of mass consumerism.

In their attempts to reconstruct life “from the bottom up,” writers of early 20th-century Japan began by addressing that which constituted the possibility of their own literary lives and social discourse – typographic print media as a commodity. In this project, I examine the writings of a broad range of authors, editors, critics, and thinkers in order to excavate a shared attention to the changing forms of print media as a means to reconstruct modes of individual perception and structures of mass social organization. This generation of authors, who began writing in the 1920s, were born at the turn of the 20th century and grew up in tandem with the naturalization and commodification of

typographic print media as a shared medium for the crafting of fiction and critical discourse for public consumption. The writers I examine here were unable to ignore the crucial function of mass-produced print media in their attempts to challenge the aesthetic, spiritual, linguistic horizons as well as possible political futures of modern Japanese social life. For these authors and many others, to change what and how the literate masses read was to change how they could think, feel, and act in order to change themselves and their world. In this project, I explore how these writers assessed the role of this new medium in their own thinking and writing and address their experiments with mass-produced printed text.

A Brief History of Publishing in Early 20th-Century Japan

The realm of printed text in the first decades of 20th-century Japan was at once unified and diverse. Major publishing firms and printing concerns dominated the national market with high circulation mainstream magazines; at the same time, a dizzying array of smaller, sometimes self-published, low circulation journals appeared and disappeared with increasing speed, making for a mosaic of print products large and small. In the 1880s and early 1890s, new small-run literary magazines had served as key sites for early experiments in the making of modern Japanese literature, though these journals were often intended for limited audiences of other writers, the educated, and the interested.³

³ These journals include publications like *Miyako no Hana* (Flower of the Capital, 1888-1893) and *Garakuta Bunko* (Library of Odds and Ends, 1885-1889). A number of important magazines were organized around higher schools, including *Teikoku Bungaku* (Imperial Literature [Tokyo Imperial Univ.], 1895-1920) and *Waseda Bungaku* (Waseda Literature [Waseda Univ.], original run 1891-1898 followed by other editions). Somewhat larger political magazines also served as important venues for this generation of modern literature, such as *Kokumin no Tomo* (The Nations' Friend, 1887-1898). At the time, newspapers, rather than magazines, were the most common reading material for most literate citizens, and they became an increasingly important

The year 1895 marked a watershed moment for magazine publishing, as the company Hakubunkan revolutionized the publishing world following the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) with the simultaneous release of Japan's first general interest magazine, *Taiyô* (*The Sun*, 1895-1928), the first popular children's magazine *Shônen Sekai* (*Boys' World*, 1895-1934), and the first large-circulation literary magazine *Bungei Kurabu* (*Literary Club*, 1895-1933).⁴

In the following years, many companies followed suit with many more magazines; some, like Kôdansha (1909-), specialized in coverage of popular entertainment and performance genres, while others, like Shinchôsha (1896-), facilitated the publication of new literary fiction and criticism. Large magazines such as *Chûô Kôron* (*The Central Review*, 1899-) published all manner of social commentary in addition to literature, and smaller coterie journals (*dôjin zasshi*), often organized around schools and artistic circles, continued to multiply.⁵ These journals did not exist in opposition to the larger magazines, but served as venues for young authors to establish themselves and attract the eyes of publishers before moving on to publish in higher circulation periodicals. All the while, the myriad array of mainstream magazines grew ever more diverse, with numerous illustrated magazines for women, children, and

venue for the publication of fiction in regular serialization in the 1890s. I briefly discuss serialized newspaper novels in Chapter 1.

⁴ Sales of each were in the hundreds of thousands, easily occupying the top three positions in national sales rankings. I detail the rise of Hakubunkan in more detail in Chapter 1. See also Tsuboya Zenshirô, *Hakubunkan gojûnen-shi* (Tokyo: Hakubunkan, 1937) and in English Giles Richter, *Marketing the Word: Publishing Entrepreneurs in Meiji Japan, 1870-1912* (Columbia Univ. Ph.D. diss., 1999), 200-219.

⁵ These included *Shinshichô* (New Thought, 1907; 1910-1911; 1914; 1916-1917; 1918; 1923), organized by students at Tokyo Imperial University, *Shirakaba* (*White Birch*, 1910-1923), organized by the authors Mushanokôji Saneatsu (1885-1976) and Shiga Naoya (1883-1971) and the women's magazine *Seitô* (*Bluestockings*, 1911-1916), founded by Hiratsuka Raichô (1886-1971), among others.

assorted specialized interests. This is the moment at which Shôyô published his essay on reconstruction in the *Kaizô*, a new, politically oriented general interest magazine that compiled the latest in fiction and socially conscious criticism.⁶ Other options available for the average reader continued to grow ever more diverse, with magazines oriented towards most any demographic. Film-lovers could read *Kinema Junpô* (*The Cinema Review*, 1919-), families followed photographic weeklies modeled after America's *Saturday Evening Post* (1821-1969) such as *Shûkan Asahi* (*Weekly Asahi*, 1922-), and many members of the masses defaulted to Kôdansha's illustrated catch-all *Kingu* (*King*, 1924-1957).

Within this milieu, a new generation of literati, raised as readers in a world already rich with text, began releasing an ambitious new wave of journals of avant-garde fiction, criticism, art, poetry, and political writing. Some, like *Aka to kuro* (*Red and Black*, 1923-1924) and *MAVO* (*MAVO*, 1924-1925) engaged with foreign artistic avant-gardes, while others, such as *Bungei Jidai* (*Literary Age*, 1924-1927) existed in a more delicate balance with the Japanese literary establishment.⁷ Radical political discourse also carved out a significant swath of shelf space, as leftist writing of all stripes rose in prestige following the Russian Revolution.⁸ In addition to politically oriented literary magazines such as *Tane Maku Hito* (*The Sower*, 1921-1923), *Bungei Sensen* (*Literary Frontline*, 1924-1934), and *Senki* (*Battleflag*, 1928-1931), major newspapers and magazines regularly hosted debates over topics in socialist theory, and Soviet-influenced

⁶ I discuss *Kaizô* and its publisher Kaizôsha in Chapter 1.

⁷ For a detailed analysis of *Bungei Jidai*, see Chapter 2.

⁸ These included writings that could be categorized as socialist, communist, Marxian, Marxist, Soviet, anarchist, and combinations and subdivisions of the above. See Chapter 4.

circles published proletarian children's magazines such as *Shōnen Senki* (*Children's Battleflag*, 1929-1931) in attempts to evolve a new vision of mass culture.

The mid-1920s also saw books join newspapers and magazines as affordable objects of popular consumption. Though modern book publishing was about as old as the modern Japanese nation state, books remained relatively expensive low-circulation luxuries for most citizens until the years after World War I.⁹ The watershed moment came in 1926, when Kaizōsha released the *Gendai Nihon Bungaku Zenshū* (*Anthology of Modern Japanese Literature*), a multi-volume hardcover series modeled after the Harvard Classics and sold at the unheard of price of a thousand pages for a single yen (*enpon*). The series was a smash success and other publishers soon followed suit, releasing similar anthologies covering the literature, drama, and philosophy of Japan and the world. The following year, the publisher Iwanami Shoten revolutionized the world of book publishing once again with the release of the *bunkobon* – small, cheap pocket paperbacks compiling “canonical works of past and present, East and West” (*kokon tōzai no tenseki*) available for just 10 *sen* at every bookstore in the country.¹⁰ This moment of popular magazines, new literary journals, and the convergence between the book form and the commodity form in modern Japan constitutes the temporal focus of the present study. The widespread circulation of printed text as a commodity constituted a shared horizon of social and literary discourse for the Japanese reading public, within which not only ideas and practice of reading and writing, but also senses of space, materiality, and political action were transformed.

⁹ Richter notes the importance of Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835-1901) in his capacity as a bookseller and publisher in addition to his role as Enlightenment educator and thinker in the early years of Meiji. See Richter, 131-165.

¹⁰ For a detailed discussion of Iwanami's project, see Chapter 1.

Writing, Body, Space, and Politics in the Age of Mass-Market Print

In this project, I ask the questions: How did those living through this period think about the medium they used to read on a daily basis? How did the new medium affect ideas and practices of writing? How did readers, writers, editors, and publishers see the dissemination of literary writing and social thought via mass-produced printed text as a means to remake themselves and their social world? In order to answer these questions, I explore how the rapid transformations of both the forms and economics of print media were deeply intertwined with the synchronous transformations of literary writing, metropolitan urban space, revolutionary political action, and discourse on the materiality of language. In this sense, I agree with Shôyô that “politics, economics, industry, the production of goods, the system we live in, cultural production, manners, customs, and not a little bit more” were dramatically reconstructed in the first decades of 20th-century Japan. I aim to explore what print media meant as a part of these acts of reconstruction. In regards to the realm of literary writing, the young author Kawabata Yasunari (1899-1972) saw evidence of an epochal shift in the economy of art in Japan in this period. Kawabata identifies the dissolution of a “feudal” (*hôken*) guild-like structure of patronage as the “kingdom of literature” (*bungei no ôkoku*) crumbles with the coming of a new “literary age” (*bungei jidai*).¹¹ For Kawabata and his fellow writers, the literary age was an era of “new values” (*atarashii kachi*), “new sensibilities” (*atarashii kanjô*), and most of all “new life” (*atarashii seikatsu*) upon which literature could be built.¹²

¹¹ Kawabata Yasunari, “Sôkan no ji,” *Bungei Jidai* vol. 1, no. 1 (Oct. 1924), 6. A full analysis of Kawabata’s text appears in Chapter 2. A similar theme appears in Ôya Sôichi’s (1900-1970) 1926 essay “Bundan girudo no kaitaiki” (The Age of the Dissolution of the Literary Guild).

¹² Kawabata, *Sôkan no ji*, 6.

Arguing that the new experience of material life should precipitate new techniques of literary expression, authors experimented with techniques of figurative language and metaphor, onomatopoeia, visual montage, and unconventional grammar, syntax, and sentence structure to call attention to the reading process itself. These techniques were predicated on the notion of “new nerves” (*shinshinkei*) and took the reader as a material body upon which the text could produce physiological sensations. Writers like Kawabata’s compatriot Yokomitsu Riichi (1898-1947) developed theories of printed language as a material object and a force able to rearrange the corpus of the reader as a bundle of nerves and particular orientation of sensory organs. This sense of both reader and text as physical objects fragmented into component parts was intimately linked to the experience of urban space as the material and phenomenological stratum of the “new life” of the new “literary age.”

As the discursive space constituted by typographic print expanded and became increasingly complex, so did the topography of the metropolis Tokyo within which this new generation of authors wrote. Over the first decades of the 20th century, Tokyo came into its own as an imperial metropole characterized by the agglomeration of all manner of people and products in an urban core boasting department stores, movie theaters, and other trappings of city life. The city center was linked to spreading suburbs through complex networks of infrastructure and railroads facilitating the circulation of consumer goods, printed text, and readers’ bodies. Authors like Yokomitsu and urban sociologists such as Kon Wajirô (1881-1973) aimed to represent the experience of city life and help readers negotiate the hopelessly complex and contradictory spaces and sensations of the

metropolis as the nearly cosmological constitutive structure within which everyday life occurred.

Like New York, Paris, Berlin, London, and semi-colonial Shanghai, Tokyo (and increasingly Japan's other cities as well) became a locus of consumer culture within which everyday life could be meaningfully compared to the experiences of modern citizens in other parts of the world. Coterminous with this transformation of urban space, the expansion of available print media provided ample opportunities for the introduction and translation of art, literature, and ideas from the rest of the world, all made available to interested readers for less than one yen in the form of books and magazines. The work of contemporary authors, intellectuals, and artists ranging from Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) and John Dewey (1859-1952) to Upton Sinclair (1878-1962) and George Grosz (1893-1959) regularly appeared in magazines, and new books and anthologies served as means to imagine a canon of world literature and thought within which Japanese literature could be situated.¹³

The most clear and contentious example of this new shared sense of simultaneity and internationalism was evident in the rapid growth of leftist political and literary activity across Japan in the 1920s, which were organized under the banners of the proletarian movement. The liberation of literature and knowledge unto the masses through the medium of mass-market print complimented the proletarian movement with popular editions of Marx, Lenin, and any number of Soviet writers.¹⁴ In part through the circulation of print, authors, critics, and activists working for political and cultural revolution were able to imagine the working masses of Japan as part of a larger global

¹³ On this point see Chapters 1 and 4.

¹⁴ For a detailed discussion see Chapters 1 and 4.

struggle crossing national borders.¹⁵ Authors came to see themselves as literary laborers selling their texts on the open market. In turn, the popularization of print helped manual laborers to become readers and writers – in 1919 only 2 percent of factory workers surveyed read books, but by 1926, 71 percent were reading some form of printed text with regularity.¹⁶ Marxist writing was faced with the task of confronting the relationship between the medium of political discourse and the commodity character of print media, and proletarian critics struggled to negotiate the dialectics of form and content, politicization and popularization, and avant-garde and advertisement nascent in their attempts to write leftist literature as part of a mass-market economy of printed text. For these writers and critics concerned with the remaking of literary writing, urban space, political action, and the human body, the shared medium of typographic printed text functioned as a site to understand, negotiate, and transform themselves and their social world. As print came to be a part of everyday life, authors explored how these new media, from small-run journals and political circulars to popular entertainment periodicals, mass-produced magazines, and affordable books, could and did change how the masses read and wrote, and what it meant for them to do so.

¹⁵ These transnational currents included significant interactions between the Japanese proletarian movements and the Korean anti-colonial movements as well as contact with political writers in China. On some of these relationships see, among others, Karen Thornber, *Empire of Texts in Motion: Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese Transculturations of Japanese Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard Asia Center, 2009).

¹⁶ Nagamine Shigetoshi, *Modan toshi no dokusho kûkan* (Tokyo: Nihon Editâ Sukûru Shuppanbu, 2001), 21.

Situating Circulation: Harold Innis, Marshall McLuhan, and the Biases of Media History

This study is an attempt to think about how mass-produced typographic text, as a new medium and as a commodity, changed ideas of aesthetics, sensation, perception, language, space, and social organization in 20th-century Japan. My approach to this problem is fundamentally grounded in the study of literature but also draws from the disciplines of critical media studies, print culture studies, and book history. The remainder of this introduction serves two purposes: Firstly, I address the methodologies, existing scholarship, and theoretical underpinnings of the approaches that inform my own analysis of the subject of modern Japanese literature and social history in the age of mass-market print. Secondly, I trace a brief history of print in Japan and East Asia in order to historically situate the period I examine and demonstrate the context within which the reconstruction of Japanese social life vis-à-vis typographic print media took place in the first decades of the 20th century. In doing so, I pay particular attention to economic character and circulation of print media as a force for individual and social change.

Among the first to explicitly examine the relationship between media for writing and changing patterns of social organization was Harold Innis (1894-1952), whose late work narrates the history of Western civilization through a series of shifts in communications media from antiquity to the present. A further analysis of the ways in which transformations of the human sensorium and accompanying patterns of perception were precipitated by printed text is the subject of the early work of Innis' disciple Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980). Here, I read the work of Innis and McLuhan with

particular attention to the circulation of media to show how the problems of circulation and commodification are inscribed into the pre-history of media studies, and to rethink the relevance of their work for the study of media beyond Western Europe by jettisoning the problematic privilege that both afford to the Western phonetic alphabet.

In his foundational works *Empire and Communications* (1950) and *The Bias of Communication* (1951), Innis crafts a historical narrative that moves from Sumerian clay tablets and cuneiform through papyrus, reed pens, parchment, the codex, and the typographic printing press, in order to trace “the implications of the media of communication for the character of knowledge” across space and time.¹⁷ In Innis’ model, the very concepts of time and space themselves shift along with these media, as “history is not a seamless web but rather a web of which the warp and the woof are space and time woven in a very uneven fashion and producing distorted patterns.”¹⁸ These transformations are dependent on what Innis identifies as the inherent “bias” innate to the materiality of various media; paper, for example, is light and less durable and thus emphasizes space, while stone, heavy and permanent, emphasizes time.¹⁹ Although Innis does not explicitly schematize his approach, his model has in essence three components: the material medium itself, which can be subdivided into the surface (such as papyrus)

¹⁷ Harold Innis, *The Bias of Communication* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1964), 3.

¹⁸ Ibid, xviii. In his foreword to *Empire and Communications*, McLuhan writes that Innis’ project was a search for “dynamic patterns of experience” as he strived to “create a kind of epistemology of experience by looking for entelechies of intelligible energies and change.” Marshall McLuhan, “Foreword,” in Harold Innis, *Empire and Communications* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1972), x. McLuhan’s characterization of Innis’ work through the recognition of patterns and his characterization of his own work as a “mosaic” is interesting in light of the dialectic of pattern and randomness as an organizing principle in the age of information within the cybernetic paradigm as identified by N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1999), 25-33.

¹⁹ Innis, *Empire and Communications*, 7. Regardless of the degree of credibility ascribed to the specific biases of media detailed by Innis, I feel that his general problematic remains relevant.

and the tool of inscription (such as the brush), the scale of the media's circulation, and the complex of social, political, and economic systems of a given place and time.

Innis argues that certain media make possible certain forms of political and social organization, noting the “durability of the parchment codex over fragile papyrus rolls allow[ing] for the building of the corpus of Christian writings” and the role of the printing press in developing democracy in France and the United States.²⁰ Though Innis places great emphasis on medium and civilization, the mediating middle term of his schema, circulation as that which outlines the spatial and temporal limits of a given culture in the age of writing, is equally important. A medium such as paper may facilitate intercourse between different cultures, but it is the circuits of trade and exchange within and between those cultures that demarcate the possibility of a given medium as a means of communication.²¹

Although Innis appears to place media in a deterministic position, he acknowledges that the movement of a particular medium into a new socioeconomic system can transform both the material form and social function of the medium itself, as when “the printing industry crossed the water of the Atlantic Ocean and changed its character.”²² If, as Innis argues, the history of a culture is the history of its media of

²⁰ Innis, *The Bias of Communication*, 47; *Empire and Communications*, 154.

²¹ This is not to say that Innis does not sometimes slide into determinism, as he generally overemphasizes single media in his histories, such as the identification of papyrus with Egypt, the Greek alphabet with Greek philosophy, the codex with Christianity and so on. On the other hand, examples of the effects of changing circuits in Innis include the role of paper from China in hastening the influence of Grecian culture through Persian and Arab civilization to southern Europe and the destruction of the London knowledge monopoly with the shift from railway to telegraph networks as circuits of communication in the late 19th century. Innis, *The Bias of Communication*, 18; 31; 59.

²² *Ibid.*, 27. The effects of these changes go so far as to affect the material composition of the medium itself, such as the spread of the newspaper's role in facilitating a rapid shift from rags to wood as the raw material for papermaking in the 19th century.

communication, it is conversely the scope of the medium's circulation that marks the limits of that culture.²³ Thus, although Innis overemphasizes the linkage between a single medium and a single culture, for him it is the expansion and crossing of the circuits of the medium's movement that allow for the mutual evolution of media and civilization.

In fact, the problem of circulation in general and the circulation of commodities in particular precedes the turn to media in Innis' own project. Before evolving his interest in communications media, Innis made his name as an economic historian with the studies *The Fur Trade in Canada* (1927) and *The Cod Fisheries: The History of an International Economy* (1940), which analyze the role of navigational routes for commodity trading in the expansion of the British Empire and the making of "Western" civilization in the Western Hemisphere.²⁴ When assessed in the context of Innis' life's work, the emphasis on the medium of communication in his later work can be seen as a particular substitution in his schema for the circulation and exchange of commodities, rather than a simply deterministic force. Though the medium for Innis serves to radically change society and economy, the scope, scale, and possibility of that change cannot be separated from the patterns of economic exchange and circulation that both precede the medium and transform together with it.

Attention to economic matters also precedes a turn to the problem of the medium in the work of Innis' disciple McLuhan. McLuhan's first book, *The Mechanical Bride: The Folklore of Industrial Man* (1951), released the same year as Innis' *Bias of Communication*, considers the vicissitudes of a culture saturated with constantly evolving

²³ As such, Innis points out that "our knowledge of other civilizations depends in large part on the character of the media" used by that civilization to record its own history that has survived until the present. Innis, *The Bias of Communications*, 33-34.

²⁴ Innis focuses in particular on the role of riverine waterways in the transition from French to English colonial hegemony in Canada.

forms and techniques of consumer advertising. In contrast to Innis' tendency toward the macro scale, McLuhan turned inwards to the micro level to investigate how advertising might remake the body and psychology of the modern consumer.²⁵ For McLuhan, advertisements were, among other things, attempts to induce money and commodities into circulation through the overstimulation of the mind and body of modern man. Into Innis' schema of medium, circulation, and civilization, McLuhan inserts the human body, a technologized sensorium evoked by the mechanized woman of the book's title.

McLuhan's attention to the effect of the medium on consciousness, as developed through an analysis of the modern advertisement, would carry over into his next major project, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (1962), an attempt to expand upon Innis' work.²⁶

In *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, McLuhan retells Innis' history of the print era in the West as the story of a system made up of bodies transformed by the medium of reproduced writing. For McLuhan, "a theory of cultural change is impossible without knowledge of the changing ratios effected by various externalizations of our senses" through new media technologies; "when sense ratios change, men change. Sense ratios change when any one sense or bodily or mental function is externalized in technological form."²⁷ New media were thus "extensions of man" and transformed the lived body itself:

²⁵ Beyond his debt to Innis, the style of McLuhan's work of this period, as well as his focus on shock and the body might be seen in the tradition of Dadaist and expressionist montage and commodity critique; the title of *The Mechanical Bride* is an homage to Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968).

²⁶ In his introduction to *The Bias of Communication*, McLuhan calls *The Gutenberg Galaxy* "a footnote to the observation of Innis on the subject of the psychic and social consequences, first of writing and then of printing." Marshall McLuhan, "Introduction," in Innis, *The Bias of Communication*, ix.

²⁷ Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1962), 56; 314.

“We no longer feel the same, nor do our eyes and ears and other senses remain the same.”²⁸ Building off Innis’ analysis of history, McLuhan goes on to advance the thesis that through this change of the body via its interactions with media, it is not only social structure, but consciousness itself that is remade by the advent of print.²⁹

Yet, despite the title of his work, McLuhan emphasizes not merely the “mass production of exactly uniform and repeatable type” so much as the revolution engendered by the externalization and reproduction of the phonetic alphabet as a representation of speech.³⁰ In his analysis it is not print itself, but the alphabet that is uniquely responsible for “the fission of the senses” and the opening of Cartesian space in the episteme spanning from the mid-15th century to the turn of the 20th. In privileging the alphabet, McLuhan both occludes the function of circulation highlighted by Innis and leaves little room to consider the effects of printed type in societies using non-alphabetic writing systems.³¹ It is McLuhan’s emphasis on the visualization of speech via the typographic alphabet that makes visible the lacuna of his and Innis’ approach to the analysis of media and society. The two privilege the Greek tradition and display a “bias” towards orality over writing in a schema within which a vaguely defined “East” functions as little more than a constitutive other.³² McLuhan identifies China, India, and Russia as “tactile in the main,” while Japan and Germany “retain the core of auditory tribal unity” despite their

²⁸ McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, 35.

²⁹ In his later work, McLuhan moves on from print to explore the effects of electronic media such as television in this capacity.

³⁰ McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, 70.

³¹ This bias was not unique to Innis and McLuhan, but shared by many scholars working on problems of orality, literacy, writing, and print in the 1950s and 1960s, such as Jack Goody and Ian Watt (“The Consequences of Literacy,” 1963) and Eric Havelock (*Preface to Plato*, 1963). See David Lurie, *Realms of Literacy: Early Japan and the History of Writing*, 33;151.

³² McLuhan later developed the idea of the possibility of a new orality in the electronic age in *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (1964); in the present discussion I have deliberately limited my analysis to McLuhan’s idea as iterated in *The Gutenberg Galaxy*.

“advances in literature and analytic technology.”³³ Likewise, the printing of “ideograms” (Chinese characters) is considered “totally different from typography based on the phonetic alphabet.”³⁴

This lacuna at the core of Innis and McLuhan’s work presents particular problems for the study of the relationship between print media, perception, writing, and social organization in societies not based upon the Western phonetic alphabet. In East Asia, not only was writing non-alphabetic, but printing itself possessed a particularly different material history in which xylography (woodblock printing), rather than typography was the primary means for the reproduction of printed text until the late 19th century.³⁵ The use of carved woodblocks complicates any potential rupture between “scribal” and “print” cultures, and not one but many print revolutions took place in East Asia both before and after the European incunabula.³⁶ Both Innis and McLuhan see the European print revolution as a revolution of economy, society, and individual experience: In Innis’ narrative, “the commercialism of the publisher began to displace the craft of the printer. The vernacular offered new authors and new readers. The small book and the pamphlet began to replace the large folios.”³⁷ McLuhan identifies typography as “the first uniformly repeatable commodity, the first assembly-line, and the first mass production,”

³³ McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, 40.

³⁴ Ibid, 47. McLuhan claims, “the ideogram affords none of the separation and specialization of sense, none of the breaking apart of sign and sound and meaning which is the key to the phonetic alphabet.” For a critique of McLuhan’s misinterpretation of the ideogram and phonocentric bias, see Lydia H. Liu, *The Freudian Robot: Digital Media and the Future of the Unconscious*, 68-69.

³⁵ I address the history of print in East Asia in detail in the following section.

³⁶ In a critique of McLuhan, Elizabeth L. Eisenstein has pointed out that in examples of early European printing, type is made to be nearly indistinguishable from handwriting. Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2005), 24-26). For purposes of convenience, I have used this abridged and revised edition of Eisenstein’s *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe vols. 1 and 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1979) here and for following citations.

³⁷ Innis, *The Bias of Communication*, 53.

which he links to the process of “men translat[ing] themselves from a world of roles to a world of jobs” in their individuation into a capitalist socioeconomic order.³⁸

With the coming of print, not only production but consumption of text was transformed, as “the development of numerous printing plants and the mobilization of a market for a commodity which could be adapted to a variety of consumers,” and early advertising took hold, with “a series of conventional instructions for the making...of muscular movements” reorienting the body itself.³⁹ For McLuhan, the reproduction of text marks the “the technological phase of progress, when change itself becomes the archetypal norm of social life” accompanying the entrance of Europe into the modern era.⁴⁰ In this process, typographic text is naturalized as a ubiquitous commodity constituting a new horizon of shared social life:

Typography is not only a technology but is in itself a natural resource or a staple, like cotton or timber or radio, and like any staple, it shapes not only private sense ratios but also patterns of communal interdependence... Print was in itself a commodity, a new natural resource which also showed us how to tap all other kinds of resources, including ourselves.⁴¹

McLuhan goes on to argue that “every technology contrived and outered by man has the power to numb human awareness during the period of its first interiorization,” but the effects of the process through which that medium becomes a constituent part of social life

³⁸ McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, 153; 22. The role of new forms of print and writing in naturalizing monetary capitalism as a system of exchange is addressed in Mary Poovey, *Genres of the Credit Economy: Mediating Value in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century England* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2008).

³⁹ Innis, *The Bias of Communications*, 23-24. McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, 154. Here McLuhan is drawing on the work of the art scholar William Ivins (1881-1961).

⁴⁰ McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, 189.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 198-199. The idea of print as a natural resource is discussed in more detail in regards to the work of Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) in the following excursus.

lasts far longer than this initial moment of shock:

Those who experience the first onset of a new technology...respond most emphatically because the new sense ratios set up at once by the technological dilation of eye or ear present men with a surprising new world...But the initial shock gradually dissipates as the entire community absorbs the new habit of perception into all of its areas of work and association. But the real revolution is in this later and prolonged phase of ‘adjustment’ of all personal and social life to the new model of perception set up by the new technology.⁴²

By following McLuhan in considering typography as a commodity akin to a natural resource, the relevance of his early work beyond the history of print in the Western world emerges. In the case of Japan in the modern period, in which the new mass-produced and mass-marketed mediums of typographic print evolved atop an already robust early modern print culture, the question at hand is how the increased circulation and rapid naturalization of this new form of economized media served to change ideas and practices of reading, writing, thinking, and social organization. The present project is an attempt to analyze the phase that McLuhan deems the “real revolution” – the remaking of personal and social life through the interiorization of a new technology for the dissemination of language. In order to do so, I examine the revolution of typographic print in 20th-century Japan within a framework of its production, circulation, and consumption, as well as with regard to how the above processes were assessed and represented in writing by those living through this period. Crucial in this analysis is the fact that, unlike in the history of Western print laid out by Innis and McLuhan, the coming of typography to Japan marked neither the transition from orality to literacy nor that from scribal to print culture, but rather the naturalization of print as a commodity to the point of saturation concomitant with the rise of urban consumer culture.

⁴² McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, 33.

Xylography, Typography, Economy: East Asia and Print History

In order to fully understand the effects of the proliferation of typographic text in 20th-century Japan, it is necessary to situate this shift in media within a longer history of print in Japan and East Asia. By briefly recapitulating this history, I aim to highlight the particularity of the rise of typographic print in modern Japan as well as address the relationship between media and economy in the field of print culture studies since McLuhan. Despite the divergent histories of print in East Asia and Western Europe in regards to both technologies and writing systems, the two were by no means truly distinct. Paper, ink, and the earliest printing technologies spread from the eastern half of the Eurasian landmass to the West, eventually making possible the print revolution of late 15th century Europe.⁴³ Paper was invented in what is now China before the Common Era and became a medium for bookmaking around the 3rd century CE, replacing bamboo, silk, and wood slips.⁴⁴ Papermaking technology migrated west over the next millennium through Samarkand, Baghdad, and Damascus before being carried by Arab merchants to southern Europe around the 12th century, reaching Germany in the 14th century.⁴⁵ Printing likely originated in China in the early 7th century through the combination of seal

⁴³ The classic study on the subject is Thomas Francis Carter, *The Invention of Printing in China and its Spread Westward* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1925). Despite its age, subsequent studies have largely reinforced and fleshed out Carter's narrative rather than contradict it. Christopher A. Reed has also noted the role of Carter's study in generating interest in Gutenberg and the history of printing within China during the Republican period. See Christopher A. Reed, "Gutenberg and Modern Print Culture: The State of the Discipline II," in *Book History* Vol. 10, 2007, 291-315. For reasons of space, I have limited my summary of the history of print in Asia to East Asia, leaving out Central Asia, the Middle East and littoral Southeast Asia; on those topics see the relevant essays in Sabrina Alcorn Baron et. al., eds., *Agent of Change: Print Culture Studies After Elizabeth L. Eisenstein* (Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 2007).

⁴⁴ Tsien Tsuen-Hsuei, *Paper and Printing* in Joseph Needham, ed., *Science and Civilization in China Vol. 5 Part 1: Chemistry and Chemical Technology*, 2-3. Traditionally, the invention of paper is ascribed to Cai Lun in the year 105 CE.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 30-40.

stamping, stone tablet engraving, and the carving of mulberry wood.⁴⁶ The technology of woodblock printing followed paper westwards, traveling with Uighur and Sogdian traders through Turkestan to Central Asia and eventually on to Persia, then as far as the European Steppe with the Mongol Empire, before arriving in Germany in the mid-1300s, less than a century before Gutenberg's birth.⁴⁷

The world's earliest surviving printed documents are Korean sutra scrolls dated to 751 CE, which were the precursors of the oldest print material in Japan, the *hyakumantô darani* (Million Stupa Dharani), printed between 764-770 under the commission of Empress Shôtoku.⁴⁸ The oldest extant printed "book" is considered to be a copy of the Diamond Sutra dated to 868 CE and excavated from the caves at Dunhang by Aurel Stein (1862-1943) in 1907.⁴⁹ These early examples of print in Asia were as much ritual objects as items made to be read; though early writing in Japan was used for bureaucratic and business functions as well as symbolic purpose, printing remained closely linked to Buddhist institutions for centuries.⁵⁰ It was not until the turn of the first millennium CE, during the Song Dynasty (960-1279) that xylography became a "fully developed and advanced art" on the continent with the copying of Confucian classics, scientific studies

⁴⁶ Tsien, 150-151.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 293; 305-307. Recent scholarship on Gutenberg has emphasized his role as a figure working to combine technologies within a larger milieu of invention, rather than as a heroic inventor of the printing press by fiat. See Stephan Füssel, *Gutenberg and the Impact of Printing* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2005). On trade circuits across Central Eurasia in this period, see Christopher I. Beckwith, *Empires of the Silk Road: A History of Central Eurasia from the Bronze Age to the Present* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2009), 140-203.

⁴⁸ Tsien, 150-151; Lurie, 146.

⁴⁹ See Frances Wood, *The Diamond Sutra: The Story of the World's Earliest Dated Printed Book* (London: British Library, 2010). Stein's role in taking the sutra to London raises interesting issues in regards to the problem of "empire and communication," as the probing of the British Empire into inland Asia served to reinvent the history of print media itself through the discovery of the sutra.

⁵⁰ The complex relationship between speech and printed text in these sutras as transliterations of Sanskrit and the equally complex horizon between orality and literacy in early Japan falls far beyond the scope of this study. See Lurie, 16.

and other “secular works” in addition to the duplication of religious scriptures and commentaries.⁵¹

The earliest experiments in clay type took place around the same time, circa 1040 CE, though it would be centuries until typography would become a viable means for the large-scale reproduction of text.⁵² Early uses of typography in East Asia include editions of roughly 100 used by Korean court nobles in the 13th and 14th centuries; in 1392 King Taejong (1367-1422) of the Yi Dynasty established a government printing office, under which bronze type was first cast in 1403. His son King Sejong (1397-1450) continued the commission of type in conjunction with the promulgation of the Hangeul writing system in 1446, though the technology was still used primarily for Chinese characters rather than printing the new Korean syllabary.⁵³ Around the same time, continental Asia saw the flowering of a secular book trade roughly concurrent with the European incunabula. In the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), commercial printers began producing popular novels, illustrated works, and, following the arrival of the Jesuits in the 16th century, books of Western learning.⁵⁴ Christian missionaries were also the first to bring typographic printing technology to Japan around the year 1590; two years later, the warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537-1598) brought back sets of copper fonts pillaged during his invasion of Korea. Yet, though typography was independently imported into Japan twice in the span

⁵¹ Tsien, 159. Major centers for printing included Kaifeng, Hangzhou, and Sichuan in addition to the spread of printed script to the neighboring Tangut, Jurchen, Khitan, and Mongol empires. Print technology continued to develop, but maintained important ritual uses; in Korea the 52 million character, 6,500 volume Tripitaka Koreana was printed as a means to ward off Mongol invaders in the 13th century.

⁵² Traditionally, the invention is ascribed to a man named Bi Sheng.

⁵³ On the history of early type in Korea see Park Byeng-sen, *Korean Printing from its Origins to 1910* (Seoul: Jimoondag, 2003).

⁵⁴ Tsien, 171-183. See also Lucille Chia, *Printing for Profit: The Commercial Publishers of Jianyang, Fujian (11th-17th Centuries)* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Asia Center, 2002).

of three years at the end of the 16th century, it failed to find favor over xylographic printing techniques. “Christian editions” (*kirishitan-ban*) and “old type” (*kokatsuji*) editions were printed for 50 to 100 years, but, as in Ming China, the true print revolution in Japan took place through the flourishing of commercial woodblock publishing.⁵⁵

Though xylography had been in use for nearly a millennium in Japan, it is not until the 17th century that print as a technology for the reproduction of literary and secular writing truly came into its own. What changed was not only the material technology itself, but the socioeconomic system within which it was used. In Japan, the increasing concentration of the population in urban centers, the establishment of effective transportation networks, and the emergence of a merchant class were significant conditions for the birth of the early modern book market. In his magisterial history, *The Book in Japan*, Peter Kornicki traces how print and the market came together in the 17th century, as books and other forms of print “became a visible commodity in shops on the streets.”⁵⁶ In *Japan in Print: Information and Nation in the Early Modern Period*, Mary Elizabeth Berry details the rise of print culture in conjunction with urban society, detailing how the centralization of people in cities created a market for all manner of

⁵⁵ Notable examples of books printed in “old type” include the *Taiheiki nukigaki* (Abridged *Taiheiki*), an edition of the *Heike monogatari* (Tales of the Heike) transliterated into roman letters, and Japanese versions of the *Salvador Mundi* and *Aesop’s Fables* (*Isoho monogatari*). Type fonts of both kanji and western letters were brought from Europe through Goa by a Japanese man who traveled abroad to learn printing and brought back presses and machines. Many of these early editions use interlinear script mixing Japanese and alphabetic characters. The first metal type made in Japan is the 1606 Suruga copper font (*suruga-ban dôkatsuji*). Later *sagabon* editions included the printing of the *Ise monogatari* (*Tales of Ise*, c. 947) as well as other classics such as the *Man’yôshû* (*Collection of Myriad Leaves*, c. 745), and the *Genji monogatari* (*The Tale of Genji*, early 11th century), as well as new books. Kornicki, *The Book in Japan: A Cultural History from the Beginnings to the Nineteenth Century* (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawaii Press, 2000), 132. For more detail see Zhang Xiumin, ed., *Katsuji insatsu no bunkashi: Kirishitanban, kokatsujiban kara shinjôyô kanjihyô made* (Tokyo: Bensei Shuppan, 2009).

⁵⁶ Kornicki, 170; 118-124; 178. Kornicki estimates that there were over 100 booksellers in Kyoto alone by the 1640s.

print, which in turn served to facilitate the circulation of goods and people across Japan through the reproduction of maps, guidebooks, and financial documents.⁵⁷

Approaches such as Kornicki's and Berry's, as well as studies on the history of the book and publishing trades in early modern China follow in the footsteps of Elizabeth Eisenstein, whose foundational work *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* was among the first to emphasize the key role of print in the formation of new systems of secular knowledge and social intercourse in early modern Europe.⁵⁸ Eisenstein points out how both the production and consumption of text were revolutionized by print technology, as scribal craft guilds gave way to a "new kind of shop structure" and the new practice of "habitual book reading" as a "communications revolution."⁵⁹ For her part, Eisenstein identifies McLuhan's *Gutenberg Galaxy* as a major influence on her attempt to probe the "actual effects of the advent of printing" and her hypothesis that "basic changes in book format might well lead to changes in thought patterns."⁶⁰ At the same time, Eisenstein's work can be read as a corrective of the oral bias of Innis and McLuhan's work, as she turns her attention towards print itself and the culture it engenders, rather than the transition from a scribal culture to a print culture.⁶¹

⁵⁷ See Mary Elizabeth Berry, *Japan in Print: Information and Nation in the Early Modern Period* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2006).

⁵⁸ See Cynthia Brokaw, *Commerce and Culture: The Sibao Book Trade in the Qing and Republican Periods* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Asia Center, 2007).

⁵⁹ Eisenstein 14; 38; 24. Eisenstein notes that there is continuity in addition to rupture between scribal and print cultures: "although printing transformed the conditions under which texts were produced, distributed, and consumed, it did so not by discarding the products of scribal culture, but by reproducing them in greater quantities than ever before." Eisenstein, 128.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, xiv-xv; 50.

⁶¹ Despite her insistence that the press was "an" agent of change rather than "the agent," Eisenstein has been criticized somewhat for allegedly ascribing to technological determinism as well as failing to view the making of print in its contingency and overemphasizing a unified "print culture" in lieu of a diversity of practices. Notable in this direction is Adrian Johns, *Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1998).

In addition to McLuhan, the other important precursor to Eisenstein's work and the study of print history is Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin's 1958 landmark study *The Coming of the Book*.⁶² The foundational study in the field of book history, Febvre and Martin's work engages even more explicitly with the economic and material specifics of the making of the book as a part of an early capitalist economic system. They identify the "book as a commodity," a "piece of merchandise, which men produced before anything else to earn a living...the printer and the bookseller worked above all and from the beginning for profit" alongside other products for sale in urban centers like Lyon, Antwerp, Leipzig, and Paris.⁶³ Over the course of their study, Febvre and Martin trace the complete production process of the book as an economic object, from papermaking to typesetting to binding, contracting, marketing, and sales. This focus on the economics of publishing and book making has remained a key component of the field of book history as undertaken in the North American academy beginning with Robert Darnton's *The Business of Enlightenment: A Publishing History of the Encyclopedie 1775-1800*.⁶⁴ Darnton's concept of the "communications circuit" of authors, editors, publishers, printers, suppliers, shippers, booksellers and readers involved in the production, distribution, and consumption of books as physical commodities has allowed book historians to write the specific stories of the development and evolution of print technology across time and space and emphasize the contingency of the economic

⁶² Eisenstein also notes the importance of Febvre and Martin's work, which was translated into English three years before her own study was published. Eisenstein, 4.

⁶³ Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing 1450-1800* (London: N.L.B., 1976), 109; 249.

⁶⁴ Robert Darnton, *The Business of Enlightenment: A Publishing History of the Encyclopedie 1775-1800* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1979). Darnton also references Febvre and Martin in a preface arguing for the value of book history as a discipline in America.

situations through which print capitalism developed in different locales, including East Asia.⁶⁵

As discussed above, in the case of Japan, it was not through typography, but through the commercialization and popularization of xylography that the print revolution of the 17th through 19th centuries unfolded, as a wide variety of literary and other popular genres were written, printed, and made available for sale to an increasingly literate and urban populace.⁶⁶ Thus, when Japan's second, industrial, print revolution of mechanized typographic publishing took place in the late 19th century, it was in a sense fully with precedent. On one hand, the 19th century in Japan saw the expansion, magnification, and diversification of an already extant commercial woodblock print culture into a highly commercialized, mass-market typographic print culture. Yet, in contrast to the continuity between early modern and modern Japanese print culture as evident in the parallel phenomena of urban dwellers purchasing and reading books sold through a sophisticated system of advertisement and distribution, both the medium of printed text itself and the series of mediations through which print objects were produced, circulated, and consumed under xylography and typography in Japan were radically different.

In the years following the Meiji Restoration of 1868, milled wood pulp paper supplanted rag-based paper, woodblock sets gave way to typography and metal printing cylinders, rope binding was replaced by paste, booksellers' guilds were dissolved, a modern postal system changed distribution methods, and traditional book lenders

⁶⁵ See Brokaw, 55-93 and Kai-Wing Chow, *Publishing, Culture, and Power in Early Modern China* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2004) as well as Kornicki.

⁶⁶ For an overview of the various genres generated in the woodblock print culture of Edo Japan, see Haruo Shirane, ed., *Early Modern Japanese Literature: An Anthology 1600-1900* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2002).

(*kashihon'ya*) lost business in favor of Western-style bookstores such as Maruzen.⁶⁷ In essence, everything from the surface of inscription to the means of inscription and the modes of production, circulation, and consumption of print were revolutionized in Japan in the second half of the 19th century, as well as the political and economic system within which print media was made and used. With this second coming to Japan, typography would take root to replace xylography to become the primary medium for the dissemination of writing in the modern era. The first modern metal typography made in Japan was developed by Motoki Shôzô (1824-1875), who received training in Nagasaki from Western bible printers working in China; his disciples opened printing companies first in major ports and urban centers, then across the country, taking part in the founding of Japan's first modern newspapers, including the *Yokohama Mainichi Shinbun* (*Yokohama Mainichi News*, 1871-1940), the first daily paper to be printed with the new type.⁶⁸ Before long, the new national subjects of Meiji Japan would be picking up newspapers, small-scale magazines, and typographic books with regularity, as a new body of readers and new modes of writing came into being in tandem with this new medium.

⁶⁷ Richter, 41; 143. For the specifics of the changing machines used, see Mack, 23-31. Crucially, the technology of both printing and the surface of inscription (pulp paper) became synchronous with those used in Europe and America around this time. Richter, 30-35. Typography took off simultaneously in Shanghai at this moment as well; see Christopher A. Reed, *Gutenberg in Shanghai: Chinese Print Capitalism, 1876-1937* (Vancouver, Univ. of British Columbia Press, 2005).

⁶⁸ Richter, 80-84. See also James L. Huffman, *Creating a Public: People and Press in Meiji Japan* (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawaii Press). The switch from woodblock to type was by no means instantaneous. The Enlightenment educator, author, and publisher Fukuzawa Yukichi's *Gakumon no susume* (An Encouragement to Learning) was first printed in type, but the slow speed of early typography could not keep up with the demand, and subsequent editions were printed using xylography. Maeda Ai and Katô Hidetoshi, *Meiji media-kô* (Tokyo: Chûkô Bunko, 1983), 70. Fukuzawa was one of the first independent publishers outside of the guild system and opened a woodblock printing plant on the campus of Keiô's school grounds. Fukuzawa saw the printing press as a key tool for the creation of a civilized nation. Richter, 143; 75.

Re-evaluating Reading in Modern Japan

This is the moment at which my study begins, as I trace the coterminous transformations of literary writing, urban modernity, and mass society vis-à-vis the rise of magazines and books from the end of the 19th century. In order to do so, it is necessary to consider not only the production of these new forms of print media, but their consumption; the ways in which these books, magazines, and other types of typographic text were bought and read. Thanks to Meiji education initiatives, Japan's literacy rate topped 90% by the turn of the 20th century, but literacy itself was not consummate with actual reading practice, which remained largely striated along lines of class, gender, and region for decades to come.⁶⁹ Regardless, by 1900 a very large percentage of the country was reading something in print on a regular basis, as testified to by the combined newspaper circulation of nearly 200 million copies per annum. Newspapers were the first medium to attain wide readership in the 1880s, followed by magazines around the turn of the century, and books in the 1920s.

Yamamoto Taketoshi has been among the first to approach the systematic study of modern Japanese mass culture from the perspective of media, and his foundational archival work on newspaper readership, magazines, and advertising provides an invaluable picture of reading practices and the economics of publishing within a broader social context at the turn of the century.⁷⁰ Yamamoto's research has been supplemented by the work of younger scholars such as Nagamine Shigetoshi, who diagrams the

⁶⁹ For more details on reading demographics see Chapter 1.

⁷⁰ See Yamamoto Taketoshi, *Shinbun to minshû: Nihon-gata shinbun no keisei katei* (Tokyo: Kinokuniya Shoten, 1973), Yamamoto, *Kindai Nihon no shinbun dokushasô* (Tokyo: Hôsei Daigaku Shuppanyoku, 1981), and Yamamoto, *Nihon no kôkoku: hito, jidai, hyôgen* (Nihon Keizai Shinbunsha, 1986). More recently, Yamamoto has turned his attention to the postwar to become one of the pioneers of occupation period studies.

expansion of reading habits into a truly mass phenomenon in the late Meiji period.

Nagamine's work also attests to the close relationship between new reading practices and changing urban space, as public areas like cafes, and trains became place to read as more and more citizens of modern Japan began picking up newspapers and magazines.⁷¹

The studies cited above, from Eisenstein and Febvre onwards, can be broadly categorized under the rubric of print culture studies, print history, or book history; without such work, it would be impossible to understand how the landscape of print media changed, and what those changes meant, in modern Japan or at any other time and place in history. Yet, there is an inherent limitation to methodologies focused on production processes, circulation figures, and the enumeration of reading practices. Although print culture studies and print history are necessarily concerned with the reproduction of text, few consider in depth the text itself or address how those living through print revolutions thought about how they read and how they wrote under the advent of new media of communication.⁷² Print history can tell us who read and even how they read, but less so what the nearly ubiquitous medium of typography meant for experience, expression, consciousness, and political organization.

I contend that through the close reading of literary and critical works with a concern for their socioeconomic context and particular attention to the rise of new media that it is possible to understand changing ideas of reading, writing, sensation, perception, space, and materiality engendered by the naturalization of typography as a new medium

⁷¹ Nagamine, *Zasshi to dokusha no kindai* (cited above), Nagamine, *'Dokusho kokumin' no tanjô: Meiji 30-nendai media to dokusho bunka* (Tokyo: Nihon Editâ Sukûru Shuppanbu, 2004), and Nagamine, *Modan toshi no dokusho kûkan* (Tokyo: Nihon Editâ Sukûru Shuppanbu, 2001).

⁷² Darnton, for example, explicitly excludes the ideas of Diderot and the content of the *Encyclopedie* from his analysis, which begins when the book leaves Diderot's hands.

for communication in early 20th-century Japan.⁷³ The period spanning from the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 to the years immediately following the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905 saw the standardization of linguistic style in printed discourse, the establishment of a national textbook system (*kokutei kyōkasho*), the popularization of photography and cinematic media, and the start of a new phase in the proliferation and financialization of mass-market magazine publishing. Within this milieu, the acts of reading and writing literature were inscribed within the particular technological and economic horizons of the material media upon which they were produced. As such, it is necessary to address what Friedrich Kittler (1943-2011) calls “the solidarity of physiology and literature” emerging vis-à-vis changes in media and reading practices through which readers engaged printed text as a material object.⁷⁴ Following Kittler, I argue that as printed language became “one medium among others” in the age of multisensory mass media, authors learning to read and write in this new discourse network developed a new understanding of the relationship between “the materiality of writing and the physiology of the senses.”⁷⁵ In the age of the industrially produced text as commodity, reading was simultaneously the transmission of semantic meaning via text as well as the action of “optical, acoustical, sensory, and motoric nervous impulses” through

⁷³ Despite the absence of attention to literature and problems of representation in most studies of print culture and book history, it is literature that serves as the starting point for McLuhan’s own attempt to reinterpret the history of “typographic man” – *The Gutenberg Galaxy* opens with an extended reading of King Lear, includes extended discussions of Rabelais and James Joyce, and closes by name-checking Rimbaud, Mallarme, Poe, and Baudelaire, in addition to engaging with discourse on art, music, and architecture throughout.

⁷⁴ Friedrich Kittler, *Discourse Networks 1800/1900*, trans. Michael Metter and Chris Cullens (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1990), 217.

⁷⁵ Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, 186; 225.

which readers' bodies perceived that text.⁷⁶ As Kittler has detailed, reading itself has a material history; my project is an attempt to understand the “role of historical, political, and economic contingency in the development” of print media, its reception, and its use and understand the moment in which “reading and writing become common property” and the “medium of writing also became homogeneous in the social sphere” as modern Japanese citizens became “engulfed in paper.”⁷⁷

In Japanese, the most sustained project to detail the phenomenological, material, social, and spatial changes to practices of reading in late 19th-century Japan is the work of Maeda Ai (1931-1987).⁷⁸ In his celebrated work *Kindai dokusha no seiritsu* (*The Establishment of the Modern Reader*, 1973), Maeda analyzes the internalization of the voice in the transition from what he labels “vocalized reading” (*ondoku*) to “silent

⁷⁶ Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, 216. I discuss the rise of a discourse on the nervous body of the reader in Chapter 2.

⁷⁷ Friedrich Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, trans. Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1999), 8. For Kittler, the “medium of writing” is a specifically homogenous medium within the discourse network of Germany around the year 1800; by contrast, writing itself remained very much in flux during this period in Japan thanks to language reforms and the evolution of experimental styles. More homogenous in the period that followed was the process of reading this writing. The situation in early 20th-century Japan combines aspects of what Kittler identifies as the discourse networks of 1800 and 1900 in Germany, as standardized educational practices and the proliferation of print took place contemporaneous with, rather than prior to, the emergence of new audiovisual media. Overall, my approach to this period owes more to Kittler's methodology than McLuhan's, though space does not allow for an in-depth engagement with his ideas. Like John Durham Peters, I read Kittler largely as “a theorist of reading,” for whom modes of reading and writing are linked to a “particular use of book technology.” John Durham Peters, “Introduction: Friedrich Kittler's Light Shows,” in Friedrich Kittler, *Optical Media* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), 6-7.

⁷⁸ Maeda's work oscillates between analyses based in materialist and phenomenologist methodologies; Maeda's study of literary text and city space, *Toshi kûkan no naka no bungaku* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobô, 1982) consists primarily of readings of fictional texts via the historical contexts of city space, but the opening essay “Kûkan no tekusuto, tekusuto no kûkan” (The Text of Space, the Space of Text) is comprised of an in depth engagement with the work of the Moscow-Tartu Semiotic School.

reading” (*mokudoku*).⁷⁹ According to Maeda, in the early Meiji period, reading was largely an oral and communal activity; newspapers were read out loud in public for a nominal fee (*yomiuri*), and books borrowed from lenders were typically read aloud to family members at home. Maeda argues that the transition to solitary silent reading dramatically altered the sense ratios of the body as the voice was internalized, the mouth and ears dropped in importance, and the eyes came to be used for the linear reading of typographic text rather than the viewing of scripted woodblock text intertwined with pictures.⁸⁰ Also recalibrated was the relationship between the print artifact, the torso, and the hand, as the posture of the body changed as readers gradually stopped stooping over low desks at schools of Chinese learning and arching over traditional books opened on the floor for joint reading.⁸¹ In contrast, newspapers, magazines, and Western-style books were built to be portable and disposable; they could be carried out and read in public, transforming the city into a space of reading and, in Maeda’s analysis, a space to be read as well.⁸²

Since Maeda, a number of Japanese scholars have continued to investigate the complex ways in which literature, new forms of print media, and new practices of reading and writing served to produce new notions of nature, city space, psychology, gender, language, journalism, tourism, and education around the turn of the 20th century. Studies

⁷⁹ See Maeda, *Kindai dokusha no seiritsu* (Tokyo: Yûseidô, 1973), 132-167. An English translation of the essay appears as “From Communal Performance to Solitary Reading: The Rise of the Modern Japanese Reader,” in *Text and the City: Essays on Japanese Modernity*, ed. James A. Fujii (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 2004), 223-254.

⁸⁰ Many genres of illustrated books constituted a major component of popular reading material from the Edo through the early Meiji period.

⁸¹ Kornicki, 261-268.

⁸² Maeda’s analyses of the fiction and changing urban environment of modern Tokyo appear in *Toshi kûkan no naka no bungaku* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobô, 1982). Maeda emphasizes the new configuration of space of modern Tokyo, linking textual, social, and geographic space in his analyses of Meiji fiction, within which the material body of the modern subject moved and read.

have focused in particular on the fourth decade of the Meiji period, with attention to the relationship between literature, print, and the solidification of the system of modern capitalism in tandem with the growth of the Japanese empire following the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-1895.⁸³ The work of Komori Yôichi in particular has highlighted changing ideas and forms of narrative and subjectivity in late Meiji literature and beyond; Komori identifies what he calls a shift “from narration to writing” (*kataru koto kara kaku koto e*) and a turn towards a materialist conception of the letter and the printed word.⁸⁴

More recent scholarship has paid increasing attention to the particularities of the forms of literary media, such as magazines, through which literature was produced and consumed, as well as the economic circumstances underwriting the new literary movements of the 1910s through the 1930s, combining these frameworks with close readings of fiction and criticism. Most influential in my own methodology has been the work of Toeda Hirokazu, whose work examines journals, editing practices, interactions between literature and visual media, and the advertising and marketing of literature in the 1920s.⁸⁵ In my approach, as in Toeda’s, an analysis of literature in the age of mass media is only possible through a framework that considers all of the above in tandem with close readings of contemporaneous literary and critical texts that reveal how authors, readers, editors, and critics conceptualized and attempted to change the social and literary space within which they read and wrote.

⁸³ A major set of studies in this vein is Komori Yôichi, et. al. eds., *Media, hyôshô, ideorogî: Meiji sanjûnendai no bunka kenkyû* (Tokyo: Ozawa Shoten, 1997).

⁸⁴ See Komori, *Kôzô to shite no katari* (Tokyo: Shin’yôsha, 1988), 441-537. My discussion of the problem of the materiality of language appears in Chapter 4.

⁸⁵ See Toeda Hirokazu, “1926 Nihon, bungaku to eiga no sôgû,” in *Hikaku bungaku kenkyû* no. 92 (2008); “Nikuhitsu to katsuji no aida ni utsushidasareru bungaku no jikken,” in ‘*Kaizô*’ *jikihitsu genkô no kenkyû* (Tokyo: Yûshôdô, 2007); “Henshû sareru honbun,” in *Nihon kindai bungaku* no. 69 (2003); “Hikisakareta honbun,” in *Bungaku* vol. 4, no. 5, Sep. 2003, among many others.

In English, a number of recent studies have likewise approached the changing landscape of literary production in Japan in the early 20th century. Seiji Lippit's study *Topographies of Japanese Modernism* is the pathbreaking work in this direction; Lippit's exemplary study explores the relationships between modernistic literature, urban space, and sensory experience across the same period, though he does not substantially emphasize the role of print media in this transformative time. More attention to typography is paid in William Gardner's *Advertising Tower: Modernity and Modernism in Japan*, which interrogates important interactions between avant-garde literature and multi-media expressionist art. Yet, a framework focused on literary modernism remains limited in an attempt to understand the mediations between media, space, and the experience of everyday life. Although I argue for the primacy of print media as an approach to the narration of modern Japanese literary history, recent studies have outlined other perspectives. Alisa Freedman's *Tokyo in Transit: Modern Japanese Culture on Roads and Rails* considers the same period in regards to changing transportation networks, city space, and urban experience, while Greg Golley's *When Our Eyes No Longer See: Realism, Science, and Ecology in Japanese Literary Modernism* details the role of scientific discourse in mediating the limits of the literary and ecological realms. In regards to the relationship between print media and literature in 20th-century Japan, Sarah Frederick's *Turning Pages: Reading and Writing Women's Magazines in Interwar Japan* highlights the magazine medium in the making of women's literature and mass culture. More broadly, Edward Mack's *Manufacturing Modern Japanese Literature: Publishing, Prizes, and the Ascription of Literary Value* demonstrates the evolution of the publishing industry and the business of literature in the

prewar period. However, Mack's work skews closer to studies of publishing history and print culture, leaving aside the reading of literary and critical works made within and about this new economy of literary production.

A work that parallels the approach of my study is Kôno Kensuke's *Shomotsu no kindai: media no bungaku-shi* (*The Modern Book: Media and Literary History*), which approaches the study of modern Japanese literature through a framework of the book as a material and financial object.⁸⁶ Kôno draws on *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, the work of Elizabeth Eisenstein and book historians such as Roger Chartier in order to write a narrative of modern Japanese literature as it develops in tandem with "the book as commodity" (*shôhin toshite no shomotsu*).⁸⁷ Like Maeda, Kôno addresses the changing sensory configuration germane to the "act of reading" (*yomu kôî*) the modern book; yet, overall Kôno emphasizes the changes in the production of the literary work over its consumption.⁸⁸ Although Kôno carefully tracks the close relationship between print media and literary text from the late Meiji period through the fall of the Japanese empire with regard to social context, in the end his notion of "reading" forecloses the possibility of considering print media as a technology that can and does transform both individual modes of perception and structures of mass social organization.

⁸⁶ Kôno further develops his approach to the economics of literature in *Tôki toshite no bungaku: katsuji, kenshō, media* (Tokyo: Shin'yōsha, 2003), a major influence on recent English studies such as Mack's.

⁸⁷ Kôno Kensuke, *Shomotsu no kindai: media no bungaku-shi* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1992), 61.

⁸⁸ Kôno's narrative pairs canonical authors with key moments in the transformation of print media and the book form, such as Higuchi Ichiyō's (1872-1896) photograph in the magazine *Bungei Kurabu*, Ozaki Kōyō's (1868-1903) newspaper serialization, Natsume Sōseki's (1867-1916) collaboration with visual artists in the visual design of his books, and Shimazaki Tôson's (1872-1943) self-publishing.

Kôno characterizes the book as “a machine for reading” (*hon wa yomu tame no kikai*) and a “machine that teaches how to read” (*yomikata o oshieru kikai*).⁸⁹ As such, Kôno’s “book” as industrial technology transforms the process of reading itself, accelerating the speed of the reading process as on an assembly line, and retraining the reading body.⁹⁰ Yet, this schema of the book as a “machine for reading” remains limited, eschewing the dimension of perception in favor of sensation, as this idea of the medium as machine for reading cyclically returns only to the changing relationship between the reader and the book itself. By contrast, I argue that, as a machine, typographic print media in Japan is not only a reproduced commodity, but a mode of production itself; it not only reorders reading practices, but serves to constitute the idea of the masses as readers and remake the consciousness of modern man. As such, the book is best characterized not as a “machine for reading,” but rather, in the words of I.A. Richards (1893-1979) in the Preface to his *Principles of Literary Criticism*, “the book is a machine to think with.” Writing at the same moment as the authors and critics of half a world away that I assess in this project, Richards takes as the starting point to his critical project the assumptions that the reading of print can open new ways of thinking and that new modes of reading can serve to reorganize both individual perception and the social organization of the masses.⁹¹ The question to be asked is: How does mass-produced typography in modern Japan, as a new media, as a commodity, and as “a machine to

⁸⁹ Kôno, *Shomotsu no kindai*, 5; 35-38.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁹¹ Richards, like the writers addressed in this dissertation, saw the writing and reading of literature as a means by which the restructure from within the mass culture of the global consumer era shared by Japan, England, America, Western Europe, and Shanghai. For an in-depth discussion of Richards’ idea as a gateway to the problem of negotiating material and phenomenological approaches to the question of technology in the age of mass consumerism, please see the excursus following.

think with” change ideas and practices of writing, reading, political action, space, the body, and the materiality of language itself in modern Japan?

Outline of the Present Project

This dissertation is an attempt to understand how the large-scale reproduction, circulation, and consumption of printed typographic text came to be naturalized in Japan in the early 20th century. Further, it is an attempt to understand how those readers and writers that were born into this sea of print used, conceptualized, and problematized the medium of their discourse as a material commodity and as a means through which to remake themselves and their society. Chapter 1, “Technologies of Reading: Mass Readership, Literary Media, and the Book as Commodity in Modern Japan,” maps the changes in print media from the end of the 19th century through the late 1920s. I highlight key points in the expansion of mass-market print, tracing the ways in which newspapers, magazines, and books transformed reading practices in Japan. I begin by showing how technologies of printing, advertising, and photography precipitated a reorganization of mass media and the publishing industry around the turn of the 20th century. In the decades following, the rise of high-circulation general interest magazines (*sôgô zasshi*) came to constitute a substantial space for social discourse, and I examine the magazine *Kaizô* (*Reconstruction*, 1919-1955) to demonstrate how this new form of print media served as a site upon which new strains of social thought and literary writing could come into contact and conflict.

The idea of the print medium as an object imbued with political and philosophical significance was further underscored with the appearance of mass-market books in the

late 1920s, as the new formats of the one-yen hardcover (*enpon*) and pocket paperback (*bunkobon*) were marketed to the public as tools by which to set knowledge free and achieve the liberation of the masses. By reading advertising campaigns for these new types of books in tandem with works by the philosopher and copywriter Miki Kiyoshi (1897-1945), I show how printed text was conceptualized as a means to interrogate the role of the commodity in structuring individual consciousness and producing social exchange. In this chapter, I argue that new forms of print media served as sites for the negotiation of new models of literary practice and social organization.

Chapter Two, “The Sensation of the New, the Problems of Perception, and the Rewriting of the Literary Realm,” explores how writers working within this new regime of print capital theorized the relationships between the author, the printed text, and the reader. I examine a group of authors born at the turn of the 20th century in order to detail the ways in which writers born into the age of mass-produced print confronted the possibilities and limitations of writing and publishing within the literary establishment. The chapter focuses on the avant-garde coterie journal *Bungei Jidai* as a means to explore how writers who sold manuscripts to make their names as professional authors evaluated and attempted to change established literary networks, existing paradigms of reading, and the realities of the market.

I read a selection of critical texts by authors such as Kawabata Yasunari and Kataoka Teppei (1894-1944) to investigate how the literary work came to be conceptualized as a material object mediating the processes of human sensation through experimental practices of representation and symbolization. By understanding the reader as a mass of nerves and flesh upon which the printed word could provoke physiological

effects, these writers found in typographic text a medium through which to make sense of the constant experience of the new shared by modern readers and writers alike. I conclude the chapter with readings of a series of fictional works by the Literary Age author Yokomitsu Riichi (1898-1947) to show how this historical sense of the human body and the printed text was written within the limits of the transportation and communication networks of modern Japan.

The third chapter, entitled “The Transformation of Tokyo, the Mapping of Urban Space, and the Making of the Mediated Body,” examines an assortment of discourses surrounding the emergence of metropolitan life in the first decades of the 20th century. In this chapter, I examine an array of representations of modern city life in order to analyze the mutual mediations between municipal space, the printed text, and the human body. Through readings of fictional works by Yokomitsu Riichi, sociological studies by Kon Wajirô (1881-1973), schemas of urban planning, and other contemporaneous critical writings, this chapter outlines the transformations of social and geographic space that unfolded in tandem with the reorganization of discursive space outlined in the previous chapters.

Through a discussion of the ways in which bodies and commodities move through local neighborhoods, department stores, rail networks, and city infrastructure, I show how literary language functions as a means by which to mediate between the physical, economic, and spatial registers of the urban experience. I argue that strategies of representation via which the fragmented city can be imagined as a structural totality serve as a means to reorient both individual perception and mass social organization. By situating the production of writing and print media within a broader discourse network

surrounding the transformation of Tokyo into a conurbation of constantly circulating people and products, I show how the literary artifact came to be inscribed as a physical quantity into the systems of the metropolitan commodity economy of modern Japan, thus allowing the printed text to function as a site from which to critique the social and economic structures encircling it.

In the final chapter, “The Labor of the Letter and the Words of Workers: Language Reform, Literary Formalism, and Proletarian Publishing Critique,” I examine the politics of orthographic reform, debates over literary formalism, and Marxian critiques of the conditions of production of print media. I demonstrate how various ideas of “literary materialism” emerged in synchronicity with the new economy of publishing and the reorganization of urban space in the 1920s. I examine responses to the government’s 1924 Proposal for Orthographic Reform (*kanazukai kaitei-an*) and describe how philologists, poets, and critics debated the nature of the printed word as a historical artifice located at the core of the social logos. As the forms of literary media and words themselves shifted, the idea of literary form became a key concern for literati, and I examine the “Formalist Debate” (*keishiki-shugi ronsô*) of the late 1920s to show how the dialectic of form and content came to function as a central problematic in the literary establishment.

The remainder of the chapter explores how authors and critics associated with the prewar proletarian movement assessed the material and economic qualities of writing in their attempts to craft a politically salient literature for the revolution of mass society. I read leftist critiques of the publishing industry by figures such as Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke (1892-1931) and Takabatake Motoyuki (1886-1928) and read the works of

Tokunaga Sunao (1899-1958), a printing-press typesetter who worked to draw attention to the conditions of labor involved in the manufacturing of the industrially reproduced printed text. This chapter demonstrates how the politicization of print media is made possible through a shared notion of the printed word as contingent material quantity and an understanding of the objectified nature of both the author and the literary work. In a brief conclusion, I summarize the significances of the rapid naturalization of typographic media into the literary, social, and economic systems of modern Japan and look forward to how an understanding of this period might lead to a better understanding of the present transition from typographic print to digital text.

Chapter One:

Technologies of Reading: Mass Readership, Literary Media, and the Book as Commodity in Modern Japan

The wealth of those societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails, presents itself as an immense accumulation of commodities, its unit being a single commodity.

-Karl Marx, *Capital* (1867)

The period spanning from the 1880s through the end of the 1920s saw the radical transformation of the production and consumption of print media and literary text in Japan. Mass readership and a widening market for all manner of print formed a rapidly changing ground upon which writers and critics reassessed how, why, and for whom they created works of literature and social thought. With the advent of popular magazines, affordable books, and other new forms of print and visual media, typographic text came to be fully subsumed as a part of the mass culture and market economy of modern Japan. During the Meiji period, newspaper readership rose rapidly, spurred on by new printing technologies, rising literacy rates, and an urbanizing public thirsty for new reading material and national news. From the 1880s and into the 1890s, newspapers were joined by a variety of both small journals and mass-produced magazines, which came to be regular reading material for more and more of Japan's imperial subjects. Popular entertainment periodicals, trade circulars, general interest magazines and literary journals reached circulations in the tens, and eventually hundreds of thousands. Although the market for magazine continued to grow and diversify into the 20th century, books remained a relative luxury through the 1910s. Lending libraries peddling woodblock print

editions had largely died out, and the high prices and low print runs of typographically printed books made them inaccessible to most until the period after World War One. The true sea change came in the mid-1920s, as the new formats of the one-yen hardcover (*enpon*) in 1926 followed by the pocket paperback (*bunkobon*) in 1927 revolutionized the book industry.

In this chapter, I outline changes in readership, publishing, and the forms of print media from the 1890s through the first decades of the 20th century. I begin by interrogating the interactions between literature and visual media such as photography, lithography, and advertising in facilitating the expansion of print into a truly mass medium in the years following the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895. I then explore the popularization of politically oriented social thought vis-à-vis the development of a new space of discourse made possible through the rise of general interest magazines (*sôgô zasshi*) such as *Kaizô* (*Reconstruction*, 1919-1955). *Kaizô*'s publisher Kaizôsha would go on to revolutionize how books were made and sold in modern Japan, marketing a new canon of modern Japanese literature for the low price of one yen for one thousand pages in 1926. I examine the circumstances surrounding both these one-yen volumes (*enpon*) and rival publisher Iwanami Shoten's competing format of pocket paperbacks (*bunkobon*), and read the marketing campaigns for these new media to show how affordable books were sold to the public as objects imbued with philosophical significance. By examining how publishers marketed themselves and their products to the public, I show how new forms of print media constituted sites for the negotiation of social change vis-à-vis shifting practices of reading and writing in modern Japan.

The Proliferation of Print: Newspapers, Pictures, and Changing Reading Practices

Beginning in the late 19th-century, new forms of print, new media technologies, and accompanying shifts in reading practices redefined the internal and external limits of popular print culture in Japan. Before the prevalence of modern books and magazines, newspapers served as the primary material for eager readers, and, from the 1890s onwards, as key venues for the promotion of modern literature as well. In the early 1870s, literacy was still somewhat limited, news were politically oriented circulars, and the act of reading itself often consisted of the oral recitation of borrowed books. By the late 1880s, circulation for major newspapers approached 50,000 copies a day, and the papers themselves had shifted to the format of journalistic dailies as they competed for reading shares of an increasingly urbanizing populace.⁹² Different newspapers sought and created different constituencies of readership: the *Yorozu Chôhō* (*Morning Report*, 1892-1940) was widely read by a working class audience as well as the politically progressive, the *Hôchi Shinbun* (*The Postal Dispatch*, 1894-1949) was considered a “newspaper for the kitchen” (*daidokoro shinbun*) appropriate for families of the growing middle class, and the *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun* (*Tokyo Asahi News*, 1888-) eventually came to be the must-read newspaper for intellectuals and the highly educated, especially after the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905).⁹³

The increasing popularity of the *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun* was due in no small part to the regular writings of Natsume Sôseki (1867-1916), who signed on as a staff writer in

⁹² James L. Huffman, *Creating a Public: People and Press in Meiji Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), 170-171.

⁹³ Yamamoto Taketoshi, *Shinbun to minshû: Nihon-gata shinbun no keisei katei* (Tokyo, Kinokuniya Shoten, 1973), 142.

1907. Daily installments of Sôseki's fiction and the desire of readers not to miss an episode helped spur sales to new levels.⁹⁴ By Sôseki's time, the phenomenon of the *shinbun shôsetsu* (newspaper fiction) had already been helping to sell newspapers for years; earlier works like Tokutomi Roka's (1868-1927) *Hototogisu* (*The Cuckoo*, 1898-1899) and Murai Gensai's (1864-1927) *Hinodejima* (*Island of the Rising Sun*, 1896-1901) earned numerous regular readers for the *Kokumin Shinbun* (*The Nation's Newspaper*, 1890-1942) and *Hôchi Shinbun*, respectively. The most successful work of newspaper fiction was undoubtedly Ozaki Kôyô's (1868-1903) *Konjiki Yasha* (*The Golden Demon*, 1897-1902), which proved to be a massive bestseller; the popularity of Kôyô's story, along with other hits such as Kosugi Tengai's (1865-1952) *Makaze Koikaze* (*Wind of the Devil, Wind of Love*, 1903) helped the *Yomiuri Shinbun* (*Yomiuri News*, 1874-) earn the name of Japan's premier "literary newspaper" (*bungaku shinbun*).⁹⁵

Newspapers served as a key medium for the creation and dissemination of literary texts beyond the limited readership of literati journals such as *Miyako no Hana* (*Flower of the Capital*, 1888-1893) and *Garakuta Bunko* (*Library of Odds and Ends*, 1885-1889).

In turn, the publication of literary fiction served to spur on the growth of the newspapers in the late Meiji period.⁹⁶ As readership and circulation continued to expand, authors like Kôyô and his compatriots came to understand the importance of grasping the needs and tastes of a broader reading public interested in new fiction, rather than write

⁹⁴ Yamamoto Taketoshi, 267. Seki Hajime, *Shinbun shôsetsu no jidai; media, dokusha, merodorama* (Tokyo: Shinyôsha, 2007), 148. Sôseki's first work for the *Asahi* was *Gubi jinsô* (*The Poppy*, 1907); his works were also published in the *Osaka Asahi Shinbun* (*Osaka Asahi News*, 1879-).

⁹⁵ Seki, 55. Yamamoto Taketoshi, 106; 109. *Konjiki yasha* would go on to continue its run in the journal *Shinshôsetsu* (*New Fiction*, 1889-1890; 1896-1926).

⁹⁶ Seki, 44.

only for a more limited circle of literati.⁹⁷ Yet, while the newspaper constituted an important venue for the launching of literature into the horizons of popular culture, books remained expensive and relatively low in circulation, with many readers still depending on *kashihon'ya* (book-lenders). Standard editions ran about 1,500 to 3,000 copies or less, with the largest editions topping out at five, six, or ten thousand published by major concerns like Shun'yôdô, which released Kôyô's *Konjiki Yasha* in book form.⁹⁸

As Seki Hajime and Kôno Kensuke have noted, the stories of these “newspaper novels” (*shinbun shôsetsu*) were told not only through the author's words, but also through inserted pictures and drawings that accompanied the text. Established visual artists contributed “inserted images” (*sashi-e*) that ran alongside the main body of the text, often supplementing the story and encouraging emotional engagement by the reader by casting a different perspective on the written scene or presaging events yet to occur in the written text.⁹⁹ Previously, illustrated genres that arose in the Edo period (1600-1867) had taken advantage of techniques of woodblock printing to weave image and text together, but newspaper novels featured words and pictures side by side rather than intricately interwoven. The physiological experience of reading also underwent a transformation around this time, as solitary silent reading gradually overtook oral reading as a common practice. In his now canonical account of the shift away from oral reading, Maeda Ai cites the biography of socialist thinker Yamakawa Hitoshi (1880-1958), who recalls his youth from the late 1890s:

⁹⁷ Seki, 36. As discussed by Seki, the genre of melodrama and a growing audience of female readers were an important aspect of this change.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 246.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 241. Kôno Kensuke has a detailed analysis of the use of inserted print pictures in literary texts of the Meiji period. See Kôno, *Shomotsu no kindai: media no bungaku-shi* (Tokyo: Chikuma Gakugei Bunko, 2007), 161-178.

When I was young, there wasn't much for children to read...after booksellers of the woodblock print era (*mokuhan jidai*) died out, there weren't yet any new booksellers of the print era (*katsuhan jidai*). So when I was in lower school, I would look at newspaper advertisements, and when I wanted books from an exhibition, I would go so far as to order them from Fuzanbô, (?). Unless one's family was of particular means, there was almost never a library in the house, and in my own house we had little more than books such as the *Analects (Rongo)*, *Mencius (Môshi)*, *Selections of Tang Poetry (Tôshisen)*, and *The Unofficial History of Japan (Nihon Gaishi)*. A friend's family had the *Hakkenden (The Eight Dog Chronicles, 1814-1842)*, so one winter we borrowed it and every night my father would read aloud with great pleasure as my mother sewed and my elder sister knotted as the whole family listened.¹⁰⁰

In the mid-Meiji period, reading involved the complex processing of text via speaking, listening, and looking, as new forms of print served to reconfigure the reading subject's sensorium. Yet these changes were not indicative of a unidirectional shift away from orally oriented modes of reading to primarily visual practices. Rather, the new balance between reading, looking, and listening constituted part of an ongoing process in which the medium of typographic text was itself imbricated with visual and auditory dimensions as new audiovisual media helped to facilitate the growth of print publications. The ways in which non-typographic media such as lithography, photography, and other specular and auditory modes of expression underwrote the large-scale expansion of print capital in Japan is evident in the histories of two of the most powerful publishing houses in early 20th-century Japan, Hakubunkan and Kôdansha.¹⁰¹ These two firms played key roles in the creation of the concept of the mass-market magazine in Japan, and both developed wide arrays of publications for a constantly growing and diversifying reading public.

¹⁰⁰ Quoted from Maeda, *Kindai dokusha no seiritsu*, 133. The unusual punctuation sequence of comma, parenthesis, question mark, parenthesis is as it appears in Yamakawa's text.

¹⁰¹ Kôdansha was originally known in full as Dai Nihon Yûbenkai Kôdansha.

Photographs of a Paper Empire: Hakubunkan, Japan at War, and the Multi-media Magazine

Founded in 1887, Hakubunkan would set the standard for magazine and book publishing for decades to come.¹⁰² In the years after the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), the firm earned massive success with *Taiyô* (*The Sun*, 1895-1928), the prototype for the “general interest magazine” (*sôgô zasshi*), as well as one of Japan’s earliest popular children’s magazines, *Shônen Sekai* (*Boys’ World*, 1895-1934).¹⁰³ The Hakubunkan house also made an indelible mark on the Meiji literary scene with *Bungei Kurabu* (*Literary Club*, 1895-1933), which ran works by authors such as Hirotsu Ryûrô (1861-1928), Izumi Kyôka (1873-1939), Higuchi Ichiyô (1872-1896), Oguri Fûyô (1875-1926) and other influential writers working near the turn of the century. *Taiyô*, *Shônen Sekai*, and *Bungei Kurabu* were all founded in 1895, and their popularity raised Hakubunkan’s power and prestige to a new level; the company had previously published primarily “practical magazines” (*jitsugyô zasshi*) and other trade-oriented periodicals that made up a large portion of magazine sales among the general populace in the Meiji period.¹⁰⁴ The three magazines were so successful that in 1897 they occupied the first, second, and third

¹⁰² Eventually, Hakubunkan would shift in its role from publisher of its own material to a capital firm and printing corporation responsible for the production of thousands of publications across Asia as it became first Hakubunkan Shihon (Hakubunkan Capital) and then Kyôdô. I discuss Hakubunkan in this period in Chapter 4. Giles Richter has pointed out that from its founding Hakubunkan took a more “corporate” approach than many of its competitors, pioneering vertical integration and distribution monopolies in the late Meiji period. See Richter, 200-219.

¹⁰³ For more on the early years of *Taiyô* and its impact, see Suzuki Sadami, ed., *Zasshi ‘Taiyô’ to kokumin bunka no keisei* (Kyoto: Shibunkaku Shuppan, 2001) and Tamura Tetsuzô, *Hakubunkan: Shuppan ôkoku no hikari to kage* (Tokyo: Hôgaku Shoin, 2007), 40-52.

¹⁰⁴ Nagamine Shigetoshi. *Zasshi to dokusha no kindai* (Tokyo: Nihon Editors School, 1997), 28.

ranks for national circulation, with *Taiyô* leading the way with nearly 2.5 million copies sold on the year.¹⁰⁵

Tracing the history of Hakubunkan reveals how this dramatic expansion in textual production was made possible in part by the circulation of the reproduced photographic image in the context of the nation of Japan's first imperial war. In 1894, the year prior to the release of its three major magazines, Hakubunkan began publishing the magazine *Nisshin Sensô Jikki* (*Record of the Sino-Japanese War*, 1894-1896), a periodical devoted to bringing from the front in the war with Qing China to an eager public.¹⁰⁶ Hakubunkan worked with the Ogawa Shashin photography company to produce mesh-plate (*amime seihan*) photographic images of soldiers, ships, and battlefields along the front, all of which were voraciously consumed by a home audience hungry for information about the war.¹⁰⁷ *Nisshin Sensô Jikki* was one of the first magazines in Japan to use photo printing (as opposed to wood or stone methods) for the reproduction of images, producing high quality gravures of the Japanese Imperial Navy and allowing the subjects of imperial Japan envision the expansion of their empire through the viewing of the photographic image.¹⁰⁸ The magazine also featured reproductions of paintings and other engraved images in addition to extensive print coverage of every public aspect of the war effort. *Nisshin Sensô Jikki* proved to be a huge success, selling roughly 100,000 copies per issue; the first issue, printed in August of 1894 went through a total of 23 pressings and 300,000 copies, numbers that would be a huge success even by the sales standards of later

¹⁰⁵ Printing Museum of Tokyo, ed., *Mirion sera tanjô e: Meiji Taishô no zasshi media* (Tokyo: Tokyo Shoseki), 56.

¹⁰⁶ Tamura, 38. Printing Museum, 53-56.

¹⁰⁷ Tamura, 38. The coincidence of new technologies of visibility with the war might prove interesting to consider together with regard to the theories of Paul Virilio. See Virilio, *War and Cinema: The Logics of Perception* (London: Verso, 1989).

¹⁰⁸ Tamura, 39.

decades.¹⁰⁹ By the end of its print run in January of 1896, the fifty issues (published several times monthly) of *Nisshin Sensô Jikki* had logged combined sales of almost five million copies in total, marking a major turning point in modern Japanese publishing history.¹¹⁰

Nisshin Sensô Jikki was not only unprecedented in sales figures, but also played a crucial role in crafting a new relationship between image and text as experienced by the reading public. Though woodblock print editions featuring intertwining image and text still circulated in the Meiji period, and many newer publications typically included reproductions of drawings and paintings, the appearance of the photographic image on the printed page was a relatively recent phenomenon. The first printed newspaper photograph in Japan had appeared only six years before; the photograph, an improved copperplate reproduction depicting the eruption of Mt. Bandai in Fukushima prefecture, appeared in the August 9th 1888 edition of the *Yomiuri Shinbun*, and produced such a sensation that the newspaper continued to publish it repeatedly for weeks after.¹¹¹

Previously, photographs had been pasted onto newspaper pages rather than printed, and even after the Mt. Bandai, printed photographs remained rare, as the cylinder technology for the ready mass production of newspaper photographs was not imported until 1903.¹¹²

In short, the presence of the photographic image in *Nisshin Sensô Jikki* was a major selling point for the magazine, adding value and interest on top of the appeal of the written war coverage itself. The combination of photograph and text, which included

¹⁰⁹ Tamura, 38-39. Printing Museum, 53.

¹¹⁰ Tamura, 38.

¹¹¹ Huffman, 166; 174. Haruhara Akihiko, *Nihon shinbun tsûshi* (Tokyo: Gendai Jânarizumu Shuppankai, 1974), 68.

¹¹² Some papers, including the *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun* and the *Yorozu Chôhō*, did not begin running photographs until the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905). Huffman, 283.

reportage, fiction, news, and analysis, served to help the viewer to imagine the scene of Japan's first modern imperial war. Further, the rise of photographic technology helped to produce new reading practices that changed the role of viewing in the reading process. At the same time, the rise of photography played a key role in the expansion of typographic media, as the capital influx induced by the arrival of the photographic image initiated a transformation of the domain of literary publishing. Hakubunkan re-invested the proceeds from *Nisshin Sensô Jikki* to release *Taiyô*, *Shônen Sekai*, and *Bungei Kurabu* as the flagship magazines of the company, each of which appealed to and helped to define a different demographic.¹¹³ *Taiyô*, which became a prototype for later general interest magazines such as *Kaizô* (*Reconstruction*, 1919-1955) and *Chûô Kôron* (*Central Review*, 1899-), incorporated coverage of nearly all subjects imaginable, including politics, business, literature, science, home economics, geography, military, tea ceremony, education, religion, and art. The editors at Hakubunkan did not forget the basis of the company's newfound success, and each issue of *Taiyô* featured numerous pages of photo plates, typically portraits of public figures, vistas of poetic landscapes such as Matsushima, and details of distant locales like India.

Catering to both literati and a wider reading public, *Bungei Kurabu* was born through the synthesis of five smaller literary magazines previously published by Hakubunkan, and incorporated fictional works, translations, and other writings into a new format, quickly becoming an important literary forum.¹¹⁴ The explicitly literary

¹¹³ Tamura, 40-41.

¹¹⁴ The five smaller magazines were *Bungei Kyôshinkai* (Literary Offerings Society), *Tanpen Shôsetsu Meiji Bunko* (Short Fiction Meiji Library), *Shunkashûtô* (Spring Summer Autumn Winter), *Sekai Bunko* (World Library), and *Naigai Kokon Itsuwa Bunko* (Library of Anecdotes Near and Far, Old and New). Nihon Kindai Bungakukan, ed., *Kindai Nihon Bungakukan vol. 7: Bungei Kurabu Meiji-hen sômokuji* (Tokyo: Kindai Nihon Bungakukan, 2005), 5.

orientation of *Bungei Kurabu*, which featured prose by Izumi Kyôka, Higuchi Ichiyô, Kosugi Tengai, Tayama Katai, Miyake Kaho (1868-1943), Tokuda Shûsei (1872-1943), and many others in addition to poetry of various styles, did not by any means foreclose the presence of photography and other visual media in the magazine. In addition to full-color woodblock prints of women on the frontispiece (*kuchie*), *Bungei Kurabu* began incorporating photographs from its first year onwards, including shots of notable views, birds, and most of all, line-ups of beautiful women (*bijin*) from around the country. The use of the latter to attract readers brought down some degree of criticism, with naysayers chiding that “there is an unseemly trend in the world of magazines, namely the inclusion of photographs of beautiful women...the literary magazine *Bungei Kurabu* is a major case of such, leading issues off by presenting *geiko* (entertainers) from the three capitals, as if they might appeal to those in the countryside.”¹¹⁵

The literary text thus still sat somewhat uncomfortably with the reproduced photographic image; the wider dissemination of the former was made possible through the presence of the latter, but the relationship between the two and the appropriateness of the pairing remained up for debate. Photographic depictions of classical literary motifs such as birds, flowers, and women seemed subject to a vulgarity not at issue when literature was paired with etched, painted, and woodblock imagery. But at the same time, the inclusion of high-quality photographic images and sophisticated photomontage techniques in the literary magazine help raised the appeal of modern literature to a broader audience, as evidenced by the unnamed editor’s remark about rural readers

¹¹⁵ The quote is from an article entitled “Zasshi sashiezu no akuryûkô” in the July 1895 issue of the magazine *Seinenbun*. Quoted from *Nihon Kindai Bungakukan*, 6. The appearance of Ichiyô’s photograph in the style frequently used to depict prostitutes caused something of a scandal. See Kôno, *Shomotsu no kindai*, 170-173.

quoted above. *Bungei Kurabu* was not only important as a forum for those writers producing literary texts, but for those merely enjoying those texts as well; the magazine facilitated the large-scale consumption of modern literature to the pace of roughly 50,000 copies and up monthly.¹¹⁶ *Bungei Kurabu* also included a high volume of advertisements, which, unlike in many smaller literary magazines, consisted not only of notices for other books and magazines, but also for general commodities such as medicines, makeup, and toothpaste. As literature became a means by which to advertise and sell new products, the marketing of those same products served to deliver literature as a commodity to consumers eager for both.

Hakubunkan, having built a textual empire through the production of a new relationship of word and image in their representation of imperial war, sought to repeat their success a decade later, releasing both *Nichiro Sensô Jikki* (*Record of the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-1905*) and *Nichiro Sensô Shashin Gahô* (*Photographic Gazetteer of the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-1905*) after the breakout of the Russo-Japanese War. The photojournalism and editing team on the front lines for *Nichiro Sensô Jikki* was led by Tayama Katai (1871-1930), who had worked as an editor for Hakubunkan since 1899 and also published early war stories in the magazine.¹¹⁷ The new photo magazines were also

¹¹⁶ Printing Museum, 54-57. Hakubunkan's rival Shun'yôdô released the journal *Shinshôsetsu*, which also was a major success, to compete with *Bungei Kurabu*.

¹¹⁷ Tamura, 52. In addition to Tayama Katai, Kunikida Doppo (1871-1908) also spent time working as a war journalist, covering the first Sino-Japanese war for the *Kokumin Shinbun* (People's Newspaper). A discussion of the relationship between Katai and Doppo's experiences as war correspondents and their literary production falls outside the scope of this project, but the particular place of the photographic image in the evolution of Katai's approach to literary representation warrants further research. Katai's major critical essay "Rokotsu naru byôsha" (Stark Description) was published in *Taiyô* (The Sun) in February 1904, immediately prior to Katai's departure to the war front the following month, though most of his major fictional works were published after his return. The act of taking war photographs also appears in Katai's literature, notably in the later "Shashin" (The Photograph, 1909). Reading this work together with Katai's war diaries and associated stories while considering his role as photographic editor might

major success, and *Nichiro Sensô Gahô* proved popular enough to outlast the war itself, continuing as *Shashin gahô* (Photo Gazette) until 1919, and establishing the genre of the photographic magazine in Japan.

Precursors of Popular Culture: Kôdansha and the Genres of Mass Enjoyment

As the years of Meiji waned, so too did Hakubunkan's primacy in the publishing industry. New competitors arose, such as the general interest magazine *Chûô Kôron*, which challenged Hakubunkan's *Taiyô*, and the company Shinchôsha, which quickly grew from a single literary magazine in 1896 to become a major contender in the publishing industry. Shinchôsha's flagship magazine *Shinchô* (*New Tide*, 1904-) became an important venue for writers such as Ikuta Chôkô (1882-1936), Nagai Kafû (1879-1959), Chikamatsu Shûkô (1876-1944), and other authors, and the company eventually grew into a powerful book publisher of both foreign and domestic literature. Equally important in the early 20th century is the rise of Kôdansha, which quickly established itself as a major power in publication for the masses. As with Hakubunkan, the reproduction of visual and performance mediums in print played a key role in the rise of Kôdansha. Kôdansha's flagship magazine *Kôdan Kurabu* (*Kôdan Club*, 1911-1946) began its run in in November of 1911. Like *Taiyô*, it featured a variety of color pictures and black and white photographs. The title term *kôdan* refers to a form of oral art and a type of popular traditional storytelling, and the lion's share of the contents of early issues

provoke interesting research directions into the development of literary perspective, especially if considered together with Doppo's experiences and writings. The production of images was also important for Doppo, who worked on magazines like *Tôyô Gahô* (*Oriental Gazetteer*) and the later *Kinji Gahô* (*Gazetteer of Modern Times*), which became *Senji Gahô* (*Wartime Gazetteer*) during the Russo-Japanese War. For more on Doppo's work as an editor, see Kuroiwa Hisako, *Henshûsha Kunikida Doppo no jidai* (Tokyo: Kadokawa Gakugei Shuppan, 2007).

of *Kôdan Kurabu* consisted of the transcriptions and reviews of oral performing arts, including *kôdan*, *rakugo* (comic storytelling), and *naniwabushi* (contemporary shamisen balladry). These oral performance genres were very popular during the Meiji period, and would continue to hold the public's interest for decades; a large share of early radio broadcasts consisted of transmissions of oral performing arts, which commanded great audience interest in both live and reproduced forms.¹¹⁸

Although smaller publications on *kôdan* and *rakugo* already existed and scripts were regularly circulated among fans, Kôdansha's innovation was to gather the various forms of popular performance together for mass publication and distribution, integrating their availability into the burgeoning territory of mass-market typographic text. Rather than the replacement of a kind of "primary orality" with a regime of printed text, magazines like *Kôdan Kurabu* served to facilitate the reproduction of oral performance, allowing performances to be read, imagined, or re-performed apart from their original time and place. *Kôdan Kurabu* acted as a kind of catchall for coverage on all manner of popular culture belonging to oral, theatrical, and specular genres, including early filmic practices and other forms of entertainment spectacle (*misemono*). Many of these practices incorporated elements from all of the above, as specular performances often contained oral elements (such as narrative accompaniment to slides, films, lantern shows and other visual media), and the arrangements of stage, apparatus, and performer functioned in a complex flux.¹¹⁹ Though genre was in a sense divided and defined by performance style,

¹¹⁸ For more on the continued popularity of oral performance into the Shôwa period, see Hyôdô Hiromi, "*Koe*" no kokumin kokka: *Naniwabushi no tsukuru Nihon kindai*. (Tokyo: Nippon Hôshô Shuppan Kyôkai, 2000).

¹¹⁹ For a detailed overview of the reception and conceptualization of early cinematic practices in Japan, see Aaron Gerow, *Visions of Japanese Modernity: Articulations of Cinema, Nation and*

the divisions between such genres were often complex and ambiguous. Rather, this diversity was held together through a loose conceptualization of all as parts of a burgeoning modern popular culture as summarized between the pages of *Kôdan Kurabu* and similar magazines. Publications like *Kôdan Kurabu* served as precursors to Kôdansha's *Kingu*, which in 1925 set a new standard for mixed-media popular magazines by covering a diverse range of subjects in a highly visual format.¹²⁰ Kôdansha continued to develop themed magazines explicitly appealing to the education of “the people” (*minshû*) as national subjects, releasing magazines explicitly targeting boys, girls, children, housewives, businessmen, and so forth. Kôdansha actively cultivated reader participation in this process of the reproduction of mass culture, soliciting surveys and submissions, as well as encouraging activities and projects to be carried out in official and semi-official reading groups associated with the magazines.¹²¹

Increases in literacy, the expansion of networks of distribution and circulation, the rise of journalism, the beginnings of a modern consumer culture, and the intersections between aural, specular, and print media all worked together to create the possibility of literature as a readily accessible commodity in the second half of the Meiji period. In a very real sense, visual media, the emergence of a multivalent modern mass culture, and the wide-scale reproduction of both helped to set the conditions of possibility for the rise of the print regime that underwrote the development of modern literature thereafter.

Spectatorship, 1895-1925 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), particularly Chapter 1 “The Motion Picture as a Problem.”

¹²⁰ For more on *Kingu* and its role in creating a new standard of mass-market magazine publishing, visuality, and advertising, see Satô Takumi, “*Kingu*” no *jidai: Kokumin taishû zasshi no kôkyôsei* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2002).

¹²¹ For several interesting analyses of the readership and participatory reading practices fostered by Kôdansha in the late Taishô and early Shôwa periods, see Kindai Bungaku Gôdô Kenkyûkai, ed., “*Kodansha*” *nettowâku to dokusha*. (Yokosuka: Kindai Bungaku Gôdô Kenkyûkai, 2006).

Through first the newspaper and then the magazine mediums, photography, visual art, literary text, and oral and specular performance genres were bound together by the possibility of their reproduction via mass-market print. This process also served to constitute a new sense of a nationwide reading public and expand the market for literary fiction as consumers bought more and more magazines.

The Coming of *Kaizô* and the Construction of “Reconstruction”

One of the most important magazines of this era was *Kaizô*, a popular general interest magazine (*sôgô zasshi*) that ran essays on social commentary, economics, and all manner of culture phenomenon, in addition to serving as a premier venue for the publication of fiction. *Kaizô*, the venture of journalist and entrepreneur Yamamoto Sanehiko (1885-1952), was the most politically inclined general interest magazine in the prewar literary landscape, and frequently ran features on labor issues, feminist thought, and other social issues of the moment. General interest magazines such as *Kaizô*, as well as its competitors *Bungei Shunjû*, (*Literary Chronicle*, 1923-) and *Chûô Kôron* (*The Central Review*, 1899-), opened up a literary and discursive space wherein diverse viewpoints could enter, compete, and emerge into the public realm, drawing the general public into enlivened debates about the nature and goals of social praxis, the functions of government, and the role of literature in modern life. In *Kaizô*, domestic thinkers and writers shared pages with the ideas of Albert Einstein (1879-1955), Bertrand Russell (1872-1970), John Dewey (1859-1952), and Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), all of whom at points contributed directly magazine.

The term *kaizô*, which lent its name to the magazine’s title, is best translated as

“reconstruction,” which came to function as a key concept in debates over the direction of Japanese society from the 1910s through the 1930s. The word appeared frequently across all manner of print media in this period, with magazines and books running commentaries on “social reconstruction” (*shakaiteki kaizō*), “economic reconstruction” (*keizaiteki kaizō*), “philosophical reconstruction” (*tetsugakuteki kaizō*), and theories of political reconstruction from both the left and the right. The concept of “reconstruction” came to function as a powerful yet floating signifier in interwar Japan, a word whose use was contested by writers and thinkers occupying a broad variety of intellectual positions. Significantly, the term moved beyond the discursive level and into the realm of praxis, as the authors, critics, and activists that made up *Kaizō*’s literary and journalistic stable dispatched the term to work towards resolving specific social problems and outlining concrete plans for reform. Crucially, these discussions circled not around the idea of building an entirely new society, but rather the trope of reconstructing a world already built, signaling awareness of the entrenched quality of social behaviors and institutions ripe for change from the inside.

A key factor in the growth of the popularity of the term was the arrival of the writings of the philosopher Bertrand Russell, as well as Russell himself, in Japan. Russell’s *Principles of Social Reconstruction*, published in English in 1916, was translated into Japanese in late 1919, only a number of months after the debut of the magazine *Kaizō*. Russell’s book, translated as *Shakai Kaizō no Genri*, was the other key component in the entrance of the term *kaizō* into the public sphere; the thought contained within Russell’s writings was also an important influence on many of the thinkers in the *Kaizō* magazine clique. Founder Yamamoto Sanehiko was quick to seize on this

fortuitous convergence of circumstances and invited Russell to visit Japan, where he had become something of an intellectual celebrity thanks to his translated and untranslated writings published in the pages of Yamamoto's magazine, culminating in a special issue devoted to Russell and his thought in September 1921. Yamamoto would later reflect on the relevance of Russell to the Japanese intellectual scene at the time: "The pieces Russell published in *Kaizô*, beginning with "Aikokushin no kôka" (Advantages and Disadvantages of Patriotism) caused an uproar so great as to turn the Japanese intellectual world nearly on its head."¹²²

For Russell, "reconstruction" was a social problem that was best approached through attention to the state of the human spirit. In *Principles of Social Reconstruction*, Russell expresses optimism for socialist political action in the remaking of structures of labor, education, marriage, and religion, expresses concern that ideology might damage the more fundamental capabilities of human instinct. He focuses on the category of "the needs of normal men and women," and argues that change must both depart from and return to the thoughts, feelings, and customs that make up the individual.¹²³ In the final chapter of *Principles*, "What we can Do," Russell writes:

We cannot limit the recourses to power of our countries, and we cannot rid ourselves of the evils of private property. We cannot as yet bring about a new life through only educational circles. Accordingly, we can recognize these problems, but it is not possible to quickly remedy these problems by utilizing only conventional political means. Our world today is sustained by

¹²² Yamamoto Sanehiko, "Rasseru no raichô," in *Shuppanjin no ibun: Yamamoto Sanehiko to Kaizôsha*, (Tokyo: Kurita Shoten, 1968), 55. In addition to Russell, the other key foreign thinker involved in the "reconstruction" boom in early 1920s Japan was John Dewey, author of *Reconstruction of Philosophy* (translated as *Tetsugaku no Kaizô*), who was also a frequent contributor (in both English and in translation) to the magazine *Kaizô*, and also visited Japan briefly while touring East Asia. An in-depth analysis of the reception of Dewey in Japan in this period is a highly interesting topic for further research, especially given his close relationship with the development of ideas of literature and reform in Republican-era China.

¹²³ Bertrand Russell, *Principles of Social Reconstruction* (London: Allen & Unwin), 1916, 42.

a faulty spirit, and that spirit will not change over only a short interval...In order to see the changes to the world that we firmly desire, we must first straighten our hearts and minds and live a life in which we think positively.¹²⁴

For Russell and his Japanese followers, self, spirit, and life experience constitute both the object of reconstruction and the site upon which the process of reconstruction unfolds. Russell's concept of social reconstruction as outlined in *Principles* is inseparable from the experience of the Great War, which was still raging in Europe as Russell laid out his theory in 1915 and 1916. In the book, which subtitled *Why Men Fight*, Russell considers the question of the human spirit under the conditions of crisis of the First World War in order to devise a route by which humanity might progress to a better phase. In evoking the rebuilding of that which has been ruined by war, the idea of "reconstruction" is further linked to the notion of postwar society and rebuilding. Although Japan was only peripherally involved militarily in the Great War, Japan's formal participation in the Allied war effort and subsequent inclusion in the charter members of the League of Nations helped conjure a strong sense of the war as a shared international experience within Japanese intellectual discourse in the late 1910s.¹²⁵ The term "postwar" (*sengo*) appeared frequently in magazines such as *Kaizô*, allowing Japanese intellectuals to imagine a conceptual rupture between past and present that marked the start of a new era in which extant social structures could be dramatically transformed.

¹²⁴ Russell, 224. "Do" is capitalized in Russell's original text.

¹²⁵ In contrast to the minting of Japan as a world power on the level of Western empires, the experience of China in Treaty of Versailles negotiations had a radically different effect on the intellectual scene there, contributing to the rise of the May Fourth Movement. See Chow Tse-tung, *May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1964) and Ezra Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2007).

Those participating in reconstruction discourse crafted genealogies of their intellectual positions, running a line through the ideas guild socialist movements, Karl Marx (1818-1883), and Kropotkin (1842-1921) to Russell and Dewey. Invoked as the spiritual guiding light of the movement was the figure of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), whose ghost is conjured up in the first pages of the inaugural issue of *Kaizô*. In a poem entitled “The Great Spirit of Reconstruction” (*kaizô no dairei*), the poet Tsuchii Bansui (1871-1952) pays homage: “In an underground room beneath the Pantheon of Paris is the grave of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Inscribed on the grave is a picture of a great arm rising out from a casket, waving a pine torch, and on the coffin it is written: ‘Here lays a man of nature and truth.’”¹²⁶ Like Rousseau, Japanese reconstructionists interrogated the social contract in tandem with the rethinking of the self and its expression. Rather than begin with an abstract and totalized concept of society, these critics aimed to remake their social world through changing the praxis of the self in everyday life.¹²⁷

These projects unfolded along many dimensions, notably in regards to Japan’s burgeoning women’s movement (*fujin undô*). The first issues of *Kaizô* saw heated debates between the likes of established feminists such as Yosano Akiko (1878-1942) and younger women critics like Yamada Waka (1879-1959). In the same inaugural issue of *Kaizô* that ran the poem dedicated to Rousseau, Akiko published “Joshi kaizô no kiso-teki kôsatsum” (A Consideration of the Foundations of Women’s Reform), in which she

¹²⁶ Doi Bansui, “Kaizô no dairei,” *Kaizô* vol. 1, no. 1 (Apr. 1919), 48-49.

¹²⁷ A further investigation into the reception of Rousseau and his work in Japan in this period remains to be carried out. Several different translations of *The Social Contract* were published between 1919 and 1930, including one by the critic Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke (1892-1931), who is discussed in Chapter 4. Other major works, including *Emile* and *Confessions* were published in various editions and translations beginning in the late 19th-century.

writes: “Reconstruction has a meaning at once old and cutting edge. Human life (*jinsei*) has been, since the distant ages before history, nothing other than a progression of reconstruction upon reconstruction of the boundaries of cultural life (*bunka seikatsu*).”¹²⁸ Yet Akiko observes that up until the present era, it has been men rather than women who have taken on the primary roles in this continual process of evolution:

Reconstruction today is tantamount to the reconstruction of the entire human race, which, needless to say, includes women. The problem, however, is from whence to begin this reconstruction. I have named “self-developmentalism” (*jiga hattenshugi*) as the primary base condition for reconstruction. “Culturalism” (*bunkashugi*) is the ideal secondary base condition to reform human life (*ningen seikatsu*).¹²⁹

In the same issue, Yamada Waka (1879-1959) penned another article for the same issue, taking a more socially-oriented view of reconstruction in contrast to Akiko’s individualism:

The term ‘reconstruction after the Great War’ (*daisensōgo kaizō*) is used in many respects, but the contents of that reconstruction are, generally speaking, only superficial or perhaps partial. I would like to think about the general reconstruction of human society from its roots...the processes of human life (*ningen seikatsu*) are quintessentially social, and at the same time it is clear the evolution of society arises from its needs.¹³⁰

Yamada emphasizes the question of needs, aiming to reposition discourse on human rights within a broader schema of social change. As such, Yamada’s feminism was but one place to begin on the larger project of political and social reform in the 1910s and 1920s; *Kaizō* published similarly-themed rafts of essays in which “reconstruction” could begin with labor rights, educational reform, theater, intellectual life, and so on. These issues continued to serve as centerpieces for the new magazine that championed

¹²⁸ Yosano Akiko, “Joshi kaizō no kiso-teki kōsatsu,” *Kaizō* vol. 1, no. 1 (Apr. 1919), 62.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹³⁰ Yamada, “Shakai no kisoteki kaizō wa fujin no ninmu,” *Kaizō* vol. 1, no. 1 (Apr. 1919), 75.

reconstruction in its title and would play a key role in the reconstruction of literary life and popular discourse on political problems and social thought in the years to come.

Books Hit the Big Time: Kaizôsha's *Anthology of Modern Japanese Literature*

Despite the gravitas imbued in the project of large-scale social reconstruction that ran in *Kaizô*, it remained a business venture owned in full by its founder Yamamoto Sanehiko, a schoolteacher turned journalist who planned to parlay his publishing ventures into a new career in political office.¹³¹ The magazine was originally started as a means to draw attention to Yamamoto's campaign, and sales floundered from the start, as 60 percent of the 20,000 copies of the first issues were returned unsold.¹³² The second and third issues performed equally badly, and it looked as if the still fledgling magazine would go caput before it ever got off the ground. The turning point came with the magazine's fourth issue; frustrated with poor sales, Yamamoto turned over primary editing duties to Yokoseki Aizô (1887-1969), a young editor more politically radical than himself. Yokoseki's first issue as editor included a special feature on the state of socialism and labor disputes (*rôdô mondai/shakai-shugi hihan gô*), and copies sold quickly. Despite threats of censorship under the Security Police Law of 1900 (*Chian keisatsu hô*), the newly radicalized *Kaizô* sold all 30,000 copies printed in under four days.¹³³

The success of *Kaizô*'s fourth issue revealed a complex relationship between publishing profits and radical political thought, as the socialist content helped the

¹³¹ Matsubara Kazue, *Kaizôsha to Yamamoto Sanehiko* (Kagoshima: Nanpô Shinsha, 2002), 48-49. Yamamoto began his career as a schoolteacher from the southern city of Kagoshima before becoming a journalist and eventually gaining ownership of the *Tokyo Mainichi Shinbun* newspaper.

¹³² Seki Chûka, et. al. eds., *Zasshi 'Kaizô' no shijûnen* (Tokyo: Kôwadô, 1977), 17; 37.

¹³³ Matsubara, 98. Seki, 44-45.

magazine sell, and sales of the magazine became a key means by which to disseminate socialist ideas. Riding high on newfound success, Yamamoto founded a publishing concern, Kaizôsha, to expand his business with forays into book publishing. In January of 1920, the first installment of Kagawa Toyohiko's (1888-1960) *Shisen o koete* (*Beyond the Brink of Death*) was published in *Kaizô*'s New Years' special issue. Editors were initially concerned that the work, which dealt with life in a Kobe slum, was written in too pedestrian (*tsûzoku*) a style to befit the magazine's intellectual readership. Yokoseki later recalled, "I was against *Shisen o koete*'s publication. I thought the writing was terrible," and Yamamoto himself expressed concern as to whether *Shisen* was of worthy stature to become the maiden work of Kaizôsha as a book publisher.¹³⁴ Despite *Kaizô*'s focus on labor issues, class struggle, and other social concerns, the magazine was much more likely to be read by the educated upper classes than by working class readers, who generally favored newspapers, popular magazines published by Kôdansha, and *jitsugyô zasshi* (practical business magazines).¹³⁵

In the end, however, *Shisen o koete* only expanded the company's audience. Grudgingly agreeing to its publication, Yokoseki discovered that "the boys working in the binding factory were reading it as they were binding it, and were eagerly awaiting the second and third installments. When I talked to them, they asked me if part two would be coming out next month."¹³⁶ The book became a phenomenal success and flew off the shelves upon its publication as a *tankôbon* (hardcover book) in October 1920. Print runs

¹³⁴ Seki, 55. Though now generally referred to as "general interest magazines" (*sôgô zasshi*), magazines like *Kaizô* were frequently called "upper-class magazines (*kôkyû zasshi*) at the time. See Nagamine Shigetoshi, *Zasshi to dokusha no kindai* (Tokyo: Nihon Editors School, 1997), 21-27.

¹³⁵ Ibid, 28.

¹³⁶ Ibid, 55.

of first 10,000, then 30,000, then 50,000 sold out instantly; *Shisen o koete* sold over one million copies by the end of 1921.¹³⁷ The success of this unexpected bestseller through the favor of factor laborers working in the printing plant marked an important change in the demographics of the book-reading public of 20th century Japan, as a broad swath of the social strata joined studied men of letters as book buyers. The ability to imagine a coherent phenomenon of “the masses” (*taishû*) emerged as working men became both subject and object in the act of reading, reading books about themselves along with the rest of society.¹³⁸

Sales of politically oriented but popular works of fiction such as *Shisen o koete* brought renown to Kaizôsha, but in the turbulent times of the 1920s, success rarely lasted long. Fires following the Great Kanto Earthquake of September 1st 1923 had destroyed the company’s main offices, and the publishing industry as a whole was in dire straits after so many booksellers and printers had been destroyed by the conflagration.¹³⁹ To compound Kaizôsha’s financial turmoil, sales of the July 1926 issue of *Kaizô* had been prohibited due to the sexual content of Kurata Hyakuzô’s “Akai Reikon” (The Red Spirit).¹⁴⁰ This fiscal necessity produced a comeback strategy that would not only save the company but revolutionize the realm of book publishing in Japan. This was the moment of the conception of the *Gendai Nihon Bungaku Zenshû* (*Collected Works of Contemporary Japanese Literature*) and the birth of the “one-yen volume” (*enpon*). Yamamoto would later recall that he and his fellow editors saw a pressing need for an

¹³⁷ Nagamine, 55.

¹³⁸ I deal with the emergence of “mass literature” (*taishû bungaku*) in Chapter 4.

¹³⁹ On the state of the publishing industry in Tokyo after the earthquake, see Edward Mack, *Manufacturing Modern Japanese Literature: Publishing Prizes, and the Ascription of Literary Value* (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 2010), 51-90.

¹⁴⁰ Seki, 95.

easily accessible series of books making major modern texts available to the average reader:

The vast majority of Tokyo's libraries had been burned, and the collection of books became an exceedingly difficult task, as there were many books that one could not get one's hands on, no matter how much one was willing to pay. The prices of the classics had skyrocketed, and it was the readers who suffered the most, as all the books soon found their way into the hands of those with money. The privileged classes came to be the monopolists of knowledge, and no one else could get the books they wanted to read. Thus we had no choice but to publish the *enpon*.¹⁴¹

Yamamoto's rhetoric hinges on a right for the general public to have access to reading material, and through it, a right to knowledge itself. This freedom to read is contrasted with the corporatist practices of the wealthy, who become "monopolists" (*dokusensha*) withholding shared treasures of knowledge from the masses; the implied duty of the publisher is to act as an equalizing force to neutralize the nascent tendencies of the upper classes. Yet, the publication of the *Gendai Nihon Bungaku Zenshū* was undeniably a business venture before it was an act of social altruism. Should the plan have failed, the company and the magazine would have been finished.

Editor Kimura Ki (1894-1979) and his assistants based the idea for the collected works on the Harvard Classics series; each volume would cost one yen and hold the selected and collected writings of one or two authors.¹⁴² Compared to the standard prices of most books, this amounted to a phenomenal deal. But no matter how bold the plan, it was sure to falter if it was not advertised, and the company went deep into debt taking out multiple loans to sponsor a broad newspaper ad campaign run by advertising powerhouse

¹⁴¹ Quoted from Seki, 99. Originally appeared as Yamamoto Sanehiko, "Jūgo-nen," *Kaizō* (Apr. 1934).

¹⁴² *Ibid*, 98-100.

Dentsû.¹⁴³ Crucial to note, however, is the fact that the one-yen volumes of Kaizôsha's series were not freely and publicly sold, but only available by subscribing to the whole series by putting down a small lump fee and agreeing to a regular payment schedule in exchange for the delivery of each volume by post. Nonetheless, the complicated fee structure did not hamper the excitement of the mostly urban middle and upper-class consumers who purchased Kaizôsha's books – over 250,000 reservations were made in the opening weeks after the plan's announcement, and somewhere between 600,000 and 800,000 copies of the anthology were published, amounting to a massive success that not only saved the company but made it the envy of the publishing world.¹⁴⁴

Writer is Rich: “Professional Writers” and the One-yen Volume

The drop in book prices and subsequent rise in circulation figures affected the lives of not only readers, but writers as well. The 1910s and early 1920s had seen the rise of the figure of the “professional writer” (*shokugyô sakka*), who made a living selling manuscripts rather than depending on a regular stipend from a newspaper or the goodwill of a mentor or patron. Due to the yen per page rates paid by high-circulation magazines such as *Kaizô*, professional authors, and increasingly, professional critics as well, were able to support themselves by selling their labor and their texts as products to magazines,

¹⁴³ Seki, 101 See also Printing Museum of Tokyo, ed., *Mirion serâ no tanjô e* (Tokyo: Toppan Insatsu, 2008), 130.

¹⁴⁴ Matsubara, 145-146. Seki, 105. Other publishing companies followed hot on Kaizôsha's heels. Shun'yôdô published the competing *Meiji Taishô Bungaku Zenshû* (*Collected Works of Meiji and Taisho Literature*), Heibonsha published the *Gendai Taishû Bungaku Zenshû* (*Collected Works of Contemporary Popular Literature*), Shinchôsha published the *Sekai Bungaku Zenshû* (*Collected Works of World Literature*), Daiichi Shobô published the *Kindai Geki Zenshû* (*Collected Works of Modern Theatre*), Kindaisha published the *Sekai Gikyoku Zenshû* (*Collected Works of World Drama*), and so on. For a discussion of the role of series such as these on the crafting of the canon of modern Japanese literature, see Mack, 91-138.

journals, and an increasing variety of print media outlets. *Kaizô*'s sterling reputation amidst literati came as much for the high rates of 1.8 yen per page as from the careful selections made by the editorial board. Yamamoto Sanehiko is alleged to have sold his own house in order to subsidize *Kaizô*'s high rates, arguing that attracting the best authors was the best strategy for the magazine to attract the most readers.¹⁴⁵ In special cases, *Kaizô* offered even more – when Shiga Naoya (1883-1971) began publishing his opus *An'ya Kôro* (*A Dark Night's Passing*, 1921-1937) in *Kaizô* in 1921, Yamamoto sent Akutagawa Ryûnosuke to offer him the unheard of sum of 5 yen per page.¹⁴⁶ Kikuchi Kan (1888-1948), editor and founder of the magazine *Bungei Shunjû* (*Literary Chronicle*, 1923-) wrote, “the arrival of the *enpon zenshû* has revolutionized the Japanese publishing world and brought great change to the publishing unions. The unexpected amount of income from royalties had a great effect on our lives as writers. It was the influence of the *enpon zenshû* that allowed us to achieve such material wealth.”¹⁴⁷ The author and critic Hirotsu Kazuo (1891-1968) mentions even more explicitly the role of the reader in the development of this unexpected wealth: “We Japanese writers were unused to the idea that books could be published in the hundreds of thousands, and in addition to gaining the opportunity to making our works available to so many readers, our eyes grew wide at the site of the accompanying income.”¹⁴⁸

Not all authors, however, were so happy about this new format. Nagai Kafû (1879-1959) wrote a venomous article in the *Jiji Shinpô* (*News of the Times*, 1882-1936)

¹⁴⁵ Matsubara, 108-109.

¹⁴⁶ Seki, 62-64.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, 108.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 107.

newspaper in which he attacks Kaizôsha and the anthology.¹⁴⁹ Having yet to secure Kafû's approval for inclusion in the *Anthology*, advertisements included the notation "in negotiations" (kôshôchû) next to Kafû's name. The fact that he was "in negotiations" apparently came as an unpleasant shock to Kafû:

This so-called collected works of literature says it reprints the great prose of past and present, allowing the people (*minshû*) to read these books as cheaply as possible. The crux of the matter is the popularization of literature, but if you take the time to think carefully, it is tantamount to treating the *shôsetsu* as a commodity, nothing more and nothing less than savvy merchants expanding their sales to try and turn quick profits. I am not pleased with this.¹⁵⁰

Despite his invocation of the logic of the commodity in his criticism, Kafû was no Marxist; rather, he was concerned that the nature of the book and the role of the author were shifting far from the early modern ideals he had carefully cultivated in his public image. But the final outcome of the spat between Kafû and Kaizôsha leaves no doubt as to the rapidity with which the rapidly expanding literary market changed the realities of writing literature. When Kafû's volume was published in the fall of 1927, he remarked: "Well, I guess my editor needed the money..."¹⁵¹ Through these changes in distribution and circulation, control of the text and its entry into the literary market and no longer lay simply with the author, but expanded to encompass the actions of editors and agents, who are driven in turn by the material necessities and economic realities of life in modern urban Tokyo.

¹⁴⁹ Seki, 103-104. The original date of the *Jiji Shinpô* article is not cited.

¹⁵⁰ Matsubara, 104.

¹⁵¹ Seki, 104.

Paperback Writers: Iwanami Bunko and the Formulation of a New Book Format

As most Japanese publishers sought to duplicate Kaizôsha's success by releasing their own anthology series, one company chose to develop its own book format, one even cheaper and more accessible than the one-yen volume hardcover. That publisher was Iwanami Shoten, and its pocket paperback (*bunkobon*) would go on to set a new standard for mass book readership for decades to come. Founded as a bookstore by Iwanami Shigeo (1881-1946) in 1913, the company first established itself as a publisher with the release of Natsume Sôseki's (1867-1916) *Kokoro* (*Kokoro*) in 1914.¹⁵² Though the firm achieved moderate prestige over the following years, in the 1920s the company was small enough that founder Iwanami Shigeo still famously traveled by foot to solicit manuscripts.¹⁵³ When Kaizôsha released their epochal one-yen anthology in 1926 and publishers scrambled to compete by devising their own anthologies, Iwanami was left in the lurch as the more established house Shinchôsha pre-empted their plans to release a series of one-yen volumes of world literature.¹⁵⁴ Rather than attempt to carve out a corner of a market for one-yen books dominated by bigger publishing concerns, Iwanami devised a competition strategy based on a new form of the book itself. The format was the budget paperback, modeled after the books released by the Leipzig-based publisher Reclam. In 1867, as Japan's social system was in the throes of radical change, Reclam began releasing a series of cheap, pocket-sized editions of literary and philosophical classics, which they dubbed the "Universal Library" (G. *Universal-Bibliothek*). The

¹⁵² *Kokoro* was originally serialized earlier the same year in the *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun* newspaper for which Sôseki regularly wrote.

¹⁵³ Iwanami Bunko Editors, ed., *Iwanami bunko no hachijû-nen* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2007), 400-401. Iwanami had increased its prestige through the release of the *Sôseki zenshû* (Collected Works of Sôseki) in 1919-1920.

¹⁵⁴ Yamazaki Yasuo, *Eien no jigyô: Iwanami bunko monogatari* (Tokyo: Hakuôsha, 1962), 17.

series was so successful that by the end of the century, Reclam's "cute little books" (*kawaiirashii kohon*) with their distinctively uniform yellow covers had become favorite reading materials not only in Europe, but among aspiring Meiji-era intellectuals like Iwanami Shigeo, then a student at the Tokyo Imperial University Faculty of Philosophy.¹⁵⁵

Iwanami's plan to sell Reclam-style cheap paperbacks was a risky economic gamble. In the 1910s, another publisher, Akagi Sôsho, had tried a similar strategy, offering works by Ibsen, Darwin, and Dostoevsky for the pittance of 10 *sen* a piece, but the series soon folded under low returns.¹⁵⁶ By 1927, when Iwanami initiated the Iwanami Library (Iwanami Bunko) series, the size of the reading populace and the market for print media had changed dramatically, with newspapers and magazines circulating in the hundreds of thousands and the success of the *enpon* format proving the viability of mass-market books. Iwanami charged 20 *sen* for a hundred-page volume, pressed in runs of 10,000 to 20,000 copies sold at local bookstores and through mail order, in contrast to the one-yen anthology editions of other companies, which were only sold through subscriptions.¹⁵⁷ Consumers were thus free to purchase whichever books they wanted, whenever they wanted; this deviation from the subscription-only sales model would prove to be an important aspect of the philosophical and political rhetoric surrounding the inauguration of Iwanami Library. In devising the Iwanami Library series, company president Iwanami Shigeo and his editors turned not only to contacts in the publishing

¹⁵⁵ Reclam's books were so popular and well known in Japan that when the Iwanami Bunko series debuted, the books were often referred to as *Rekuramu-ban* (Reclam editions). The original Reclam series included a single volume of Japanese writing, a collection of *waka* poetry. Satô Tsuji, "Rekuramu bunko," *Shisô* 71 (Sept. 1927): 92.

¹⁵⁶ Iwanami Bunko Editors, 401.

¹⁵⁷ This price was only a fifth of that of a hardcover *enpon* volume. The relatively low popularity of books in comparison to magazines is evident in the low circulation numbers, which were less than the average print run of many small literary coterie magazines (*dôjin zasshi*). Iwanami Bunko Editors, 402.

industry but to philosophers, consulting with Watsuji Tetsurô (1889-1960), Nishida Kitarô (1870-1945), and Abe Jirô (1883-1959), all of whom wrote regularly for Iwanami's journal of philosophy *Shisô* (*Thought*, 1921-). The birth of Iwanami Library was conceptualized as an act of philosophical significance on top of its character as an economic move; Iwanami would employ a marketing strategy centered upon the positive repercussions of the mass production of print on the history of the human spirit.¹⁵⁸

The first set of Iwanami Bunko editions were released on July 10th, 1927, and included now-canonical works of modern Japanese literature such as Natsume Sôseki's *Kokoro*, Kôda Rohan's *Gojû no tô* (*The Five Storied Tower*, 1891-1892, and Higuchi Ichiyô's *Takekurabe* (*Growing Up*, 1895-1896). But Iwanami's first set of releases contained more works of Western philosophy and literature than domestic works, including several volumes of Tolstoy, Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* (1897) and *The Cherry Orchard* (1904) and classics of Plato, Kant, and others. Iwanami stated its mission as the publication of "the classics" (*tenseki*) of "new and old, east and west" (*kokon tôzai*), to compile a canon in which Japanese literature, thought, and tradition was, although distinct, part of a greater discursive entity of "world thought." The following year, Iwanami also began publishing the first of its "lecture" (*kôza*) series, the *Iwanami Kôza Sekai Shichô* (*Iwanami Lectures on World Thought*, 1928). Abe Jirô (1883-1959) writes in the eponymous introduction to the first volume: "So what does 'world thought' (*sekai*

¹⁵⁸ While Watsuji and Nishida agreed readily, Abe urged Iwanami not to follow through, arguing that "the plan is unsystematic, it will be difficult to turn a profit, and authors' royalties will fall dramatically." Before long, major authors like Mushanokôji Saneatsu (1885-1976), Kôda Rohan (1867-1947), and Shimazaki Tôson (1872-1943) signed up to have their works published in *bunkobon* form, and Iwanami decided to set the plan into action. It is worth noting that the responses of Nishida and company revolved primarily about the economic realities of the plan and problems of profitability and royalties, which gives an interesting perspective on the monetary concerns of the business of philosophy in prewar Japan. Yamazaki, 13.

shichô) mean? It is not simply to treat Western thought and Eastern thought separately, but rather to subdivide both, and to draw the large (necessarily large) ring that encompasses their totality, as they overlap like the rings on an old tree.”¹⁵⁹ After a number of essays on the histories of Eastern and Western traditions of thought, the later volumes of the *Sekai Shichô* are a montage of discussions of Japanese and foreign thinkers, with Rousseau next to Kamo no Chômei (1155-1216), Fukuzawa Yûkichi (1835-1901) next to Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910), and Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801) sandwiched between Kant (1724-1804) and Goethe (1749-1832). Through publishing endeavors such as these, Iwanami aimed to craft a model of *Weltliteratur* of which Japanese literature constituted an important part.

This goal could not be achieved by simply publishing new books, but through marketing them and compelling readers to understand the merit of the project and the works it encompassed. On July 9th, 1927, the day before the first volumes of Iwanami Bunko were made available, the company took out a large advertisement in the *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun*, running a manifesto-like essay entitled “Dokushoshi ni yosu” (To the Readers). The essay extolled the virtues of the thrift and availability embodied in the pocket paperback. The manifesto, while credited to company founder Iwanami Shigeo, was in fact written by the philosopher Miki Kiyoshi (1897-1945), a young professor at Hôsei University and editor at Iwanami Shoten.¹⁶⁰ The advertisement characterizes the series as follows:

¹⁵⁹ Abe Jirô, “Sekai shichô” in *Iwanami kôza sekai shichô dai isshû*. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1928-1929), 5.

¹⁶⁰ Yamazaki, 17. The text of the essay is reprinted identically in nearly all printed editions of Iwanami Bunko volumes. Citations are taken from the original new *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun* edition, and further references to the single page, unpaginated text are cited as Miki, “Dokushoshi ni yosu.”

The Iwanami Library contains books of all types, including literature, philosophy, natural science, and social science. Each book is of a truly canonical value (*kotenteki kachi aru sho*) and absolutely necessary for all to read... This plan is more than a mere passing fancy of this mortal world; we have made great sacrifices to lend our meager powers to this enterprise of eternity (*eien no jigyo*). We will continue to develop our plan so that we might complete our Library mission with no regrets.¹⁶¹

With the Library series, Iwanami aimed to craft an ideal of universalist values of thought, knowledge, and self-cultivation (*kyōyō*) transcending dimensions of time and money in the creation of spirit. The rhetoric of canon formation plays a key role in the advertisement, as the history of philosophy is subsumed and released into the present. In turn, actions within that present, specifically the practices of publishing and compilation, forge an imagined future, an “eternity” that transcends space and time. In this formulation, the publication and marketing of Iwanami’s books thus allows for the imagination of a greater body of world literature and thought, a corpus of texts accessible through the purchase of paperback volumes.

Specifically, Iwanami’s defined its mission with the goal of publishing only books seen with canonical or at least “semi-canonical” (*jun-koten*) value. The categorization and organization of the Iwanami Bunko series has helped organized interpretive paradigms for subsequent generations of readers and scholars. In 1931, Iwanami initialized an easily recognizable red, yellow, blue, and green color-coded system, also inspired by the format of the original Reclam editions. Pre-modern works were grouped by Iwanami under the scholarly rubric of “national literature” (*kokubungaku*) and painted with a yellow stripe to demarcate them from modern works of Japanese literature, which were marked green. Everything between the *Man’yōshū* (*Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves*, c. 785) and Shikitei Samba’s (1776-1822) *Ukiyoburo* (*Bathhouse of the Floating World*, 1809-1813)

¹⁶¹ Miki, “Dokushoshi ni yosu.”

would become “national literature,” while Meiji works and beyond were filed separately as “modern.”¹⁶² However, as with the release of Kaizōsha’s *Gendai Nihon Bungaku Zenshū*, the official organization and numeration of the series contents was not reflected in the order in which the volumes went on sale. The 8th-century *Man’yōshū* is given an originary position in the history of Japanese literature and marked as volume number one in the Iwanami Bunko series, but it was not actually made available until several months after the initial set of releases. Instead, the first day of releases featured works by more recent and more popular authors, as the economic success of the project took precedence.

In crafting the Iwanami Bunko project, Iwanami Shoten situated its position in the literary market upon a dialectic of two distinct but inseparable pillars of value – the economic value of thrift and the transcendent value of knowledge. The latter becomes accessible precisely through the logic of the former, as a coherent idea of “knowledge” emerges through the mediation of the economic register, as newly affordable works of literature and philosophy are made available for purchase by the general public. The great tree ring in Abe Jirō’s metaphor of “world thought” thus stands within a vast forest of books, pages, texts, and words both abstract and historical; the forest of consumer choice underwrites the discursively produced image of the book as a transcendent source of knowledge. The reader meets the tree not as a pillar of spirit as such, but in the media of pulped paper purchased in the form of the book, as a coherent schema of the thought of “past and present, east and west” is held together through the literary market at large, the

¹⁶² A letter from a student in the late 1920s testifies to the usefulness of such editions: “I am so happy that I can now buy the books I want at cheap prices...I cannot wait for the releases of the *Genji monogatari* (*The Tale of Genji*, early 11th century) and the *Heike monogatari* (*Tales of the Heike*, 13th century). Please keep releasing the books that the students want so much. Yamazaki, 22.

circulation of critical discourse, and the unity of the series as it is sold.¹⁶³

The success of Iwanami Bunko lay not just in its affordability and access, but in the format of the books themselves as well. Published in small volumes measuring roughly six inches by four-and-a-half inches, pocket paperbacks were significantly smaller than the one-yen hardcovers, allowing eager readers to peruse them in far more places than previously possible. With reading no longer limited to desks or tables in homes and offices, the sale and circulation of Iwanami's books and their eventual imitators helped transform growing swaths of space into locations in which the act of reading could be carried out.¹⁶⁴ Rarely exceeding a hundred pages, a pocket paperback volume could slip easily into a pocket and weighed almost nothing at all. This aspect of the format is stressed in Iwanami's manifesto:

Since we emphasize portability and affordability, the books' outer appearance are nothing worth giving a second look to, but we have made our best efforts to carry out the most stringent selection criteria in regards to the contents. Now more than ever, these books display the characteristics that you have come to expect from Iwanami products.¹⁶⁵

Despite the advertisement's rhetoric claiming to eschew form for content, the Iwanami Bunko project constitutes a case of extreme attention to the matter of form. The simple, basic design of the Iwanami Bunko volume, far from lacking a regard for form, in fact highlights the ways in which the form of the medium intersects with new

¹⁶³ Satô, 23.

¹⁶⁴ Maeda Ai has outlined the emergence of modern reading spaces such as libraries, reading rooms, and cafes populated by a public engaged in the relatively new practice of sustained, silent, individual reading. See Maeda Ai, *Kindai dokusha no seiritsu* (Tokyo: Yûseidô), 1983. More recently, James Fujii has linked the development of modern reading practices to the expansion of urban rail lines, as the portability of the newspaper medium facilitated modes of reading typified by commuting workers consuming literature in the form of short serials. See James Fujii, "Intimate Alienation: Japanese Urban Rail and the Commodification of Urban Subjects," *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 11: 2 (1999).

¹⁶⁵ Miki, "Dokushoshi ni yosu." At the time Iwanami Bunko volumes bore only a simple paraffin sleeve.

practices of reading. The lasting success of Iwanami's paperbacks was predicated on the material qualities of the media form, as the new format was specifically developed to render possible new reading practices and open new markets of reading. Like the one-yen hardcover *enpon*, itself a radically successful experiment in format, the new pocket paperback *bunkobon* created opportunities for a broad public readership to get their hands on otherwise unaffordable and inaccessible texts. Most texts released by Iwanami were already extant in hardcover editions or periodical publications; Iwanami's move was not to create new works, but rather to alter the forms in which those texts could be accessed. Thus, despite their ballyhooed "stringent selection of content" (*naiyô no gensen*), Iwanami's true revolution lay primarily in the format of their products, as the *bunkobon* was not a reduction to a minimalism of naked text or pure content, but rather a radical formal experiment.

Any Way You Want It: Rhetoric of Freedom and Social Change in Iwanami Ideology

In an advertisement for the Iwanami Bunko printed in the October 18, 1927 edition of the *Osaka Mainichi Shinbun* newspaper, the copy reads: "The first duty of the truly popular edition (*fukyûban*) is the rigorous selection of contents. The second duty is affordability. But low prices must not come before the ability to make free selections of books."¹⁶⁶ This rhetoric of freedom comprised a crucial component of Iwanami's sales campaign; the first line of the first advertisement for the Bunko series, as penned by Miki Kiyoshi, begins: "Truth is sought by all, and each seeks it for himself, just as art is loved

¹⁶⁶ Kaizôsha, Advertisement. *Osaka Mainichi Shinbun*, Oct. 18, 1927.

by all and each loves it in his own way.”¹⁶⁷ Freedom of the spirit is then explicitly linked to the freedom to purchase and the ability to make decisions as to the relative value of different commodities. As laid out in the company’s manifesto, one of the fundamental philosophical underpinnings and marketing strategies of the Iwanami Bunko series was the ability for readers to “freely choose to select whichever they book they want, whenever they want... We conceived the Iwanami Bunko to free readers from the fetters of the reservation system and to fully accomplish our mission of bringing out popular, accessible versions of the classics of east and west.”¹⁶⁸ Such freedom was explicitly posited against the restrictions and cost of the subscription-only one-yen anthologies, whose expensive reservation purchase systems implicitly limited their readership.

By encouraging the development of spirit and knowledge of self through consumer choice, Iwanami’s pocket paperback series (as well as Kaizôsha’s one-yen hardcovers) played an important role in the establishment of the modern liberal reader-consumer at liberty to select between items and ideologies. Knowledge, art, and self-cultivation were constructed as necessities of modern life mediated through the act of reading as made possible by the changes sweeping the Japanese publishing industry in the 1920s. A common rubric for the historical evaluation of Iwanami’s endeavors is to assess it as part of a prewar trend towards “cultivationism” (*kyôyô-shugi*), a modern enlightenment ideal of self-education.¹⁶⁹ The availability of great works of classical and contemporary thought and literature on the commodity market allowed any member of the reading public to strive towards a self-image as a learned man of letters. The company

¹⁶⁷ Miki, “Dokushoshi ni yosu.”

¹⁶⁸ Miki, “Dokushoshi ni yosu.”

¹⁶⁹ An interesting discussion of Iwanami Shoten and prewar “cultivationism” (*kyôyô-shugi*) appears in Takeuchi Yô, *Kyôyôshugi no botsuraku: kawariyuku erîto gakusei bunka* (Tokyo: Chûô Kôron Shinsha, 2003).

readily perpetuated the notion, with president Iwanami Shigeo boasting that readers “depend on the Iwanami Bunko for all their cultural education (*kyōyō*)...the popularization of the canon shows the standard of culture.”¹⁷⁰

Yet, maintaining an analytical schema contrasting Iwanami as bastion of high culture to a low-brow mass culture typified by popular magazines like *Boys' Club* (*Shōnen Kurabu*, 1914-1962) and *King* (*Kingu*, 1924-1957), obscures the complex dialectics of popularization and edification at work as the mass-market paperback transformed the realities of how and what people read in prewar Japan. Iwanami was by no means merely a cynical corporation complicit in the creation of antisocial bourgeois subjectivity. Rather, the language surrounding the founding of the Iwanami Bunko trades explicitly in class rhetoric and revolutionary ideology, overtly appealing to the category of “the people” (*minshū*) as an active mass subject. The series’ founding manifesto, which ran as a large format newspaper advertisement aiming to catch the attention of the highest possible number of people, begins with rhetoric shot through with class consciousness:

Previously, art and truth were locked away under the eaves of palaces so as to keep the common people (*tami*) ignorant. Now, there is the pressing desire for the people (*minshū*) to take back knowledge and art from the ruling classes (*tokken kaikyū*). Iwanami Bunko was born from that pressing desire.¹⁷¹

Here, manifesto author Miki understands “the people” to be consummate with and constituted by a mass reading populace, which is then contrasted with a privileged class willfully withholding the liberating powers of art and knowledge. In Miki’s logic, the book itself becomes both the object of liberation and a tool by which that liberation can

¹⁷⁰ Iwanami Shigeo, *Iwanami Shigeo: Shigeo ibunshō* (Tokyo: Nihon Tosho Sentā, 1998), 136.

¹⁷¹ Miki, “Dokushoshi ni yosu.”

be achieved, as he continues: “We must bring the people together to liberate these immortal books from studies and bookshelves; we must stand together to take those books out onto every corner of every street.”¹⁷² The rhetoric hinges upon the differentiation between public and private space, emphasizing the “public” aspect of the act of publication. What is specifically at stake in the “freedom” of books is the transformation of the experience of conscious life, as Miki bids to “release these materials so necessary for the lives of all people (*seikatsu kôjô no shiryô*) rapidly and in the simplest form possible, in order that they might contribute to the principles of the critique (*hihan*) of life itself (*seikatsu*).”¹⁷³ Within this configuration, the book simultaneously becomes both a bourgeois need and a medium through which to build a critique of the very structure of those needs. In Miki’s reckoning, the printed text possesses a special potential to overcome its own role as an object within the material milieu of everyday life, transforming the subject’s consciousness of the historicity and mutability of social life itself. This ability in turn points back towards the role of authors, publishers, and other workers involved in the production of print media to take responsibility for public life; in the words of the journalist Yoshino Sakuzô (1878-1933): “A single handbill can change a man’s fate,” to say nothing of a book or magazine.¹⁷⁴

The constitution of the reading populace to which Miki appealed had undergone a substantial transformation in the preceding decades. Though 97% of the Japanese population was logged as literate at the end of the Meiji period, many people only regularly read newspapers, if at all.¹⁷⁵ The rise of popular magazines marked the

¹⁷² Miki, “Dokushoshi ni yosu.”

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Quoted from Nagamine, 25.

¹⁷⁵ Nagamine, 21.

emergence of a new phase of the mass culture of reading, although reading practices remained highly segregated along the axes of gender, urbanization, education, and most importantly, class.¹⁷⁶ Iwanami was fully aware of the appeal of their cheap new volumes to a broader reading population, exhorting in a later advertisement: “these *bunko* volumes go out not only to the readers of the world, but to those who plow the fields, to those who hold hammers, to those who ride boats, to those who work in stores, to those who commute on trains, to those who pull horse carts, to soldiers, and to female students.”¹⁷⁷

Iwanami contrasted themselves sharply with Kaizōsha and other publishers of *enpon* volumes, who were made out to be cynical businessmen emptily deploying righteous rhetoric. Advertisements for the Iwanami Bunko series attacked other publishers head on, labeling them as opportunists and claiming that “those who seduce men so starved for knowledge by using cheap prices and savvy business methods do not follow the true path of ‘publishing for the people’ (*minshūban*).”¹⁷⁸ Iwanami’s competitors selling one-yen editions by subscription were singled out for special scorn, as Iwanami readers sent in letters of support criticizing the formal characteristics and sales techniques of competing formats and revealing the class-striated nature of mass readership:

One volume for one yen! One thousand pages for one yen!
They’re nothing but goats covered in tigers’ skins!...Do they think
that those of us who aren’t the prodigal sons of the rich have the space to
line up all our money and our letters on our bookshelves? Our books are not

¹⁷⁶ In 1919, the Police Factory Bureau (*Keishichō kōjō ka*) carried out surveys of 100,000 workers in 3,000 factories. The results from glass factories are representative: 44% reported reading newspapers, with 20% reporting reading magazines regularly; in cotton factories, 32% reported reading newspapers, 6% reading magazines, and only 2% reading books. By 1926, less than a decade later, 71% of the workers surveyed in a factory in Aichi were reading some kind of material regularly. Nagamine, 23.

¹⁷⁷ Iwanami Shoten, Advertisement. *Osaka Mainichi Shinbun*. Oct. 18, 1927.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

for decoration, but they are what we need to live, and we want them just the same as the gruel-eating poor do. Our Iwanami Bunko! Our shining sun!!

A youthful subject of our Empire

The arrival of an age in which one-yen volumes come tumbling one after the other has dazzled readers and heedlessly made the proletarian classes seethe with envy...Even common peasants (*hyakushō*) who can barely afford to live from day to day have sprouted the desire for knowledge of the world. We poor men (*binbō na oretachi*) are not the only ones who desire a series like the German Reclam volumes for Japan. We will support your valuable Bunko with our meager wallets.

A peasant of Tōhoku

I recently received five volumes of your publishing house's Iwanami Bunko in the post, and I would like to take this opportunity to praise your books. They are truly nice, and they are amazingly and refreshingly affordable...When I buy them at 20 *sen* a volume...it feels like I can hear the voices of the proletariat.

A worker at Sasebo Naval Hospital¹⁷⁹

As Miki's manifesto found its audience as a newspaper advertisement, the act of purchasing Iwanami Bunko volumes came to represent an expression of proletarian solidarity and subjectivity for eager consumers across Japan. Despite Iwanami's innovations of form and skillfully planned arrangement of content, the key to the success of the Iwanami Bunko endeavor lay in the recognition of a truly mass market of readers otherwise un-served by existing forms of print media.

¹⁷⁹ Yamazaki, 20-21.

Relocating the Logos through the Power of Print : The Marxist Materialism of Miki Kiyoshi

Understanding the nature of the relationship between the consciousness of these masses and the commodity character of print media was not only a marketing technique, but also a philosophical endeavor for editor and thinker Miki Kiyoshi, who wrote the above cited ad copy. An examination of Miki's early thought both lends insight as to the philosophical framework underpinning the Bunko project and provides a prism through which to evaluate the functions of books and other forms of print media as mass-market commodities circulating within the social logos. In 1925, just prior to the beginning of the Iwanami Bunko project, Miki returned to Japan from a multi-year intellectual tour of France and Germany, where he had studied with Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), among others. By 1927, Miki had taken a professorial position at Hôsei University and was working as an assistant editor at Iwanami, where he also contributed to the journal *Shisô*. The magazine, founded in 1921 and edited by Watsuji Tetsurô, narrated its own foundation in terms of what the magazine might contribute to a discursive realm "already flooded with too many magazines":

Many magazines follow the popular problems of the times and the interests of the readers...but what is needed most and what is missing most in Japan today is a magazine that does not merely curry favor by following the trends of the times, but rather deals with more eternal problems. This magazine, *Thought*, does not posit any one intellectual position, but labors in the service of truth, beauty, and good to provide perspectives from different fields for the general cultivation (*ippan kyôyô*) of the nation's people (*kokujin*). We inwardly hope that those who feel unsatisfied with superfluous journalism will recognize our efforts.¹⁸⁰

¹⁸⁰ This unattributed headnote appears on an unnumbered page at the front of the first issue of *Shisô*, dated October 1, 1921.

Positing Iwanami's ventures against popular general interest magazines like *Kaizô* and *Chûô Kôron*, this unsigned header to the first issue eschews the momentary problems of the present for matters of eternity as journalistic practice is disparaged in favor of pensive contemplation in the pursuit of intellectual cultivation of the self.

Yet, like the Iwanami Bunko project and its similar rhetoric of temporal transcendence, *Shisô* also opens a space for a manner of critique able to engage with problems of the present. Although the library of philosophical discourse cited by *Shisô* seems to span time and space to empty out its own moment in connecting the archive of the past to a utopian future, the journal itself, as a new formulation of said archive, is imbued with the ability to shift the perception of that present. Both *Shisô* and the Iwanami Bunko project provided something like concrete manifestations of what Miki called the "logic of conceptual power" (*kôsôryoku no riron*), which could gather together intellectual traditions as diverse as "neo-Kantianism, phenomenology, existentialism, Marxism, pragmatism, and their variants and hybrids."¹⁸¹ This inclusive unity of knowledge is made available through shared access to the written text as print media within the economic market, lending Iwanami's projects the potential to function as practical manifestations of Miki's philosophical investigations. Though Miki's intellectual endeavors remain difficult to disentangle from the legacy of his mentor Nishida Kitarô and the Kyoto School, his work is notable for some of the most sustained engagement with the philosophical questions raised in the work of Marx.¹⁸² Unlike most critics active in prewar Japan, Miki was concerned primarily with Marxian thought as

¹⁸¹ Harry Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity: History, Culture, and Community in Interwar Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 359.

¹⁸² For a recent overview in English of the political entanglements of the Kyoto School, see Christopher Goto-Jones, *Political Philosophy in Japan: Nishida, the Kyoto School, and Co-Prosperity* (New York and London: Routledge, 2006).

materialist philosophy rather than economic doctrine, and resisted being drawn into the protracted debates over the efficacy of Marxism as an economic system vis-à-vis the Japanese case.

A major early essay, “Marxism and Materialism” (Marukusushugi to yuibutsuron), published in *Shisô* almost simultaneously with the initiation of the Iwanami Bunko series, is worthy of particular attention here. Miki begins the piece with the statement “words work in magical ways” (*kotoba wa majutsuteki na hataraki o suru*), before going on to describe the ways in which materialism is often misconstrued and misunderstood as nothing more than vulgar economic determinism. He notes the fetish power of the word “Marxism” itself, remarking how it causes some who hear it to “scrunch their shoulder and make the sign of the cross.”¹⁸³ The literary critic Kobayashi Hideo (1902-1983) would go on in his seminal 1929 essay “Myriad Designs” (Samazamanaru ishô) to argue that Japanese Marxists had been seduced by the dark magic of the already commodified term “Marxism” itself, allowing their thought to be emptied of the robust materialism fundamental to the Marxist intellectual tradition.¹⁸⁴

By contrast, Miki, who would go on to translate *The German Ideology* for Iwanami in 1930, does not write off the “sorcery” here associated with the image of Marxist philosophy, but rather takes it as an opportunity to delve deeper into the constitution of materialist thought and its necessity for the critique of modern life. To Miki, words, speech, and thought are not the mere abstractions of an irreducibly concrete reality, but rather dialectically dance with what he calls “basic experience” (*kisoteki*

¹⁸³ Miki Kiyoshi, “Marukusu-shugi to yuibutsuron,” *Shiso* 69 (Oct. 1927), 31.

¹⁸⁴ Kobayashi Hideo, “Samazama-naru ishô,” *Kobayashi Hideo zenshû* vol. 1 (Tokyo: Shinchôsha, 2002), 133-151. Kobayashi’s essay originally ran in the Apr. 1929 issue of *Kaizô*. I discuss Kobayashi’s essay in detail in Chapter 4.

keiken).¹⁸⁵ For Miki, “words” (*kotoba*) are necessarily linked to the problem of the commodity, which he identifies as that which sets the base and bounds of submerged human consciousness. In “Marxism and Materialism,” he writes

It is no coincidence that Marx began his greatest work [*Capital*] with an analysis of the commodity, which makes clear the totality of capitalist society and reveals its fundamental character. The reality is that modern society is a society of the mass produced commodity. At this phase in the development of humanity, the commodity points towards the analysis of all problems, and their final mysteries lie in the construction of the commodity. The problem of the commodity is not a particular problem of the science of economics...but a problem of the totality of all capitalist society. The construction of the commodity is the model form of the object of existence...and as a result, consciousness is submerged away from real life (*genjitsu no seikatsu*). The commodity is what supports the materialization of existence (*sonzai no busshitsuka*).¹⁸⁶

Here, the commodity forms the fundamental categories of perceived existence within which consciousness is both formed and sublated. Thus the “magic” properties of words lie in their fetish character as commodities, and the relationships built upon these words are in fact built upon the commodity: “Not only the consciousness of human relations and interactions, but all social relations are themselves buried, submerged. The essence of the construction of the commodity is what gives the material character to human relations...and supports its ghostly objectivity.”¹⁸⁷ Although the experience of social existence is mediated through the logos of texts, speech acts, and communications, the

¹⁸⁵ Harootunian, 367. Harootunian describes Miki’s view on the concept of “words” and their relationship to conscious existence as follows: “Existence...is always mediated first by words; things that have to be talked about must be submitted to ‘this structure of words’,” and “consciousness, insofar as it is social, can only exist in logos, in words, in representation. The consciousness of the individual who ‘lives socially’ is thus ‘buried within words which have a public existence.’ On their part, individuals are obliged to bury their own subjectivity in words by representing the consciousness of the self with words. Without making words ‘public,’ ‘there is no chance for social intercourse’ and for the realization of cooperation among people.”

¹⁸⁶ Miki, “Marukusu-shugi to yuibutsuron,” 45-46.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 46.

seeming materiality of that existence is in fact supported by another, deeper materiality, that of the mass-produced commodity that masks the relationships that “play out in forms concealed from us.”¹⁸⁸

As Miki himself recognizes, his argument is in many ways a summary of Marx’s celebrated discussion of the commodity form that opens Chapter One of Volume One of *Capital*; Miki’s innovation is to posit how the exchange of commodities not only dictates social relations but also forms human consciousness and constitutes the bounds of experience itself. Addressing Marx’s view that “there is nothing other than consciousness (*ishiki*, G. *das Bewusstsein*) and existence made conscious (*ishiki sareta sonzai*, G. *dasbewusste Sein*),” Miki unpacks the material construction of that consciousness itself, replacing “the absolute opposition of the spirit and the material” with a dialectical contradiction.¹⁸⁹ This consciousness then simultaneously emerges and is submerged via the phenomena of mutual human social interaction, “without which production cannot occur”:

Production occurs only when men exchange their actions with other men. At the social level, ‘I’ (*ware*) cannot exist merely as myself. ‘I’ becomes ‘thou’ (*nanji*), and ‘thou’ becomes ‘I,’ as subject and object are both exchanged and simultaneously occupied...It is through the unification of ‘I’ and ‘thou’ that the reality of humanity (*ningen no geijutsusei*) first arises.¹⁹⁰

Through this process of dialectical exchange, man makes the products and relations that structure the experience of social existence; consciousness of this process is continually submerged into the process itself. Miki responds to this problem with a plea for the recognition of Marxism as a model of practical materialism through which the matter of

¹⁸⁸ Miki, “Marukusu-shugi to yuibutsuron,” 36.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, 36. Miki does not cite Marx directly, but includes the German terms in his text.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, 37.

submerged social consciousness might be rectified.¹⁹¹ Significantly, this essay, which is perhaps the most politically charged in Miki's early philosophical career, is dated June 28th 1927, barely one week prior the penning of the Iwanami Bunko manifesto. For Miki, the experience of the present and the nature of human consciousness could not be truly understood without first grasping the nature of the commodity and its fundamental role in the creation of human relations and social intercourse. He paid special attention to the idea of the "word," since he took words as printed text to both structure consciousness through their commodity character and hold the key to understanding the material foundations of the social logos. Through his involvement with Iwanami and his work on the Iwanami Bunko manifesto, Miki found a practical way to express and practice this philosophy, endeavoring to bring the word to the people in the form that it could best be used to unravel the problem of the commodity – as commodity itself, as pocket paperback.

Marketing Marx, Capitalizing on *Capital*: *Shihonron* as Format War

One particular volume included in the Iwanami Bunko series played a special role not only in Miki's thought but also in the development of the literary commodity market itself – a translation of Marx's *Capital*. In 1919, when the critic Ikuta Chôkô (1882-1936)

¹⁹¹ Miki pays particular attention to the subjectivity of the proletariat, in which he identifies the ability to overcome the antinomies of the capitalist mode of production. The argument echoes strongly with the key concepts outlined in Georg Lukacs in *History and Class Consciousness* in 1923. Lukacs' work was translated into Japanese as *Kaikyû ishiki to wa nan zo ya: 'Rekishiki to kaishikyû ishiki' kaikyû ishiki-ron* by Mizutani Chôzaburô and published by Dôjinsha Shoten in January 1927. Though it is impossible to say with certainty that Miki read Lukacs' work, given his knowledge of German, familiarity with the philosophical currents of Marxist thought, and the fact that Mizutani's translation appeared nine months before Miki's essay, it seems likely that he had engaged with Lukacs' ideas.

published an early partial translation of the work, he declared Marx to be a “child of popularity” (*ryūkōji*).¹⁹² the popularity of that “child” would only continue to grow, and by the mid-1920s, a rapid rise of public interest in leftist discourse had made Marx’s name alone enough to sell books and magazines by the thousands. By 1927, when Iwanami started its Bunko series, the role of Marxian thought in social discourse had become a visibly contentious issue within the fields of literature politics, economics, and philosophy.¹⁹³ Thus it should come as no surprise that when Iwanami’s paperback entered into all-out competition with Kaizōsha’s hardcover *enpon* format, both turned to Marx’s *Capital* to publish as a flagship title. Both publishers saw the release of *Capital* as not only a significant social endeavor and political event, but also as an opportunity to win the escalating format war between budget hardcovers and inexpensive paperbacks. Competing translations of *Capital* (both as *Shihonron*) thus became the site on which the most acerbic battle between Kaizōsha’s one-yen volumes and Iwanami’s pocket paperbacks was fought.¹⁹⁴

Since the drafting stages of the Iwanami Bunko plan, the company had intended to include a translation of *Capital* in the series, as well as a translation of Marx’s “Wage-Labor and Capital” (*Chinrōdō to shihon*).¹⁹⁵ In May of 1927, one of Iwanami’s editors

¹⁹² Ikuta Chōkō, *Shihonron daiichi bunsatsu* (Tokyo: En’yōsha, 1919), 7. The general problem of the economics and popularity of proletarian literature and Marxist discourse is discussed at length in the final chapter of this dissertation.

¹⁹³ Takabatake Motoyuki (1886-1928), translator of the first complete Japanese edition of *Capital*, wrote in a “popular lecture” (*taishū kōza*) published in the magazine *Kaizō*: “surely there is no one who still confuses *Capital* for a sister publication to Malthus’ *Essay on the Principle of Population* or mistakes it for a kind of pulp fiction for stockbrokers.” Takabatake Motoyuki, “Taishū kōza: Marukusu no *Shihonron*,” *Kaizō* vol. 8 no. 11 (1927.11), 67.

¹⁹⁴ Both publishing houses had substantial background in the publication of Marxist material and socialist thought. Iwanami had previously released works such Georgi Plekhanov’s *Basic Problems of Marxism* (translated as *Marukusu-shugi no konpon mondai*), published in 1925.

¹⁹⁵ Yamazaki, 33. Iwanami Shoten would release three different volumes of Marx’s work

went to visit Takabatake Motoyuki (1886-1928), translator of the first complete Japanese edition of *Capital*, which had been released in a more expensive scholarly edition by Daitôkaku in 1922 and 1923.¹⁹⁶ Just as it looked as if Iwanami's business negotiations were about to succeed, Takabatake admitted that he had already signed a contract with Kaizôsha to release a new popular edition (*fukyûban*) of his existing translation.¹⁹⁷ Upon hearing this, the Iwanami staff scrambled to find a new strategy and turned once again to Miki Kiyoshi. Miki was sent on the next express train to his alma mater in Kyoto to ask Kawakami Hajime (1879-1946) to quickly produce an alternative translation of Marx that Iwanami could release.¹⁹⁸ Kawakami, originally a lecturer of classical economics at Tokyo Imperial University, had quit his job to teach the poor after developing an interest in the Christian socialism of Kinoshita Naoe (1869-1937) and Uchimura Kanzô (1861-1930). He rose to fame with the publication of the phenomenally popular work of reportage *Binbô monogatari* (*Tales of Poverty*) in 1916, and eventually went on to join the Faculty of Economics at Kyoto Imperial University, where he became closely affiliated with the burgeoning student activist movement.¹⁹⁹

Kawakami agreed to provide a translation for the Iwanami Bunko series, writing and publishing simultaneously at the rate of about a hundred pages each month. As he noted in his translator's preface to "Wage-Labor and Capital," he "new editions in this

before publishing a single volume of essays by the Meiji enlightenment thinker Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835-1901), proof positive not only of the strength of influence of Marx's thought at the time, but to the ability for that "magical" word Marx to move copies off the shelves. As of 2011, the Iwanami Bunko series has released over 60 volumes of Marx, more than almost any other writer, save for Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Sôseki, and Goethe.

¹⁹⁶ A hardcover edition of Takabatake's translation of Volume 1 had also been released by Shinchôsha in 1925.

¹⁹⁷ Yamazaki, 33.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹⁹⁹ *Binbô monogatari* (which featured a portrait of Adam Smith on the frontispiece) was originally published as a series of articles in the *Osaka Asahi Shinbun* in 1916 and published as a book in 1917, going through 30 reprintings in two years. Gail Lee Bernstein, *Japanese Marxist: A Portrait of Kawakami Hajime* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 18.

cheap form would reach as many readers as possible.”²⁰⁰ Iwanami began printing editions of Kawakami’s new manuscript, going so far as to write false names on the covers of the galley plates so as to keep the existence of their competing translation a secret.²⁰¹ On September 23rd, 1927, Iwanami fired the first public volley, printing an advertisement in the *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun* newspaper announcing the impending release of the Bunko edition of *Capital*. The advertisement, again officially accredited to Iwanami Shigeo, begins in a similar fashion to Miki’s “Marxism and Materialism” essay:

The name of Marx is the name of a monster rampaging through the world. Some curse him as a devil and others praise him as a god. But he is neither a bringer of miracles nor a sorcerer. *Capital*, wellspring of mysterious power (*fushigi naru chikara no gensen*) is a simple scholarly work which can be understood, examined, and critiqued by anyone using the faculties of their own knowledge and reason...its study moves and shakes the world in a way like no work since Copernicus. *Capital* creates a new age and writes history. The appearance of this book in Japanese holds a special and immediate significance for the present situation of our country...its publication is an event in world history.²⁰²

Iwanami’s ad copy brings together the dual dimensions of value functioning in the literary market, touting a cheap price for access to a book with the power to change not merely the reader’s life but the state of the nation and the world itself.²⁰³ Despite the fact that the book had yet to be released, the ad locates its ability to change the world not so much in the revolutionary qualities of Marx’s thought, but in the release of his work in such a cheap and accessible format in Japanese.

²⁰⁰ Kawakami Hajime, *Chinrôdô to Shihon* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1927), 6.

²⁰¹ Yamazaki, 34. Although all traces of Marxist thought would essentially disappear through government suppression via the *Chian Iji Hô* (Peace Preservation Law) just a few years later, it is worth noting that at this particular moment in time, Marx’s name was hidden not out of political necessity but as part of a complex marketing strategy in a crafty fight to use *Capital* to create the biggest possible public relations splash.

²⁰² Iwanami Shoten, Advertisement. *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun*. Sept. 23, 1927.

²⁰³ Ibid. The ad promotes “The introductory chapter to *Capital*, the book that Lenin exhorts you to read again and again!”

Of course, numerous different translations of *Capital* were already available in Japanese; what Iwanami was selling was not just the mere “content” of *Capital*, nor only *Capital* as available in a new form, but the possibility for the reader to dispel the myths surrounding *Capital* through the purchase of *Capital* as a market commodity. The advertisement goes so far as to recognize the printed text of *Capital* to be a commodity as such, bearer of the “mysterious power” of the fetish. Following Miki’s logic, the only way to fully engage in a critique of thought and existence is to recognize the underlying material realities of the commodity that both forms and sublates human consciousness. This is the precise process playing out in the advertisement for *Capital* as sold by Iwanami Shoten, as each member of the masses is encouraged to engage their own individual critical faculties with those of Marx, constituting not only an exercise in Miki’s philosophical theory but a brilliant marketing strategy in its own right.

After Iwanami announced the release of Kawakami’s translation, Kaizôsha wasted no time kicking their own advertising campaign into full swing. In October 1927, the company published a full-page advertisement soliciting subscribers to buy Takabatake’s forthcoming translation, available in eight volumes for a total cost of eight yen. The ad featured the tagline “A New Revised Translation – The Most Affordable Edition in the World – *Capital*, Liberated Unto the Masses (*minshû ni kaihô saru*) for the First Time!”²⁰⁴ Thanks to Iwanami’s new paperback edition, Kaizôsha’s version was by no means the cheapest translation available, but it was smartly marketed as such, as the ad lists the prices of previous Japanese (the first of which is priced at a staggering 65

²⁰⁴ Kaizôsha, Advertisement. *Kaizô*, Nov. 1927. Due to the sensitivity of the timing of the competition between the companies in releasing their translations, it is worth noting that “November” issue of the magazine was actually released in October, as is the custom for many periodicals.

yen), English, German, and French editions, though leaves off Iwanami's. The main text of the ad reads:

Marx's *Capital* is a masterpiece painstakingly produced through the scientific endeavors of man since the dawn of recorded history. Rare is the work that sixty years after its publication, still sets aflame the soul of an age, and turns the thought of our era on its axis. Sadly, the girth, profundity, and high cost of the book have kept it from being widely read, but Kaizôsha now brings you the world's most affordable edition of *Capital*, featuring a clear new translation based on rigorous scholarship of the original text, including explanatory footnotes. Now, for the first time, *Capital* is easy to buy and easy to read. We are elated to make such a contribution to the culture of our land, and we humbly await your support.²⁰⁵

Like Iwanami's ad copy, Kaizôsha's promotional campaign imbues *Capital* with a double historicity, firstly in the potential of the book's contents to define an era and change the world, and secondly in the publication of particular form of the book itself. In the reckoning of both Kaizôsha and Iwanami, their publications render *Capital* (and thus modern history itself) free, liberated, and given over to the masses precisely through the mechanisms of mass production that makes the new cheap prices possible. Key to selling *Capital* was convincing the public that it was accessible not only in the monetary sense, but also accessible in regards to its readability as a text. In Kawakami's words, the publishers had to "aspire to make the translation as popular (*tsûzoku*) as possible."²⁰⁶ The term *tsûzoku* carries the nuance of the vernacular and almost vulgarly simple, an implication that a work was perhaps too "common" to maintain elite appeal. Yet it was precisely as a *tsûzoku* work that both Iwanami Shoten and Kaizôsha tried to reframe *Capital*.

The two competing editions of *Capital* were printed on the same day, October 1st,

²⁰⁵ Kaizôsha, Advertisement. *Kaizô*, Nov. 1927.

²⁰⁶ Kawakami Hajime, trans., *Shihonron* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten 1927), 4.

1927.²⁰⁷ The two translations are notably similar, though Takabatake’s revised edition contains more detailed annotations than Kawakami’s rush version. In his preface, Kawakami describes *Capital* as the key to “discovering the contradictions (and the seeds of those contradictions) of contemporary society” through an analysis of the commodity form.²⁰⁸ Elsewhere, Takabatake similarly muses: “it is impossible to develop a view of society without knowing Marx, and there is no better way to know Marx than to read *Capital*.”²⁰⁹ With these mass-market editions, Marx’s masterwork is not only made widely available, but transformed in character from an economic work pertinent only to specialists into a book necessary for all modern subjects to understand their own lives. In promoting the massive *Complete Works of Marx and Engels* (*Marukusu Engerusu Zenshū*) series the following year, Kaizōsha reinforced this notion: “People of the present day are beset with the necessity (*hitsuyō*) to fully comprehend the truth of Marxism, which forms the basis of all social movements and is the root of modern thought...at present, the study of Marxism as the base for a world view is a necessity.”²¹⁰ But the remaking of Marx (or at least Marx-related print goods) as a necessity for the modern masses was by no means a simply altruistic action, as Kaizōsha and Iwanami both struggled to sell copies while locked in a heated format war.

Both Kawakami and Takabatake translate Marx’s phrase “means of subsistence” as “*seikatsu shiryō*” (materials for life), an almost identical phrase to Miki’s “*seikatsu kōjō no shiryō*” (also “materials for life”) which appears in the Iwanami Bunko

²⁰⁷ The publication date, which is distinct from the printing date, is marked as Oct. 3 in Kaizōsha’s edition and Oct. 6th in Iwanami’s edition.

²⁰⁸ Kawakami, 6.

²⁰⁹ Takabatake, 67.

²¹⁰ Kaizōsha, Advertisement. *Kaizō*, March 1928. At the time, Kaizōsha’s series was one of the most exhaustive editions of the works of Marx and Engels to exist anywhere in the world, and included extensive correspondence and other rare texts.

manifesto.²¹¹ In Marx's original text, the term indicates a fundamental process of abstraction in the production of the commodity: "it does not matter here how the thing satisfies man's need, whether directly as a means of subsistence, i.e. an object of consumption, or indirectly as a means of production."²¹²

In other words, "*seikatsu shiryō*" indicates a need, the specifics of which are irrelevant when structured through the process of exchange. In 1927, through the processes of mass production and mass marketing, the book medium in general and the work *Capital* in particular were re-imagined as necessities of modern life. But as Miki points out, that particular material, by virtue of its medium, also holds the potential to act as a site for the critique (*hihan*) of that very life process (*seikatsu*) itself. This referential self-consciousness of the commodity towards its own role in the crafting of social logos lends it the power to interrogate not only its own nature, but the structure of the larger cultural and economic systems through which it circulates. In the long history of Japanese print capital, these events mark a particularly noteworthy moment, in which the problem of the changing form of reading material came to be interpreted and analyzed via that material itself.

In the following months, Kaizōsha began circulating gossip that Kawakami's translation would never be completed, and soon that prediction proved true as Kawakami's translation fell further and further behind schedule.²¹³ For Iwanami Shoten, the desire to sell *Capital* had outstripped the ability to produce *Capital*, resulting in a huge loss of both economic and cultural capital. The publication of Marx's *Capital*

²¹¹ Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, trans. Ben Fowkes (New York: Penguin, 1990), 125.

²¹² Ibid, 125.

²¹³ Yamazaki, 35.

became a major media event within the Japanese publishing world. The release of competing translations of *Capital* coincided closely with the transformation of the modern book into a mass-produced commodity in the Japanese market, and it was precisely through its existence as a commodity that Marx's critique of the commodity became accessible and viable. At the same time, through the writings of Miki Kiyoshi and other thinkers, Marxism came to be understood in Japan as a philosophical system and site for social critique. Perhaps more than any other pieces of printed text at that time, the competing translations of *Capital* played a key role in the struggle for the future of the book in Japan.

Conclusion

By 1927, the many forms of typographic print media, including newspapers, mainstream magazines of all genres, literary journals, and hardcover and paperback books, had become near-ubiquitous aspects of everyday life in modern Japan. Over the three decades since the Sino-Japanese war, not only literary media, but the populace reading, and their modes and practice of reading changed dramatically. By the late 1920s, decades of standardized national education, nationally high literacy rates, and economies of scale in the production, distribution, and sale of print helped to create a highly diversified mass culture of reading. In turn, the mass circulation and regular reading of magazines and books played a key role in the imagination and constitution of the masses as such, as apparent in the populist rhetoric of advertisements for those products. If the masses were structured through their shared purchases of print media, then it followed that changes to the form and content of those forms of media could change the very

structure of the masses, a notion seized upon by authors and intellectuals aiming to “reconstruct” modern social life in Japan.

Further, this wide variety of affordable books and magazines served as a vector for the popularization of a range of currents of thought from around the world. Appearing at a moment when the Japanese people increasingly recognized themselves as part of a global political and cultural system, mass-produced print in Japan helped produce a sense of simultaneity of ideas between Asia and the West. Especially significant were *Kaizô*'s role in importing Anglo-American pragmatic thought and Iwanami Shoten's role in the systematic reception of European Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment philosophy. Unlike in previous decades, these complex systems of thought were not only imported for and by intellectuals, but became widely popular, as new forms of books like Iwanami's pocket paperbacks made philosophy accessible to the masses, at least as an object of purchase and consumption. At the same time, anthologies like *Kaizôsha*'s played a key role in the canonization of Japanese modern and classical literature in the popular mind, as both a shared national heritage and an indivisible part of a system of world literature. Crucially, these processes were mediated through the economic realities of the market for print products as commodities for sale to the masses. The popularization of social thought took place precisely through the buying, selling, and advertising of these new types of typographic media as part of a robust consumer culture.²¹⁴

As is evident in the advertising campaigns for Iwanami's and *Kaizôsha*'s competing translations of Marx's *Capital*, books and magazines were recoded as bourgeois needs in the 1920s. Herein lay one of the central contradictions of books and

²¹⁴ This dynamic proves to be a complex crux for the proletarian movement; I address proletarian writings on popularization and publication in depth in Chapter 4.

magazines as new media of communication, as highlighted by Miki Kiyoshi: mass-produced typographic text was at once a force for the liberation of the masses and a commodity inscribed into the very capitalist economy that reformers sought to critique and change. The transcendental values endorsed by Iwanami's projects were inseparable from the problem of sales and economic market value, as the circulation and advertising of this new medium underpinned the imagination of the idea of the transcendental itself. Freedom as an ontological goal was inseparable from the freedom of consumer choice when making purchasing decisions.

Yet, rather than shirk this reality, Miki, as a copywriter and philosopher, chose to embrace this contradiction, exploring how the book, as both medium and commodity, might serve as a key site to grasp the totality, both social and spiritual, of modern life predicated on capitalist mass-production. Miki addresses the relationship between book and commodity by transforming Marx's *Capital*, the book on the commodity form, into a commodity at the precise moment that the book became a fully exchangeable commodity in modern Japan. For Miki, it was through self-reflexive recognition of both the reader of both himself and his book that presented the possibility for the critique of this system. In the following chapter, I move from the realm of publishing to the writing of literature, to explore how a new generation of authors working at the same moment understood and attempted to change acts of reading and writing in the age of consumer society through experiments on literary writing.

Chapter Two

The Sensation of the New and the Problems of Perception: Bungei Jidai and the Rewriting of the Literary Realm

The forming of the five senses is a labour of the entire history of the world down to the present.

-Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*²¹⁵

In the preceding chapter, I discuss the beginnings of the book as mass market commodity in modern Japan, detailing the processes of production, marketing, and circulation that made the book into an object of consumption for the rapidly expanding reading populace of early 20th-century Japan. The formation of this new print economy was not an ideologically neutral process, as an understanding of literary and philosophical texts as material objects moving in the commodity market imbued the acts of reading and writing alike. As Miki Kiyoshi detailed in his theory of words on a page as material objects able to interrogate the transformations of human sensibility, typographic text came to form a constitutive force in the structuring of everyday life. The 1920s also mark the point in time in which the first generation to undergo education under the national textbook (*kokutei kyōkasho*) system and come of age as readers within the world of mass-market literary media began writing and publishing fiction and criticism. These writers, who were born into a print regime of a distinctly different scale from that of only a decade before, came to confront the possibilities and limitations nascent in this reality

²¹⁵ Karl Marx, “Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844,” in Robert C. Tucker ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader: Second Edition* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978), 89.

of economized publishing as they attempted to carve out new positions from which to engage in acts of literary production.

In this chapter, I examine a particular group of such authors, those associated with the founding of the journal *Bungei Jidai* (1924-1927). Writers such as Kawabata Yasunari (1899-1972), Kataoka Teppei (1894-1944), and Yokomitsu Riichi (1898-1947) began their writing careers in earnest in the early 1920s, and with the publication of *Bungei Jidai* attempted to find new ways to function within and expand the boundaries of the literary establishment. These authors struggled to position themselves within a pre-existing literary market, seeking to transform the discursive space of literary writing and advocating new modes of experimental textual expression tied to the sensory experiences of modern life. Further, *Bungei Jidai* contributors like Yokomitsu and Kawabata would go on to problematize the ways in which literary texts could be read by both literati and general readers. In this chapter, I explore the specifics of the economic and discursive dimensions through which these experiments unfolded by addressing the role of the publishing company Kinseidô in the founding of *Bungei Jidai* and interrogating the dialectic of avant-garde and advertisement in the formation of a framework for these new ideas of literary praxis.

I then move on to the ways in which the *Bungei Jidai* authors represented themselves vis-à-vis their own image as crafted through critical discourse, exploring how the label of *shinkankaku-ha* (Neo-Sensationist or Neo-Perceptionist school) served as a site through which the group could negotiate problems of sensation, perception, and the experience of the new. These concepts came to take on a central significance in the attempts by *Bungei Jidai* writers to remake the literary establishment from within. The

many valences of the term *kankaku* (sensation, perception, or sensibility) were dispatched in attempts to re-evaluate the relationship between the shared experiences of the “new lifestyle” (*atarashii seikatsu*) and the experiences of reading and writing the literary work. The most explicit theorization of this approach is Yokomitsu’s 1925 essay “Kankaku katsudô” (Sensory Activity), in which he identifies the concept of human sensation as necessarily mediated and argues for the role of literary representation in that process of mediation.

In the final segment of the chapter, I turn to analyses of several early fictional works by Yokomitsu to assess his narrative strategies for problematizing the relationship between the reader’s body and the printed text. Although Yokomitsu’s fiction of this period is characterized by a tension between a straightforward literary style and experimental formal techniques, I argue that these works betray an awareness of the ways in which images and experiences of the human body are mediated by different forms of text embedded within the transportation and communication networks of 20th-century Japan. In sum, this chapter seeks to investigate how authors working within the established literary marketplace of the 1920s envisioned their own positions within that discursive space, and in doing so developed a sense of printed text as central to the mediation of the senses, perceptions, and experiences of modern life.

A New Generation Gets Going: *Bungei Jidai*, *Kinseidô*, and Other Literary Upstarts

By the early 1920s, the large-scale circulation of print media had become a constant and consistent condition that served to structure the production and consumption of the literary text in Japan. Within a burgeoning mass-market commodity economy, the

production of literature became increasingly inseparable from the production of specular and oral media, performance, and advertising. Newspapers, the proliferation of all manner of magazines, and the nascent book market brought literature to a wider audience, redefining the ways in which the public could interact with literary texts. Within this landscape of publishing, a group of young writers, including Kawabata Yasunari, Yokomitsu Riichi, and Kataoka Teppeï aimed to establish themselves via the journal *Bungei Jidai*. These authors were initially affiliated with the recently founded magazine *Bungei Shunjû* (*Literary Chronicle*, 1923-), which was edited by author, editor, and literary businessman extraordinaire Kikuchi Kan (1888-1948). Still little more than a small personal magazine with big ambitions, *Bungei Shunjû* quickly became a force to be reckoned with in the literary world, as Kikuchi took promising young writers under his wing and taught them the business of producing literature. Before long however, Yokomitsu, Kawabata, and company moved to organize a journal of their own, aiming to take what they had learned from Kikuchi to the next level. Their departure sent a small shock through literati circles, and depending on the version of the story, the founding of *Bungei Jidai* incurred varying degrees of Kikuchi's wrath or favor.²¹⁶

The anxieties of influence and independence in regards to Kikuchi and the rest of the literary establishment were eminently present among the coterie that crafted *Bungei Jidai*. Yokomitsu and others wrote brief articles and editorials attempting to clear the air between the two magazines and shore up any potential misunderstandings amongst the new journal's readership. Kawabata visited Kikuchi to assuage any potential problems

²¹⁶ For a nuanced and detailed perspective on Kikuchi's business acumen and role in the production of literature, see Toeda Hirokazu, "Kôkoku kara mita Taishôki no *Bungei Shunjû* no tenkai," *Kokubungaku kenkyû* 148 (March 2006), 98-109, and Toeda Hirokazu, "Shuppatsuki *Bungei Shunjû* no media senryaku," *Nihon kindai bungaku* 66 (May 15, 2002), 185-201.

arising from the departure of the writers, while Yokomitsu, who had been on the dole from Kikuchi to make ends meet as a struggling young writer, was thrust into a new role of relative economic independence.²¹⁷ In a short article entitled “*Bungei Jidai to gokai*” (Some Misunderstandings about *Bungei Jidai*) published in the first issue of the journal, Yokomitsu writes, “I figured that all manner of nasty speculative rumors might come on the heels of the publication of this magazine... I have received no small amount of favor from *Bungei Shunjû*, and I have no reason to lash out at them, so why should I do so, and why should any of us?”²¹⁸ Beyond *Bungei Shunjû*, equally important in the founding of *Bungei Jidai* was the fledgling publisher Kinseidô, which played a quintessential role in the establishment of the journal’s milieu.

Kinseidô was a medium-sized publishing company founded in 1919 by the “literary youth” (*bungaku seinen*) Fukuoka Masuo (1894-1969). After moving to Tokyo from Osaka, Fukuoka cut his teeth in the publishing business at the Bun’yôdô company for three years before starting his own imprint.²¹⁹ According to the memoirs of Fukuoka’s assistant Kadono Torazô, Fukuoka’s goal was to succeed as a mainstream publisher of literary works; he aspired to make the company into a major house like Shinchôsha, but often found himself losing out to more powerful publishers, since the still-nascent Kinseidô was unable to offer the same level of salaries, page rates, distribution, and prestige as larger organizations.²²⁰ Fukuoka’s company found itself more often than not peddling second-rate stories, works of *zuihitsu* (literary miscellany), and cast-off essays

²¹⁷ Kadono Torazô, *Kinseidô no koro* (Tokyo: Waku Shuppan, 1972), 133.

²¹⁸ Yokomitsu Riichi, “*Bungei Jidai to gokai*,” *Bungei Jidai* vol. 1, no. 1 (Oct. 1924), 15-16. Yokomitsu also dedicated his first short story collection, *Onmi* to Kikuchi on the frontpiece.

²¹⁹ Kadono, 50.

²²⁰ Kadono, 73. Interestingly, after the war, Kinseidô gave up literary publishing, and turned to pressing language study books; it continues to exist today, primarily as a publisher of books on learning English and Chinese.

and plays by major authors, publishing and distributing editions of 3,000 of minor works by the likes of literary stars such as Tanizaki Jun'ichirô (1886-1965), Chikamatsu Shûkô (1876-1944), Akutagawa Ryûnosuke (1892-1927), and Tayama Katai (1872-1930).²²¹ It was impossible for a small company like Kinseidô to keep up with its already wealthy competitors, so Fukuoka's firm decided to try a new strategy – soliciting the work of young authors for a new magazine to draw attention to the company as a mover and shaker in the literary world.²²² In early 1924, the editor and leftist agitator Iida Toyoji (1898-?) joined the Kinseidô staff, as did the young author Nakagawa Yoichi (1897-1994).²²³ The Kinseidô editors then approached Yokomitsu, Kawabata, and other young writers in regards to founding a new coterie magazine (*dôjin zasshi*) under the company's auspices. Kinseidô published the first issue of *Bungei Jidai* in October 1924.²²⁴

For this new generation of writers associated with *Bungei Jidai*, their goal was not so much a concerted attempt to knock down the old guard, but rather a move to posit the “already established writers” (*kisei sakka*) as a kind of constitutive other through which to delimit their own position. At the same time, the founding of *Bungei Jidai* served as part of a savvy marketing strategy by Kinseidô as it aimed to draw attention to itself in an increasingly competitive literary market. In the first issue of *Bungei Jidai*, Kawabata notes how his new generation of “emerging authors” (*shinshin sakka*) was frequently characterized by critics as “mounting a challenge against the established authors, starting

²²¹ Kadono, 73. For a nearly complete list of works published by Kinseidô during the prewar period, see Munakata Kazushige and Toeda Hirokazu, eds., *Kinseidô o chûshin to suru Taishô shôwaki no shuppan shoshi to bungaku ni kansuru sôgô kenkyû* (Toyko: MEXT, 2007).

²²² Kadono, 80.

²²³ Ibid, 91.

²²⁴ Ibid, 127.

a movement to destroy the literary realm (*bundan*) as it stands.”²²⁵ In essays by *Bungei Jidai* writers, “established authors” are often left unnamed, with the concept serving as a convenient catchall and straw man against which the new wave could define themselves.²²⁶ Yet, though Kawabata compares the older generation of authors to “dancers that have no legs,” he admits that his goal is “not to throw stones at them.”²²⁷ Rather, the goal of *Bungei Jidai* was to set the literary world abuzz with word of a rising new generation, and the journal’s coterie was highly aware of the expectations that critics held for them. “Everywhere you go, people are talking about *Bungei Jidai*,” reads the editors’ afterword to the inaugural issue, written before the magazine hit the stands.²²⁸ By the second issue, the editors go so far as to claim “it would be no exaggeration to call the release of *Bungei Jidai* the one and only major event in the literary world within the past year.”²²⁹ This tension between the literary establishment and the *Bungei Jidai* authors would constitute the framework within which they posited new and experimental forms of literary writing.

The End of “Literary Feudalism” and the Anxiety Over “Established Authors”

²²⁵ Kawabata Yasunari, “Sōkan no ji,” *Bungei Jidai* vol. 1, no. 1 (Oct. 1924), 6.

²²⁶ Additional relevant essays on the “Shinkankaku-ha and Established Authors Debate” (*Shinkankaku-ha kisei bundan ronsō*) are compiled in Hirano Ken et. al., eds., *Gendai Nihon bungaku ronsō-shi* (Tokyo: Miraisha, 2006), 293-382.

²²⁷ Kawabata, “Sōkan no ji,” 8. Interestingly, when Kawabata and company did name the targets of their attacks, the authors identified were not older writers of stolid style so much as the cohort of economically successful authors half a generation older than the *Bungei Jidai* group. In an April 1925, special issue of *Bungei Jidai* dedicated to the critique of the literary establishment (*kisei sakkaron tokushū*), the authors so named were the likes of Akutagawa, Kikuchi, and Hirotsu Kazuo (1891-1968) – the same writers that made up the ranks of Kinseidō’s own roster of publications.

²²⁸ “Henshū kōki,” *Bungei Jidai* vol. 1, no.1 (Oct. 1924), 108.

²²⁹ Kadono, 129.

In the founding issue of *Bungei Jidai*, Yokomitsu Riichi writes that the magazine is “by no means a literary and military bivouac against the established authors... Kinseidô pays for our manuscripts, and thus I am in no position to make such statements.”²³⁰ Kawabata would further explicate the emergence of his own clique and its relationship with the established literary milieu with historical and spatial metaphors. He sketches the literary world as a “kingdom of letters” (*bungei no ôkoku*), evoking a still closed literary realm beginning to crumble, unable to sustain its limited size, close relationships, and conservative structure in the face of the creative destruction unleashed through the expansion of mass-market print capital.²³¹ With the changing of the guard comes a new mode of life, and in an essay entitled “Atarashiki seikatsu to atarashiki bungei” (New Life and New Literature), Kawabata identifies the goal of his generation of writers as the linking of modern literature with this experience of life.²³² Kawabata writes that there cannot but be “mutual interaction between the lives of authors and artists and their art (*geijutsu*);” the working lives of the new generation of professional writers (*shokugyô sakka*) of the mid-1920s like Kawabata were in fact quite distinct from authors of earlier generations who made their livings via teaching posts, newspaper employment, or generous patrons.²³³ This notion of a new life (*seikatsu*) links authors to their readers as well, as both shared the experience of everyday life within urban Japanese consumer society.

²³⁰ Yokomitsu Riichi, “*Bungei Jidai* to gokai,” *Bungei Jidai* vol. 1, no. 1 (Oct. 1924), 16.

²³¹ The metaphor would be echoed by Suwa Saburô, a *Bungei Jidai* member who later became an author of proletarian fiction. Suwa Saburô, “*Shinkankaku-ha* to kisei sakka datô,” in Odagiri Susumu, ed., reissue of *Bungei Jidai*, (Tokyo: Nihon Kindai Bungakukan, 1967), 5 (supplement).

²³² Kawabata, “Sôkan no ji,” 7. Kawabata, “Atarashiki seikatsu to atarashiki bungei,” *Bungei Jidai* vol. 1, no. 1 (Oct. 1924), 6-10.

²³³ Kawabata, “Sôkan no ji,” 9. The emergence of the “professional writer” (*shokugyô sakka*) is discussed in Chapter 1. Yokomitsu’s case speaks well to this change, as he sets out as a writer with Kikuchi as his patron but establishes himself in full through the selling of manuscripts.

Kawabata claims that the “religious age” (*shūkyō jidai*) of the world has come to an end, having been replaced by the “literary age” (*bungei jidai*), suggesting a Benjaminian loss of aura for the role of art in human life and the birth of a “new spirit” (*atarashii seishin*), “new values” (*atarashii kachi*), and “new sensibility” (*atarashii kanjō*).²³⁴ For Kawabata, literature’s recognition of the experiences of this new life constitutes the central strategy for “breaking down the gates” (*kyokumen dakai*) of the kingdom of literature in order for “young soldiers to occupy it and expand their territory.”²³⁵ In Kawabata’s configuration, literature is thus dialectically linked to the new lifestyle of his present age, becoming a constitutive part of culture as such, which now occupies a central position in the experience of everyday life. To Kawabata, this shift opens up a future in which “our descendents will stand in the eternal palace of literature...and make pilgrimage to the temple of literature,” which has become the broader “domain of the people” (*minshū no ue*).²³⁶

Kawabata’s bold statements and vivid metaphors describe a kind of reterritorialization of the literary realm, as the limits of literature are expanded from within through an understanding of the experience of everyday life shared by readers and writers. For Kawabata and other *Bungei Jidai* authors, the production of the literary work through the acts of writing and reading becomes impossible to conceptualize as exterior to modern life itself. This self-consciousness encompasses not only the ways in which the changing state of material life forms a basis for the creation of text, but conversely

²³⁴ Ibid, 9. Kawabata’s criticism of writers of a “religious age” might be identified with the work of figures such as Kurata Hyakuzō (1891-1943), whose works such as *Shukke to sono deshi* (*The Monk and his Apprentice*, 1916-1917) took up spiritual themes.

²³⁵ Ibid, 7.

²³⁶ Ibid, 10.

includes the ways in which the literary work itself creates new notions of values, spirit, and sensibility.

The critic Chiba Kameo (1878-1935), who would later coin the name *shinkankaku-ha* that would be ascribed to Kawabata, Yokomitsu, and their compatriots, saw *Bungei Jidai*'s approach as a schismatic move, "a complete rejection of the established authors," as the magazine set out on a "pilgrimage into an unknown world."²³⁷ In Chiba's case, the reconceptualization of the literary establishment occurs via a metaphorical recharting of potential horizons. But a new world is not mapped in a day, and neither is a new world discovered, and the writers of previous eras and the modes of expression with which they worked were not overturned by the advent of *Bungei Jidai*. Authors of "earlier" generations continued to write and to sell, and the continued literary production of those authors helped to support the emergence of new writers and new writing in more ways than one. One of the most important figures for the growth of Kinseidō was Tayama Katai, whose work at Hakubunkan had helped build the powerful house of Hakubunkan a generation earlier. When Kinseidō was struggling to make ends meet, Katai lent his assistance to founder Fukuoka Masuo to help the company. Katai, who had worked as an editor at the magazine *Bunshō Sekai* (*Literary World*, 1906-1920), gave Fukuoka tips on publishing strategies and layout, and even more importantly, bequeathed to Kinseidō permission to publish some of his works, which he continued to write into the 1920s.²³⁸ Works penned by Katai made up some of Kinseidō's maiden publications, and announcements for new editions of his work were a far from insignificant share of the advertising space of any given issue of *Bungei Jidai*.

²³⁷ Chiba Kameo, "Na wa shosen hitotsu no gainen," *Bungei Jidai* vol. 2, no. 7 (July 1925), 11.

²³⁸ Kadono, 70-71. For a list of Katai's work published by Kinseidō, see Munakata and Toeda, eds.

Even while *Bungei Jidai* authors argued for a discursive space safe from “established authors,” it was the revenue generated by figures like Tayama Katai that kept the magazine fiscally afloat. In this light, Kinseidô and *Bungei Jidai* appear as multivalent entities encompassing both those young writers seeking to carve out territory in the literary realm as well as older authors producing the works that are actually being bought and read by a larger audience. Though *Bungei Jidai* is now remembered as the representative magazine of Kawabata and Yokomitsu’s own “literary age,” both smaller journals and larger magazines such as *Chûô Kôron* (*The Central Review*, 1899-) contained equally as many names associated with earlier eras of literary history, such as Kôda Rohan (1867-1947), Shimazaki Tôson (1872-1943), and Mushanokôji Saneatsu (1885-1976). Authors of these different generations and ascribing to different modes of literary expression often found themselves bound together by the books and no further apart than opposing pages of advertising copy in literary magazines. In a very real sense, the literary experiments carried out in magazines like *Bungei Jidai* were taking place within and upon a framework sustained by the continued literary production and circulation of their purported progenitors.

Besides primarily printing works by established authors, Kinseidô also published a large number of books of leftist interest. Publications of Socialist and Marxist thought proved to be big sellers throughout the 1920s, as did all manner of writings from and on Soviet Russia. In addition to the interest generated by the Russian Revolution, these works maintained popularity as consumable critiques of social problems (*shakai mondai*) of the kind discursively detailed in magazines like *Kaizô* (*Reconstruction*, 1919-1955). The literary legitimacy gleaned from *Bungei Jidai* was helping to sell Kinseidô products,

and Kinseidô was selling works on Lenin and Trotsky, photographic histories of the Russian Revolution, and collections of proletarian novels in addition to the latest by Yokomitsu and Kawabata.²³⁹

One of Kinseidô's other strategies for breaking even was the selling of sheet music. Although the company portrayed themselves primarily as a publisher of literary fiction, company assistant Kadono Torazô describes trips to Ginza to sell hundreds of sheafs of harmonica songbooks and sheet music. In the early years of Kinseidô, songbooks still functioned as a major moneymaker for the publisher, as did the sales of camera magazines, which brought in major advertising dollars.²⁴⁰ The photographic medium and the textual representation of sound in print (as well as the possibility of its reproduction from the sheet music) supported the structure of literary space seemingly devoted to the pursuit of the written word as such. As with Hakubunkan and Kôdansha, Kinseidô's expansion of print capital was supported by the circulation of specular and otherwise non-typographic media, as the written text came to be imbued with the possibility of the reproduction of the other means of expression.

The Avant-garde as Advertisement?

According to company assistant Kadono Torazô's memoirs, it was *Bungei Jidai* that "acted as a pipe to turn Kinseidô into a full-fledged literary publisher" by drawing

²³⁹ To give a single example, an advertisement for *Rônô roshiya shôsetsu-shû* (*A Collection of stories from the Russia of Workers and Farmers*, trans. Yonegawa Masao) ran prominently in *Bungei Jidai* for numerous months through 1925. For a full list of proletarian-oriented publications released by Kinseidô, see Munakata and Toeda, eds. On the popularity of leftist literature and criticism in this period, see Chapters 1 and 4.

²⁴⁰ Kadono, 70.

the attention of the publishing world.²⁴¹ Yet, despite its ability to grab the attention and readership of literati, the small circulation magazine was anything but a success if assessed solely through the most basic level of economic analysis. The seminal critic, author, and literary historian Itô Sei (1905-1969) writes that *Bungei Jidai*'s payment scheme was to award authors three yen a page for creative works (*sôsakû*), one yen a page for miscellaneous writings (*zuihitsu*), and sell 5,000 copies a month for 30 *sen* a piece, aiming to break even at no profit and no loss to the bottom line.²⁴² The first issue may have sold out and been the toast of the literary town, but that was by no means the rule – Kadono claims that *Bungei Jidai* ran in the red (*akaji*) for most of its existence, costing the company more to print and create than it could possibly bring in; according to Itô's later guesses, the company was losing as much as 1000 yen per month by publishing the magazine.²⁴³

So, why continue to sell *Bungei Jidai*? Kinseidô was able to turn enough of a profit through the sales of works by established authors, harmonica sheet music, and histories of the Russian revolution that they could afford to pay for *Bungei Jidai* to act as a loss leader for the company. The sensation caused by the release of *Bungei Jidai* transformed the name of Kinseidô into a sign for the literary and acted as a means to advertise the new books they were publishing, including hardcover editions (*tankôbon*) by rising stars such as Yokomitsu, Kawabata, Inagaki Taruho (1900-1977), Kon Tôkô (1898-1977), and other writers affiliated with the magazine. In other words, *Bungei Jidai*

²⁴¹ Kadono, 134.

²⁴² Quoted from Odagiri, ed., *Bungei Jidai* reissue *kaisetsu*, 9.

²⁴³ Kawabata Yasunari, "*Bungei Jidai* Sôkan tôji," *Bungei Jidai* reissue, 1 (supplement). Kadono, 134. Itô, 9. In fact, it was precisely by describing how the new journal would be a small circulation coterie magazine rather than a moneymaking venture that Kawabata was able to convince Kikuchi Kan that the magazine posed no threat to his *Bungei Shunjû*. Kawabata, "*Bungei Jidai* Sôkan tôji," 3.

as a whole functioned as a kind of advertisement that was able to exceed its own boundaries, generating interest in the authors writing for it and the company publishing it, and serving as a means to shift the boundaries of the territory of the “literary kingdom” itself.

These dual functions of *Bungei Jidai* suggest that the dialectical dance between experimental art and advertising is internal to the avant-garde, as techniques developed by each are almost immediately incorporated into the other. Under a fully financialized literary market, the success of a project was dependent in part on its ability to properly grasp and manipulate the economic logic of that system from within.²⁴⁴ This ability to lay bare the internal machinations of the production of the work of art recalls the project of the European historical avant-garde, but were the authors of *Bungei Jidai* really the experimental vanguard of their own literary age? Various groups and journals such as *MAVO* (1924-1925), *Aka to Kuro* (Red and Black, 1923-1924), and *Shi to Shiron* (Poetry and Poetics, 1928-1931) would engage in far more explicitly avant-garde literary, poetic, and artistic praxis, recreating the text as visual phenomenon and holding events and happenings that problematized the function and performance of art itself.²⁴⁵

Despite Yokomitsu’s claim that “portions of futurism, cubism, expressionism, Dada, symbolism, constructivism, and realism (*nyojitsu-ha*) all can be considered as part” of the *Bungei Jidai* project, poets like Takahashi Shinkichi (1901-1987) and Hirato Renkichi (1893-1922) produced literary texts closer in form to European Dada,

²⁴⁴ This relationship between new types of literature and new strategies of advertising was by no means entirely new, as similar techniques were used by Edo publishing houses centuries before.

²⁴⁵ For in-depth discussions of these journals and poets in English, see William O. Gardner, *Advertising Tower: Japanese Modernism and Modernity in the 1920* (Cambridge: Harvard Asia Center, 2006) and Jennifer Weisenfeld, *MAVO: Japanese Artists and the Avant-garde* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2002).

Surrealism, and Futurism than any *Bungei Jidai* authors did.²⁴⁶ There was, however a great degree of cross-pollination between many of these circles. Most notable was Murayama Tomoyoshi (1901-1977), a key member of both the MAVO and proletarian art movements who was also a regular contributor to *Bungei Jidai* and produced both orthographically challenging texts such as “Aru tatakai” (A Certain Battle, 1925) and numerous constructivist-influenced covers for the magazine.²⁴⁷ Nonetheless, it would be challenging to cantilever the work of Yokomitsu Riichi and most other *Bungei Jidai* authors into a definition based on Peter Bürger’s formulation of the avant-garde as “the self-criticism of art in bourgeois society” that serves to make visible the production of the work of art itself.²⁴⁸

The fiction of Yokomitsu Riichi and other *Bungei Jidai* writers, while often formally challenging and grammatically experimental in the use of expressionistic techniques such as unconventional personification, onomatopoeia, character montage, and fragmentary sentences, did not generally attempt to problematize the boundaries of what constituted literature itself.²⁴⁹ As detailed above, authors like Kawabata were concerned with occupying and transforming the extant structure of literary production in Japan, rather than building an external position from which to critique it. *Bungei Jidai* authors may have been at times considered writers of “bad sentences” by their critics, but

²⁴⁶ Yokomitsu Riichi, “Kankaku katsudô,” *Bungei Jidai* vol. 2, no. 2 (Feb. 1925), 7. For readings of some such poetic experiments, see Miryam Sas, *Fault Lines: Cultural Memory and Japanese Surrealism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002).

²⁴⁷ “Aru tatakai” was published in *Bungei Jidai* vol. 2, no. 9 (Sep. 1925), 31-36. It features varying font sizes, flipped characters, nonsense words, and other typographic experiments not generally typical of *Bungei Jidai*, though common in magazines like *MAVO*. Murayama-designed covers of *Bungei Jidai* are identifiable through the English signature TOM (standing for “Tomoyoshi”).

²⁴⁸ See Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 20-34.

²⁴⁹ Some specific examples of such textual practice are discussed later in this chapter.

there was no question that they were explicitly engaging in the creation of literary works within the already established norms of print capitalism. They published in the same journals as their would-be opponents, and more often than not, their techniques of textual expression resembled that which came before as well.²⁵⁰

Yet, to consider *Bungei Jidai* vis-à-vis Bürger's definition is not entirely inappropriate, as he points towards the avant-garde as a "negation of the autonomy of art."²⁵¹ In this respect, *Bungei Jidai* writers (as well as many of their contemporaries) could be considered avant-garde, as they were highly self-conscious of the ways in which the circulation and economic functions of literature (and other arts) constituted a set of *a priori* conditions within which their texts were produced as material objects.

As in Kawabata's assessment of his moment of writing, the ostensible autonomy of art if quickly liquidated through the increasing impossibility of decoupling literary production from the material stratum of everyday life and economics. According to Bürger, the avant-garde as self-conscious producers suggest a semantic withdrawal that destabilizes the relationship between the work and its consumer:

The refusal to provide meaning is experienced as shock by the recipient. And this is the intention of the avant-garde artist, who hopes that such withdrawal of meaning will direct the reader's attention to the fact that the conduct of one's life is questionable and that it is necessary to change it. Shock is aimed for as a stimulus to change one's conduct of life; it is the means to break through aesthetic immanence and to usher in (initiate) a change in the recipient's life praxis.²⁵²

In this formulation, the recipient's perception of the work of art is disrupted, unsettling the horizon of expectation, as the consumer, implicated in the process of production,

²⁵⁰ For a discussion of the criticism leveled at Yokomitsu and other authors for their "bad grammar" by other literati, see the final section of this chapter.

²⁵¹ Bürger, 47.

²⁵² Bürger, 80.

responds to a gap in the text by perceiving a gap in himself. The shared location of both within the structures of consumer society allows the consumer and the work to enter into a relationship of exchange – to the avant-gardist, the recipient is no more autonomous than the work with which he engages. For Bürger, as the new experience engendered by the avant-garde art object serves to deliver a sensation of shock that can reorient the perceptual apparatus of the viewer or the reader. This dialectic of sensation and perception constituted a key concept for the *Bungei Jidai* authors, who came to be appellationed with the moniker *shinkankaku-ha*, the “Neo-Sensationist” or “Neo-Perceptionist” school.

The Birth of the *Shinkankaku-ha* and the Problem of the “New”

The term *shinkankaku-ha* was coined by the literary critic Chiba Kameo in his short but now-classic essay, “Shinkankaku-ha no tanjô” (The Birth of the *Shinkankaku-ha*) in the November 1924 issue of the short-lived magazine *Seiki* (*Century*, 1924). In his essay, Chiba raises the question of whether or not the literary establishment (*bundan*) is “moving” (*ugoiteiru*), and asks how they might be able to move beyond the (unspecified) impasse at which the Japanese literary establishment found itself. Fittingly, he locates the opening of a new methodological possibility in the changing make-up of mass production through print capital:

Middle-ranking authors (*chûkyû sakka*) and un-established authors (*mumei sakka*) seize upon the unsure gait of the established (*kisei bundan*), and their determination to storm its stronghold is intense. Perhaps it is the ability to print more freely (*insatsuryoku no jiyû*) that has made possible the large number of personal magazines (*kojin zasshi*) and coterie magazines (*dôjin zasshi*)... The position of the established authors has stagnated... It is the clear truth that the un-established authors hold strong convictions about art, and that they are attacking only with the intention of

advancing the *bundan* a single step - perhaps this is why there is no astonishing rotation (*kaiten*). On the surface level, it looks as if the literary globe (*bundan chikyū*) is not moving, and if we were to look back from generations later, any movement might seem incredibly sluggish; but who could say that there is not a contemporary literary world quietly turning itself, aiming for a second rotation (*dai-niji kaiten*) right beneath our eyes?²⁵³

Chiba admits that in literature, unlike in the political realm, there can be no instantaneous changing of the guard and no sudden replacement of those who wield literary authority. Rather, he looks to the undercurrents that he sees emerging, questioning how authors of the present seek to depict the experience of reality. Despite the article's title and its lasting impact through the name it lent to the authors associated with *Bungei Jidai*, only a small portion of the essay deals explicitly with the group of writers that Chiba calls the “*shinkankaku-ha*.” Although Chiba never goes into any specifics or provides many proper names, he selects *Bungei Jidai* for special notice from amongst the new magazines that “struggle for literary hegemony” (*bundan haken no sōdatsu*).²⁵⁴ Beyond the identification of the new literary techniques employed by the magazine's associated authors, Chiba further goes on to detail the strategies by which *Bungei Jidai* attempted to sell itself within the increasingly saturated realm of magazine publishing:

First there was *Shirakaba*. Then there were the numerous iterations of *Shinshichō*. At the time it we might have imagined that those authors would become the mainstream (*chūryū*) of today. For those paying attention to the movements of the literary realm (*bundan*), the emergence of coterie journals (*dōjin zasshi no hassei*) is not a force for the expression of thought that can be looked upon lightly. Yet even so, a certain number of them bubble up only to vanish. But some push aside the overflowing mainstream to take their place and themselves become great rivers of thought... One of the recently emerged magazines is *Bungei Jidai*. *Bungei Jidai* is unique amongst the magazines in how effectively it

²⁵³ Chiba Kameo, “Shinkankaku-ha no tanjō,” in Miyoshi Yukio, ed., *Kindai Nihon bungaku hyōron taikai dai 6 kan: Taishōki III Shōwaki I* (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1973), 38-39. Originally ran in *Seiki* (Nov. 1924).

²⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 39.

has used that weapon called the advertisement...reading the recently released first issue of the magazine, we can gain hints at numerous levels as to the broader thought of the present literary establishment.²⁵⁵

For Chiba, in the continually flowing tide of history, literary schools and their journals swim in competition, each struggling to take the lead and direct the future movement of literature. In the constant flood of new coterie journals, it is not merely the style of writing that allows a given journal, such as *Bungei Jidai* to triumph, but the savviness with which they are able to advertise themselves and wield their medium of the journal to make their names known.

In regard to the literary style of the “*shinkankaku-ha*” writers, Chiba delineates a clear break between their style and the modes of depiction employed by established authors, claiming that the “*kankaku*” of the writers of the so-called *Bungei Jidai* group is totally different from that which has come before.²⁵⁶ The question that has concerned authors, critics, readers and scholars from the time of the article’s publication to the present is just what exactly this “*kankaku*” might be. The name of *shinkankaku-ha* has been alternately translated as “Neo-Sensationists,” “Neo-Perceptionists,” “New Sensationists,” “Neo-Sensualists,” and “New Sensationalists.”²⁵⁷ Most recently, film scholar Aaron Gerow has argued that the name is best translated as “Neo-Impressionists,”

²⁵⁵ Chiba Kameo, “Shinkankaku-ha no tanjô,” 39.

²⁵⁶ Ibid, 40.

²⁵⁷ In *Topographies of Japanese Modernism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), Seiji Lippit uses “New Sensationist”; Tomi Suzuki, in *Narrating the Self: Fictions of Japanese Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996) chooses Neo-Perceptionist, as does Masao Miyoshi in *Accomplices of Silence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974). Donald Keene uses “New Sensationalist” in *Dawn To the West: Japanese Literature of the Modern Era: Fiction* (Columbia University Press, 1998). In his study of the Chinese movement *xinganjue-pai* which was influenced (at least in name) by the *Shinkankaku-ha*, Shu-Mei Shih uses “Neo-Sensationist”; *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917-1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001). In *Modern Japanese Writers and the Nature of Literature* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976), Makoto Ueda uses Neo-Sensualist. To my knowledge, the only major critical work to leave the term untranslated (as I do here), is Dennis Keene’s *Yokomitsu Riichi: Modernist* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980).

since Chiba links the adoption of the term to translations and interpretations of the work of the French writer Paul Morand's writings on Neo-Impressionism.²⁵⁸ I have chosen to leave the name "*shinkankaku-ha*" in situ, as the term itself was used discursively with all of the above connotations shortly after its coining. In Chiba's most explicit discussion of what constitutes *shinkankaku* and its technique, he writes:

We might for now call ours the "age of *shinkankaku*." Authors stand at the peak of a special visual field and revel in it, looking out with a gaze that pierces through all the hidden aspects of life...they allow us to peer through little holes at the interior life in its totality of existence and meaning...the arrival of such a subtle art is the promise of nature. Why, in their expression of life, must they open these little holes? Because it is nothing more than the instantaneous sensations of extreme stimulations that they use to symbolize this great interior life through such small external forms and shapes.²⁵⁹

Chiba thus constructs a conceptualization of *shinkankaku* that embodies both sensation and perception. He begins by discussing the process of perception, as the acute vision of the artist allows the larger reading populace to see that which they previously could not, namely the contours of their own life experience. At the same time, he notes that perceptual shifts transpire through the explicitly sensory register, the "extreme stimulations" that conclude his discussion. In this configuration, the agglomeration of sensations is what comprises both "interior life" and its "expression," as sensory experience delimits changes in perception. The two are connected through the "holes" that link the internal ("hidden aspects") and the external ("instantaneous sensations"), bringing a dialectical totality into visibility. Chiba's "holes" resemble the refusal of meaning posited by Bürger, as the literary text stands in for the point at which sensation

²⁵⁸ Aaron Gerow, *A Page of Madness: Cinema and Modernity in 1920s Japan* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Japanese Studies, 2008), 15.

²⁵⁹ Chiba, "Shinkankaku-ha no tanjô," 40.

and perception are reconstituted; the term *shinkankaku* is left open, allowing the word itself to constitute a gap that would shock the literary world.

The name *shinkankaku-ha* quickly left Chiba's pen to become a discursive signifier associated with the *Bungei Jidai* group. Poet and contemporaneous critic Hashizume Ken (1900-1964) notes: "although it is generally thought that Chiba Kameo is the one who applied the name *shinkankaku-ha*, strictly speaking such is not the case."²⁶⁰ Chiba, highly self-aware of his own role as a critic agrees, stating that "genres are generated; they say that it was Zola and Maupassant who made Naturalism...but can we really say that Zola and Maupassant created Naturalism? No, it is the critics who have created it."²⁶¹ Once the term took hold within the literary establishment and critical discourse, the task left to *Bungei Jidai* authors like Kawabata, Yokomitsu, and Kataoka Teppei was to respond to their own categorization as an ostensibly distinctive school. Yokomitsu Riichi, writing in a leaderly role for the *Bungei Jidai* group displays ambivalence towards the moniker but recognizes potential in the centrifugal force generated through the name of the group:

No members of *Bungei Jidai* claim themselves to be *shinkankaku-ha* writers, and there are no works that are self-proclaimed *shinkankaku-ha* works...but many of the journal's authors *could* in fact be *shinkankaku-ha* writers, and, if they were all to take on the name, then they would become obligated to create something new, different, and interesting.²⁶²

The writers in question seized upon the opportunity, as the circulation of the term *shinkankaku-ha* produced a plethora of engagements with the problems of sensation, perception, newness, and the role of the literary work therein. In July 1925, roughly half a year after the publication of Chiba's article, *Bungei Jidai* ran a special section in which

²⁶⁰ Hashizume Ken, "Daini giteki kôsetsu" *Bungei Jidai* vol. 2, no. 7 (July 1925), 16.

²⁶¹ Chiba Kameo, "Na wa shosen hitotsu no gainen," *Bungei Jidai* vol. 2, no. 7 (July 1925), 11.

²⁶² Yokomitsu Riichi, "Tada namae nomi ni tsuite," *Bungei Jidai* vol. 2, no. 7 (July 1925), 14.

the journal's authors were given a chance to respond to the name *shinkankaku-ha*, which had by then stuck to them with considerable tenacity. Responses ranged from approval to indifference to complete rejection, as each writer saw a different degree of possibilities and limitations contained within the term. Nakagawa Yoichi admitted to liking the name, especially the sense of “newness” (*atarashisa*) that it implied. In a brief essay entitled “Atarashiki jidai no tame” (For a New Age), Nakagawa writes that the “*shin*” (new) was the most important part of the moniker, and that the group could just as easily be dubbed the “*shinshinkei-ha*” (new nerve school) or the “*shinjinsei-ha*” (new life school), as their work developed techniques to express the vicissitudes of both exterior and interior life.²⁶³

Kawabata also seized upon the term to further develop his idea of the relationship between a new mode of life and a new way of writing literature. In another early essay, “Shinshinsakka no shinkeikô kaisetsu” (An Interpretation of the Trends amongst Newly Emerging Authors, 1925), Kawabata claims that understanding the idea of “newness” (*atarashisa*) itself is “the sole passport into the literary kingdom” (*bungei no ôkoku...[e no] yuitsu no ryokôken*), again structurally imagining the contours of the literary realm in terms of a sharp divide between the established writers and new generation, and claiming the concept of “newness” as the major literary problem of 1924.²⁶⁴ Kawabata writes:

Even in the case of the writers of the proletarian school (*puroretaria-ha*), if they are emerging authors (*shinshinsakka*) creating a new literature (*atarashii bungei*), then a new sensibility (*atarashii kankaku*) must be manifest in their style (*sakufû*). The reason why is quite clear. Without new expression (*atarashii hyôgen*), there is no new literature. Without new expression, there is no new content (*atarashii naiyô*). Without new sensibility, there is no new expression. And this is the start of nothing. The

²⁶³ Nakagawa Yoichi. “Atarashiki jidai no tame ni,” *Bungei Jidai* vol. 2, no. 7 (July 1925), 22. The special section (led off by an essay by Chiba himself, cited above) is called “‘*Shinkankaku-ha*’ to iu meishô ni tsuite.”

²⁶⁴ Kawabata Yasunari, “Shinshin sakka no shinkeikô kaisetsu,” *Bungei Jidai* vol. 2, no. 1 (Jan. 1925.1), 2.

truth is that proletarian school authors such as Maedakô Hiroichirô (1888-1957), Kaneko Yôbun (1893-1985), and Imano Kenzô (1893-1969) are working towards expressions based upon these new sensibilities. This is only natural.²⁶⁵

The concept of newness itself (*shin*, *atarashii*, or *atarashiki*) was imagined by Kawabata and his cohorts as a type of rupture with existing ideas of literary production, as well as a problem to be constantly confronted. This confrontation with the perpetual experience of the new in turn forms a baseline for Kawabata's reframing of the literary world, allowing him to establish a solid position for his associated clique of authors vis-à-vis the writers of the preceding generation.

The idea of the "new" itself, however, was not entirely new, as the prefix *shin-* had already been a common literary trope for some years, as in the titles of journals such as *Shinchô* (*New Tide*, 1904-), *Shinshôsetsu* (*New Fiction*, 1889-1890; 1896-1926), and *Shinshichô* (*New Thought*, 1907; 1910-1911; 1914; 1916-1917; 1918; 1923).²⁶⁶ Although the identification of modern literature with the notion of the new was already an established convention, Kawabata repositions newness as a central problematic, marking his own moment with the emergence of a self-consciousness quality of literary production as contingent upon the confrontation of perpetual change. Significantly, Kawabata looks not only to his own journal's group of writers, but also to the faction of writers of proletarian fiction affiliated with the journal *Bungei Sensen* (*Literary Frontline*, 1924-1933). He sees writers like Maedakô as equally committed to the problems of

²⁶⁵ Ibid, 4. Maedakô Hiroichirô (1888-1957), Kaneko Yôbun (1893-1985), and Imano Kenzô (1893-1969) are all authors of proletarian fiction associated with the journal *Bungei Sensen* (*Literary Frontline*, 1924-1932).

²⁶⁶ *Shinshichô* was an irregular publication released by different groups of students at Tokyo Imperial University in numerous installments over the course of many decades; the first six iterations, up to the date of the founding of *Bungei Jidai* are listed here. Significantly, Kawabata Yasunari acted as the editor for the sixth run of the magazine, published by Nantendô.

expression as himself, though later expresses concern that many authors of proletarian fiction do not properly embody the appropriate perceptions or sensibilities of the lives of the laboring subjects that they seek to represent. Nonetheless, Kawabata crafts a picture of his own “new age” (*shinjidai*) in which the constant engagement with the experience of the new itself gives rise to new ideas of the form and function of writing as practiced by the authors of both *Bungei Jidai* and *Bungei Sensen*.

Permutations of Perception: The Many Valences of *Kankaku* Discourse

One more valence of meaning within *kankaku* emerges through Kawabata’s discussion, namely *kankaku* as “sensibility” in addition to sensation and perception. Out of a new awareness of sensation emerges what Kawabata identifies as a “new sensibility” (*atarashii kankaku*) towards the production of literature and the world. For him, this new sensibility becomes the defining characteristic of his compatriots. The writers associated with *Bungei Jidai* continued to redefine and retheorize the nature of *kankaku* and its functions; the closest they came to offering a definition of the term was in May of 1926, when Kinseidô released the *Bungei shingo jiten* (*A Dictionary of New Literary Terms*), a compendium operationally defining popular buzzwords of the day. *Ryūkôgo jiten* (“buzzword dictionaries” of popular terminology) had been popular for decades, and were bought by consumers aiming to stay informed in regards to the ever-shifting linguistic landscapes of loan words, popular terms, proper nouns, and “isms.” Kinseidô’s dictionary is officially credited to the “editors of *Bungei Jidai*” (*Bungei Jidai henshûbu*), so we can presume to glean from it at least one relevant definition of the term *kankaku* as it was understood at that time. In the *Bungei Jidai* dictionary, *kankaku* is defined as:

An exterior stimulus that passes through the five sense and creates a psychological phenomenon (*seishin genshō*) in the brain. Sight, sound, taste, smell, and touch are the five senses. “Sensory depiction” (*kankaku byōsha*) is the identification and discovery of what is specific to each sense and the depiction thereof. In the literary world (*bundan*), it seems there has recently emerged a *kankaku-ha* school, comprised of a group of authors that make use of such techniques. To feel (*kanji*) is the emotion (*kokoromochi*) that arises with the impact of stimulation from the outside world. It can also be the good and bad feelings held towards a person or an object, which are also called “sensibility” (*kanjō*)...²⁶⁷

Kankaku remains a loose term, even within the limits of this single definition. Though it can slide into the realm of emotion and maintains the potential to become detached from its material roots, at its most fundamental level it is linked to those perceptions that are processed through the sense organs of the body. The human body as physical and biological object constitutes an important locus for writers such as *Bungei Jidai* regular Kataoka Teppeï, who writes that in entering the modern era, “people threw away their spirits, forgot their relationships with the gods, and came to base everything on nerves and sensations...it is flesh itself (*nikutai koso*) that the modern man believes in...new life is the life that is built upon that flesh.”²⁶⁸ For Kataoka, literature itself is built upon that same life and material experience:

Our literature is built upon our daily lives (*seikatsu*), and thus those humans who we take up in our works of literature are human flesh properly furnished with nerves and senses (*shinkei to kankaku*). It is only the human body that can be recognized by modern readers. More than anything else, it is our pressing duty to separate ourselves from the influence of Christianity that ignores the existence of the nervous system.²⁶⁹

Kataoka conceives of the human body as a bundle of sensory nerves that act as the central mediating processor for the understanding of existence both inside and outside the

²⁶⁷ Bungei Jidai henshūbu, ed., *Bungei shingo jiten* (Tokyo: Kinseidō, 1926), 53.

²⁶⁸ Kataoka, “Tōan hitotsu,” *Bungei Jidai* vol. 1, no. 1 (Oct. 1924), 18.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 18.

literary text. The literary text is then gripped with the necessity of engaging this materialist understanding of the body, as it becomes “a prophecy of the new range of limits (*shin-han'i*) of the experience of life praxis (*jikkô seikatsu*)”.²⁷⁰

Kawabata goes further to tie the material body to a “problem of epistemology” (*ninshiki no mondai*), as he argues: “*shinkankaku*-ism is not only the discovery of sensation or perception, but a different way of thinking about the places that sensation and perception occupy in human life.”²⁷¹ He explicates the issue with a metaphor of an eye and a flower: “Say there is a single lily blooming in a field. There are only three ways one can look at the eye and the lily...Am I inside the lily? Is the lily inside me? Or are the lily and I two separate things?”²⁷² Each mode of expression implies a different relationship between the internal and external, and Kawabata utilizes another flower metaphor to clarify the possibilities of each: “One can write ‘my eyes saw a red rose,’ but the emerging author (*shinshin sakka*) grasps the eye and the flower as one and writes ‘my eyes are a red rose...that is how one feels, how one lives life.’”²⁷³ To Kawabata, the sense organ’s function exceeds the simple task of the sensation of an object, and act by unifying object and organ, as the organ is transformed through its relationship with the object. The sense organ itself is thus historicized, as what is perceived and produced through the act of sensation is distinct from the unified impression of an external object. Gilles Deleuze has similarly described the process of sensation as such, here in regards to the viewing of a painting by the artist Francis Bacon (1909-1992): “At one and the same time I *become* in the sensation and something *happens* through the sensation, one through the other, one

²⁷⁰ Kataoka, “Tôan hitotsu,” 19.

²⁷¹ Kawabata, “Shinshinsakka no shinkeikô kaisetsu,” 5.

²⁷² Ibid, 6.

²⁷³ Kawabata, “Shinshinsakka no shinkeikô kaisetsu,” 5.

in the other. And at the limit, it is the same body that, being both subject and object, gives and receives the sensation. As a spectator, I experience the sensation only by entering the painting.”²⁷⁴ For Deleuze, like for Kawabata, sensation restructures the subject; the subject that arises is not external to the force of sensation, but rather comes to exist within the field of sensation itself. The eye “becomes” the object of the red rose that “gives” the sensation, resulting in the formation of eyes-as-rose, rose-as-eyes, and the viewer with transformed roses-for-eyes who is repositioned within the frame of representation of the work of art.

In this process, the transformation of the viewer’s senses becomes part of the work of art’s own process of completion through its reception and consumption by the viewer. Kawabata insists on a specificity to this process particular to the nature of the media through which the work is created: “literature (*bungei*) is different from art and music... the workings of the senses when looking at or creating art or music are different from those used in literature.”²⁷⁵ For Kawabata, visual art, sound, and text all take part in the recombination of the senses that is consummate with the experience of living in the modern “literary age,” but he identifies a distinctiveness to the way in which that process takes place when instigated through the printed and reproduced literary text.

The Mediation of Sensation: Yokomitsu Riichi’s “Kankaku katsudô”

Kawabata himself does not explicate the particularities of this process, the most detailed discussion of the question of literature and *kankaku* can be found in Yokomitsu

²⁷⁴ Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation* trans. Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 31. Italics are in the original text.

²⁷⁵ Kawabata, “Shinshinsakka no shinkeikô no kaisetsu,” 5.

Riichi's 1925 essay "Kankaku katsudô" (Sensory Activity), the closest any *Bungei Jidai* member would come to a literary theory based on the idea of new sensation or new perception as such. Yokomitsu starts by raising the matter of the reception and perception of the work of art: "The perception (*kantoku*) of the effects of art...is clearly arbitrary and dogmatic. Our sensual reception (*kankakuteki kyôju*) is more arbitrary still, due to the differences in the individual sensibilities of intuition and direct sensation (*kanseiteki chokkan*)."²⁷⁶ This fundamentally arbitrary quality of the act of individual engagement with the work of art produces a limit of understanding of the work's function vis-à-vis the difficulty of transmitting the particular internal reactions instigated by a given work. Yokomitsu laments that "those who do not understand will never understand," and takes it upon himself to explain the machinations inherent in transformations of sensibility. Like Kawabata and the other *Bungei Jidai* writers cited above, Yokomitsu seizes upon the discursively distributed term of *kankaku*. Though he claims that he has been "using the term *kankaku* since the first issue of *Bungei Shunjû* was published," the need to explicate a conceptualization of *shinkankaku* as a literary mode clearly arises through the discursive pressure to act as a representative of the *shinkankaku-ha*, as Yokomitsu's theory was published only three months after Chiba's initial article.

²⁷⁶ The full title of the essay is "Kankaku katsudô – kankaku katsudô to kankakuteki sakubutsu ni taisuru hinan e no gyakusetsu" (Sensory Activity - A Retort to the Criticisms of Sensory Activity and Sensory Works)." The work originally ran in *Bungei Jidai* vol. 2, no. 2, Feb. 1925. The essay is included in Yokomitsu's collected works as "Shinkankaku-ron" (Theory of New Sensation), a title which was appended later when the essay was republished in subsequent collections. I cite the text as it appears in its original form in *Bungei Jidai*; the text as it appears in the *zenshû* is slightly modified in places, and there are some slight semantic as well as orthographic differences, but none that substantially change the argument. A complete list of Yokomitsu's revisions between "Kankaku katsudô" and "Shinkankakuron" is included in Hoshô Masao et. al, eds., *Teihon Yokomitsu Riichi zenshû* vol. 13 (Kawade Shobô Shinsha, 1982), 619-621. Hereafter, the *zenshû* is referred to as *TYRZ*. The selection cited here appears on page 2 of *Bungei Jidai* vol. 2, no. 2.

Yokomitsu delineates *kankaku* and *shinkankaku* by contrasting them with a commonsense understanding of the former: “the term *kankaku* has heretofore been used to mean nothing more than the transformation of the object of stimulation (*shokuhatsu taishô*) from an objective form (*kyakkanteki keishiki*) to a subjective form (*shukanteki keishiki*).”²⁷⁷ He clarifies that *kankaku* should be distinguished from *kannô* (sensory function via the sense organs alone), thus arguing for *kankaku* as something beyond a one-dimensional phenomenon in which the “object of stimulation” moves directly from the objective register of the outside world to the inner realm of perception. Yokomitsu instead rethinks the term as inherently bound to the problem of symbolization and representation, and thus literature. This dimension of the notoriously dense “Kankaku katsudô” emerges when Yokomitsu’s vocabulary is read through the lexicon of Neo-Kantian philosophy, from whence most of his key terms are directly borrowed.²⁷⁸ In a key passage explaining the contours of *kankaku*, Yokomitsu explains:

The concept of sensation, that is to say the sensory symbolization (*kankakuteki hyôchô*) of the *shinkankaku-ha* is, put simply, the directly sensed stimulating object (*chokkanteki shokuhatsubutsu*) that suspends natural outward appearance as the subject (*shukkan*) leaps into the thing-in-itself (*mono jittai*, G. *Ding an sich*)... The subject is that which has the capability for understanding (*ninshiki*, G. *Erkenntnis*) the object (*kyakutai*) as the thing-in-itself. Understanding is of course the synthesization (*sôgôtai*) of intellect (*gosei*, G. *Verstand*) and sensibility (*kansei*, G. *Sinnlichkeit*).²⁷⁹

²⁷⁷ Yokomitsu, “Kankaku katsudô,” 2.

²⁷⁸ Neo-Kantianist philosophy was an important and even dominant trend in Japan in the first decades of the 20th century. The influence of Neo-Kantian German thought a major influence on Kyoto School philosophers such as Nishida Kitarô (1870-1945) and Tanabe Hajime (1885-1962), and later became an object of their critique. Yokomitsu was himself interested in Neo-Kantian epistemology at this point in his career, and essentially all of his key critical terms in this essay are Japanese words used as the conventional translations of Kantian concepts. I would argue that the degree to which Yokomitsu “properly” understands Kant’s philosophy and its heritage is less important than the ways in which he appropriates the terms for his own argument.

²⁷⁹ Yokomitsu, “Kankaku katsudô,” 3.

Essentially, *kankaku* ceases to indicate a simple movement from sensed object to sensing subject within the realm of “natural outward appearance,” and is instead interpreted as the process in which the datum apprehended through the faculty of sensibility is mediated through the faculty of intellect as the subject constructs knowledge of the world.

Crucially, this mediating process is inseparable from the act of representation:

Sensation (*kankaku*) is the representation (*hyôshô*, G. *Vorstellung*) of the operation (*sayô*) that brings about the representative capability (*hyôshô nôryoku*) of the exterior object and transcendental object (*junsui kyakkan*) (rather than the object (*kyakutai*) in contrast to the subject)... Sensation is the symbolization (*hyôchô*) of [Aristotelian] matter (*shitsuryô*, Gr. *hyle*) of sensible knowledge (*kanseiteki ninshiki*) that arises from stimulation by the transcendental object.²⁸⁰

For Yokomitsu then, any attempt to create “new sensation” or “new perception” emerges from an understanding of sensation and perception as themselves mediated representations, rather than the immediate transference of stimulus from object to subject, though the role of the latter cannot be omitted. In fact, despite his repeated invocation of the term, *kankaku* ceases to function as the key component in Yokomitsu’s formulation, as the intellectual faculty (*gosei*) and epistemological activity (*ninshikiteki katsudô*) emerge as the major arbiters of human sensibility.

According to Yokomitsu, pure sensory activity (*kankaku katsudô*) makes one not a man, but “nothing other than an animal,” whereas “humans are those which engage in intellectual activity” (*gosei katsudô*). He goes on to associate the sensualization of life (*seikatsu no kankaku-ka*) with “a fall into the face of destruction” (*metsubôshô e no daraku*), and goes so far as to claim that “the unification of literary sensory symbolization with the sensualization of life is dangerous.”²⁸¹ To Yokomitsu, the way to properly

²⁸⁰ Yokomitsu, “Kankaku katsudô,” 3.

²⁸¹ *Ibid*, 5.

apprehend the idea of “*kankaku*” is not through the embrace of modern materialistic life as such, but rather through understanding how the experiences that constitute life are processed by the intellectual and other internal faculties of the subject. For Yokomitsu, this means through the processes of literary symbolization and representation involved in the writing and reading of literature:

The objects (*taishō*) that trigger *kankaku* for the *shinkankaku-ha* arise, of course, from the vocabulary, poetry, and rhythm of writing (*gyōbun*)...sometimes they arise from the inflected point of view (*kussetsu kakudo*) of the theme, sometimes from the jumps between the silent lines of text, and sometimes from the reversals, repetitions, and speed of the plot’s progress.²⁸²

To Yokomitsu, grammatical and narrative techniques of writing themselves become the “triggers” for sensory experience, as sensation and perception are understood to be always-already mediated processes that pass through the body, text, and faculties of intellect, sensibility, and understanding before coming into their own.

Yokomitsu argues that the materiality of everyday life can be most properly perceived through the field of representations that constitute it, rather than via “direct” contact with objects as such. He identifies the writings of several authors as exhibiting techniques that use strategies of representation to such effect, including not only his *Bungei Jidai* compatriots, but also Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, the poet Bashō (1644-1694), Shirakaba school writer Shiga Naoya (1883-1971), and Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900). At the level of literary technique through which the multilayered processes unfold, Yokomitsu identifies modes of writing that “make one forget the concept of time in the advancement of the plot,” the “destruction of form” (*keishiki hakai*), and the “disturbance of the arrangement of tone (*jōchō hairetsu*) through the collapse, accumulation, and

²⁸² Yokomitsu, “Kankaku katsudō,” 7.

synthesization of parts” (*pâto hôkai*).”²⁸³ Thus literature comes to play a central role in the recombination of sensation and perception, as literary form, more than a means of expression, is identified as playing a meditating role in the constitution and perception of modern life itself. Yokomitsu identifies symbolization, representation, and the reconfiguration of grammatical and narrative structure as indispensable components in the formation of consciousness of the material world. Though I have heretofore discussed only his critical essays, Yokomitsu Riichi was primarily a writer of fiction, so at this point I turn to readings of several early short works from the period preceding the writing of “Kankaku katsudô” to examine the kind of literary practice from which his early theory of literature and sensation emerged.

Both the Horse and the Cart: Time, Sound, and Vision in “Hae”

The early fiction of Yokomitsu Riichi exhibits a tension between experimental works engaged in the distortion of narrative form and grammatical structure, and straightforward stories written in an objective mode stylistically nearly indistinguishable from the writings of the established authors whom he and the other *Bungei Jidai* writers fashioned themselves against. Rather than overturn the conventions of mainstream literary language and format as such, Yokomitsu’s early writing is possessed of a style based in conventional prose smattered with subtle yet significant textual innovations. Despite his literary-philosophical program detailed in “Kankaku katsudô,” the ways in which the processes of sensation and perception are problematized in Yokomitsu’s fictional works are not always immediately obvious. Nonetheless, many of his early

²⁸³ Yokomitsu, “Kankaku katsudô,” 8.

stories display examples of a writing practice that urges the reader to reassess his own position in relation to the text as Yokomitsu uses unconventional points of view, expressionistic style, and personification techniques that de-center the singular human subject and call attention to the ways in which the printed text itself serves to structure consciousness and experience. Significantly, many of these early stories are set in the interstitial space between the country and the city, as the process of passing between the two assumes a meditating function that draws the attention of the reader to the structure of the larger textual and spatial systems at work.

Yokomitsu's breakthrough story is the short "Hae" (The Fly, 1923); published in Kikuchi Kan's still-fledgling *Bungei Shunjû*, which helped establish Yokomitsu's reputation as a rising young author. The story describes the ill-fated journey of a horse-drawn cart from the country to the city; much to the chagrin of a group of waiting passengers, the cart's departure is delayed by the driver's devotion to delicious dumplings from a street-side stall, and when the buggy finally begins to move, the now-stuffed and drowsy driver falls asleep at the saddle, leaving the cart to go careening over a cliff as the horse runs off the road. Only the eponymous fly survives, as it flits away not a moment too late. The story is divided into ten sections, each consisting of a few lines of description, snippets of conversation, and the staccato progression of the minimalist narrative. The passage of time constitutes a central problem to the characters, as the first two thirds of the story play out through the tension between the rushed passengers waiting for the cart and the hungry driver in no hurry to leave. The first human character to appear is an old woman hurrying into town:

A farmwoman ran into the empty pasture of the carriage station. Early that morning, she had received a telegram (*denpô*) that her son, who worked in

town, was in critical condition. She had run across three leagues of mountain roads still wet with early morning dew.

“Is there a carriage?”

She peeked into the driver’s room and called out, but there was no reply.

“Is there a carriage?”²⁸⁴

Though the time of the carriage’s departure remains uncertain, the farmwoman knows the expected duration from the village to the town, as she entreats the driver, “It takes three hours to town. It’ll take three full hours. My son’s dying, will ya help me make it?”²⁸⁵ As the wait grows longer, the narrative time of the reader and the diegetic time of the characters are extended in tandem as more passengers filter in and the wait for the cart’s departure stretches on. A mother and child show up, as does a country gentleman and a young couple planning to elope, who expectantly ask the farmwoman if she knows when the carriage might depart:

“The carriage isn’t leaving?” the young man asked again.

“It’s not going?” the girl asked.

“I’ve been waiting two hours already, it’s not going. It’s three hours to town. What time is it now? It’ll be noon by the time we get there.”

“It’ll be noon all right,” the country gentlemen said from off to the side.

None of the characters can depart without the cart, and the cart cannot depart without the hunchbacked (*nekoze*) driver, who continues to wait for the dumplings to cook for an uncertain duration. The hunchback’s hunger, which is itself dependent on the cooking dumplings, becomes the determinative driving force of the plot, which must be resolved before the narrative can progress.

The idea of hunger as a constitutive bodily impulse structures Yokomitsu’s first published work, “Shinme” (The Holy Horse), which was released under the name Yokomitsu Hakuho in *Bunshō Sekai* in July 1918. The story takes the interiority of a

²⁸⁴ Yokomitsu Riichi, “Hae,” *TYRZ* vol. 1, 188. “Hae” was originally published in *Bungei Shunjū* vol. 1, no. 5, May 1923.

²⁸⁵ Yokomitsu, “Hae,” 189.

hungry horse as a site for experimentation in perspective and personification. In that story, the “he” (*kare*) that constitutes the subject of the narrative is quickly revealed to be not a human but a horse kept in a shrine. The internal monologue of the humanlike horse is cited in parentheses, while the voice of the keeper is quoted as such; both are narrated through an objective visual perspective focused on the horse, but outside of its interiority. The horse is introduced as a being that does nothing but eat beans and hay on end, and only after his hunger is made clear is “he” personified and given an interiority. Yet, whenever “the beans are scattered in front of him he forgets everything” and is sent back into a perpetual state of confusion, wondering where he is and what he is doing, oblivious to the symbolic role that has been granted him by his keepers.²⁸⁶

(Oh no. Ugh! Here he comes again) A hurried sound like sandals banging came from below.

(It’s no good. He’s the same one that comes every day)

It grew noisy just below. Before long, fifty some children were brought in by their teacher. The teacher stopped the children and began to explain.

“This horse went off to the Russo-Japanese War and made its way back home running through a hail of bullets. This horse did what it did for the country and for you, so everyone should study hard and do what they must for the country.”

The children all gazed at him with their mouths open.²⁸⁷

The perpetual process of eating and forgetting that characterizes the horse in “Shinme” is transposed onto the character of the driver in “Hae,” who, unlike the horse and the other characters in his own story, is left without interiority and retains only the senses of hunger and confusion that eventually lead him, those around him, and the narrative itself

²⁸⁶ Yokomitsu, “Shinme,” *TYRZ* vol. 1, 3. The characters in the title of the story, meaning a horse venerated at a Shintô shrine are typically read “Jinme.” The reading “Shinme” is confirmed in Inoue Ken, et. al, eds. *Yokomitsu Riichi jiten* (Tokyo: Ôfû Shoten, 2002), 123.

²⁸⁷ Yokomitsu Riichi, “Shinme,” 5. The parentheticals appear as such in the original text.

to an sudden end.²⁸⁸ The concluding line of “Shinme,” “He lived another day without knowing what was going on,” could apply just as readily to the driver and passengers of “Hae,” as each is unable to control their fate on the day that is already inscribed to be their last.²⁸⁹

As the wait for the cart’s departure drags on, the uncertainty of the duration of the wait is explicitly transferred to the narrative register at the start of the seventh section, as an unidentified and unquoted narrator wonders,

Just when will the carriage leave? The sweat of the people gathered in the carriage station had dried. But just when will the carriage leave? No one knows. The only ones that might know were the dumplings that had just started to swell inside the dumpling shop’s pot.²⁹⁰

Unlike the quotationally marked voices of the passengers, who express their concerns about the carriage’s departure in dialectally inflected spoken language (“*mada kanô*,” “*demassenno*,” “*mada jarô*”), the narrative voice in section seven is expressed in written language (*deru no de arô*) addressing the reader but none of the characters. The narrator’s voice, wondering aloud, is explicitly separate from the scene, as the characters are represented between two repetitions of the narrator’s question, which they do not hear. The question of the carriage’s departure is extended beyond the concerns of the characters as the reader too is implicated in the process of waiting. The narrator seems ready to confess that the matter is outside of his control as well. Using stylistic techniques such as these, Yokomitsu places a sense of agency and contingent reality into the material workings of the world of the story, as the only objects that might retain control of the narrative are the dumplings themselves.

²⁸⁸ For a further discussion of “Shinme” as a precursor to “Hae,” see Yamamoto Ryôtsuke, *Yokomitsu Riichi to shôsetsu no ronri* (Tokyo: Kasama Shoin, 2008), 19-21.

²⁸⁹ Yokomitsu Riichi, “Shinme,” 7.

²⁹⁰ Yokomitsu Riichi, “Hae,” 192.

The following and exceedingly brief section eight pulls the different registers and markers of the progression of time together as the marked time of the clock and the immeasurable and yet constitutive time of the boiling dumplings meet to sound simultaneously: “The carriage station’s clock struck ten. Steam whistled out of the dumpling shop’s cauldron. *Zaku, zaku, zaku*. The hunchbacked driver cut some hay for the horse. The horse lapped up some water beside the driver. *Zaku, zaku, zaku*.”²⁹¹ The striking of the clock and the whistling of the pot are conventionally narrated, but the process of reading is transformed in the following sentence with the appearance of the onomatopoeia *zaku zaku zaku*. The rushing sound of the driver cutting hay for the horse appears as the representation of sound as such, and though the source of the sound is clear, the two are not explicitly linked at the grammatical level. The reader is told of the sounds of the clock and the cauldron, but “hears” directly the *zaku zaku* of the hay being cut, and is thus internalized into the space of the narrative. By repeating the onomatopoeia, Yokomitsu allows the reader to “see” the horse drinking water from a perspective within the scene rather than outside of it, as the horse is represented between the two iterations of sound.

The type of onomatopoeic technique that Yokomitsu utilizes here seems almost pedestrian, but was a fairly experimental technique rarely seen elsewhere in the modern prose of that period. Onomatopoeia has a long history in Japanese literature through the use of *giongo* and *gisego* (onomatopoeic words) and *gitaigo* (mimetic words), which appear throughout classical poetry, medieval tales, and other premodern works of fiction, as well as in modern works, such as Futabatei Shimei’s (1864-1909) *Ukigumo* (Drifting Clouds, 1887-1889). However, *gitaigo* typically take the particle *to* or appear before a

²⁹¹ Yokomitsu Riichi, “Hae,” 193.

verb, taking on an adverbializing function to describe the following process or verb phrase. In these cases, which constitute the mainstream usage of onomatopoeia in traditional literary Japanese, the onomatopoeic phrase does not necessarily represent the generation of sound as sound, but serves to characterize an action, such as the “*shikejike*” with which Futabatei’s Bunzô gazes at his love interest Osei, or the “*jirori*” rolling of the eyes that she throws back at him.²⁹² In contrast, Yokomitsu’s “*zaku zaku zaku*” is written as the production of sound as such created through the mediating role of the printed word. “*Zaku zaku zaku*” does not describe the act of cutting hay, but replaces the action with its own aural quality; the production of “sound” through this textual and grammatical device

²⁹² Futabatei Shimei, “Ukigumo,” in *Futabatei Shimei zenshû* vol. 1 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobô, 1984), 25. Most studies of onomatopoeia and mimetic words limit their scope to the realm of linguistics. Surprisingly little critical work on onomatopoeia and modern literature has been done in relation to Japanese, or indeed, any language, either at the level of literary theory or secondary criticism. Otsubo Heiji, author of *Giseigo no kenkyû* (Tokyo: Kazama Shobô, 2006), is one of the few to submit such words to systematic study. Outside Japan, onomatopoeia, sound, and meaning in regards to literary structure were subjects of research by the Russian Formalist Osip Brik (1888-1945), the work of whom is largely untranslated into English. Some of the few English language sources on Brik (which is limited largely to the biographical) include Vahan D. Barooshian, *Brik and Mayakovsky* (New York: Mouton), 1978 and Roman Jakobson, *My Futurist Years* (New York: Marsilio Publishers, 1997). The quality of language as pure sound was of course an important device used by the Dadaists, most notably in the sound poems of Tristan Tzara (1896-1963). In theory, Dada was a major influence on the work of Yokomitsu and other *shinkankaku-ha* authors, though the level and depth of their knowledge and engagement with Dadaist works is somewhat obscure. Beyond Yokomitsu’s name-checking of Dada and Surrealism cited above, *Bungei Jidai* authors rarely mention or discuss the work of the European historical avant-garde in any specific terms during this period. In his study of Dada in Japan, Kamiya Tadataka (who also served as one of the editors for the *Yokomitsu Riichi jiten*), devotes several pages to the relationship between Dada and *Bungei Jidai*; though some writers like Kawabata and Hashizume Ken, occasionally use the terms “Dada” and “Dadaism” and try to position themselves vis-à-vis a thinly defined concept of the movement, there is no evidence of any substantial engagement with any key texts by major European artists or poets associated with the Dada movement among that circle. Murayama Tomoyoshi, who spent time in Germany, was involved with more explicitly Dadaistic artistic practice through his work in the journal *MAVO*, but rarely mentioned it in *Bungei Jidai*. In general, Dada was understood as a vague idea and an open and floating signifier through which authors like Yokomitsu and Kawabata used as a base to imagine other possibilities of writing as writers rather than a particular set of influences or texts they adopted into their own writing. The work of authors such as Tsuji Jun (1885-1944) might more readily be classified as Dadaist. See Kamiya Tadataka, *Nihon no dada* (Sapporo: Kyôbunsha, 1987).

thus precipitates not only a new auditory mode, but also shifts the visual register of the text, moving the perspective of the reading subject into the diegesis of the story, thus bifurcating the reader and allowing him to exist on both sides of the text.

Yokomitsu does not continue to utilize such explicit onomatopoeic technique in the rest of “Hae,” and its appearance is limited to this single sequence. By contrast, in the next section of the story, as the cart at long last departs, the driver’s horn and shoes clatter in unison, but neither produce sound in an onomatopoeic sense, only the narrative representation thereof, as both “ring out” using the same verb (*Rappa ga natta. Kutsu ga natta*). Here, rather than “produce” sound, the text subsumes it into the representational register to be imagined as any other process within the story. A third relationship between the written word and the signification of sound appears later in the text. As the journey progresses, the youngest passenger, who is just learning to speak, recites the names of the objects he sees, such as the horse (*uma, uma*) and a pear tree (*nashi, nashi*); the child’s mother recites the names back to him, resulting in the multiple repetition of syllables as the horse and the pear tree are transformed into meaningless vocalizations severed from immediate referential significance. Through these narrative techniques, Yokomitsu puts into practice a series of attempts to work through the vicissitudes of the sensorial and perceptual faculties involved in the process of reading, as well as the types of visual and auditory sensations that the text can produce. Over the course of the short story, the reader is carried through a sequence of different relationships with the creation of narrative time and the ways in which the represented space of the story is “seen” and “heard,” resulting in a reconsideration of the reader’s integration into the textual space and the processes through which the relationship between the two is crafted.

Critical work on “Hae” has focused primarily on the visual register as manifested in the fly and the image of the eye as the focal point around which the narrative viewpoint flits. The fly’s movement from the spider’s web to the horse’s back at the start of the story puts the characters into view, and the fly alights just as the cart goes careening off the final cliff, thus forming the frame of the story. Kuritsubo Yoshiaki describes the “objectification (*kyakutaika*) of the position of the solitary fly that has internalized the eye as a device,” a metaphor made cinematic by Yura Hiromi, who describes the story’s narrative technique as “the dramatics of perspective deriving from the ‘camera eye.’”²⁹³ Komori Yôichi recognizes the cinematic qualities of “Hae” but rejects the identification of the fly’s eye with the camera eye, arguing instead for the coincidence of fly and screen, rather than camera:

Transforming the expression “the big eyed fly” into an image...results in the compound eye of the fly reflecting large across a screen. The reader, standing in an outside perspective, is looking at the screen and looking at the “eye,” while also being seen by the fly’s “eye”...From this moment on, the reader, who is possessed with the consciousness of being seen, recognizes the self as a physical body projected into the world of the text.²⁹⁴

I would argue that the emergence of the reader’s self-awareness of the textualized yet material body that Komori identifies takes place not only at the explicitly visual level, but via a more complex process bound up with the sense of narrative time and the multiple forms of the representation of sound and meaning that Yokomitsu deploys throughout the text. Through these mediating formalistic devices, Yokomitsu thrusts the reader into a relationship with the text in which the reader exists simultaneously inside and outside and

²⁹³ The view of Kuritsubo (who is one of the editors of the Yokomitsu’s *zenshû*) and Yura are summarized in Inoue Ken et. al., eds., *Yokomitsu Riichi jiten* (Tokyo: Ôfû Shoten, 2002), 156-157. Kuritsubo’s article was originally published in *Bungaku* in 1984; Yura’s in the monograph *Yokomitsu Riichi no bungaku to shôgai* in 1977.

²⁹⁴ Komori Yôichi, “*Kôzo to shite no katari* (Tokyo: Shin’yôsha, 1988), 446.

is thus able to “experience” the sensations germane to the diegetic space even while being made aware of how those sensations are textually generated. As in Yokomitsu’s theory of *kankaku*, sensation forms the constitutive base of perception, but is apprehended through its own representation and symbolization, rather than directly. The effect engendered through this process in “Hae” might be seen as embodied in the eponymous fly, which begins the story caught within a web but is able to extricate itself in order to gain a new perspective on the scene, much as the formalistic devices at work in the story allow the reader a way to perceive his own position within the web of the text.

The fly’s self-extraction from the web initiates the narrative, opening a frame that later closes as the fly alights from the crashing cart: “The carriage station was deserted in midsummer. A single big-eyed fly was caught in a spider web, and its back legs bounced on the mesh of threads as it dangled. Then it dropped like a bean.”²⁹⁵ Not fully stuck within the web (*ami*) inside the stable, the fly is able to free itself, which allows it a full range of motion and perspective onto those situated within a larger network. The network that structures the narrative of “Hae” is the communication and transportation network of modern Japan through which the passengers on the carriage move; the farmwoman, eloping couple, country gentleman, and small child each can reach their destination only through the carriage line that connects the country and the town, thus delimiting the space of possibility of the story itself. The transportation network of the carriage station is tied to the electric communications network, as the movement and temporal tension of the story is set in motion with the arrival of a telegram (*denpô*) that transmits the notice of the farmwoman’s sick son from town to village, resulting in her movement from village to town. At the time of the fly’s movement from the spider web to the horse’s back that

²⁹⁵ Yokomitsu, “Hae,” 187.

initiates the narrative, each of the bodies in the story (save that of the fly itself) is already integrated into the transportation network that allows for the rapid movement of bodies both real and represented across the space between the urban and the rural. The bodies of the passengers, driver, and horse proceed upon the route with no expectation of incident until the narrative itself intervenes. The text's conclusion creates a disruption that shows the impossibility of maintaining a distinct existence outside of the network's structure; when the cart deviates from its route, the passengers and means of transportation cease to exist as individual entities, instead ending up as a "lump of horse, man, and carriage plank" at the conclusion of the story.²⁹⁶

Yokomitsu's "Onmi" and the Body Written and Read

The contingencies nascent in the movement of bodies and communications shuttling between the country and the city and the role of written and printed text in structuring and representing those movements appears as a theme in other early short works by Yokomitsu Riichi. In May 1924, between the publication of "Hae" and the first issue of *Bungei Jidai* in October 1924, Kinseidô released the first individual collection of stories (*tankôbon*) by Yokomitsu, entitled *Onmi (My Beloved)*.²⁹⁷ Though some of the works included in this early collection, including "Hae" and the longer work *Nichirin (The Sun, 1924)* have come to be read as representative examples of Yokomitsu's early

²⁹⁶ Yokomitsu, "Hae," 195.

²⁹⁷ Somewhat unusually, the title story, "Onmi," appeared for the first time in this book, rather than initially running in a magazine before being reprinted. Another *tankôbon* of Yokomitsu's work, named for *Nichirin*, was released the same month by the publisher Shun'yôdô, and also included "Hae," "Teki" (The Enemy), which is discussed below, and several other stories that also appeared in the *Onmi* collection. The simultaneous release of "Hae" in book form by two competing publishers shows the importance and success of the works and provides an interesting picture of literary marketing at that time.

and experimental “*shinkankaku*” period, the stories predate both the appellation of the moniker by Chiba Kameo and the establishment of the conceptual framework advocated by Yokomitsu in “Kankaku katsudô.” The majority of the stories included in the collection, such as “Mura no katsudô” (Activity in the Village, 1924) and “Imo to yubiwa” (Potatoes and Rings, 1924), are tales of the countryside written in a straightforward style. An examination of the works in *Onmi* reveal an image of Yokomitsu as an author who alternated between the penning of experimental works and naturalistic rural stories influenced by his early literary idol Shiga Naoya. In a letter to a friend from 1920, the year to which the writing of the title story “Onmi” is dated, Yokomitsu voices his concern over the extent of his own anxiety of influence, as he writes that “I am so hopelessly influenced by Shiga that whatever I write ends up tasting like bad dumplings.”²⁹⁸

If “Hae” is a representative work of the more experimental tendencies of Yokomitsu’s early period, then “Onmi” is one of Yokomitsu’s more conservative stories in both substance and style. It tells the tale of Matsuo, a student who travels to the countryside to visit his sister who has recently given birth. Over the course of several visits, Matsuo dotes on his infant niece Yukiko and revels in her affection until a faulty vaccine renders the girl ill. Yukiko recovers, but a rift opens between the student and the young girl, and Matsuo is left dejected when Yukiko ceases to return his affection as she

²⁹⁸ See Inoue Ken, et. al eds., *Yokomitsu Riichi jiten*, 75-76. Yokomitsu and Shiga’s relationship is discussed in Yoshida Hiroo, “Yokomitsu Riichi to Shiga Naoya,” in *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kanshō* vol. 48, no. 13 Oct. 1983, 67. The critics Itô Sei (1905-1969) and Kobayashi Hideo (1902-1983) noted the influence of Shiga’s work on Yokomitsu in his lifetime. More recently, Miyaguchi Noriyuki has analyzed the relationship between Yokomitsu’s early works and Shiga’s oeuvre. See Miyaguchi Noriyuki, “Yokomitsu Riichi ‘Onmi’ shi-ron,” *Nagoya kindai bungaku kenkyū* 11 (1993), and Miyaguchi, “Yokomitsu Riichi ‘Marukusu no saiban’ o megutte – Shiga Naoya to no kanren o kangaeru tame no ichi kōsatsu,” in *Yokomitsu Riichi kenkyū* no. 5, 63-73.

once did. Although there is little if any unconventional technique at the level of form in “Onmi,” Yokomitsu highlights the processes of reading and writing to show the ways in which different types of textual media possess the potential to structure and distort the body as it is both lived and imagined. “Onmi” opens with an act of reading, as the protagonist is glancing over a book as his mother walks in to tell him that his sister is due to give birth; he leaves to visit his sister shortly after, but returns to the city before the baby is born. As in “Hae,” the delivery of a message initiates the key sequence in the story, as Matsuo receives a notice (*hōchi*) the following month announcing the birth of Yukiko and heralding his movement from his lodging in Tokyo to the country village where his sister lives. Although Matsuo is delighted to meet his new niece, he finds that his Tokyo-trained novelistic imagination has difficulty separating the reality before him from the ways in which his readings have trained him to imagine village life:

He snapped awake from a dream of a baby crying somewhere far away. To his side the baby was crying and thrashing her hands to free herself from a thread that had become tangled around her.

“Wah, wah, wah, waah.”

That’s how the baby cried. He recalled the depiction (*byōsha*) of a baby crying in just the same way before it died in a sketch-like work of fiction (*shaseiteki na shōsetsu*) by a famous author that he had once read.²⁹⁹

The baby has been left in Matsuo’s care, but Matsuo’s image of the baby and its fate has already been constructed through what he has read in Tokyo, as his experience of reality comes to resemble novelistic realism. When he returns home the following day and his mother asks him about the baby, Matsuo is again only able to think of the baby as it might appear in a work of fiction:

“The baby has a big navel don’t it? It’s so big I thought blood might come out if you rub it. I’ve been worried, does it look it might be anything?”

“Hmm, is it really that big?”

²⁹⁹ Yokomitsu, “Onmi,” 310.

As he washed his feet, he recalled a story titled “The Umbilical Cord” (*Hozo no o*) by a female author (*jōryū sakka*) that he had once read. He remembered a scene in which a baby dies after blood seeps out of its navel, and grew uneasy.³⁰⁰

The baby’s navel quickly firms up and there proves to be nothing to worry about; despite Matsuo’s interpretation of reality as colored by the scenarios in the works of fiction that he has read, the text of those stories as part of his mental apparatus has no material effect on the state of Yukiko’s health, as her physical body remains distinct from Matsuo’s imagination of it.

Yukiko’s body remains whole and intact until several months later in the narrative when the family receives a vaccination notice for the child. In contrast to the representation of the stories that are referenced in Matsuo’s earlier imagination of Yukiko, the vaccination notice appears in the narrative as a specifically material reproduced printed object (*insatsubutsu*), and accordingly it has an irrevocable physical effect on the girl’s body as well as the relationship between she and Matsuo:

When vacation ended, he went back to Tokyo. The day before he left, a printed notice (*insatsubutsu*) announcing the impending date of vaccination for babies born the year before was delivered to the house. [Yukiko’s father] Hisakichi and [her mother] Orika invited Matsuo to go with them to the doctor, but he didn’t want to do that. He somehow felt that his niece would be made dirty. After two weeks had passed, Matsuo received a letter from his sister in which she wrote that five days after receiving the vaccine Yukiko had run a fever and grown weak...the way that his sister wrote the letter put no limits on his imagination and he felt troubled.³⁰¹

Disease arrives for Yukiko in tandem with the printed object, as the vaccine meant to inoculate her has poisoned her instead. Days later, another letter arrives from Matsuo’s sister. “Coarsely written and crossed out in places, it said ‘The vaccine has given Yukiko

³⁰⁰ Ibid, 311.

³⁰¹ Yokomitsu, “Onmi,” 319.

a serious infection. Her arm was taken, but her life was spared.”³⁰² To Matsuo, reading the letter from afar, his niece’s body is irrevocably damaged and no longer able to be perceived as a constant, total, and contiguous whole, as “the image of Yukiko, with her arm severed, rolling around on the the floor like a broken toy” manifests itself in his mind.³⁰³ The image of Yukiko’s severed arm renders Matsuo himself nearly unable to write, as he “breaks down crying while writing, unable to dip his pen into the inkpot.”³⁰⁴

Not long after, more letters arrive in Tokyo, first from Matsuo’s father, then from his brother-in-law, reassuring him that his sister had been prematurely worried and that Yukiko was already “crawling around as healthy as ever.”³⁰⁵ Interestingly, Matsuo associates the image of the shattered body not with the reproduced printed document that heralded its transformation, but with the illegibility of his sister’s letter. Matsuo writes “an angry letter criticizing his sister for her crossed-out chicken scratch,” as if it were the crossing out of her words that had somehow crossed out Yukiko’s arm.³⁰⁶ Though Yukiko’s body is restored without ever having been truly broken, the relationship between she and Matsuo is in effect severed, as the remainder of the story deals with his inability to win the toddler’s trust. Significantly, the scene in which Matsuo receives the series of letters is the only scene in which the urban space of Tokyo is represented, as Matsuo angrily stomps around his neighborhood worrying about his niece.

Although various types of text, such as the vaccination order, letters, newspapers, and telegrams appear throughout the story, it is only within the space of the city (which is linked to the act of reading in the opening scene) that multiple types of texts can come

³⁰² Yokomitsu, “Onmi,” 319.

³⁰³ Ibid, 320.

³⁰⁴ Ibid, 320.

³⁰⁵ Ibid, 321.

³⁰⁶ Ibid, 321.

into argumentation, exchange, and negotiation through which the body is taken apart and put back together. Though “Onmi” contains none of the formalist textual practices that characterize “Hae,” the story problematizes the circulation of text and shows how access to the materiality of the body is mediated through the reading and writing of the word as literary text, printed document, and handwritten letter. In “Hae,” the space between the country and the city constitutes the primary locus in which Yokomitsu’s mediatory textual practices of sensation and perception play out, while in “Onmi,” the space between is not itself represented within the diegesis of the text, but is replaced with the passage of letters between the locales, as the exchange of text produces and manipulates the image of the body across the mediatory space.

Reading Along the Lines: The Disruption of Railway Travel and the Distortion of Grammar

The relationship between reading, writing, and travel along the rapidly developing transportation and communication networks of modern Japan plays a central role in yet another story included in Yokomitsu’s *Onmi* collection, “Teki” (The Enemy, 1924).³⁰⁷ “Teki” tells the story of Kitagawa Manji, an illiterate man who spends his life working as a station attendant at the rural train stop in his home village. The “enemy” in question is Manji’s friend turned rival Goichi, who by virtue of finishing primary school is able to advance his station in life and move on while Manji, having dropped out without completing the second grade, remains stuck behind. Manji spends his life resenting Goichi in every way, even plotting to kill him, but when the two finally meet again, he

³⁰⁷ “Teki” first appeared in the journal *Shinshōsetsu* in Jan. 1924 and was first published in book form in the collection *Nichirin* published by Shun’yōdō the same year.

finds himself unable to do so. The key point in the narrative of “Teki” is the utterance by Goichi that prevents Manji from moving on past his own local station, the moment in which Goichi is transformed from friend into enemy:

When Manji was 23 years old, he and Goichi were both set to be promoted to the next level of employment based on their yearly evaluations. But Goichi moved up and left Manji behind. Goichi had finished primary school. Manji had quit halfway through second grade. When word got around that Manji and Goichi would be promoted to the same rank, it was Goichi who sneakily approached the stationmaster and confided in him as to Manji’s lack of schooling. “You know, Kitagawa never passed the second grade. Just try asking him to write a sentence. That man doesn’t know a single character.”³⁰⁸

Goichi advances in rank and moves on to work at a bigger station in a bigger town down the line, while Manji is left to languish behind. Crucial here is how literacy is tied not only to social progression, but also to the movement of the train (and the ability to move the train) from station to station along a presumably linear path. It is through reading and writing that one can move along this fixed mechanical line, passing from a small station to a larger locus. The lack of literacy becomes a kind of originary trauma for Manji, generating a lifelong conflict played out along the rail lines with his enemy Goichi. At age 36, Manji “began reading from a primary school reader (*tokuhon*). He taught himself arithmetic,” learning the symbols, characters, and numbers that allow him to begin moving away from his small station and towards Goichi.³⁰⁹ The iteration of letters is linked to the movement of the train upon the line, as the gap produced by the movement of the train opens a schism between Goichi and Manji whose lives are made parallel but incommensurable through the differential in their reading ability.

³⁰⁸ Yokomitsu, “Teki,” *TYRZ* vol. 1, 266-267.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid*, 269.

Yokomitsu's own early life was in many ways delineated by the creation of rail lines, as his father Yokomitsu Akitoshi worked as a track construction laborer. The family moved with him from job to job, as the younger Yokomitsu bounced from Aizu to Chiba, Tokyo, Iga, and Hiroshima all before he was five years old.³¹⁰ The representation of movement and stoppage along the rail lines within the transportation network constitutes the central structure of Yokomitsu's "Atama narabi ni hara" (Heads and Bellies, 1924), which contains perhaps Yokomitsu's single most influential line of text. The story, which was featured in the fiction section of the inaugural issue of *Bungei Jidai* in October 1924, describes the momentary panic of a crowd of train passengers when an express train traveling through the countryside comes to a sudden stop. With little explanation as to the reason for the stop other than "a problem on the line between stations H and K," the multitude (*gunshū*) of passengers are left confused and disoriented until a replacement train arrives; the only figure left unperturbed is a mentally disturbed boy whose nonsensical singing continues as it did before the train stopped.³¹¹ Upon the story's release, it produced a minor scandal within the *bundan* with its seemingly innocuous first line: "High noon. The crowded express train ran at full speed. The small stations along the tracks were ignored like stones."³¹² As Yokomitsu's colleague Kataoka Teppei noted in a later issue of *Bungei Jidai*:

In the opinion of a certain established author, this is a very bad sentence. The implication is that the expression needlessly goes out of its way to be strange, or perhaps it is that there is no new content in this so-called "

³¹⁰ Yokomitsu's father's railroad work would eventually take him to colonial Korea, where he would later die. The incident is the subject of the story "Aoi Taii" (The Pale Captain, 1927).

³¹¹ Yokomitsu, "Atama narabi ni hara," *TYRZ* vol. 1, 399. Originally published in *Bungei Jidai* vol. 1, no. 1, Oct. 1924.

³¹² Yokomitsu Riichi, "Atama narabi ni hara," 396. My translation of the line is a modified version of that which appears in Seiji Lippit, *Topographies of Japanese Modernism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 78.

“sensory” (*kankakuteki*) writing deemed to be the coming of a new era on the basis of its eccentric grammar.³¹³

At issue is the personification of inanimate objects as the train “ignores” the stations as if they were stones. To at least some older authors, the modes of writing adopted by Yokomitsu and other *Bungei Jidai* authors was nothing but an attempt to willfully and meaninglessly subvert accepted norms of style, providing no truly new literary development or interest. Kataoka suggests several alternative (that is to say, traditional) ways of styling the same sentence, including, “The train ran on at full speed without stopping at the small stations;” “The train did not stop at the small stations, but continued on,” and so forth. He identifies these standard grammatical structures with the writing style of the “established authors” (*kisei sakka*), who he claims are

Unable to escape a naturalistic (*shizenshugi*) mode of writing; that is to say, the most standard style of Japanese realists (*Nihon no riarisuto*) working at the level of naturalism and similar modes based upon realist practices (*shajitsushugi*) concerned only with the baseline of the five sensory organs of the scientist.³¹⁴

Like Yokomitsu in “Kankaku katsudô,” Kataoka seeks to separate a “sensory” textual practice engaged with grammatical structure and the mediating properties of the written word from a simplistic conception of sensation as produced through solely through a body existing entirely outside of the text.

The passage of the train generates a string of representations of vocalizations within the story and within the train itself. The lines following the famous opening continue as such:

Amidst this phenomenon, a lazy-looking boy was mixed in with the packed-in passengers. He sat there, looking respectable and began twirling

³¹³ Kataoka Teppei, “Wakaki dokusha ni uttau,” *Bungei Jidai* vol. 1, no. 3 (Dec. 1924), 2.

³¹⁴ *Ibid*, 6.

his kerchief into a headband. Then he started pounding on the window with both hands and singing in a loud voice.

“Oh my wife is so lucky

Lucky

Yoi yoi

Lucky, Lucky

Oh so lucky

Yoi yoi”³¹⁵

The mentally incapacitated boy begins babbling, and continues to do so on and off throughout the remainder of the story. His vocalizations are represented as coming from amidst a crowd located not within the train as such, but within “this phenomenon” (*kôiu genshō no naka de*), the grammatically reversed representation of the train passing the stations. The boy’s babbling is aligned with the indefinite duration of the train’s journey (which exceeds the length of the narrative), and Yokomitsu implies that as long as the train remains within the interstitial space between the point of departure and the point of arrival, his voice will continue to sound: “He shook his head. His voice grew louder and louder. Judging by the spirit of his voice, it seemed as if he would continue singing every song he knew until the train arrived at its destination. The songs continued to flow from his mouth, constantly changing.”³¹⁶ As in “Hae,” the narrative space is linked to the space of the journey between points, as the generation of constantly changing language is mapped onto the mediatory interval between two indeterminate points. In the case of “Atama narabi ni hara,” “the train comes to a sudden halt” in this movement, which briefly “sets the passengers in the car silent before they begin chattering” again.³¹⁷ Unlike the songs of the boy, the cries of the unnamed passengers (“What is this!” Where are

³¹⁵ Yokomitsu Riichi, “Atama narabi ni hara,” 396.

³¹⁶ Ibid, 397. The story concludes with another string of nonsensical singing from the boy, who remains on the stopped train as it finally begins moving again, long after the other passengers have alighted.

³¹⁷ Yokomitsu, “Atama narabi ni hara,” 396.

we?”) call out to their inability to place themselves spatially or understand the chain of events that have led them to their present impasse, as “everything becomes unclear” (*issai ga fumei de atta*).³¹⁸ As a result, the passengers are transformed into the body parts of the title, as “heads wrapped within fat bellies” push back onto the replacement train when it finally arrives. Thus, the passage and stoppage of the train produces a stream of language that transforms the bodies within it to a mass of parts, calling attention to the ways in which those bodies and voices emerge through the contingencies of the networks of transportation and communication that provide the story’s setting.

The effects of this process are not limited to the diegetic space of the story itself, as the infamous first line generated a great deal of chatter at the level of literary discourse in the debates over the grammatical legitimacy of Yokomitsu’s sentence. The train’s act of “silently ignoring” (*mokusatsu*) the small stations is precisely what gives rise to the voices of the literati, as the small stations are anything but ignored as they spread throughout the discursive network of readers. When smooth passage between the nodes of the network is halted and the process of reading is disrupted by the “very bad” grammar of the sentence, the heretofore ignored “stones” that make up the points along the rail line and line of text are transformed into the object of the attention of the reader and critic. Kataoka points out:

The term “silently ignore” (*mokusatsu*) conveys the feeling of a certain type of violence. A psychological violence, or to put it a different way, a fever of the mind. This violence, this fever, conveys a certain sense of stress, of pressure. The term “silently ignore” takes this sense of pressure and pushes upon (*semaru*) a person...the result is a kind of internal musical effect (*naimenteki na ongakuteki kôka*) that sensorially stimulates us.³¹⁹

³¹⁸ Yokomitsu, “Atama narabi ni hara,” 399.

³¹⁹ Kataoka, “Wakaki dokusha ni uttau,” 7.

In addition to the production of the sounds inside and outside both train and text through the grammar of Yokomitsu's representation of "silence," the story thrusts Kataoka's "sensorially stimulated" reader into a new relationship with the text built around the train's movement and stoppage. Kataoka describes the process as such:

The reader's sensations (*kankaku*) – in the ideal situation the sensations of their whole body – are, along with the writer, given a life force (*seimei*) at once inside, in the depths of, and above a given object. Then it is the reader that writes (*egaku*). In this way, the sensations of the author live on blended into the object, and at that instant the promise of a second life (*dai ni no seikatsu*) begins.³²⁰

In Kataoka's understanding, the text, understood as a particular collection of literary techniques, possesses the ability to mediate between the author and the reader, sensation and perception, and subject and object. Sensations are located not directly in the body's experience within the material world, but rather as phenomena instigated through a particular kind of textual practice, much as in Yokomitsu's literary theory outlined in "Kankaku katsudô." Interesting in Kataoka's formulation is the way in which subjectivity in the production of the text is transferred from the writer to the reader, who in turn becomes a kind of writer as sense perceptions of the material world are mediated from the author's pen to the printed word to the reader's body, where they are reproduced in the crafting of a new mode of life (*seikatsu*). In this way, Kataoka develops Yokomitsu's concern with the way in which the body is produced and experienced through the literary text, as the body itself becomes the mediatory existence in the integration of objects into the perception of lived experience by both reader and writer.

³²⁰ Kataoka, "Wakaki dokusha ni uttau," 5.

Conclusion

In the previous chapter, I detailed the transformations of print media and the publishing industry in the first decades of the 20th century and demonstrated the crucial role of these changes in the making of programs for social reconstruction and the popularization of social thought in modern Japan. In this chapter, I turned from an analysis of the publishing industry on the production side and the masses on the consumption side to a schema addressing the literary journal and the individual writer on one hand to the individual reader on the other. I argued that a new generation of authors beginning their literary careers in the 1920s came to understand the nexus of economic, material, and discursive circumstances that structured the possibilities of literary production in prewar Japan. In essence these writers were concerned with another aspect of the same problem raised by Miki: namely how the written word as a material and economic object might be made to reorient not social structure, but individual modes of sensation and perception.

Rather than try to simply overthrow previous generations of authors and their respective modes of literary technique, writers like Kawabata, Yokomitsu, and Kataoka attempted to theorize how new ground in the literary realm might be discovered, carved out, and claimed while working within a system they recognized as essentially all-encompassing. The economic realities of their “avant-garde” literary production formed a crucible within which they came to understand the idea of what it might mean to create something “new.” This idea of newness itself provided a key trope for understanding the modern age that they wrote in, as constant confrontation with new texts, new experiences, new media, and new modes of urban life came to be seen as a problematic that cut to the

core of their own acts of writing. Urged on by an awareness of the way in which the circulation of the discourse of the literati produced their position within the *bundan*, these authors looked for a way to negotiate the relationship between their literary art and the experiences of everyday life shared by all modern writers and readers. *Bungei Jidai* became a site in which progressive-minded authors drafted an understanding of literary production focused on the complex dialectics of ever-evolving sensation and perception, which they located at the heart of any attempt to process the constantly shifting reality of modern life in the 1920s.

This endeavor was most clearly articulated in the work of Yokomitsu Riichi, who developed a theoretical framework in which the mediating processes of sensation and perception were themselves understood to be mediated through the symbols and representations that made up a piece of printed text. The interwoven relationships between the set of sensations and perceptions lodged in the human body and the power of the printed word figured prominently in Yokomitsu's early short works, many of which explored the ways in which different forms of written or printed text produced different ideas of the human body and the sensory processes through which it perceives the world. Within Yokomitsu's oeuvre, this concern arises in a set of works structured around the development of the expanding transportation and communication networks of 20th century Japan, as forms of distorted text and representations of fragmented bodies emerge from the in-between space along those networks. What remained for Yokomitsu and the other "emerging authors" of the mid-1920s was to explicate the ways in which the body and its parts were recombined and re-imagined within the rapidly transforming metropolis itself, a space where different people, products, modes of vision, ideas of

experience, and textual practices circulated amidst the commodity economy of consumer capital. Having explored the transformations of discursive space and literary writing, in the following chapter I turn to the remaking of geographical and social space and explore the relationship between literature, criticism, and the new realities of life in the modern city.

Chapter Three:**The Transformation of Tokyo, the Mapping of Urban Space, and the Making of the Mediated Body**

Capitalism produces its own geography.

-David Harvey, *The Urban Experience*
(1985)³²¹

This chapter traces the structural shifts at work in the expansion of the city of Tokyo in the first decades of the 20th century and examines changing ideas of urban space and the human body through an investigation of various strategies of representation of the modern metropolis. In this chapter, I read a variety of texts concerned with the multifarious and fragmentary qualities of modern urban life, including works of fiction by Yokomitsu Riichi (1898-1947), sociological studies by the urban ethnographer Kon Wajirô (1881-1973), critical writings on department stores and railroads, and excerpts from schemas of urban planning under the tenure of Tokyo mayor Gotô Shinpei (1867-1929). I thus situate the production of literary writing within a broader discursive framework that provides a picture of the varied and multivalent forces at work in the spatial transformation of Tokyo in the early 20th century. By reading selected works of urban fiction in tandem with a discussion of the historical phenomena involved in the development of Tokyo as a conurbation of consumer capital, I demonstrate mutually mediating relationships between literature, urban space, and the human body. Key to these processes are the ways in which the body is fragmented into parts and reimagined through the circulation of commodities, including the literary work as an object to be bought and sold in consumer society. My discussion begins with an analysis of the

³²¹ David Harvey, *The Urban Experience* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1989), 5.

relationship between a single person and a single coin and moves outwards through the individual, the store, the city, the transportation network, the nation, the empire, and finally the geology of the earth in order to demonstrate the relations between each of these levels and show the ways in which an understanding of those relations are mediated through techniques of literary representation and other modes of social discourse.

Dialectical Vision in the Lower Depths

In the final sections of the previous chapter, I examined a set of fictional texts by Yokomitsu Riichi (1898-1947), all of which problematized the relationship between images of the body and forms of written text as they moved along the communication and transportation networks linking the country and the city. I argued that Yokomitsu uses the interstitial space between the rural and the urban to draw attention to the different forms and functions of written and printed text that mediate the understanding of bodily experience and sensory knowledge. Here, I turn my attention away from that interstitial space and towards the center of the city itself, which became a key topos for Yokomitsu and many other writers of his generation. Yokomitsu penned a number of works dealing with many of the multifarious aspects of life in the modern city, the most famous of which is the long novel *Shanghai* (*Shanghai*, 1928-1932), which explores in expressionistic fashion the many-faceted dimensions of experience in the semi-colonial city. In crafting a montage-like image of the ways in which people, products, and bodies came together from all over the world only to be broken apart within the fractured

topography of empire, Yokomitsu wrote a novel that remains among the strongest examples of long-form fiction from the prewar period.³²²

However, Yokomitsu's engagement with the problematics of urban space did not begin with his one-month visit to Shanghai in 1928; rather, *Shanghai* might be seen as the culmination of a much longer interest in the relationship between narrative form, the human body, and the rapidly shifting qualities of the urban experience. Working as a writer in Tokyo throughout the turbulent 1920s, Yokomitsu had lived in the metropolis and with the metropolis since the start of his authorial endeavors, and like most writers of his generation, took a keen interest in addressing the question of what it meant to exist within a conurbation of such scale. His necessarily fragmentary approach to representing the totality of the urban experience began at the bottom of the city itself, with the 1924 story "Machi no soko" (The Depths of the Town) in which he crafts a short sketch of the experience of the lower end of modern urban life. "Machi no soko" also serves as the starting point for my own analysis, as it takes up the matter of negotiating the disparity

³²² In terms of my selection of texts for analysis in this chapter, the apparent lacuna would be an absence of discussion of *Shanghai*, often held to be the great novel of urban space to be written in prewar Japan. My reasons for this exclusion of *Shanghai* are two-fold: Firstly, a number of excellent studies of *Shanghai* have already been published in both English and Japanese. These include Lippit, *Topographies of Japanese Modernism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 73-115, whose analyses of the novel informs my brief summary here; Dennis Washburn's critical postscript in his full translation as *Shanghai: A Novel* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Center for Japanese Studies, 2001); Gregory Golley, *When Our Eyes No Longer See: Realism, Science, and Ecology in Japanese Literary Modernism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008), 121-159; Yamamoto Ryôsuke, *Yokomitsu Riichi to shôsetsu no ronri* (Tokyo: Sasama Shoin, 2008), 191-230; Maeda Ai, *Toshi kûkan no naka no bungaku* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobô, 1982), 365-401; Komori Yôichi, "Mojishintai shôzô kôkan – ryûdôtai to shite no tekisuto 'Shanghai,'" in *Kôzô to shite no katari* (Tokyo: Shinyôsha, 1988), 507-537; Toeda Hirokazu, "Kaizôsha to Shanghai," *Ajia Yûgaku* no. 62 (2004), among many others. Secondly, although *Shanghai* is undoubtedly the most sustained work of Yokomitsu's to take the modern city as its object, it is far from the only one. The texts I read in this chapter can all be understood as commentaries on the changing state of Tokyo, which was Yokomitsu's home as well as the site for his literary experiments in the representation of the urban experience. By reading a diversity of shorter stories set in Tokyo, I show how a complex and more fully totalized picture of the modern city emerges through the multivalent fragments of urban life.

between different views and experiences of urban space as mediated through the most central of all commodities, the money form. The brief story follows a few days in the life of an unemployed man. The story, short as it is (about five pages as originally published), begins not by immediately introducing the nameless protagonist, but rather by outlining the contours of the physical and economic landscape within which he is later situated:

There was a shoe store on the street corner. The inside of the house was stuffed with black shoes from wall to floor. A girl languished amidst the walls of black shoes that were like heavy doors. Next door was a clock shop, with a thicket of clocks forming a pattern. Next door to that was an egg shop, where a hunched old man sat wiping his brow with a cloth amidst the froth of eggs. Next door to that was a china shop...Next door to that was a flower shop. The girl in the flower shop was even filthier than the flowers. Sometimes a foolish-looking young boy emerged from amidst the flowers. Next door to that was a clothing shop...Next door to that a bookshop like a plate of armor opened its maw...³²³

The narrative goes on to list a girls' school, a bathhouse, a fruit shop, and a surgeon before eventually introducing an anonymous protagonist that "passes silently by the shops."³²⁴ The neighborhood Yokomitsu sketches, a not quite slum, lacks any of the trappings of bourgeois urban life, but is no less a picture of the modern city populated with people and products jammed together. The street is comprised of row after row of the goods, commodities, and institutions that constitute the experience of daily life; the people sit framed by these objects, only occasionally emerging. Those who are not ensconced amidst their wares are represented as the flows of a faceless crowd, "colorful waves of schoolgirls that go streaming out of the gate at three in the afternoon," and "throng of black and blue workmen avalanching out of the factory gates like a weary

³²³ Yokomitsu Riichi, "Machi no soko," in Hoshô Masao et. al, ed., *Teihon Yokomitsu Riichi zenshû*, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Kawade Shobô, 1981), 192-193. Hereafter cited as *TYRZ*. Originally published in *Bungei Jidai*, vol. 2, no. 8, Aug. 1925.

³²⁴ Yokomitsu, "Machi no soko," 193.

wind.”³²⁵ These figures and objects surround the equally anonymous protagonist who moves within the milieu of the circulating masses but attempts to seek out the possibility of a parallax vision through which he can perceive the structure of the city as a whole, as “every day he climbs to the top of the green hill behind the street” and looks out, as the “objects (*kyakkanbutsu*) of the town compete for attention within his two fields of vision (*shiya*).”³²⁶ The two fields of vision correspond to the two different images of the city that spread out from the man’s vantage point:

To the north, the manors of the gentry spread out across a high plateau. There, wind and light moved in and out freely...He thought nothing at all. He looked down onto the city to the south, sitting at the bottom of a narrow ravine. There, carbonic gases made the air thick. The dust, typhus, and smoke from the military factories blowing on the east wind were the only things that moved freely. There were no plants. The only things that gathered together there were tiles, bacteria, and empty pots, goods left unsold in the market, laborers, prostitutes, and rats.³²⁷

A contrast emerges between the grime of the lower depths and the free, bright space of the upper city, populated with “dancing girls,” “cars,” and “silk hats.” The latter is characterized by the movement of light, wind, and the moneyed elite, while the former appears as its dark other where people and things gather and build up but do not circulate, a privilege reserved for gas, dirt, disease and other undesirables of urban life. In David

³²⁵ Yokomitsu, “Machi no soko,” 193-194. Yokomitsu scholar Ishida Hitoshi has argued that based on the description of the area and Yokomitsu’s own residential history that the area on which “Machi no soko” can likely be identified as the Tamachi neighborhood in south central Tokyo. Ishida Hitoshi, “Yokomitsu Riichi no keishikiron – toshi bungaku no jikûkan,” in Taguchi Ritsuo, ed., *Nihon bungaku o yomikaeru 12 – toshi* (Tokyo: Yûseidô, 1995), 138-158. Ishida’s argument, based on the industrial character of the area at the time, the unusual north-south (rather than east-west) schism between high and low, and the fact that Yokomitsu had previously lived in the area, is convincing. Nonetheless, I argue that the significance of the work and the model of the city and urban vision which it sketches extends far beyond an identification with a particular geographic and historical topos. For a longer discussion of the methodological concerns behind the relationship of literature and specific locales within Tokyo, see the Introduction to this dissertation.

³²⁶ Yokomitsu, “Machi no soko,” 193.

³²⁷ *Ibid*, 193.

Harvey's words, "the city is the high point of human achievement...but it is also the site of squalid human failure;" the dual nature of urban space is on full display for Yokomitsu's anonymous protagonist from his place on the hill.³²⁸ Yet, at this point in the narrative, the two images of the city appear as entirely distinct, rather than dialectically linked in their contradiction.³²⁹ Yokomitsu hints at a connection between the two, as the leftover goods are the surplus of something beyond their resting place, and the laborers and smoke-belching factories are at work for an economy that extends beyond the lower depths in which they dwell. Nonetheless, the panorama of the city that the hill provides to both the protagonist and the reader reveals only the visual and phenomenological dimension of the city, the deeper structure of which begins to emerge as the narrative moves into the psychology of the protagonist as he re-enters the slum:

He wanted money, ten *sen*. If he just had that much, he could make it for a day without thinking about anything. If he didn't think, his sickness would be healed. When he moved, he started getting hungry. If he got hungry, ten *sen* wouldn't be enough for one day. With a pale greenish face, like a bug searching for camouflage, he sat in the green grass on the hill for a day. When the sun sank low, he descended from the hill and entered the city streets.³³⁰

To the protagonist, the small sum of ten *sen* possess the ability to cease the endless cycle of thinking, moving, and eating that constitutes his experience of everyday life, as the money embodies the exchange relationships that structure the sequence of those actions.

³²⁸ David Harvey, *The Urban Experience* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1989), 229.

³²⁹ In *Topographies of Japanese Modernism*, Seiji Lippit cites the same passage depicting the contrast between the upper and lower cities in "Machi no soko." As part of a larger analysis of Yokomitsu's long novel *Shanghai*, Lippit states that "the protagonist's capacity for a rational comprehension of sensory phenomena collapses in the face of this fragmentation." In the following pages, I will argue that the protagonist's movement within the city and his grasp of the exchange relationship imbued in the money form produce a more ordered vision that allows the registers of sensory phenomena and structural comprehension, and of high city and low city to be grasped in a dialectical totality beyond this fragmentation and apparent paradox.

³³⁰ Yokomitsu, "Machi no soko," 194.

The man turns out to possess the ten *sen* in question, which he uses to buy a serving of meat in a worker's canteen at the bottom of the hill. With the money, he can participate in the minimal activities urban existence and move freely within the limited realm of the lower city; without it, he can either gaze at the bifurcated vision of the metropolis or begin thinking about his own position. The two experiences and the two sides of the city are connected via the man's relationship to the coin in his pocket, which mediates his relationship between vision and sensation. At this point in the narrative, the deeper structure of the urban landscape and the dialectical nature of the city itself comes into clearer focus to the protagonist. Passing through a marketplace filled with light glinting off acetylene lamps and shiny objects for sale, the protagonist re-imagines the topography of the city, envisioning it not as a populated landscape, but as an abstract form structured by the coin itself:

He peered affectionately at the mountain of copper coins piled on the mat. He felt a strange sense of refinement emerging from the masses of lumpy copper clinging to each other, as if the pile of coins was a mysterious tower (*kikai na tô*). He began to see the dynamic (*rikigakuteki*) volume of the copper coins settled at the bottom of the city as if they formed a pin single-handedly supporting the sloping line of the giant cone of the city, radiating out with the coins at the center.³³¹

The man grasps the internal dialectic at work in the glinting lump of metal laying upon the mat of the vegetable merchant; although the money is at rest at the moment, its volume remains “dynamic” as it holds within its solid state the ability to move, circulate, and determine the contours of his life. With ten *sen* no longer in his pocket, the protagonist sees the merchant's money as both out of his reach and as the linchpin that structures the urban space through which he moves. To him, the coins are at once a

³³¹ Yokomitsu, “Machi no soko,” 195.

familiar brown lump and a “mysterious tower” as distant as the homes of the gentry across the city. The sloping line echoes the hill on which the man had previously sat, offering a different kind of vision of the city’s underlying topography and structure. He suddenly exclaims, “That’s right! I’ve got to pull out the pin!” No sooner does he reach this realization than his previous image of the city is shattered: “When he felt the illusion (*gensô*) of the city laying on its side and cracked into pieces, he felt satisfied, and again entered into the shoulders of the people. Amidst the stench of the people’s bodies, he stopped, overwhelmed with a sudden sadness.”³³² When the vision of the city as a contiguous totality has been stripped away, a perceptual shift reorients the man’s experience of urban space as nothing other than the continual jostling of smelly bodies.

The protagonist’s relationship with money thus mediates the way in which he is able to sense and perceive the space of the city. However, rather than the possession or lack of ten *sen* at a particular moment, it is an understanding of his possible uses for the money that allows the man to continue living at the minimum threshold of urban life. Back inside the man’s home, the same ten *sen* manifests itself not in the form of copper coins, but in the form of commercial print products in his possession: “He knew that if he sold three magazines, he could get ten *sen*. As long as he knew this principle, he felt no fear in life. One day, he sold the three magazines, and grasping the money that he had made, he made to go out.”³³³ Being unemployed, the protagonist’s ability to make money is necessarily contingent upon any number of external factors; what structures his existence is the internalization of the principle of exchange, a key part of the process that

³³² Yokomitsu, “Machi no soko,” 195.

³³³ *Ibid*, 196.

Harvey calls the “urbanization of consciousness.”³³⁴ Significantly, the particular object that the protagonist builds this understanding upon is mass-market printed matter, which exists to him not as text, but as commodity per se, acting as the symbolic pin that structures his own consciousness, not through its content, but through the function of its form as tradable for money. He exchanges the magazines for cash, but ends up taking pity on an old beggar, which leaves him penniless once again.

Stripped of the ten *sen*, the protagonist sets off to sit in the grass on the green hill one more time. This time, however, Yokomitsu’s narrative omits any vision of the city. What Martin Jay describes as the “radical separation of the spaces of production and consumption” that allows for the emergence of the act of aesthetic viewing from afar is supplanted by the protagonist’s unfinished reflection on his position: “Life is...” (*seikatsu to wa*).³³⁵ The story draws to a close as the protagonist finds himself once more at the bottom of the hill amidst the city streets, where “no matter what he thinks, his head hurts” as the “city spreads out with him at its center.”³³⁶ At the conclusion, Yokomitsu repeats but modifies the description of the street that opened the story: “On the street corner was a shoe store. The shoe store girl sat silently amidst the shoes. Next door was a geometric clock shop. Amidst the countless angles of the clocks, a clock struck three.”³³⁷

³³⁴ See Harvey, *The Urban Experience*, 229-255. In regards to labor, unemployment, and the problem of contingency as manifest in prewar Japan, see Ken C. Kawashima, *The Proletarian Gamble: Korean Workers in Interwar Japan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).

³³⁵ Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 59. Jay is summarizing Raymond Williams’ history of the emergence of the rural pastoral as aesthetic pleasantries from *The Country and the City*. Whereas the first time the protagonist in “Machi no Soko” ascended the hill he was able to view the city as bifurcated tableau distinct from his own experience and the struggles within the city, after moving between the two spaces and coming to understand the role of money, he is no longer to see the same panorama as a mere view outside of his own existence within those structures of production and consumption.

³³⁶ Yokomitsu, “Machi no soko,” 195-196.

³³⁷ *Ibid*, 197.

The repetition of the opening forms a frame for the narrative, within which the protagonist shuttles between moneyed and penniless, high and low, and two visions of the city. However, rather than the frame lending meaning to the narrative contained within, the dialectical motion of the protagonist sandwiched within the two representations of the slum's street instead alters the frame itself. Upon its second appearance, the street comes to be seen by the reader and protagonist as part of the larger deep structure of the city as mountain of coins. After walking through the street once more, the protagonist eschews the solace of the panorama atop the hill and instead stops "in front of the gate of the girls' school. He stood there gazing as if he was a stake (*kui*) being bathed in a swift current. The wave of young girls split before him, peacefully flowing by like flowers waving in a garden."³³⁸ Having passed through the dialectical motions of the core of the narrative of "The Depths of the Town," the protagonist locates himself as a one of the innumerable crowd of single points around which the city unfolds, as the circulation of people and goods continues ceaselessly on.

Mysterious Tower and Microcosm: The Department Store as Totemic Topos

In "The Depths of the Town," Yokomitsu Riichi presents a process in which the urbanized consciousness is produced by movement through the topography of the modern city. In this process, metropolitan space functions as the mediating structure through which capitalism as a system is experienced and imagined as a totality that constitutes the particular sensations and perceptions of a subject functioning within it, as urban landscape configures the human body moving in its midst. The pressures and struggle of

³³⁸ Yokomitsu, "Machi no soko," 196-197.

daily life within the slum constitute what Yokomitsu's nameless protagonist identify as the linchpin of the city itself, as the lower depths both supply the laboring bodies necessary for the production of bourgeois culture and absorb the detritus and surplus that are the remainders of life on the distantly viewed hill. If the slum forms one pole of the city's architecture, the other is the "mysterious tower" that appears to the nameless man as he gazes upon the pile of copper coins. In Japan in the 1920s, the mysterious tower as herald of capitalist culture was not merely an abstract fantasy, but a concrete space that embodied fantasy itself – the department store. The department store, a manifestation of modern consumer culture par excellence, forms a dialectical pair with the market street in the depths of the town, radically different in physical form, yet parallel in function. In early 20th century Japan, as in 19th century Paris and London, and fin-de-siecle America, the department store stood as a totemic structure, at once a manifestation of burgeoning consumer society, and a major engine for the production and reproduction of the same.

Along with the plebian mass entertainment district of Asakusa, the department store, first emerging in Ginza and central Tokyo before proliferating throughout the city, was one of the most symbolic and influential places in the prewar metropolis. Within the department store, no less a part of mass culture than the rowdy, popular, and diverse topos of Asakusa, a contrasting pattern of cultural practices was produced, generating particular types of movement and images of the body germane to the full-blown capitalist culture to come.³³⁹ Henri Lefebvre has argued that "a revolution that does not produce a

³³⁹ Numerous literary and cultural studies in both English and Japanese have focused on Asakusa as a privileged topos for reconstructing the image of the 1920s as an age of vibrant popular culture and possibility implicitly compared to the militarism and repression of the 1930s and 1940s. The success of such approaches, which have created a much-needed body of knowledge of the urban popular culture of 20th century Japan have made "Asakusa" almost synonymous with the study of literature and urban space in prewar Japan. In this chapter, I attempt to craft a broader

new space has not realized its full potential;” This is true not only of socialist revolution, but of the consumer revolution as well, as the spaces produced through a particular mode of social practice in turn produce particular representations of space and representations of the body within a particular spatial structure.³⁴⁰ Spaces like the department store mediate the subject’s engagement with capitalism as it is experienced as a constitutive force in the practices of everyday life. As such, the department store became a popular site for the investigation and critique of modern metropolitan life, generating a diverse set of discourses on the transformation of Tokyo and the experience of living within it.

In Japan, department stores (*hyakkaten*, *depâtomento sutoa*, or *depâto*) developed from successful dry-goods stores (*gofukuten*) that became wealthy merchants and major businesses during the Edo period. Japan’s first department store (taking the name from American shops like Chicago’s Marshall Field’s, Philadelphia’s Wanamaker’s, and New York’s Macy’s) was Mitsukoshi, founded as a department store in 1904 and declaring itself “the only department store in Japan” in a full-page advertisement taken out in most

analysis of the metropolis as structure rather than particular locale, and focus in part on Ginza and the department store in order to understand how the social practice germane to that topos fit into a larger and more complex nexus of a national, imperial, and global capitalist culture. Due to its links with the Edo period cultural engine of the Yoshiwara licensed quarter, Asakusa is difficult to separate entirely from evocations of lively Edo commoner culture and the specificity of early modern Japan; by focusing instead on the Ginza department store, I hope to understand the structural reconfigurations parallel to those taking place in other locales with the proliferation of consumer culture. For superlative studies on Asakusa and beyond in English, see Lippit, *Topographies of Japanese Modernism*; Miriam Silverberg, *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense: The Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006). In Japanese, see Maeda Ai’s “Gekijô to shite no Asakusa,” in *Toshi kûkan no naka no bungaku*, among many others. In *Toshi no dramaturugî: Tokyo – sakariba no shakaishi* (Kawade Shobô Shinsha, 2008), Yoshimi Shun’ya describes the shift from Asakusa to Ginza as a key development of the 1920s.

³⁴⁰ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1991), 38-46; 54.

of the country's major newspapers and magazines the day after New Years Day 1905.³⁴¹ Located in central Tokyo between the imperial palace and the city's banking center, Mitsukoshi competed fiercely with other shops and houses located nearby and around the city, including Shirokiya, Matsuya, Matsuzakaya, and Takashimaya. Beginning with capital injections around the time of the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905 and spurred on by the economic boom following World War One, department stores jumped in prominence and extended their consumer base.³⁴² The rapid growth of an urban population, the birth of a burgeoning middle class, and the development of a broad and efficient railroad network allowing both goods and people to reach the store formed a nexus of conditions that allowed for the emergence of the physical agglomeration and circulation of goods at a scale not seen before. The department store in Japan was a single but key component in a retail revolution that supplied the populations of Tokyo, Osaka, Fukuoka, and other regional cities with specific desires for the accoutrements of modern life as well as the objects with which to fulfill those desires.³⁴³

³⁴¹ Hatsuda Tôru, *Hyakkaten no tanjô* (Tokyo: Sanseidô, 1993), 60. The term *hyakkaten* did not come into use until slightly after the transliteration of "department store." Mitsukoshi, previously known as Mitsui Gofukuten, traces its roots back through the famous Echigoya shop to the merchant house founded by Mitsui Hachirôbei in 1673. In *Hyakkaten hyakkei*, Kuramoto Chôji cites a thinly-veiled parody of Mitsui in Ihara Saikaku's (1642-1693) *Nippon Eitaigura* of 1688. See Kuramoto, 14. The story quoted is the fourth tale in the first book of the work; for a translation of the passage in question, which describes Mitsui's development of a cash on delivery system for goods payment, see "In the Past on Credit, Now Cash Down," part of *Japan's Eternal Storehouse* trans. G.W. Sargent, in Haruo Shirane, ed., *Early Modern Japanese Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press), 133-136. A discussion of Mitsui also appears in the editor's introduction to the selection, Shirane 131-133. In addition to dry-goods stores, an important predecessor to the department store in Japan was the *kôkanba* market of the Meiji period.

³⁴² Matsuda Shinzô, *Depâtomento sutoa* (Tokyo: Nihon Hyôronsha, 1931), 88-92. Reprinted in Wada Atsuhiko, ed., *Modan toshi bunka 08: depâto* (Tokyo: Yumani Shobô, 2005).

³⁴³ See Michael Barry Miller, *The Bon Marche: Bourgeois Culture and the Department Store, 1869-1920* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 183. This characterization of desire and fulfillment built upon a set of conditions of population and transportation is used to describe the

Although the department store had already been established within Tokyo's urban landscape for several decades since the turn of the 20th century, the department store as a topos of cultural practice began drawing increasing interest from writers, journalists, economists, and others following the rebuilding and revamping of the stores after the damaging destruction of the 1923 Great Kantô Earthquake which nearly leveled the city. In the period following the quake, competition between shops became increasingly intense, and special sales and bargains transformed the stores from edifices for the elite into places for mass consumption. Department stores came to be seen as spaces in which all strata of urban society could mingle, shop, and play as they moved through, looking at new commodities and each other while performing their own particular class and gender-based identities.³⁴⁴ Cultural critics and fiction writers took special interest of the ways in which these architectural edifices were transforming the experience of daily life and the ways in which members of the urban populace imagined themselves and each other. Department stores were seen as all-inclusive microcosms of the city itself in which, as Yokomitsu Riichi put it, "one might award a prize for finding something that is *not* there rather than something that is."³⁴⁵ At the same time, department stores were viewed as fantastical, almost futuristic places, "where one might sigh while dreaming of the 25th

emergence of the Bon Marche department store in 19th century Paris; a similar set of conditions and effects describes Tokyo in the early 20th century.

³⁴⁴ See Yamamoto Taketoshi, "Hyakkaten to shôhi kakumei," in Yamamoto Taketoshi and Nishizawa Tamotsu, eds., *Hyakkaten no bunkashi: Nihon no shôhi kakumei* (Tokyo: Sekai Shisôsha, 1999), 3-15. In "Hyakkaten no ibento to toshi bunka," Tsuganesawa Toshihiro highlights the importance of cultural exhibitions and other events held inside department stores in generating interest and excitement in urban consumer lifestyles. Yamamoto and Nishizawa eds., 130-154.

³⁴⁵ Yokomitsu Riichi, "Matsuzakaya – Matsuya – Mitsukoshi," *Bungei Shunjû* vol. 5, no. 12 (Dec. 1927), 133. Reprinted in Wada, ed.

century.”³⁴⁶ As urban ethnographer Kon Wajirô noted, “The department store may be a multi-storied building, but it can also be seen as a model city (*rittaikei no machi*).”³⁴⁷

Yokomitsu’s characterization of the dual nature of the department store as representation of both the city of the present and the utopia of the future, material reality and elaborate fantasy, closely mirrors the description of the department store by its most renowned literary chronicler, Emile Zola (1840-1902). Published in 1883, Zola’s *Au Bonheur des Dames* tells the story of a young girl beginning work at the titular shop in Paris between 1864 and 1869; the store is explicitly modeled after the Bon Marche, which rose to dominance during the same period.³⁴⁸ Zola describes the space not only as a store, but as a giant machine emerging from and driving 19th century French consumer society: “The continual roaring of the machine at work, the marshalling of the customers, bewildered amidst the piles of goods, and finally pushed along to the pay-desk... a nation of women passing through the force and logic of this wonderful commercial machine.”³⁴⁹ This engine of bourgeois French society is at the same time a city of the future, as Zola describes the department store as *phalanstere*, the utopian communities developed by Charles Fourier (1772-1837).³⁵⁰ The rise of the luxurious yet popular department stores in

³⁴⁶ Yokomitsu Riichi, “Matsuzakaya – Matsuya – Mitsukoshi,” 133.

³⁴⁷ Kon Wajirô, “Depâto fûzoku shakaigaku,” *Kôgengaku: Kon Wajirô shû* vol. 1 (Tokyo: Domesu Shuppan, 1971), 206.

³⁴⁸ Zola’s novel has been translated into English as *The Ladies’ Delight* and *The Ladies Paradise*.

³⁴⁹ Quoted from Lisa Sanders, *Labor Leisure, and the London Shopgirl, 1880-1920* (Columbus: Ohio State Press, 2006), 83. Alison M. K. Walls has pointed out that the period in which the novel is set interestingly coincides with Marx’s writing of *Capital*. See Alison M.K. Walls, *The Sentiment of Spending: Intimate Relationships and the Consumerist Environment in the Works of Zola, Rachilde, Maupassant, and Huysmans* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008).

³⁵⁰ Walls, 2. In Japan, the fantastical qualities of the department store were often not associated so much with the utopistic impulse, but rather the mysterious, dark, and uncanny. For example, in the collection of anecdotes *Abakareta hyakkaten* (The Department Store Laid Bare), published in 1932, Ishikari Jirô tells numerous purportedly true stories about strange and unexplainable happenings centering around the department store. Ishikari Jirô, *Abakareta hyakkaten* (Tokyo: Seika shoin, 1932). Reprinted in Wada, ed.. The association of the hypermodern phenomena of

post-earthquake Tokyo of the 1920s echoes the emergence of the Bon Marche and Zola's fictional Au Bonheur amidst the rebuilding of Paris through the sweeping reforms of Baron George-Eugene Haussmann (1809-1891) in Second Empire Paris; interest in the department store as a meaningful and powerful space within Tokyo grew as Japan entered its own phase of bourgeois mass culture.³⁵¹ Not coincidentally, Zola's *Au Bonheur des Dames* was first translated into Japanese in 1922, appearing as *Kijo no rakuen* (The Ladies' Garden of Pleasure) just as profits at Mitsukoshi were hitting pre-quake peaks.³⁵²

Press interest in department stores as a social phenomenon grew, as nearly every magazine and newspaper ran articles addressing the economic, psychological, and cultural dimensions of the ways in which department stores were restructuring modern life.³⁵³ In 1927, author and editor Kikuchi Kan's (1888-1948) magazine *Literary Chronicle* (*Bungei Shunjū*, 1923-) ran a feature called "Tokyo no Areguro" (Tokyo Allegro) in which five writers associated with the journal *Bungei Jidai* (*Literary Age*, 1924-1927) chimed in with brief thoughts on the nature of the department store. Kataoka Teppei (1894-1944) described the "stimulations of the department store as the

urban life with the extraordinary and supernatural was by no means limited to department stores; notable are works produced by figures such as editor Umehara Hokumei (1901-1946) and author Uchida Hyakken (1889-1971). For a recent commentary on Zola's department store and the fantastic in Japanese, see Ono Ushio, "Hidai suru toshi no 'kaibutsu' – Zora no egaku hyakkaten," in Tsukuwa Masanori, ed., *Modan toshi to bungaku* (Tokyo: Yōsen-sha, 1994), 92-107.

³⁵¹ For a general introduction to Haussmann, see David Jordan, *Transforming Paris: The Life and Labors of Baron Haussmann* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). A critical discussion of Haussmann's work and the origins of the modern metropolis appears in Walter Benjamin, "Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century," in *Reflections*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (New York: Schocken Books, 1978), 146-163.

³⁵² The translation of Zola's *Au Bonheur* by Mikami Otokichi (1891-1944) was published by Tenyūsha in 1922. For numerical statistics on department store sales in this period, see Matsuda Shinzō, *Depâtomento sutoa* in Wada, ed.

³⁵³ See Yamamoto Taketoshi, "Hyakkaten no imêji no enshutsu," in Yamamoto, ed., 198-222.

concentrated reflection of cusp of modern city life,” while Iketani Shinzaburô (1900-1933) characterized the store as an evincing of “the ever-multifarious tastes (*shumi*), desires (*yokubô*), and lifestyles (*seikatsu*) not as abstractions, but as specimens in a museum concretely on display.”³⁵⁴ The appeal of such a place was immense, as evidenced in an anecdote conveyed by Kataoka:

Last autumn, a girls’ school in Okayama took a graduation trip (*shûgaku ryokô*) to Tokyo. One day, the students split into two groups, with one group to visit the Imperial Exhibition (*Teiten*) and one group visiting a department store. Out of the hundred students, only six wanted to visit the Imperial Exhibition. The rest set off for the department store. Art holds no appeal for schoolgirls any longer. What the girls want to experience is life itself (*seikatsu*).³⁵⁵

In the previous chapter, I discussed the ways in which authors like Kataoka, Yokomitsu, and Kawabata Yasunari (1899-1972), situated the inseparability of literary production from the experience of everyday life and the buying and selling of products. Here, the circulation of commodities takes on a cultivating and educational function, as haloed art-as-such loses out to the seductive pull of throwing one’s body into the fantastical yet material world bounded by the walls of the department store.

Perpetual Motion and the Parts of the Body: The Reimagination of the Figure in Yokomitsu Riichi’s “Nanakai no Undô”

At issue for authors and critics were the ways in which the process of moving into and through the department store carried the potential to transform the sensibilities and perceptual apparatus of the subjects that submit themselves to the consummate sensory experience that the store provides. Iketani’s comment above highlights the dialectical

³⁵⁴ Kataoka Teppei, “Futatsu no hyakkaten,” *Bungei Shunjû*, vol. 5, no. 12 (Dec. 1927), 123. Iketani Shinzaburô, “Ginza to hyakkaten,” *Bungei Shunjû* vol. 5, no. 12 (Dec. 1927), 125. Both are reprinted in Wada, ed.

³⁵⁵ Kataoka, “Futatsu no hyakkaten,” 134.

nature of the department store as a space that both presents desire-as-goods and goods-as-desire as concrete abstractions available to the human beings circulating in their midst. Kataoka focuses on the sensory stimulations that constitute the experience of existence within the stores Matsuya and Matsuzakaya, admitting that he has “no idea which one is which”:

A mountain of yellow lining folded around cloth. A beautiful scene.
Color and radiance, my sleepy eyes couldn't be stimulated enough.
Heading to the home furnishings on the sixth floor, I imagined I heard my wife's voice: “We don't have enough of those. And we need more of these too.”... Strangely, the place didn't smell of perfume at all. It only smelled of skin.

The department store is a place where animals sleepwalk. It is a hell.³⁵⁶

Kataoka's comments evoke Yokomitsu's theorization of sensation and perception as outlined in his essay “Kankaku katsudô” (Sensory Activity, 1925) where he argues that life understood through unmediated sensory stimulation and nothing else reduces man to an animalistic existence.³⁵⁷ Georg Simmel made a similar argument, noting: “A life in the boundless pursuit of pleasure makes one blasé because it agitates the nerves to their strongest reactivity for such a long time that they finally cease to react at all.”³⁵⁸ For Kataoka, the continual overstimulation of the body overwhelms the perceptual apparatus, as the “beautiful scene” quickly transforms into “a hell” and the body and mind are rendered numb and left to drift as if asleep. Yokomitsu adds that the “place does not permit reflection (*kansô*); were you to begin reflecting, you must also think of the numerous pickpockets surrounding you.”³⁵⁹ In essence, the concern of authors and critics

³⁵⁶ Kataoka, “Futatsu no hyakkaten,” 135.

³⁵⁷ For an in-depth reading of Yokomitsu's “Kankaku katsudô,” see Chapter 2.

³⁵⁸ Georg Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” in David Frisby and Mike Featherstone, eds., *Simmel on Culture; Selected Writings* (London: Sage Publications, 1997), 178.

³⁵⁹ Yokomitsu, “Matsuzakaya – Matsuya – Mitsukoshi,” 133.

like Yokomitsu and Kataoka was to address how excess sensation and over-stimulation might be mediated into an experience comprehensible to the urban subject or reader.

A few months before the “Tokyo Allegro” special in *Bungei Shunjū*, Yokomitsu had published in the same magazine a story set in a department store. “Nanakai no undō” (Seven Floors of Movement, 1927) describes a day at the department store as the son of the store’s owner moves from floor to floor flirting with each of the shop girls in turn. Similar to “Machi no soko,” “Nanakai no undō” opens by establishing the setting and populating it with human figures buried amidst the commodities on display:

Today is the continuation of yesterday. The elevator continued to vomit upwards and excrete downwards. Women leaping into chocolate. Women sinking into socks... From amidst the fence of parasols, Yoshiko’s face stuck out. A pocket mirror in a compact. A pillar of caps along the wall of soap. A forest of walking sticks surrounded by feather pillows, Kyôko’s face amidst the mountain of perfume had been debased since morning. Waves of people flowed between the wallets and the knives, pushing ever to the rear. A valley of cans and a cliff of shoes. Ribbons and lace climbing amidst the flowers. Gripping a cluster of bills, Hisakichi came forward, avoiding Kyôko’s line of sight. Her eyes bounced back across the counter from amidst the perfume.³⁶⁰

Whereas in the opening of “Machi no soko” the narrative point of view moves linearly, progressing from shop to shop one at a time, “Nanakai no undō” opens with a montage-like explosion of sights, sounds, and sensations amidst which the goods for sale seem to form constantly changing physical landscapes. Yokomitsu’s similes, metaphors, and fragmentary sentences not only represent but also reproduce the experience of overwhelming overstimulation, as body parts emerge from and disappear into objects moving as if human in a confusing confabulation. While Zola made the department store a key site for the development of naturalist prose, Yokomitsu uses expressionistic

³⁶⁰ Yokomitsu Riichi, “Nanakai no undō,” *TYRZ*, vol. 2, 447. Originally ran in *Bungei Shunjū* vol. 5 no. 9, Sept. 1927.

technique to transform the text itself into something like a department store. His colleague Iketani notes that “when one begins writing about department stores, the pen starts moving in a department store-like fashion (*hyakkaten-shiki*),” as conventional techniques of literary representation prove insufficient to evoke the experience of existence amidst the whirlwind of people and products that is the department store.³⁶¹

However, despite the experimental prose of the opening, “Machi no soko” does not continue in such an expressionistic vein, taking a less experimental narrative structure thereafter. With the appearance of Hisakichi, the department store owner’s scion gripping the wad of cash, the maddening array of sensations fall away as the passing of money between the prodigal son and the shop girls forms the central structure of the story’s plot. The “seven floors of movement” refers to the number of stories of the department store that Hisakichi traverses, visiting a different girl at each floor and slipping each one of his ten yen bills.³⁶² After a brief exchange with the first shop girl, Kyôko, Hisakichi heads to the elevator and rides up to the second floor to see the next girl, and so on up the line. As the son of the store’s owner, Hisakichi is not shopping, but using the bills as a means to create connections with each of the girls in turn:

Hisakichi was not at the counter for his own livelihood (*seikatsu*). He was the indulgent son of the department store’s owner and he was there to create an eternal woman (*eien no josei o tsukuru ga tame*). For him, life was a matter of unbelievably expedient means. He licked up the shop girls of the seven floors, one after the next. The eternal woman was being made, gathered together around him. Kyôko was the torso, Yoshiko was the head. The shoulders arms and legs moved amidst the blankets and desks of the seven floors. Yôko. Toriko. Tamiko. Momoko. Utsuko. His allowance was 20,000 yen a month.³⁶³

³⁶¹ Iketani, “Ginza to hyakkaten,” 137.

³⁶² Six to eight floors was the standard height of department stores in Japan during this period.

³⁶³ Yokomitsu, “Nanakai no undô,” 448-449.

For Hisakichi the capitalist-in-training, the movement through the space of the department store is not the submission to the sensory overload of new and barely differentiable products, people, sights, sounds, and smells, but an exercise in the reconstitution of the fragmented body through its component parts. In its seven floors, the building is partitioned into discrete spaces, within each of which exists a woman who, through her work as a sales girl and her fetishization within Hisakichi's imagination has been reduced to a single part of the body, abstracted yet material. In his circulation through the store, Hisakichi breaks down the bodies of the laboring girls into individual pieces only to recollect them in the fabrication of a transcendental image of a whole body.

Significantly, the body reconstituted through this process is not Hisakichi's own, but the body of a woman. Few writings on department stores have overlooked the gendering of the space of the store and the ways that space in turn structures the performance of gender roles and identity. From the title on (rendered in English as *The Ladies' Delight*), Zola's novel crafts a picture of both shoppers and workers as gendered explicitly female; in both Zola's and Yokomitsu's work, capital and the male are mutually encoded. The conflation of consumable goods and female body formed a nexus of sexual desire, and concerns about the department store as erotic spaces ripe for vice arose in America, England, and France as well as Japan.³⁶⁴ In a 1930 miscellany on the department store, *Hyakkaten hyakkei (A Hundred Views of the Department Store)*, critic Kuramoto Chôji (1899-1982) begins a section entitled "the eroticism (*erochishizumu*) of the department store" with a paean to the "army of shop girls":

³⁶⁴ For extended discussions of sexuality and sexualization of the department store in the 19th and early 20th century, see Walls, 54-97.

Here there sit one thousand beautiful girls. And what's more, most of them are decorated as beautifully as the girls in a harem. In the gorgeous great hall they compete to stand on the front lines in the departments of cunning and coquetry, love, deception, vanity, envy, imitation, friendship, delicious food, beautiful clothes, excitement, exhaustion, germs, and curiosity...³⁶⁵

Kuramoto's montage of competitive feelings intermingled with material pleasures and emotional affects highlights the ways in which the figure of the shop girl came to be seen as a representative symbol of the complex nexus of sensations and desires embodied in both the department store and the consumer society that made it its temple.

Needless to say, this imagined figure of the shop girl was by no means consummate with the actual experience of female laborers at the department store. Both Hisakichi's "eternal woman" and Yokomitsu's tackling thereof can be seen as components of the complex of male fantasies stimulated through the changing social roles of women in the 20th century. Unlike Zola's work, based on extensive archival research, interviews, and site visits in his aim to craft a naturalistic picture of protagonist Denise Baudu and her environment, Yokomitsu's writings are based primarily on imaginations about the inner workings of the mysterious department store based on his experience passing through the space as an anonymous customer and observer. Acting as both customer-as-writer and writer-as-customer, Yokomitsu creates a textual interpretation of the space that suggests a possible way to make sense out of the experience of entering the department store. This experience is shared by readers consuming the narrative as literary product, which functions as part of a larger set of critical strategies to order the sensory experiences of consumer modernity. In essence, the act of reading the text itself functions similarly to Hisakichi's dispensation of ten-yen

³⁶⁵ Kuramoto, 75.

bills, converting sensory overload to coherent narrative for the reading subject in possession of the text.

The appearance of the shop girl in “Nanakai no undô” and other works around this time might be read as part of the thriving discourse on the “modern girl” in mid-1920s Japan, an overdetermined amalgamation of images of the contemporary woman that circulated through fictional and journalistic discourse in the mid-to-late 1920s. The particular imagination of the female figure that appears in Yokomitsu’s story is that of the “eternal woman” (*eien no josei*) that Hisakichi attempts to build.³⁶⁶ “Nanakai no undô” originally ran in the September 1927 edition of *Bungei Shunjû*, which was a special issue dedicated to the memory of the recently deceased Akutagawa Ryûnosuke (1892-1927), a colleague of Yokomitsu from his days at the magazine. The idea of the eternal woman and similar tropes appear in stories by Akutagawa, especially “Seihô no hito” (A Man of the West).³⁶⁷ The trope of the eternal woman also appears in works by Akutagawa’s foil in the debates over the role of the plot, Tanizaki Jun’ichirô (1886-1965), including the

³⁶⁶ Popularization of the term “modern girl” is generally credited to critic Nii Itaru’s (1888-1951) essay “Modan gâru no rinkaku,” published in the high-brow women’s magazine *Fujin Kôron*, April, 1925. Miriam Silverberg points out that the term predates Nii’s usage slightly, but his essay marks a turning point in the popularity of the trope. The diversity of images that might be subsumed into the name “modern girl” ranges broadly from factory laborers to flappers, and, as Silverberg argues, the modern girl was more a discursive signifier dispatched as appropriate across a diverse range of context, rather than an image of a particular type of woman. See Silverberg, “The Modern Girl as Militant” and “The Café Waitress Sang the Blues,” in Silverberg, *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense: The Culture of Japanese Modern Times* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 51-141. A detailed engagement with the trope of the modern girl or its others falls outside the scope of this analysis, but it is important to note the role of newspapers, women’s and popular magazines and critical and fictional texts in the promulgation of the discourse centering around the trope. Andreas Huyssen also has noted the biases at play in modernist avant-garde and critical works in prewar Europe, as mass culture comes to be coded as a female constitutive other of the engaged male subject. See Huyssen, “Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism’s Other,” in *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 44-64.

³⁶⁷ “Seihô no hito” first appeared in the journal *Kaizô* in August 1927, one month before the release of “Nanakai no undô.” Akutagawa uses the phrase “*eien ni josei naru mono*” for eternal woman.

play “Eien no gûzô” (The Eternal Idol, 1922) and “Aozuka-shi no hanashi” (The Story of Mr. Aozuka, 1926).³⁶⁸ The latter story describes the grotesque fetishism involved in an attempt to reproduce piece-by-piece an image of the eternal woman as imagined through the cinematic medium, as the titular character constructs an all-too-lifelike copy of a human being.³⁶⁹ In contrast to Tanizaki’s Mr. Aozuka, Hisakichi does not try to build or rebuild a pre-existing eternal woman, but rather formulates his own particular concept or category of the universal out of a series of isolated parts and experiences as he seduces each of the floors’ shop girls in turn. However, one piece of Hisakichi’s “eternal woman,” the head, as represented by the first floor shop girl Yoshiko, is yet to be integrated into the figure:

He wasn’t good at dealing with Yoshiko. It was only the head of this “eternal woman” on whom his ten yen bills had never had any effect. Whenever he made it this far, he always started going a little crazy. Like a gambling addict on a losing streak, he thrust bill after ten yen bill in front of her. But Yoshiko only replied: “My dear, why do you give me money like this?”³⁷⁰

Whereas in “Machi no soko” the possession of money allows the unemployed worker to stop thinking, here the disruption of the circulation of money forces Hisakichi’s mental machinery into action. After Yoshiko confronts Hisakichi, the department store as sensory experience disappears from text, which becomes an extended conversational negotiation between the two characters nearly devoid of supplementary narrative:

“Right now you look just like money to me.”

³⁶⁸ “Eien no gûzô” was originally published in *Shinchô* in March 1922; “Aozuka-shi no hanashi” originally ran in installments in the Aug., Sep., Nov., and Dec. issues of *Kaizô* in 1926.

³⁶⁹ The significance of the appearance of “Nanakai no undô” in the Akutagawa memorial issue of *Bungei Shunjû* and the connection between Yokomitsu, Akutagawa, and Tanizaki’s stories is noted by Yamoto Hiroshi in Inoue Ken et. al., eds., *Yokomitsu Riichi Jiten* (Tokyo: Oufu, 2002), 145. In “Seihô no hito,” Akutagawa references the idea of the eternal woman as it is raised in Nietzsche’s *Ecce Homo* (1888).

³⁷⁰ Yokomitsu, “Nanakai no undô,” 452.

“So, you’re saying that you don’t see me as a human.”

“That’s right. You’re money. That’s all.”

“So you treat me like a monster.”

“That’s what satisfies you. You’re like a machine that tests how far human faculties (*kannô*) can be developed through money. So tell me, what kind of information do I provide you with?”

“In terms of this department store’s sales proceeds, I’m not sure.”

“My dear, I’ll give you a little lesson. What I do is take your money and scatter it around to everyone else who works with me. That makes the goods move more efficiently. And then you get more money, don’t you? And then I take more, and I spread it all around, and while I’m doing that, you get to practice sleeping with women. I just quietly watch you live out this age of excess. I’ve been a gentle teacher like this for you for quite a while now.”

“So basically you’re some kind of socialist.”

“Well, I guess I am, I’m a laborer working for you. I’m someone who you might catch yelling for the workers of the world to unite.³⁷¹

From Yoshiko’s perspective, Hisakichi is not a capitalist, but capital itself circulating endlessly through the department store. However, rather than refuse her place within the process of continually circulating cash, Yoshiko merely diverts the route of circulation to distribute Hisakichi’s money to her fellow workers. Yoshiko is savvy enough to realize that her action does not truly disrupt the processes of capitalism at work, but in fact facilitates it by raising the efficiency of the laborers and the rate of sales of the store’s goods. In this way, she and all her fellow shop girls become not only the parts of Hisakichi’s imagined body of the eternal woman, but also parts of the larger capital engine of the store itself, which continues to grow. Yoshiko’s retort reveals that it is not only the shop girls who are transformed by their implication in this process, but also Hisakichi himself, the ostensible operator of the system. In his continual circulation, Hisakichi has transfigured his own body into a machine of calculus and economic rationality that weighs human beings as faculties, abilities, and efficiencies. In a sense,

³⁷¹ Yokomitsu, “Nanakai no undô,” 453.

this is the repetition of the same process, albeit on a different order of scale, of the “urbanization of consciousness” in “Machi no soko.”

The impossibility of escaping the flow of consumer capital embodied in the department store plays out in the conclusion of the story, in which Yoshiko, despite her chiding, gives in to Hisakichi’s entreaties and accompanies him to a hotel, where even “the cushions smell of the department store.”³⁷² “Nanakai no undô” can thus be read as a narrative of capitalism re-incorporating its own critique, as the “head” represented by the “socialist” Yoshiko is left with no choice but to submit to subsumption into the larger abstract body created within the store as emblem of urban space. Like in “The Depths of the Town,” the story closes with an echo of the opening, forming a frame within which the rest of the narrative is contained:

Today is the day after yesterday. The elevator continued to vomit up and excrete down. A woman smelling opera bags. A woman engrossed in her compact... Yoshiko had stood since early morning amidst the fence of parasols, pounding at a feather pillow and cursing her youth. When break time came, Hisakichi, who had taken the head of the “eternal woman,” gazed at the eternal woman’s legs and hands and headed up towards the 7th floor.³⁷³

With the sublimation of Yoshiko, the body of Hisakichi’s eternal woman is completed, and save for her frustration, everything is back where it was at the beginning of the narrative, with Hisakichi circulating endlessly through the goods and women piled on the seven floors of the store. At the conclusion of “Nanakai no undô,” the primary narrative is set within a continual loop of time, space, and money, as each day becomes “the day after yesterday” and Hisakichi ceaselessly moves up and down the floors. The narrative

³⁷² Yokomitsu, “Nanakai no undô,” 455. The way in which the site of the sexual scene has already been perfumed with the essence of the department store prior to the arrival of the actors suggests the degree to which the mode of life embodied in the store has permeated the texture of ostensibly “private” space and action in forming the sensual cues of desire.

³⁷³ Ibid 459.

forms a cycle that begins, ends, and begins again with Hisakichi's "break time" (*kyūkei no jikan*) that he shares with the girls, as the possibility of the representation of the sensory experience of their labor is excluded from the text in lieu of the representation of transcendent time and the "eternal" body.

Yokomitsu's text itself, by virtue of representing the department store and the shop girl at all, is embedded within the broader fetishization of those popular discursive tropes circulating within the popular press, magazines, and other media during the mid-1920s. The commodity character of such writing is not overlooked by Yokomitsu's compatriots Kataoka and Iketani. After noting how the vacationing school girls choose the stimulations of modern life over "art" (*geijutsu*), Kataoka savvily quips: "In the bookselling department (*shosekibu*) of the department store, my own collection of stories for young girls (*shōjo shōsetsushū*) is on display. It is most certainly not a work of art (*geijutsu sakuhin*)."³⁷⁴ Kataoka locates his own literary production explicitly within the framework of the commodity economy, as does Iketani, who concludes his musings on the department store as follows:

The elevator arrived in the basement. The exit's that way!
One line of five people. Suga [Tadao] is thinking about how he wants each customer to buy one copy of *Bungei Shunjū*. Ishihama [Kinsaku] is turning over a fixed-price note. Yokomitsu is tired from his seven floors of movement (*nanakai no undō*), and Kataoka just came up with a conclusion about department stores and their myriad goods.³⁷⁵

³⁷⁴ The work to which Kataoka is referring is almost certainly *Ami no ue no shōjo* (Girls on the Nets), a short story collection published in May of 1927, several months before his piece on the department stores. It was also around this time that Kataoka became increasingly interested in proletarian literature and drawn into the orbit of leftist literary production, though he would not join a political party until the following year.

³⁷⁵ Iketani, 137. Suga Tadao (1899-1942) worked primarily as an editor for *Bungei Shunjū*. Ishihama Kinsaku (1899-1968) founded the sixth iteration of *Shinshichō* with Kawabata Yasunari before becoming a member of *Bungei Jidai*. By this time, Yokomitsu, Kataoka, and the other writers associated with *Bungei Jidai* and *Bungei Shunjū* were no longer young authors struggling to change the state of the literary world, but had themselves become part of the literary

Like Yoshiko's critique of Hisakichi, Yokomitsu's critique of the transformation of everyday life and the human body by consumer capital cannot escape the larger frame of print media as commodity; the processes of production and distribution of his and other texts form the conditions of possibility of the writing and publishing of the story in the first place.³⁷⁶ Thus, texts such as "Nanakai no undô" and other works casting a critical eye upon the rapidly changing contours of consumer capitalism are written from within an already established literary economy and serve to reproduce and expand a broader social discourse on the problem of modern life. Of a dualistic nature, they function as critiques of the forms of bourgeois lifestyle while simultaneously serving to produce and perpetuate fetishizations of the same.

Men as Minute Movements and Materials: People on the Streets in Kon Wajirô's Ginza Surveys

In the large body of writings on the phenomenon of the department store, some give the topos fictional treatments, some employ economic rubrics, and many consist of miscellaneous musings both on the experience of entering the store and the effects it has on society at large. Among these texts, one of the most unique approaches to the analysis

establishment, and knew well the economic realities of the writing profession. For a detailed discussion of the economics of *Bungei Jidai* and its associated authors, see Chapter 2. For more information about the rise of the professional writer in the literary realm, see Chapter 1.

³⁷⁶ The way in which writing on the department store and similar phenomena is contained within a space structured by the stores themselves is literally made visible in the Tokyo allegro feature, in which a drawing of the buildings of Ginza surrounds the printed text. The scope, scale, and popularity of writings on such topics are evident in the prevalence of works like Kuramoto's *Hyakkaten hyakkei*. Published in 1930 and available for a mere ten *sen*, it begins its preface with the statement: "It is unarguably the age of the department store (*hyakkaten jidai*). For men and women both, without the department store, there would be no night and no day dawning. We now see numerous stories in both magazines and newspapers concerning department stores." For an exhaustive list of writings that deal with department stores in prewar Japan, see the "Kanren nenpyô" in Wada Atsuhiko, ed., *Korekushon modan toshi bunka 08: depâto*, 605-674.

of the department store can be found in the work of the urban ethnographer Kon Wajirô, who was perhaps the first to subject the space to systematic study. Kon's work, essentially observational and statistical in nature, highlights the who and the how of the patterns of people circulating through these totemic structures of consumer society. In a 1928 study entitled "Depâto fûzoku shakaigaku" (The Sociology of the Mores of the Department Store), Kon pays attention to the paths that people take when progressing through the giant stores:

Each person has his own habits in the route (*mawarikata*) that he or she takes upon entering the department store... Some people go ahead and ride the elevator straight to the top floor and then take the stairs down, buy what they're looking for, and then stroll around just looking (*kenbutsu*). Some people buy what they want, and then idly go around (*bura bura*)... Of course people do not always engage in the same actions every time. Depending on the time and the situation, they take various routes. The actions of those who enter the department store is like that of the pilgrimage of the 33 holy places of the olden days... For those reluctant to climb the stairs, they have built escalators and elevators.³⁷⁷

In essence, the store produces a nearly infinite possibility of circuits of movement through its interior, depending on the time, whim, and condition of the strolling subject. Customers can start at the top, bottom, or somewhere in between, and take any combination of stairs, elevators, and escalators to choose their own individual route amidst the goods on display. Most department stores were seven stories or more, and the new technology of the elevator was not only a convenient mode of vertical transportation, but an attraction in and of itself for the crowds gathering in department stores.³⁷⁸ Japan's first elevator, established in the twelve-story Ryôunkaku (Cloud-Surpassing Tower) viewing pavilion in Asakusa was one of many new technologies, that along with movie theaters and panoramas, was simultaneously a new experience of space and a new way of

³⁷⁷ Kon, "Depâto fûzoku shakaigaku," 228-229.

³⁷⁸ Hatsuda, *Hyakkaten no tanjô*, 108-109.

seeing.³⁷⁹ However, unlike the lift in Asakusa's tower, elevators inside Mitsukoshi, Matsuya, and other central Tokyo department stores did not provide a panoramic visual perspective onto the city as landscape, but rather allowed urban commoners to move through the building as a self-contained city.

Kon creates a model of the department store in which any possible combination of vertical and horizontal movement becomes possible, though all remain protracted by the larger structure of the building itself, which, as a microcosm of consumer capitalist society, forms the limits of that movement. The scale of the department store as a mode of belief and action is evident in Kon's analogy to the pilgrimage of the 33 Temples of Kannon.³⁸⁰ However, rather than compare the department store with a particular holy site or temple to which the faithful make pilgrimage, the scope of Kon's simile plays to a broader scale, as the department store forms the entire cosmology within which the 33 temple pilgrimage is contained. The department store is not only a cosmos to Kon, but a model of the city more perfect than the city itself, and he notes that the artificial space of the store forms an ideal spot for the urban stroller: "When it is cold, the rooms are heated, and when the weather is hot, they think to make it cool inside; for strollers it is far

³⁷⁹ Built in 1890, the tower was also known as the Jūnikai (Twelve-Storied Tower). The top stories were later closed, and the tower collapsed during the earthquake of 1923. Despite this example, elevators remained quite rare for the coming decades in Tokyo, to say nothing of the rest of the country. For more on the association of Asakusa and new modes of visibility, see Lippit, *Topographies of Japanese Modernism*; Silverberg, *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense*; Yoshimi, *Toshi no doramaturugī*; Aaron Gerow, *Visions of Japanese Modernity: Articulations of Cinema, Nation, and Spectatorship, 1895-1925* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010). For primary sources on Asakusa, and spectatorship, see Minami Hiroshi, et. al. eds., *Nihon Modanizumu no 'hikari' to 'kage' – kindai shomin seikatsushi 2: sakariba uramachi* (Tokyo: San'ichi Shobō, 1984), 245-286; 392-415 and Gonda Yasunosuke, *Katsudō shashin no genri oyobi teikyō* in *Gonda Yasunosuke chosakushū* (Bunwa Shobō, 1974).

³⁸⁰ The number 33 is particularly associated with the Buddhist deity of compassion Kannon (C. Guanyin, Sk. Avalokitesvara). There are numerous 33-site pilgrimages across Japan, most famously the *saikoku sanjūsansho* route located in western Japan.

superior to the city where the sky can be seen overhead.”³⁸¹ The department store thus both internalizes and epitomizes modern urban space itself, reproducing it in miniature to create the experience of a utopistic space to match the ideal body generated through the circulation of capital within, as detailed in Yokomitsu’s story.

Department stores not only produced new patterns of circulation within themselves, but also created new modes of movement along their external facades. Accordingly, Kon observed not only people inside the store, but people entering, exiting, and traveling around them. As part of his “sociology,” he stood next to the iconic lion statues at the gate to Mitsukoshi and dutifully counted each passing person over the span of thirty minutes, tallying 1,077 men and 1,065 women on a certain November day.³⁸² Kon actually began his project not inside the department store, but on the streets outside of it, surveying all aspects of passerby in Ginza in his first systematic study of modern street life, “Tokyo Ginza-gai fūzoku kiroku” (A Record of The Mores of The Ginza Neighborhood of Tokyo), published in 1925. Choosing a stretch of street spanning from Kyōbashi to Shinbashi, Kon “took the two newly rebuilt giant department stores on the east side of the Ginza, the centers around which the crowds grew” as the central locus of his study and set out to meticulously log pedestrian movements through that space.³⁸³ Noting, “surveys of life and of clothing, food, and shelter (*ishokujū*) are typically carried out within the home,” he shifted his gaze to the life of people on the streets (*gaijō ni okeru seikatsu*) in order to apprehend the modern urban experience.³⁸⁴ Keeping track of the number of people passing through at each hour of the day, Kon and his team of

³⁸¹ Kon, “Depāto fūzoku shakaigaku,” 227.

³⁸² Ibid, 208.

³⁸³ Kon, “Tokyo Ginza-gai fūzoku kiroku,” *Kōgengaku: Kon Wajirōshū* vol. 1 (Tokyo: Domesu Shuppan, 1971), 62.

³⁸⁴ Ibid, 55.

assistants observed and recorded nearly every possible aspect of each passerby, including age, gender, class, and appearance.

The single largest and most detailed section of Kon's report, however, was devoted not to any particular quality of the Tokyo citizens themselves, but rather the accessories with which they adorned themselves. Prior to his Ginza survey, Kon, a professor of architecture and industrial design at Waseda University, had devoted his cataloging eye to buildings and their exterior accoutrements; his first surveys were observations of rural farmhouses in Northeastern Japan under the tutelage of the ethnographer and author Yanagita Kunio (1875-1962), and he also carried out work on Korean farmhouses and detailed the gutters, walls, lamps, and fences of buildings in the Kiso region.³⁸⁵ Kon's approach to observing Ginza strollers might be seen as a transposition of his architectural studies, in which fine differentiations were drawn between the material construction of different building types. In moving from the house to the street, Kon came to view people as he viewed buildings, an appropriate application considering the place of the massive department stores at the center of Kon's survey areas.³⁸⁶ For each entry in his survey, Kon cataloged their coat, collar, necktie, gloves, shoes, belt, hairstyle, glasses, caps, bags, and other accoutrements, marking down the style and color of each. Summarizing his notations on male shoes, Kon writes:

Between red shoes and black shoes, black shoes are losing out, and between high-laced boots and short shoes, it seems that short shoes have fallen from fashion. Among short shoes, red shoes are on the rise... You no longer see shoes with deep rubber soles, and as with the previously

³⁸⁵ Miriam Silverberg, "Constructing The Japanese Ethnography of Modernity," in *The Journal of Asian Studies* vol. 51, no. 1 (Feb. 1992), 35-37.

³⁸⁶ Silverberg characterizes Kon as cultivating an interest in "architecture outside of architecture." Silverberg, 36.

popular single color shoes, they seem to have come to exist in a kind of canonically historical state.³⁸⁷

Countless charts are attached to Kon's study, each tallying and calculating the precise number of boots, bags, and other accessories. In Kon's mode of viewing, each mark on his sheet, while theoretically corresponding to an individual person, was in fact an agglomeration of individual parts and objects logged independently and fragmented into data points tabulated to form a general image of the crowd as it moved through a certain place at a certain time of day at a certain point in history. For Kon, the choice of location at the point where the inside of the department store-as-city met the city itself highlights the ways in which the commodities contained within the store moved beyond its physical limits to constitute the image of each person as seen by Kon and his surveyors. Whereas Yokomitsu's Hisakichi crafted the image of a body from its component parts through his circulation, Kon's picture of the body comes from watching other people circulate; as he tabulates them, they come to be fragmented parts held together through the minimal unity of the body as a singular data point within the chart of the larger crowd.

Of course, it was not only the people subject to Kon's gaze that were transformed through Kon's mode of viewing, but also Kon himself, as well as the society to which he spoke, as the reconceptualization of bodies as collated commodity data in turn transformed the viewer into a data processor. If writing about the department store necessarily effects a "department store-like style" of sensory montage, as Iketani argues, then the attempt to write the whole of a consumer society with the department store at its center produces its own distinct mode of representation. When the scale of the movement of people and objects is so large, only an objective technique such as the one Kon devises

³⁸⁷ Kon, "Tokyo Ginza-gai fūzoku kiroku," 77-78.

could hope to capture it all, though doing so inevitably results in the reduction of the phenomena to a series of numbers, graphs, and tables. Kon himself, however, did not necessarily see his work this way, instead presenting a methodology naming its heritage in the sciences of ethnography (*minzokugaku*), archaeology (*kôkogaku*), and biology (*seibutsugaku*).³⁸⁸ In the opening pages of his Ginza study, which made Kon's name as a social researcher, he writes:

I want to try utilizing the methods that anthropologists (*jinruigakusha*) apply to undeveloped peoples, but apply them to the civilized (*bunmeijin*)... The customs (*shûkan*) and mores (*fûzoku*) of civilized man have not been analytically considered by any scholars... We have no clear record (*kiroku*) of the material dimensions (*sô*) of cultural society (*bunka shakai*)... What about the center of the city?³⁸⁹

Though Kon situates his own project within the ethnographic tradition, his work can be linked to the contemporary disciplines of marketing, statistics, and journalism as to the classical human sciences. Kon's work in Ginza, which established him as an in-demand cultural critic for years to come, was proposed by the women's magazine *Fujin Kôron* (*Ladies' Review*, 1916-); Kon recalls the editor asking, "We don't know what kind of results we might find, but might you be able to help us on this experimental project?"³⁹⁰ When gathering assistants to aid him in his survey, Kon included a doctor, a department store employee, a newspaper reporter, several magazine reporters, a sociologist, a painter, a soldier, and a student; his primary collaborator on the project was the industrial

³⁸⁸ Kon, "Tokyo Ginza-gai fûzoku kiroku," 54. Although Kon's work is often referred to as "modernology" (*moderunorojio* or *kôgengaku*), the moniker was not explicitly chosen until 1927, whereas the Ginza survey was carried out in 1925. For the origin of the term "modernology," see Silverberg, "The Ethnography of Modernity," 36.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 54.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 53.

designer Yoshida Kenkichi (1897-1982).³⁹¹ It is not difficult to imagine the interest that results like Kon's might have had for each of these groups, as the data generated in such an endeavor could be used to develop techniques of marketing, reportage, representation, and social modeling; Kon himself would go on to publish similar surveys in major magazines and newspapers such as *Shufu no Tomo (The Housewives' Friend, 1917-2008)* and *Shûkan Asahi (Weekly Asahi, 1922-)*. In the previous section, I discussed how the production of texts by Yokomitsu, Iketani, Kataoka, and other authors aiming to apprehend the multi-faceted essence of the department store are themselves underwritten by the capitalist mode on which they comment. Likewise, Kon's surveys are as much an aspect of a burgeoning consumer society as reflections thereon, as data driven discourse on the circulation of customers helped to create images of the modern body in parts and fragments.

Shuttling and Shuddering Along the Rails: Shops, Stations, Subways, and Surplus Population

At the same time that department stores as concentrated intensities of consumer capital reconfigured the bodies, movements, and modes of perception of the people circulating through and around them, they also transformed the topography of urban space itself. The emergence of department stores, as well as other key loci of city life, was made possible through the increasing scales of production and population that

³⁹¹ Kon, "Tokyo Ginza-gai fûzoku kiroku," 56. In Kon's introduction he also notes that his work might be of interest to bureaucrats (*gyôseikan*), sociologists (*shakaigakusha*), psychologists (*shinrigakusha*), life reformers (*seikatsu kairyôka*), researchers of customs (*fûzoku kenkyûka*), and shop owners and businessmen (*shôten keieisha*) (58). Kon's work, which spans many decades, subjects, and methodological practices can by no means be summarized or simplified through my analysis here; nonetheless, I feel that the role of the Ginza survey in establishing Kon deserves a careful consideration of the frame in which his work was carried out.

characterized Tokyo in the first decades of the 20th century; a broad and efficient network of local, regional, and national transportation was a structural necessity to move both goods and people into the city center.³⁹² At the same time, the activity and development generated in and by these accumulations of people, products, and capital (what Yoshimi Shun'ya calls *sakariba*) in turn influenced the development of the transportation network itself, as the city developed and expanded its subway and streetcar systems.³⁹³ In addition the city core of Nihonbashi, Ginza, and Shinbashi, department stores also popped up in Ueno and most symbolically, Shinjuku; as the middle-class grew, the mid-1920s saw the rise of a major demographic shift to the south and west of the traditional city center, as a network of rail lines began shuttling commuters to and from their homes in the suburbs. Shinjuku began developing as a second metropolitan core (*fukutoshin*), and Mitsukoshi opened up a second store there in 1923, with numerous other stores soon to follow.³⁹⁴

The dialectical relationship between urban lifestyle and mass-transit was most prominently manifest not in Tokyo, but Osaka, as the Hankyû corporation developed a department store that simultaneously served as the terminus for Osaka's central Umeda

³⁹² The nationalization of the railways was made official in 1906, though took years to carry out in practice. This is discussed in more detail below in regards to the work of Gotô Shinpei.

³⁹³ Perhaps the most obvious example of the influence of the department store on the Tokyo train network is the name of the Mitsukoshi-mae station subway station, from which passengers exit directly into the Mitsukoshi store. The first subway line in Tokyo, the Ginza line, began by connecting Asakusa and the northern train terminus at Ueno in 1925; by 1934 it had been extended to Shinbashi, linking Ginza to Asakusa. More broadly, major commercial centers such as Shinjuku, Ikebukuro, and Ueno formed the terminus points of the increasing number of commuter lines extending to the suburbs; these centers were in turn developed through their role as transit points.

³⁹⁴ Alisa Freedman, *Tokyo in Transit: Japanese Culture on the Rails and Roads* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 144-145. For a general overview of the rise of Shinjuku as a key site in Tokyo metropolitan life, see Freedman, "Shinjuku Station Sketches: Constructing an Icon of Modern Daily Life," in *Tokyo in Transit*, 116-172.

station.³⁹⁵ In Tokyo, the close relationship between sales and transit the two is evidenced in Suga Tadao's description of the iconic Marubiru as the "retail stand" (*baiten*) for Tokyo station.³⁹⁶ In addition to functioning as terminal points, department stores in Shinjuku, Ueno, and central Tokyo and their surrounding *sakariba* acted as engines generating an outward flow of cultural form that served to transform the city and the country. It is for this reason that Kon deliberately chose Ginza as the site to initiate his analytic study of the modern, recognizing it as "the great center of Tokyo's mores and culture (*fūzoku karuchua*), which has the quality to diffuse to Tokyo's periphery (*shūen*) and spread out to all the regions in the entire country."³⁹⁷

³⁹⁵ Hatsuda, 168-174. Although Tokyo, as the capital and primary metropolis formed the primary site of nationwide cultural (as well as literary) production, the modes and means of life tied to the urbanism most readily associated with Tokyo increasingly were reproduced in regional cities throughout Japan, many of which also developed their own distinct forms of urban modernity and modernism. Recently, an increasing number of studies have focused on Osaka and the Kansai region's importance. See Suzuki Sadami and Takemura Tamio, eds. *Kansai modanizumu saikō* (Kyoto: Shibunkaku, 2008); Shindō Masahiro, ed., *Korekushon modan toshi bunka 20: Ōsaka no modanizumu* (Tokyo: Yumani Shobō, 2006). In English, see Michael Cronin, "Treasonous City: Osaka in the Japanese National Imaginary" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Irvine, 2010).

³⁹⁶ Suga Tadao, "Go-annai," *Bungei Shunjū* vol. 5, no. 12 (Dec. 1927), 139. Reprinted in Wada, ed. "Marubiru," the colloquial name for the Marunouchi building, an 8-story business and shopping center constructed adjacent to the grounds of the Imperial Palace in 1923. The height, which allowed occupants of the building to "look down" onto the Palace caused a stir in the establishment of the symbolic power of business capital in creating modern Tokyo and modern Japan. See Takematsu Yoshiaki, ed. *Korekushon modan toshi bunka 56: Marunouchi bijinesu sentā* (Tokyo: Yumani Shobō, 2005).

³⁹⁷ Kon, "Tokyo Ginza-gai no fūzoku kiroku," 55. Although my analysis limits itself primarily to the space of Tokyo itself and the effect of the changes wrought therein on other spaces in Japan, it should be remembered that at this time, "Japan" included not only the "*naichi*" of the home islands, but also the colonies of Taiwan, Korea, and, in the 1930s, Manchuria. The study of the dialectics of urbanism and the expressions thereof between the metropole and colonial space falls outside the scope of this study, but is an indispensable point in understanding the refiguring of life in the prewar period. I deal with this problem in a later section in this chapter on Gotō Shinpei's colonial enterprises and role in restructuring Tokyo in the 1920s. In addition to the ways in which colonial space functioned as both supplier of labor and raw materials as well as consumer of surplus production, cultural and aesthetic developments in colonial cities, most notably Dalian, had a lasting effect on policy, architecture, and artistic movements in the metropole. For more on the aesthetics of colonial modernism, see Kawamura Minato, *Ikyō no Shōwa bungaku: 'Manshū' to kindai Nihon* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1990).

The physical space of the Tokyo metropolis as well as the set of modes of urban experience and life practice associated with it expanded along the ever-widening network of rail lines that transformed both the region's landscape and the lives of those that populated that space. Though the proliferation of crisscrossing lines allowed for the diffusion and transmission of a consumer lifestyle crystallized in the figure of the department store, the redrawing of the lines that structured the city also created a conjunction of negative externalities, exclusions, and new spaces. In a short work entitled "Kôkasen" (The Elevated Line, 1930), Yokomitsu Riichi addresses some of the unexpected effects generated by the remapping of the city. The story, published in the mainstream magazine *Chûô Kôron* (*The Central Review*, 1899-), tells the tale of a group of drifters living in a concrete cave that takes shape under the construction site of an elevated train line.³⁹⁸ Excluded from participation in the new modes of an urban life practice based on consumer surplus, characters like "the man that collects empty matchboxes," "the carpenter who shoots morphine every five minutes," "the man drawing pictures in soot on the ground," and "the old man always wearing more clothes than he needs" gather together in a temporary shelter created in the spaces between the lines of the elevated train above and the new subway tracks below:

Before long, the plane of plaster would be laying on its side as part of the elevated line – the cluster of square iron pillars that supported the plank formed a long cave above the ground. When night fell, the iron cave drew a pitch dark line across the center of the crowded city. Without notice, a number of the tramps prowling the city had piled up in the cave, like trash drifting in on the wind... It was impossible to tell which kimono was which as they slept with shoulders rubbing together. From between the muddy feet, occasionally a sleepless face would rise up to hear the

³⁹⁸ Different experiences along train lines, and the way that train lines determine experiences form a significant motif in Yokomitsu Riichi's fiction. For more on Yokomitsu's writings on the topic of rails, see Chapter 2, particularly the discussions of "Teki" (The Enemy, 1924), and "Atama narabi ni hara" (Heads and Bellies, 1924), both of which are set on rural railroad lines.

footsteps of the night watchman. From amidst the tatters along the boards below and the contours of the concrete, the skin of chunky thighs ill-suited for this place came into view like young sprouts. None of them tried to move or talk.³⁹⁹

Beginning with a tangle of body parts amidst urban clutter, the scene within the makeshift cave echoes Yokomitsu's representations of the low city market in "Machi no soko" and the department store in "Nanakai no undo." But here there are no goods intermingled with the bodies, only an undifferentiable mass of flesh hemmed in by the structure of a city with no space for those to whom the bodies belong. The story deals primarily with the worries of Takesuke, a drifter who has found temporary employ as a night watchman on the construction site, and his asthmatic friend Hoichi, who manually controls the rail-crossing gate until the new line is built. Both consider themselves lucky to be employed, but know that their work is contingent upon the temporarily incomplete status of the elevated line's construction.⁴⁰⁰

In contrast to the narrative of "Machi no soko," which is constructed between the twin locales of the market and the hill, or "Nanakai no undô," in which Hisakichi and Yoshiko's trip to the hotel completes the imagined body, no outside or other space appears in "Kôkasen," as the characters remain trapped within the iron cage that emerges as the remainder of the expanding urban network. Yokomitsu brings attention to the fact that the building of the rail line on which the fate of the homeless hangs remains not only

³⁹⁹ Yokomitsu Riichi, "Kôkasen," *TYRZ* vol. 3, 314-315. Originally published in *Chûô Kôron* vol. 45, no. 2, Feb. 1930. Although "Kôkasen" is rarely remembered or subjected to scholarly analysis, it was considered a relatively major work at the time, as evidenced by the fact that it lent its name to the title of a collection of stories published by Shinchôsha released later that same year.

⁴⁰⁰ Yokomitsu also deals with the manually controlled rail-crossing gate in the story "Marukusu no Saiban" (Marx on Trial, 1923), in which a gate operator is accused of letting a drunken man tumble onto the tracks on account of class hatred.

out of their control, but also beyond the control of the local citizens perturbed by their presence:

Above the heads of the old men, the advancing elevated line sucked down 600 barrels of cement in a day. Five cement mixers became ten. Rivets bound to giant flanks of iron emitted flame all day and all night. When sparks fell from above and burned their awnings, the shops below appealed to the neighborhood council. The road had been turned up and was in such a bad state that shopkeepers swelled into meetings complaining that they were no longer able to sell their goods. But it was impossible for the neighborhood council to check the power of the progressing elevated line and subway line. There was nothing for the council to do but give in to the railway ministry.⁴⁰¹

Although the townspeople are bothered by the tramps in their midst, they too are subject to the externalities of heat, sound, and hassle generated through the laying of the new line. The presence of the new train line has been prescribed by a transportation ministry more concerned with the city as a system than any individuals within it, as the conditions of the individual bodies of the neighborhood locals and the homeless drifters are subordinated to the production of a well-functioning urban system. “Kôkasen” then tells the story of what is created and what is destroyed, what is made visible and made hidden in the expansion of the urban rail network.

Governor Gotô and Napoleon: Mutual Territorializations of City and Body

The production of sick bodies in the city contra the promotion of an ideal of a healthy urban space was a highly historical concern in the transformation of modern Tokyo. Significantly, Yokomitsu’s text problematizes the role of a powerful city government in the remaking of Tokyo, as the 1920s saw a large scale restructuring of the metropolis, generated not only through developments in urban life and consumer society,

⁴⁰¹ Yokomitsu, “Kôkasen,” 314.

but also through a series of urban planning initiatives undertaken by government agencies. The first decades of the 20th century saw a major reconceptualization of the idea of the city and its functions at the level of policy; the changes wrought upon urban space are most immediately manifest in the many roles played by Gotô Shinpei (1857-1929), a colossally influential figure who might be compared to Paris' Baron Haussmann. Gotô, who originally trained as a doctor, found employ in the Interior Ministry's Bureau of Health and Hygiene in 1882 after distinguishing himself in medicine and treating the politician Itagaki Taisuke (1837-1919). After several years studying in Germany, he was named Minister of Health in 1892. In 1898, Gotô was named Chief of Civil Administration (*minsei chōkan*) of Japan's new colony of Taiwan, and then made the first head of the fledgling South Manchurian Railway Company in 1906. In 1908 he became Minister of Transportation and Communication, where he oversaw the building of the first elevated rail line in Tokyo and facilitated the expansion of the nationwide railway network, which was nationalized in 1906.⁴⁰² After terms as first Minister of the Interior in 1916 then Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1918, Gotô became Mayor of Tokyo (*shichō*) in 1920, where he served until spring of 1923, just before the Great Kantō Earthquake.⁴⁰³

In May 1921, during Gotô's term as mayor, he drafted a new city plan (*toshi keikaku*), an updated version of the previous 1903 schematic of Tokyo.⁴⁰⁴ Popularly

⁴⁰² The railways system was nationalized in March 1906, but the actual process of linking and unifying the diverse set of systems in place to create a practical national railway network took over five years, the latter part of which fell to Gotô's time in the Ministry. Freedman, 95.

⁴⁰³ Unless otherwise noted, general biographical information on Gotô is cited from the chronology (*nenpu*) included in Tsurumi Yūsuke, *Gotô Shinpei* vol. 4 (Tokyo: Gotô Shinpei haku denki hensankai, 1938), appendix pages 1-74.

⁴⁰⁴ Isoda Kōichi, *Shisō to shite no Tōkyō: kindai bungaku shiron nôto* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1990), 11. Interesting about the map for Gotô's plan and the following plan of 1925 is the way in which the city is explicitly divided into color-coded sectors in which different parts of the city are labeled industrial (blue in the 1925 map, north and east, and south of the city center), residential

known as the 800 million yen plan (*hachiokuken keikaku*), Gotô's program was based on systematic surveys of the city and included details on reforming architectural law, roads, trash, sewage, water supply, housing, electricity, gas, ports, rivers, public halls, and all conceivable aspects of the polis. The relevance of Gotô's experience as a colonial administrator is difficult to overstate in discussing his approach to restructuring Tokyo in this and later plans; time heading the South Manchurian Railway imported the role of transportation networks in development, and urban planning strategies used during his time in Taipei were employed to draft a center and periphery view of Tokyo in which the city was put together through a system of concentric ring roads and key arteries.⁴⁰⁵

Though Gotô was no longer mayor at the time of the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923, he was renamed Minister of the Interior the day after the quake so as to oversee the rebuilding of the city. Gotô rejected a plan to create a new capital outside Tokyo and drafted an even more ambitious plan to rebuild the city (*toshi fukkô keikaku*), asking for the astronomical sum of three billion yen in funds. By that time, assassinations had felled Hara Takashi (1856-1921) and Yasuda Zenjirô (1838-1921), two of Gotô's most important political backers, and without their support, the master plan faltered, though

(yellow, to the west and south, as well as the east bank of the Sumidagawa), and commercial core (red, the west bank of the Sumidagawa to the Imperial palace). The vision of the city displayed in the planning maps is of urban space itself as pattern, as different "genres" of space, people, and practice are co-ordinated through the use of color.

⁴⁰⁵ For a discussion of the role of Gotô's colonial experience in his role as a city planner and the specifics of his urban design philosophy, see Aoyama Yasushi, "Toshi seisaku no chichi – Gotô Shinpei no toshi-ron," in Mikuriya Takashi, ed., *Jidai no senkakusha – Gotô Shinpei* (Tokyo: Fujiwara Shoten, 2004), 152-161 and Aoyama Yasushi, "Gotô Shinpei no toshi keikaku," in Mikuriya, ed., 31-34. Interestingly, Mikuriya, the editor of a recent major volume of essays on Gotô, has been named one of the chairs of a committee tasked with conceptualizing the rebuilding of the area damaged in the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake of 2011. The ring road system was never completed due to a combination of factors, including the earthquake, financial crises, difficulty of implementation, and a lack of political backing. The partially completed form remains today – beginning at the Imperial Palace, the rings are Uchibori-dôri, Sotobori-dôri, Gaien-higashi-dôri, Gaien-nishi-dôri, Meiji-dôri, Yamate-dôri, Kannana-dôri, and Kanpachi-dôri.

Gotô was renamed mayor in 1924.

Gotô's influence on the business of building Tokyo in the 1920s was immense. Standing at the intersection of biology, transportation, colonial governance, urban planning, and communications (he modernized the postal and electrical systems while heading the Ministry of Communication, and would later deliver the inaugural address of nationalized radio in 1925), Gotô's work reveals a vision of the city as a rational organism structured through its internal networks.⁴⁰⁶ Earlier, while in Taiwan, Gotô began adapting the principles of biology to business and governance. For the former doctor, managing the spread of malaria and other tropical communicable diseases necessitated a reorganization of the ways in which people, water, and waste moved through space. In turn, an understanding of the networks through which these flows traveled produced a conceptualization of the city and the colony as a biological organism to be administered and attended to.⁴⁰⁷ Gotô, who had previously written on "principles of biology" (*seibutsugaku no gensoku*), developed a vision of urban space as a body to be

⁴⁰⁶ Important developments in the idea of the rational city came to Gotô through his relationship with the American historian and theorist of civilization Charles Beard (1874-1938), whom Gotô's son-in-law, the politician and writer Tsurumi Yûsuke (1885-1973) met in the United States and introduced to Gotô. Although an analysis of Gotô's colonial enterprises and their influence on his theories of governance and urbanism seem to mesh neatly with the idea of a Foucauldian biopolitics, the model of rationality developed by Beard, who taught at Columbia and was one of the founders of the New School for Social Research, is grounded primarily in prewar American progressive political movements, rather than a authoritarian model of knowledge production. Beard penned a book on Tokyo governance after his visit in 1923, published as *The Administration and Politics of Tokyo* (New York: Macmillan, 1923). The specifics of Gotô and Beard's relationship and the influence of Beard's thought on Gotô, as mediated by Tsurumi, the great theorist of Wilsonian liberal democracy in prewar Japan, requires further research. Gotô and Beard's relationship is summarized in Hirata Sachiko, "C.A. Beard – Tokyo shisei no jogensha," in Mikuriya, ed. 264-265. For a discussion of Gotô's work in the development of the Japanese national railway network, see Harada Katsumasa, "Nihon tetsudô-shi no naka no Gotô Shinpei," in Mikuriya, ed., 162-169. For a discussion of Gotô's role in establishing communication systems, including the development of the telephone network, see Fujii Nobuyuki, "Gotô Shinpei no tsûshin jigyô – sono denwa seisaku," in Mikuriya, ed., 177-183.

⁴⁰⁷ Aoyama, 153.

purified, with people flowing through arteries and circulatory passes.⁴⁰⁸ Scholar of governance Aoyama Yasushi compares Gotô's vision to the work of Patrick Geddes (1854-1932), a Scottish biologist and urban planner who viewed the city as a massive organism whose functionality could be increased through the rearrangement of the parts of its urban "body."⁴⁰⁹ In other words, at the same moment that the city came to be understood as a force transforming the bodies moving within it, urban space itself came to be reconceptualized, by Gotô and others, as a huge body subject to manipulation and distortion. While producing the sick bodies of the asthmatic tramps huddled under the rail lines in Yokomitsu's "Kôkasen," the sick body came to be read as a metaphor for the city as such.

The dialectic of reterritorialization at work between the human body and the conquest of space features prominently in another short story by Yokomitsu Riichi, "Napoleon to tamushi" (Napoleon and the Rash, 1926). Though the story does not deal explicitly with the transformation of Tokyo as such, it highlights Yokomitsu's understanding of the ways in which the colonial endeavor infects the corpus of the colonizer. "Napoleon to tamushi" finds Napoleon Bonaparte in the midst of his subjugation of Europe, at the height of his powers and success save for a nagging skin

⁴⁰⁸ Aoyama, 153. For an interesting if highly idiosyncratic examination of the influences of Gotô's philosophy of biology and hygiene on his philosophy of governance, see Mark Driscoll, *Absolute Erotic, Absolute Grotesque: The Living, Dead, and Undead in Japan's Imperialism, 1895-1945* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 30-36.

⁴⁰⁹ Aoyama, 154. The cross-mapping of physical space and the human body within a particular cosmology of physical and abstract space dates back much farther than the work of Gotô or Geddes. In an essay entitled "The Imagination of the Body and the History of Embodied Experience: The Case of Chinese Views of the Viscera," Shigehisa Kuriyama examines medical and erotic prints from the Edo and Meiji periods to think about the historical qualities embedded in the anatomical and topographical imaginations through particular imaginations of the connections between human bodies and the world. In Shigehisa, ed. *The Imagination of the Body and the History of Bodily Experience* (Kyoto: Nihon Bunka Kenkyû Sentâ, 2001).

rash plaguing the Corscian commander. Napoleon stands on the balcony of the Palace of Tuileries as his general asks him rhetorically, “Majesty, who is it that has conquered Europe?” to which he replies, “It is I, It is I.” (*Yo da, yo da*).⁴¹⁰ However, no sooner does Napoleon identify himself as master of the continent than the narrative begins to problematize the mechanisms that make the majesty, as Yokomitsu introduces the plague with which Napoleon secretly struggles:

On Napoleon’s belly, a rash (*tamushi*) five inches long festered intensely, as if it was a map...The history that grew like a thicket on his flesh (*nikutai*) began at the battle of Lodi, during his conquest of Italy in which his ambitions had been confirmed. One of his soldiers fell before his eyes, torn apart by bullets. Napoleon picked up the soldier’s gun and cut through the front lines, plunging into the enemy’s ranks...the enemy soldiers collapsed. Napoleon’s shining glory had begun. The rash that made him suffer like an Anglo-Saxon was transmitted from the soldier’s gun to his body.⁴¹¹

Napoleon’s rash seizes his body at the exact moment when he begins his first campaign, just as his imperial ambition turns into military reality. His “shining glory” and his affliction are made inseparable, as the existence of the rash is made consummate to the “I” that names himself master of his domain. The movement through Europe has infected Napoleon with the rash, but increasingly it is the rash that comes to move Napoleon, as

The activity (*katsudô*) of the rash made Napoleon’s whole body tremble...the rash divided up. His nails followed the itch. The rash became even more active. Napoleon’s nails shook violently rebelling against his intense will. But the rash had no will (*ishi*)...the singular will of Napoleon, who had shook the world raised all its power and grappled with the rash as it was a sheet of paper. The one that ended up wriggling and submitting was Napoleon Bonaparte...
“I, I am not afraid of anything. I conquered the Alps. I subjugated Prussia. I devastated Austria.” But before he could even finish speaking,

⁴¹⁰ Yokomitsu, “Napoleon to tamushi,” *TYRZ*, vol. 2, 208. Originally published in *Bungei Jidai* vol. 3, no. 1 (Jan. 1926).

⁴¹¹ *Ibid*, 209-210.

Napoleon's nails had already begun scratching, like a well-maintained machine, at the ringworm on his belly.⁴¹²

Yokomitsu's characterization of the relationship between Napoleon, his conquest, and the rash on his belly shifts the impetus of ambition and expansion from the individual human will (*ishi*) to the non-sentient rash itself, which constantly forces Napoleon to move in fits of frenzy. As Napoleon annexes more territory, he is increasingly transformed into a machine that can do nothing but wriggle and squirm even as his person constitutes the core of the actions that transform Europe on the world historical scale.⁴¹³ As the rash itself becomes the subject of historical change, the act of colonization generates a sick body at its center, which in turn continues to carry out the conquests that reproduce that body as disease.⁴¹⁴ When Yokomitsu's Napoleon seeks a doctor's help, he is given a prescription that renders visible this dialectical relationship:

Napoleon's rash was a type of ringworm. Among all the types of skin disease, it was the one that had the character to spread in an outline delivering a most powerful itch.

"Excellency, you must apply this oriental ink (*tôyô no sumi*)."

From that time on, the oriental ink followed the outline of the rash on Napoleon's belly, drawing a big, dark, map. But Napoleon's rash was not Spain...the more he scratched around, the more the rash split on its side. On Napoleon's stomach, the oriental ink expanded its territory (*hanto*). It came to resemble the shape of the map of Napoleon's cavalry as it swept through and invaded Austrian territory.⁴¹⁵

⁴¹² Yokomitsu, "Napoleon to tamushi," 210; 216.

⁴¹³ Yokomitsu's story also plays upon anxieties of class and social rank in this process. In Yokomitsu's characterization, despite his victories, Napoleon maintains a strong sense of himself as a plebian out his element, a fact bodily reinforced by his lowly rash. He is obsessed with hiding the rash from his second wife, Marie-Louise of Austria, convinced that it will mark his born social status and alienate her.

⁴¹⁴ The dialectics between the sick body and colonial space in the literature of Yokomitsu Riichi has been a popular topic of analysis in regards to his most long work, *Shanghai*. For excellent discussions of body and city space in semi-colonial Shanghai, see Lippit and Golley; pages cited above in footnote 7.

⁴¹⁵ Yokomitsu, "Napoleon to tamushi," 210-211.

As Napoelon's kingdom expands, the rash on his belly spreads out in tandem, creating a literal and figurative map that belies the intertwined processes of territorialization that craft both a new colonized space and a body that has been colonized through the production of that space. The image of the rash (*tamushi*) is used to similar effect in "Kôkasen," in which the colony of homeless tramps living under the train line are described as "the rash of the city" (*tokai no tamushi*), a by-product generated by the extension of the ministry-planned rail lines.⁴¹⁶ Amidst the extended transformation of imperial Japan, the city of Tokyo, both Yokomitsu and Gotô reconceptualized the way in which the body moving through those spaces transformed them even while being transformed by them.

As the city came to be seen as an organism whose parts could be rearranged to keep it "healthy," that organism produced "sick" bodies that constituted its own internal organs, metamorphosizing the sense of physicality of those who dwelled within it. Disease and the debilitation of the body through the stresses of modern life also came to be seen as an important metaphor for literature itself. Nakagawa Yoichi (1897-1994), a writer affiliated with Yokomitsu and the journal *Bungei Jidai* attempted to summarize what he saw as the relationship between new life, new literature, and new illness in a 1924 essay:

The outbreak (*hassei*) of a new literature (*atarashii bungaku*) – beyond the emergence of new health (*atarashii kenkô*) in this age, the outbreak of a new disease (*atarashii byôki no hassei*) is directly due to / linked to literature. Literature itself is sickness...as I, as an individual, become sick, tired, and crazy...that is when I see new literature emerge...With the progression of science, diseases increase more and more; this is an

⁴¹⁶ The ways in which sickness spreads out from the city and reorients the relationship between body and space is also a theme in Yokomitsu's earlier story "Namboku" (North and South, 1922), in which a man returns to his village stricken with illness after a try at life in the city and is shuttled backand forth between the north and south factions of the village.

interesting phenomenon that occurs through interaction with the minuteness of the human nervous system. Though doctors aim for health, they delight at the discovery of curious diseases...Literature too loves health. But first it must develop a new sense of humor (*kaigyaku*) through the discovery of new diseases. The new disease is the intractable pursuit of the human nervous system towards existences it finds unusual (*ijô naru sonzai*). It is a reflection of fear, the shuddering and temptation that poisons the human heart. It is a flood of strange and mysterious bacteria...The more serious this sickness becomes, as a reaction to that disease, new literature explodes bigger and taller, as the reaction to and rebellion against that sickness.⁴¹⁷

Nakagawa sketches a pattern of relations between literature and sickness in which each seems to transform and then finally become the other. He identifies the way in which new types of illness can produce new ideas about expression, but also names “literature itself as sickness,” as he locates it within the larger complex of information and stimulation that foists itself upon the nerves of an already overstimulated modern man. Nakagawa’s essay begins with what seems to be an idea of sickness as physical malady as might be treated by a doctor, but moves to a more metaphorical idea of illness in which the sickness in question emerges as the untamable set of experiences and emotions that constitute modern life itself. In Nakagawa’s construction, literature comes to act as the mediating agent between the physiological and psychological dimensions of illness in the age of modern science. At the same time, literature itself functions for Nakagawa not only as sickness, but as medicine, as it must both seek out and abhor new illnesses in order for it to develop and change.

⁴¹⁷ Nakagawa Yoichi, “Atarashii byôki to bungaku,” in *Bungei Jidai* vol. 1, no. 1 (Oct. 1924), 12-13.

Dirty Water and Sick Civilization: Cholera, Rivers, and the Metropolis Remade

In Nakagawa's essay, the crafting of literature is linked to the mind and body's perpetual source for the unusual, which is in turn explained via the evocative metaphor of "a flood of mysterious bacteria." This flood of bacteria acts as a model that the human organism must function within, as it is both the blessing and the curse that gives birth to the new. Through the works of Gotô, Yokomitsu, and Nakagawa, a complex view of the relationship between sickness and society emerges, one in which the processes of civilization and modernization literally and metaphorically reproduce disease even while eradicating it. A precedent for such a model can be found in a text that has since come to be read as one of the key statements on Japan's place and experience in the modern world. "Datsu-a-ron" (On Leaving Asia), an anonymous editorial published in March 1885 and later accredited to the enlightenment thinker Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835-1901), famously compared the spread of civilization to an epidemic of measles:

Civilization (*bunmei*) is like the spread of measles (*hashika*). At present, measles advance eastwardly from Nagasaki in the west towards Tokyo; they are like an infestation that spreads with warm spring weather. At this time, even if we attempt to inoculate ourselves against the ravages of this loathsome epidemic disease (*ryûkôbyô*), are there really any measures we can take? I assert that there is nothing that can be done. We do not want to intensify the damages wrought by the epidemic. With civilization, full of benefits, there come advantages and disadvantages. Simply put it is the role of intellectuals not to keep the disease at bay, but to make efforts to assist the epidemic and allow the people to bask in that which it brings.⁴¹⁸

⁴¹⁸ "Datsu-a-ron" originally appeared in the March 16, 1885 edition of the *Jiji Shinpô* newspaper. The brief but dense essay has later come to be read as a crucial text in understanding Fukuzawa's views on Japan's relationships with Korea, China, and the West, and is intimately tied to anxieties over colonization in Asia. Written during the Sino-French War of 1884-1885, the essay belies concern over the presence of the West in Asia, and Fukuzawa's "measles," identified with the port city of Nagasaki that served as a center of early Western learning during the Edo period, are generally understood as a signifier for the West. My intention here is not to engage explicitly with the complex discourses of modernization and enlightenment and the negotiation between East and West within which Fukuzawa was speaking in the Meiji period (a dissertation in itself), but rather

Fukuzawa declares civilization itself the disease, albeit a disease that must be accepted rather than fought against, as the sickness it spreads is both a blessing and a curse. Since preventing the disease completely appears impossible to Fukuzawa, he recommends a kind of modulated inoculation, in which the intellectual plays the role of the physician by allowing the nation as patient to become sick while assuring that the positive mutations wrought by the disease are not outweighed by the negatives.⁴¹⁹ Fukuzawa's statement implies an understanding of modernity associated not so much with a binary of infection versus prevention, but rather a dialectic between sickness and inoculation, in which the constant struggle with and management of "civilization" constitutes the process that produces modern national subjects (*kokumin*).

Although Fukuzawa is speaking metaphorically, the spread of disease constituted a major problem in Meiji Japan, one that would have a transformative effect not only on the nascent nation-state, but on the topography of Tokyo as well. Fukuzawa's choice of measles (*hashika*) as the symbolic sickness is somewhat surprising, as the disease had existed in Japan since the Heian period; the disease that caused the most concern in Meiji Japan, and was most immediately associated with foreign presence was not measles, but cholera. Cholera, not originally endemic to Japan, was first recorded in 1822, when the cholera bacteria was brought by a Dutch merchant ship to Nagasaki. Epidemics increased in frequency and intensity through the 19th century, with tens and sometimes hundreds of

to highlight the significance of the management of disease as an important metaphor embedded in the projects of creating a functional modern space. Fukuzawa Yukichi, "Datsu-a-ron," Keiô Gijuku hensan ed., *Fukuzawa Yukichi zenshû* vol. 10 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1958), 238.

⁴¹⁹ Again, a full reading of Fukuzawa's essay would take into account changing discourse on medicine and medical science in Asia in the 1880s, a time in which figures like Gotô Shinpei and Mori Ôgai (1862-1922) were traveling to Germany to study medicine. At the same time, the development of Western medical science itself cannot be separated from the colonial projects that produced the very anxieties that appear in Fukuzawa's essay.

thousands dying in devastating outbreaks in 1879, 1882, 1886, 1890, and 1895.⁴²⁰ The conflagration of 1879 ravaged Tokyo, which killed 105,000 people in the metropolis and other cities.⁴²¹ In the mid-Meiji period, victims of cholera were often treated not by medical science, but through Buddhist prayers and exorcisms; cholera was not isolated until 1884, and a vaccine was not developed until 1900. By the 1890s, cholera came to be understood to be a water-borne bacteria, and the managing of waterways and water sources came to be seen as the key to preventing further deadly outbreaks.⁴²² At that time,

⁴²⁰ Rokurô Takano et. al, eds. *Studies of Cholera in Japan* (Geneva: Health Organization of the League of Nations, 1926), 89-96. The study, originally published in English, was carried out by the Chief of the Section of Preventative Medicine for the Sanitary Bureau of the Home Ministry. The study notes that cholera was so prevalent that between 1877 and 1926, there were only five years in which some degree of epidemic did *not* occur. See also Yamamoto Shun'ichi, *Nihon korera-shi* (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 2006), 116-182. In many ways, cholera can be seen as a quintessentially modern disease. Originally endemic to the Ganges river valley in India, the *vibrio cholerae* bacterium spread to the rest of the world largely through the rapid routes of maritime and overland trade established by the British Empire in the early 19th century, sweeping across Eurasia until eventually arriving in London in the 1830s, where the first major outbreak in England would claim 20,000 lives. The 'modernity' of cholera also lies in its method of transmission and the relationship of transmission to human social space. A water-borne bacteria transmitted through the liquid waste of the victim, cholera spreads most rapidly when infected water re-enters public water systems, where it is imbibed by other victims using the same water source. As such, cholera as an epidemic disease is a largely urban phenomenon, as the creation of modern cities such as London and Tokyo produced the conditions for massive outbreaks to occur. In turn, the identification of the epidemiological pattern of cholera and the restructuring of the water systems to prevent the disease had a major impact on the structure of the city itself. In essence, the circulation of choleric water was managed through the diversion of the circulation of clean water as part of the city's hygienic system. See Steven Johnson, *The Ghost Map* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2006), esp. 33-35, 41-45. Johnson also notes the way in which London was reconceptualized as a sick organism in the mid-19th century, as the city as body metaphor took root in urban critique. Johnson 88-90.

⁴²¹ No doubt the problem of cholera also contributed significantly towards Gotô Shinpei's philosophies of medicine and urbanism. Gotô was a medical student in Nagoya in 1879, the city hit hardest after Tokyo in the outbreak of 1879. According to his biography, in 1895, while serving as in the Bureau of Health and Hygiene, Gotô oversaw the development of the world's first cholera serum for the treatment of the disease. See Tsurumi, *Gotô Shinpei*, vol. 1, 737-739. Gotô was also concerned about the spread of disease through rail networks in addition to water. Aoyama, 146.

⁴²² Cholera was identified as a water-borne disease by John Snow (1813-1858), in response to the London epidemic of 1854. However, it would be several more decades until a wider understanding of the disease took hold, especially in Japan. In a brief newspaper essay written in the midst of the minor cholera outbreak of 1922 (in which less than 5,000 died), Akutagawa

most citizens of Tokyo were drawing their water from wells and unpurified surface channels (*jôsui*), so cholera outbreaks tended to be clustered around particular water sources, and concentrated in maritime and water bound areas.⁴²³

Centered primarily to the east of the Imperial Palace, Tokyo was still in many ways a riverine city built along the Sumidagawa and Arakawa rivers; areas adjacent to water, such as Nihonbashi, Kanda, Fukagawa, and Asakusa experienced some of the worst effects of the epidemics.⁴²⁴ An improvement plan initiated in 1898 and completed in 1901 attempted to reform Tokyo's water system by replacing the exposed channels (*jôsui*) with modern pipe systems (*suidô*) in order to provide citizens with cleaner water, thereby stunting the spread of disease.⁴²⁵ Though outbreaks killing hundreds and sometimes thousands would continue for years, no epidemic approaching the scale of the outbreaks of previous decades occurred again. The managing of the metropolitan water system and the need for clean water as a necessary condition for urban life resulted in drastic changes to the topographical and geographical make up of the city of Tokyo. Following the cholera outbreak of 1886, the city came to recognize the need for a larger ex-urban water source to provide purified drinking water, and annexed the Tamagawa

Ryûnosuke described his fear of contracting the disease. The difference in the perception of cholera across different period of time is clear in the essay, as he describes the fear felt by Natsume Sôseki (1867-1916) when his son was stricken ill amidst the epidemic of 1879 in contrast to his own mostly neurotically self-induced concern. Unlike tuberculosis, cholera never became a major interest of literary writers in Japan; the most notable work to focus on the disease is Ozaki Kôyô's "Aobudô" (Green Grapes, 1895), which is based upon the illness of Kôyô's pupil Oguri Fûyô (1875-1926). Akutagawa Ryûnosuke, "Korera," *Akutagawa Ryûnosuke zenshû* vol. 9 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1996), 244-245. The piece originally ran in the *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun*, Oct. 14, 1922.

⁴²³ Takano, 97-109. Shigenobu Yukihiro, "Mizu to baikin – toshi densetsu to iu hôhō ni mukete," in Satô Kenji, ed., *21 Seiki no toshi shakaigaku 3: Toshi no kaidokuryoku* (Tokyo: Keisô Shobô, 1996).

⁴²⁴ Shigenobu, 35.

⁴²⁵ Mori Ôgai, in his faculty as a doctor, was also interested in the relationship between water and disease, giving a lecture on waterborne illness entitled "Mizu no setsu" (Thoughts on Water) in 1898, the year the improvement plan was initiated.

river and its environs, drastically increasing the size of the metropolitan prefecture and subsuming the Musashino plain into the bureaucratic territory of the capital.⁴²⁶

Increasingly, the networks of water that structured central and eastern Tokyo and had determined the makeup of urban living space in pre-Restoration Edo were shifted underground as canals were replaced with covered channels.⁴²⁷

This was not a shift from unsullied nature to technological civilization so much as a reconfiguration and occlusion of the existing man-made uses of the river that had structured the city while it was still known as Edo. During the Edo period, the capital was a city built upon water as much as it was a city of land; construction and dredging of canals and moats, the building of the Tamagawa *jōsui* (exposed water channel), and the diversion of tributaries by the Tokugawa government transformed the flood plain into a waterborne metropolis.⁴²⁸ A network of canals facilitated the transportation and circulation of people and goods through land between the castle and the Sumidagawa River.⁴²⁹ Most major cultural and ritual sites lay along the Sumidagawa River and its tributaries, including Ryōgoku, Fukagawa, and of course Asakusa and the Yoshiwara licensed quarter. By the 20th century, the redrawing and reorienting of the urban networks of circulation had been shifted, as the movement of people and goods in Tokyo came to

⁴²⁶ Katō Tadoru, *Toshi ga horoboshita kawa: Tamagawa no shizen-shi* (Tokyo: Chūkō Shinsho, 1973), 114. This transformation of rural land into a part of Tokyo sets the stage for early naturalist explorations of the ex-urban space in the following years, most famously Kunikida Doppo's 1898 "Musashino." In many ways, this event created the conditions for the formation of suburban Tokyo and the eventual population shift to the west and south of the city center in the 20th century.

⁴²⁷ In addition to the physical transformation of the city, Shigenobu has noted that the cholera outbreaks of the Meiji and early Taishō eras, produced a problem of visibility, in which the naked eye is relieved of the ability to discriminate pure from impure water due to the microscopic size of the bacteria. Shigenobu, 35-40.

⁴²⁸ Hidenobu Jinnai, *Tokyo: A Spatial Anthropology* trans. Kimiko Nishimura (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 68-70.

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.*, 72-77.

be carried out along the rails rather than the rivers. Through these processes, the rivers of Tokyo cease to exist primarily as a feature of human geographical space; as they became sources of the resource of clean water, they became parts of a series of networks and conduits that served the needs of the urban populace and facilitated the growth and restructuring of the city.⁴³⁰

The re-utilization of the river transforms it into what Martin Heidegger calls “standing-reserve” (G., *Bestand*), an essence of a thing in which it is “ordered to stand by, to be immediately at hand...so that it may be on call for a future ordering.”⁴³¹

Heidegger famously draws his own analysis from a discussion of the damming of the Rhine river, through which the river comes to exist primarily as a power station.

Heidegger describes instrumentalization of the river (what he calls “challenging-forth”) as such:

Unlocking, transforming, storing, distributing, and switching about are ways of revealing. But the revealing never simply comes to an end. Neither does it run off into the indeterminate. The revealing reveals to itself its own manifoldly interlocking paths, through regulating their course.⁴³²

In this dense passage, Heidegger is sketching how the integration and manipulation of a thing into a system of resources exceeds the re-ordering of the object itself, transforming in tandem the relationship between that thing (here, the river) and the human, as the thing “no longer stands over us as object.”⁴³³ Man, “already challenged to exploit the energies of nature,” takes part in the process of ordering the world to reveal itself in a certain way;

⁴³⁰ In this sense, the rivers might be seen as a component of Fukuzawa’s dialectic of infection and inoculation that drives the expansion of “civilization” as a mode of existence.

⁴³¹ Martin Heidegger, “The Question Concerning Technology,” in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 17.

⁴³² *Ibid*, 16.

⁴³³ *Ibid*, 17.

in doing so, he produces an Enframing (*Gestell*) that in turn structures man's relationship with his world and the objects in it.⁴³⁴ Enframing, which Heidegger identifies through Plato as the "name for the essence of modern technology," places man in a fundamentally different relationship with the space through which he moves, as that which he seeks to order ends up ordering him.⁴³⁵ Heidegger's discussion highlights the complexities of the relationships at work between the mutual re-orderings of space and human experience that lie at the core not only of the transformation of modern Tokyo, but of the ways in which the perception of landscape and technology are embedded within the development of any experience of space.

Riparian Enumerations and the Narration of History

In the case of Tokyo, the instrumentalization of the river networks in the process of producing and regulating the city as an urban corpus was fundamental to the creation of the modern metropolis. By the time of Gotô Shinpei's tenure as governor of Tokyo, these water systems, like the transportation and communication networks, had come to be naturalized as part of the larger urban body to be manipulated and rearranged in the

⁴³⁴ Heidegger, 18-20.

⁴³⁵ Heidegger defines Enframing as "the gathering together of that setting-upon which sets upon man, i.e., challenges him forth, to reveal the real, in the mode of ordering, as standing-reserve." This is what Heidegger means by his famous line that "the essence of technology is nothing technological." Heidegger, 20. Heidegger draws on another example to exhibit the way in which *Gestell* results in a fundamentally inconsummable set of experiences of the world, describing how "The forester who, in the wood, measures the felled timber and to all appearances walks the same forest path in the same way as did his grandfather is today commanded by profit-making in the lumber industry, whether he knows it or not. He is made subordinate to the orderability of cellulose, which for its part is challenged forth by the need for paper, which is then delivered to newspapers and illustrated magazines. The latter, in their turn, set public opinion to swallowing what is printed, so that set configuration of opinion becomes available on demand." Heidegger's example is notable in how it demonstrates the way in which the woodcutters' action is structured within a much larger complex of sociotechnological frames and actions, as well as the way in which his actions in turn produce the possibility of that complex. Heidegger, 18.

reconstruction of the city.⁴³⁶ The Arakawa river channel was built from 1913 to 1930, and the tributary Nakagawa river was diverted in 1924 as part of a program of flood management, another task necessary for the creation of a fully functioning imperial capital. In addition to their practical functions, Tokyo's rivers were utilized to produce a new type of urban visibility; following the earthquake of 1923, Gotô decided to transform the artery of the Sumidagawa into a "museum of bridges," collecting designs and surveying the public in order to make the river into a display of the myriad possibilities of modern architecture and construction.⁴³⁷ The fundamental geography and topography of the landscape lying beneath metropolitan Tokyo in the early 20th century thus underwent a total restructuring, in terms of both physical characteristics and the ways in which the contours of land and water fit into the networks sustaining modern urban social life. As the body of Gotô's city took shape, the rivers that had once acted as the lifeblood of early

⁴³⁶ The degree to which the new water system succeeded in creating a healthy urban populace and thus making itself invisible is evident in the scale of the minor cholera outbreak of 1922-1923. The few diagnosed cases of the disease were traced to water sourced from outside the city's purified waterworks, indicating both the purity of the water as well as the degree of trust placed in the system. Shigenobu, 40.

⁴³⁷ Aoyama, 31. The bridge is also a privileged figure in Heidegger's thought. In the well-known essay "Building Dwelling Thinking," Heidegger describes how the bridge "does not just connect banks that are already there. The banks emerge as banks only as the bridge crosses the stream. The bridge designedly causes them to lie across from each other...the bridge gathers the earth as landscape around the stream...[a spot along the river] proves to be a location, and does so because of the bridge." Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," *Poetry, Language, Thought* trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Perennial Classics, 2001), 150-152. Like the repurposing of the river discussed above, the building of a bridge brings a particular landscape into being. In the case discussed here, the river, naturalized through its integration into the modern urban network is remade into something visible through the transformation in its essence, as the Sumidagawa as a museum of bridges is ontologically distinct from the Sumidagawa as a source of water or a route of transportation. Unno Hiroshi notes that major construction on the Arakawa channel was completed by 1924. Although I focus on the problem of cholera in provoking a new bearing towards the city's rivers, the periodic destructive flooding of Tokyo's rivers, especially the central Sumidagawa were another reason for the major restructuring of urban water networks. Unno points out that the Arakawa river project was developed after the major flood of 1910, and notes that the Sumidagawa was first spanned by train with the connection of the Azumabashi-Narihirabashi bridge in 1902. Unno Hiroshi, *Modan toshi Tôkyô* (Tokyo: Chûô Kôronsha, 1983), 15.

modern Edo came to be naturalized as increasingly invisible parts of the 20th century metropolis.

This reordering of the deep structures of the very ground upon which citizens walked was by no means ignored by the city's literati, and the rivers of Tokyo, the central Sumidagawa in particular, came to constitute a privileged topos upon which to represent the growing pains of urban modernity.⁴³⁸ Some authors, such as Nagai Kafû (1879-1959), set elegiac stories along the river's banks, creating evocative images of the changing pace of life along the water.⁴³⁹ However, although these writings effectively convey a snapshot of urban life in a period of transition, such stories do not necessarily problematize the transformation of space as such beyond the emotional affects and experiences of their characters. A more macroscopic view of the dialectics at work between the lay of the land and the building of human civilization appears in an unconventional work by Yokomitsu Riichi entitled "Shizukanaru raretsu" (Quiet Enumerations). Published in *Bungei Shunjû* in 1925, in the midst of Gotô's numerous riverine restoration projects, "Shizukanaru raretsu" is an abstract historical narrative that traces the mutual interactions between humans and rivers across the long durée. If "Machi no soko," Yokomitsu's story that opened this chapter, provides a dialectical view of the metropolis from the perspective of a single anonymous member of modern society, "Shizukanaru raretsu" serves to close the chapter by looking back upon the construction of the city from an almost cosmological point of view.

⁴³⁸ Unno Hiroshi's *Modan toshi Tôkyô*, a major work in the study of literature and urban space, is in many ways a picture of the changing ways in which the Sumidagawa has been represented in the modern period.

⁴³⁹ Kafu's *Sumidagawa* (The River Sumida, 1909) is representative.

The story follows a pair of rivers, named River S (*S-gawa*) and River Q (*Q-gawa*), and tracing their long lives from prehistory to apocalypse. As the narrative opens, the two rivers are the undeniable subjects of the story, pushing back and forth in the struggle to control the watershed they share:

When it was young, River Q cut into mountain walls with great waterpower. Clouds became fog and filled the valleys...
Day and night, River Q and River S, which ran next to it, fought over the watershed...
The struggle between River Q and River S for the watershed grew fiercer and fiercer. Though River S told the tales (*monogatari*) of numerous victories, it built up a great accumulation of sand in its mouth.⁴⁴⁰

Yokomitsu imbues the two rivers with qualities that conventional human characters might possess, portraying them as active subjects able to narrate their own experiences. But before long, the rivers are joined by the encroachment of human civilization on their banks, first in villages, then in fortified castle towns also named “S” and “Q” (*S-jō* and *Q-jō*). The relations between these competing societies come to mirror the battle of the rivers flowing beneath, “as the struggle between the flows (*suiryū*) of River Q and River S grew ever more intense, and the struggle between the castles built on their respective river beds grew more intense as well.”⁴⁴¹ However, rather than portray a model of history in which human society merely reflects the changing currents below, Yokomitsu shows how the paths of the rivers themselves begin shifting in tandem with the human struggles above, as a rapid boom in the population of Castle Q leads to “River Q growing fatter and

⁴⁴⁰ Yokomitsu Riichi, “Shizukanaru raretsu,” *TYRZ*, vol. 2, 178-180. The use of a single roman letter for a character’s name, sometimes followed by a title, is a common convention in modern Japanese literary writing; perhaps the most famous example is “K” in Natsume Sōseki’s *Kokoro* (1914). The quality of the rivers and the subsequent forms to which they lend their names as the “subjects” of the narrative is emphasized by the fact that nearly all of the story’s 19 sections begin with either the letter S or Q as the subject of the first sentence.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid*, 181.

fatter, stealing water from River S.”⁴⁴² River and civilization thus enter into an interrelationship in which each mutually drives the reformation of the other. In his enumeration of these struggles, Yokomitsu uses the term *sanga* (mountains and rivers), which ironically references Bashô’s (1644-1694) famous citation of the Tang dynasty poet Du Fu (712-770), “Kingdoms crumble but the mountains and rivers remain” (*kuni yaburete sanga ari*).⁴⁴³ Whereas Bashô’s poem evokes the fleeting nature of human endeavors in contrast to an eternal and unchanging natural landscape, Yokomitsu’s “struggle amidst mountains and rivers” calls forth a view of landscape in constant flux, ceaselessly shifting through both internal conflict and pressures generated by the conditions of the evolving human society above.⁴⁴⁴

Eventually, a series of bloody conflicts lead to the subjugation of Castle S by Castle Q, which becomes the locus of a burgeoning feudal society. But before long, the unit of economic production shifts from the castle town to the individual citizen, ending the necessity for conflict between the two states:

The merchants accumulated financial power. The struggle between individuals grew fiercer. But for the lord of Castle Q, this phenomenon was to be welcomed. As the competition between individuals grew more intense, it wore down group hatred towards Castle Q...
 The feudal system (*hōken seido*) became extinct...
 The people became merchants (*shōnin*) and accumulated great personal wealth (*shizai*)...
 The more their production increased, the more their wealth increased. The more their wealth increased, the more their production expanded.⁴⁴⁵

⁴⁴² Yokomitsu, “Shizukanaru raretsu,” 181.

⁴⁴³ Bashô’s citation appears in his prose introduction to his poems on Hiraizumi in his 1702 work *Oku no hosomichi* (The Narrow Road to the Deep North). Du Fu’s original poem is entitled “Chunwang” (Spring View) and first appeared in the anthology *Youxuanji*, compiled in the year 900 by Wei Zhuang (836-910). Yokomitsu spent the most significant portion of his youth in the Iga-Ueno area in which Bashô was born. They each have memorial parks located in the town of Tsuge, only a few hundred meters from each other. Inoue Ken, et. al, *Yokomitsu Riichi jiten*, 551.

⁴⁴⁴ Yokomitsu, “Shizukanaru raretsu,” 181.

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 187.

At this point, the people living on the rivers learn to “love individuality,” and begin “building a new culture” based upon a bourgeois social order.⁴⁴⁶ The transition closely resembles the course of Japanese history during the 19th century, as Castle S and Castle Q transform into City S and City Q (*S-shi* and *Q-shi*) as the early modern feudal system gives way to urban capitalist enterprise. As the paths of the rivers fluctuate and the social structures on their banks evolve, the subjects of the narrative transform in turn. “Quiet Enumerations” consists of 18 brief segments, 17 of which begin with either the letter Q or the letter S, placing the rivers and structures to which they refer in the clear subject positions of the story.⁴⁴⁷ In the first half of the narrative, the rivers themselves are the key actors, and each section starts with the name *Q-gawa* (River Q); as the societies on the rivers develop, narrative agency moves away from the rivers, and Yokomitsu evenly alternates *Q-gawa* and *Q-jô* (Castle Q) in the initial subject position, with the human and natural systems passing through a phase of mutual influence. In the final third of this story of riparian and human evolution, *S-shi* (City S) takes over the place of the primary subject as Yokomitsu narrates the transfer of historical subjectivity from rivers to human settlements.

Though the letters themselves remain unchanged in appearance, their referents are changed via the shifting system of suffixes, so that the letters S and Q are themselves historicized within the narrative, as their meaning moves along with the makeup of the social systems and landscape that they narrate. Eventually, S and Q come to refer

⁴⁴⁶ Yokomitsu, “Shizukanaru raretsu,” 189.

⁴⁴⁷ The majority of these 17 sections begin with the letters themselves, though in several of the sections the letters are preceded by perfunctory modifiers such as “*kono*” (this). The one section not to place either Q or S in the subject position at the start of the paragraph is section 9, located precisely in the middle of the narrative, instead focuses on Polaris, the North Star, which gazes down upon the shifting rivers; this section is discussed below.

primarily to the human artifices that have overwhelmed and subjugated the rivers. At the same time, as civilization enters the capitalist phase, the boundary between S and Q is eschewed as the needs of advanced civilization serve to rearrange the formerly disparate rivers and settlements into a single metropolis. The “water power of River S alone” is no longer able to support such a high level of economic activity, and the rivers S and Q are merged together into one, as are the cities S and Q; the citizens of City Q (*Q-shimin*) and City S “join together to form one great city upon the two rivers that had heretofore struggled with each other.”⁴⁴⁸ Yokomitsu’s vision of history in “Shizukanaru raretsu” thus traces the subsumption of discrete subjects into the internal systems of a new aggregated metropolitan subject that effectively negates the contradictions of the existing natural and social orders in claiming a primary position in the historical narrative.

City S and City Q are thus supplanted by City SQ (*SQ-shi*) as the subject of the story’s final sections, a new compound nominal that refers to the entire metropolitan complex. Factories are built, rail lines proliferate, and an electrical grid is set up, giving rise to City SQ as a fully modern urban topography in which “beams of light glinting off glass and metal flashed continually through the space as the roar of engines and the clanging of hammers vividly mixed together.”⁴⁴⁹ The urban environment SQ emerges as the new subject of the story’s narrative, as River S and River Q are fully subsumed into the resource networks of the new metropolis. Yet, as with Napoleon, the symbolic agent of history in Yokomitsu’s story discussed above, the unified subjectivity of the metropolis SQ is disrupted and critiqued almost as soon as it is achieved. Grammatical structure and the objective qualities of straightforward narration break down just as S and

⁴⁴⁸ Yokomitsu, “Shizukanaru raretsu,” 188-189.

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 189.

Q coalesce into a single unit, as the new contradictions at play within City SQ lead to proletarian uprising, great war, total destruction, and the dissolution of the heretofore conventional narrative into a staccato series of fragmentary sentences at the story's close:

Rock and arms and bullets and flashing blades.
 Blood and explosions and battle cries and shrieks and howls.
 Sprint. Collision. Carnage. Downfall. Throws. Flood.
 The structure of the whole city, destroyed
 To the level plane, –
 To the horizon, –
 To ruin, –
 The flickering of colors and sounds and black smoke.⁴⁵⁰

In Yokomitsu's telling, the ability to coherently narrate the course of history breaks down as the "objectivity of the city schisms" (*shigai no kyakkan ga bunretsu shita*), leaving only a montage of scattered material and human actions in the story's final lines. Like the vision of the protagonist in "Machi no soko," in which "the city shatters and falls on its side" when he mentally removes the imaginary pillar of coin that stands at its center, unified objectivity becomes impossible to maintain within the metropolis that takes the final subject position in "Shizukanaru raretsu." But, in contrast to the other stories of Yokomitsu's analyzed above, "Shizuka naru raretsu" does not begin with an expressionistic montage of sight, sound, and fragmentary images and sensations, but rather devolves to the point at which those sensations overwhelm the ability to produce a narrative of history itself.

Despite drawing attention to the difficulties of narration in an era in which the metropolis constitutes a subject that is at once primary and schismatic, Yokomitsu's model of history in "Shizukanaru raretsu" remains largely teleological, following a familiar arc of evolution wherein natural order is superseded by human civilization,

⁴⁵⁰ Yokomitsu, "Shizukanaru raretsu," 190-191.

which progresses through primitive, feudal, capitalist, and socialist phases before its eventual and inevitable collapse and disintegration. But Yokomitsu writes in a decentering device that appears at the core of the narrative structure; in section 9, the single section of the story not to take either S or Q as its subject, Yokomitsu focuses on the North Star, which “continually looks down upon the struggles between the two rivers” and seems to represent an objective observer of history.⁴⁵¹ However, this North Star is not the same North Star that appeared earlier in the narrative; Polaris, the previous North Star, had succumbed to Perseus in a battle for supremacy in the heavens, and by section nine, Perseus itself had “fallen under secret attack by the star Andromeda,” which becomes the latest in a series of North Stars.⁴⁵² The firmament above is thus revealed to be as much in flux as the world below, as Yokomitsu reframes the primary narrative of rivers and cities to reveal the subjective and shifting nature of the observer vis-à-vis a set of forces barely visible in the text.

In this act of reframing, Yokomitsu suggests that his own attempt to narrate the history of civilization is embedded within and susceptible to the very processes that it sets out to describe, as well as alludes that the act of viewing or reading this history takes place within its own constantly shifting set of circumstances. For the reader of Yokomitsu’s text, that act of reading is carried out not within the abstract space of the story’s starry sky, but amidst the spatial structures of 1920s Tokyo. Along with Yokomitsu’s other works of urban fiction, “Shizukanaru raretsu” suggests a dual character of the metropolis, in which the modern city is at once the agglomerated subject

⁴⁵¹ Yokomitsu, “Shizukanaru raretsu,” 181.

⁴⁵² Ibid, 183.

of historical narrative and a hopelessly complex and self-contradictory space of action and sensation in which true objectivity is impossible to maintain.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined the mechanisms at work in the spatial transformation of Tokyo across the first decades of the 20th century. This reconfiguration of urban space took place across a complex and multivalent set of processes in which individual practices and modes of perception intersected with shifting forms of social behavior, economic forces, and material needs structured upon a system of networks moving people and products in and out of the metropolis. These processes played out atop a particular physical topography that served to frame these changes while being transformed by the new structures built upon it. By beginning with a single subject and working outward through the locales of everyday life, consumer modes of commerce, transportation networks, and national and colonial space to arrive at a topographic picture of the landscape within which all of the rest are situated, I have attempted to show how systems functioning on different structural levels of city space are each constantly working in interrelation with the others, from bacteria to the individual actor to the department store to the railway network.

The writing of literature and other contemporaneous discourses on the rapidly changing nature of life in the city served to mediate between these different levels. In addition to fiction and criticism, a diverse range of sociological analyses, maps, epidemiological studies, and urban planning strategies changed the ways in which citizens could make sense of the multifaceted experience of modern metropolitan life,

and in doing so transformed the modes by which city dwellers perceived their shared space and dwelled within it. By embedding the writing of literature within this broader system, I show how literary writing came to function as one of a number of discursive practices that attempted to represent the multifarious factors at play in the mediations between human body and urban space in Tokyo in the 1920s. As noted by several of the figures discussed in this chapter and elsewhere in this dissertation, it is due to the integration of literature into the wider commodity market that allowed it to take on such a function. Understood as a physical object to be bought and sold, the literary work circulated along the networks of communication and transportation that structured the metropolis, and authors such as Yokomitsu Riichi took on new subjects of representation and new strategies of writing that could serve as critiques of the system that produced them.⁴⁵³

One task facing both fiction and other types of social discourse was how to make sense of the every-widening variety of objects and sensations that threatened to overwhelm the human perceptual apparatus. As I demonstrate in my readings of “Machi no soko,” “Nanakai no undô,” and the urban ethnography of Kon Wajirô, one way to synthesize the contradictions of modern urban life and create a mode of vision by which to grasp both social space and the self as coherent entities was through the movement of money. Metropolitan life, which was made possible through the rapid and large-scale circulation of capital, complicated a notion of the body as a naturally and internally coherent unit, as the human corpus increasingly came to be seen as an agglomeration of independent parts. At the same time, the fragmented body could be reimagined as a

⁴⁵³ This process might be thought of as a kind of repetition of an earlier convergence of literary writing, economic commodification, and urban everyday life that constituted one of the cruxes of fiction in the Edo period.

totality only through the continual circulation of capital, as when the young department store scion Hisakichi constructs an image of the “eternal woman” by distributing cash to his sales girls, or when ethnographer Kon chooses to grasp contemporary social practice by re-imagining the individual as a unit comprised of previously purchased commodities.

It was not only abstract images that were being reproduced within the spatial system of metropolitan Tokyo, but irreducibly physical bodies as well. A dialectic of sickness and health lay at the heart of the expansion of urban space in Japan, as the city required healthy bodies in order to function properly, but simultaneously continued to produce an excess of sick ones, as the pressures of urban modernity overwhelmed the senses of its subjects. As the urban experience transformed the human body and its senses, the body itself came to be seen as a metaphor by which to comprehend the impossibly complex organism of millions of people living together. As with any body, the management of disease constituted an important task, and those charged with building the modern city and modern society, including Meiji enlightenment thinker Fukuzawa Yukichi and Tokyo mayor Gotô Shinpei, turned to theories of disease, inoculation, and the re-organization of the body in conceptualizing the future of modern life. Through these intricately intertwined processes, literati such as Yokomitsu, thinkers such as Kon, and bureaucrats like Gotô came to see both urban space and the human bodies that populate it as historically contingent constructs, agglomerations of parts that are constantly subject to rearrangement.

The transformation of urban space described above took place nearly simultaneously with the reorganization of the discourse networks surrounding the writing of literature and the restructuring of the systems of production, circulation, and

consumption of print media in the first decades of the 20th century that I outline in the previous chapters. These sets of processes were deeply mutually intertwined, and together marked a shift into an era of literary production in which the literary work was inscribed as a physical quantity into a nexus of a metropolitan commodity economy. By virtue of this quality, the literary text came to be seen as a site from which to launch critiques of those social and economic structures that surrounded it and a means by which to produce changes in human sensation and perception vis-à-vis its place of print the realm of urban social life. In the following chapter, I continue my analysis of this theme by turning my attention to a set of planned linguistic reforms that were announced coterminously with the rebuilding of the city, and going to discuss how the the production of the literary commodity was imbued with the potential for meaningful political change by the proletarian social movements of the late 1920s.

Chapter Four:

The Labor of the Letter and the Words of Workers:

Language Reform, Literary Formalism, and Proletarian Publishing Critique

The bourgeois apparatus of production and publication can assimilate astonishing quantities of revolutionary themes.

-Walter Benjamin, "The Author as Producer" (1934)⁴⁵⁴

As I have outlined in the previous chapters, the mid-1920s in Japan saw the near simultaneous reconfigurations of the print media regime, the public discursive sphere, the accepted techniques of literary style, and the contours of geographic and social space. In this chapter, I demonstrate a concurrent shift in the notion of printed language itself, as literati asked how the printed word might serve to restructure the consciousness of the masses in a social milieu characterized by the ubiquity of print as a fundamental part of urban consumer life. Through an examination of texts on linguistic reform, literary formalism, and the commercialization of political writing in the age of print capital, I explore the emergence of a variety of interrelated discourses built upon what might be termed "literary materialism." While some writers were concerned with the effects of orthographic reform on the social lives of modern men, others came to see letters (*moji*) as material objects (*buttai*) with which to build new literary forms and social structures. Authors and critics associated with the Japanese proletarian literary movement debated the idea of a "materialist" (*yuibutsuron*) theory of literature and interrogated the material

⁴⁵⁴ Walter Benjamin, "The Author as Producer," in Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media* (Cambridge: Harvard Belknap, 2008), 86.

conditions of production that underwrote the circulation of printed text on a mass scale. Within this discourse network, mass-produced printed text, understood as an agglomeration of individual letters, could enter into relations of exchange with physical, spatial, and social structures, which were also conceived of as compositions comprised of combinations of individual parts. In other words, at the same moment that the human body and the urban space of the modern metropolis came to be seen as fractured totalities made up of discrete yet constituent parts, so did printed text text itself.

The chapter begins with an examination of responses by authors and critics to the Ministry of Education's 1924 announcement of a proposal for orthographic reform to further the phoneticization of the Japanese kana syllabary. Reactions to the script reform ranged from consternation over the perceived instrumentalization of language to optimism over nascent possibilities for new horizons of the aesthetic and political functions of literature. Both sides shared a sense of printed language as a social medium comprised of individual letters embodying a balance of visual, auditory, and semantic qualities. Conversely, for these writers, changes to the internal mechanisms of letters possessed the potential to restructure the society writing with them. The writing and printing of language came to be seen as an irreducibly material process built upon letters as discrete physical units, an idea that underwrote the theory of literature developed by Yokomitsu Riichi (1898-1947) in the late 1920s. Building upon his earlier theory of text as a means to mediate sensation and perception, Yokomitsu devised an idea of writing in which the total form of the literary work emerges through the agglomeration of atomistic letters. In Yokomitsu's model of the production process of the literary work, individual letters and parts are arranged into larger entities objectively estranged from the writer and

free to circulate at large, mirroring the production of the typographic media of books and magazines upon which Yokomitsu's own writing circulated.

As I outlined in Chapter One, the late 1920s were marked by the rise of new forms of print media; in this chapter, I examine how the “problem of form” (*keishiki mondai*) emerged as a cause for concern in Japanese literary and critical discourse; as the function of literature in the material world of social life came into question, the concept of “form” became a key site for the negotiation of the roles of aesthetics and politics in modern literature. The problem of form was of particular interest to critics associated with the proletarian literary movement, such as Kurahara Korehito (1902-1991), who sought to defend Marxist literature from the charge that political literature necessarily privileged content over form. In the “formalist debate” (*keishigi-shugi ronsô*) of the late 1920s, Kurahara and his comrades were critics accused of overlooking the role of literary language in their political project. Further, the critic Kobayashi Hideo (1902-1983) disparaged the movement for ignoring the commodity character of proletarian criticism itself as written within the market economy of modern Japanese literature. For Kobayashi, to overlook such a lacuna was to allow their political project to be reduced to the empty reproduction of ideological forms detached from the material stratum of social life. Although Kobayashi's critique accurately describes a good deal of the doctrinaire communist criticism of the moment, I aim to show how the proletarian literary movement in fact produced a series of complex critiques of the commodification of political discourse within the system of consumer print capital. Critics such as Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke (1892-1931), Nii Itaru (1888-1951), and Takabatake Motoyuki (1886-1928) addressed the place of mass-market publishing in the establishment of modern mass

culture and its role in the struggle for a revolutionary future. By envisioning the masses to be constituted through the large-scale circulation of print, these critics aimed to demonstrate that popular and political culture were two sides of the same coin.

A number of publishing projects aimed to overcome the apparent contradiction inherent in mass-produced print as both the reproduction of bourgeois popular culture and tool for the promulgation of revolutionary ideas. I examine the case of the publishing house Heibonsha (1914-), for one, served simultaneously as Japan's premier publisher of both popular literature (*taishū bungaku*) and radical social thought in the late 1920s. Another attempt to further the the popularization of political culture while politicizing popular culture took place in the works of Tokunaga Sunao (1899-1958), a labor turned literatus who became a best-selling author of proletarian fiction. Tokunaga was a typesetter by trade, and his first novel, *Taiyō no nai machi* (*Streets Without Sun*, 1929), depicts a historical 1926 strike at his former employer Kyōdō Printing, the largest printing press in Asia. As a typesetter, Tokunaga learned to read and write while working to make mass-market print media in the most material sense, and I conclude the chapter by demonstrating how his unique relationship with the production and consumption of the literary text led him to lay bare the exploitation of labor underwriting the typographic mass-media that served as the logos for modern metropolitan society.

Building a Better Letter: Debates over the 1924 Proposal for Orthographic Reform

In the mid-1920s, coterminous with the transformation of Japan's print industry and literary landscape by the advent of mass-market book publishing, the printed Japanese language itself was subjected to a series of changes. In December 1924, the Special Committee on National Language Inquiry (*Rinji kokugo chōsakai*), acting on behalf of the Ministry of Education (*Monbushō*), announced a plan for the reform of the use of the Japanese kana syllabary (*kanazukai kaitei an*). The proposed plan, announced to the public in the *Kokumin Shinbun* (The Nation's Newspaper, 1890-1942), called for a series of orthographic changes, including guidelines for vowel usage and other writing conventions, and the elimination of several characters from the syllabary.⁴⁵⁵ The Committee's proposal was a new phase in a long cycle of movements to revise the written form of the Japanese language.⁴⁵⁶ The terms of debate informing the syllabary reforms of the 1920s were established by the earlier Committee on National Language

⁴⁵⁵ Salient changes included the elimination of the *kana* for *wi* and *we*, the discouragement of the use of *kuwa* instead of *ka*, the standardization of the small dropped syllable *tsu* prior to double consonants, the discouragement of the use of *kefu* for *kyō*, the encouragement of the use of *u* rather than *fu* as the final verb syllable, and the elimination of *dzi* and *dzu* in favor of *ji* and *zu*.

⁴⁵⁶ Along with a plan to limit the number of kanji for standard use (*kanji seigen*), the *kanazukai* policy was one of the major initiatives by the committee, which was established in 1921 and remained in place until 1934, when it was replaced by the *Kokugo shingikai* (National Language Committee). The Special Committee was formed in 1921 and patterned after the previous Committee on National Language Inquiry (*kokugo chōsa iinkai*), which was established by the Ministry of Education in 1902. The deeper roots of the debates over written language go back to the problem of *genbun itchi* (the unification of written and spoken language) in the Meiji period. See Nanette Twine, *Language and the Modern State: The Reform of Written Japanese* (London: Routledge, 1991), 176. For more detailed analysis of *genbun itchi* and topics in language reform in English, see also Nanette Gottlieb, *Kanji Politics: Language Policy and Japanese Script* (London: Paul Kegan International, 1995). In Japanese see Yamamoto Masahide, *Genbun itchi no rekishi ronkō* (Tokyo: Ofūsha, 1971), Lee Yeounsuk, "*Kokugo*" to *iu shisō* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1996) and Nakayama Akihiko, "'Bun' to 'koe' no kōsō – Meiji sanjūnendai no 'kokugo' to 'bungaku'" in Komori Yōichi et. al., eds, *Media, hyōshō, ideorogī: Meiji sanjūnendai no bunka kenkyū* (Tokyo: Ozawa Shoten, 1997).

Inquiry (*kokugo chōsa iinkai*), which was established in 1902 by the Ministry of Education at the urging of the linguist Ueda Kazutoshi (1867-1937). The goals of the 1902 committee included the crafting of a “standard language” (*hyōjungo*), the codification of written kana orthography, the limitation of the number of Chinese characters (*kanji seigen*), and most radically, the consideration of a proposal for the elimination of Japanese and Chinese script in favor of Romanization (*romaji*). The 1902 Committee oversaw the approval of an orthographic system referred to as *hyōon-shiki* (phonetic style) or *hatsuon-shiki* (pronunciation style), which was contrasted to older writing conventions known as *jion-shiki* (script-sound style) or *rekishiteki kanazukai* (historical kana usage).⁴⁵⁷ The modified phonetic system was ordained as official policy for several years, but was eventually rescinded in 1908 under pressure from anti-reformist factions favoring the “historical” written system.⁴⁵⁸ But the matter remained far from settled, and debates would arise periodically for decades to come.⁴⁵⁹

One of the greatest challenges facing reformers was how any language reform might be practically executed. Although national textbooks (*kokutei kyōkasho*) followed the Ministry of Education’s policy, the process of naturalizing already literate adults to

⁴⁵⁷ The differences include the use of *ha* for the particle *wa*, the use of *e* and *o* for *we* and *wo*, and the elongation of vowels using *u* in the *hyōon-shiki* system.

⁴⁵⁸ Importantly, the 1902 reform was linked to the establishment of a nationwide educational system and standard, resulting in the new state-compiled textbook system (*kokutei kyōkasho*) established in 1903 and 1904. Gottlieb, 56-60. It is worth noting that many of the authors discussed elsewhere in this dissertation, including Yokomitsu Riichi (1898-1947), Kawabata Yasunari (1899-1972), Miki Kiyoshi (1897-1945), who were born at the turn of the 20th century belonged to the first generation of students to pass through the nationalized school system at the primary level and experience first-hand the different textbooks and forms of language pedagogy effected through these reforms. An overview of curriculum reading in modern national compulsory education in Japan in English appears in Haruo Shirane, “Curriculum and Competing Canons,” in Haruo Shirane and Tomi Suzuki, eds., *Inventing the Classics: Modernity, National Identity, and Japanese Literature* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 235-249.

⁴⁵⁹ Debates over orthographic reform in the occupation period and postwar, and differing views by government officials, literati, and the Japanese Communist Party in particular is a topic for further research.

new conventions of writing posed a difficult task. Reformers identified a key role for the publishing industry in remaking the modern Japanese written language. In practice, it was largely through the adoption of new standards of orthography by newspapers and magazines that script came to be standardized in the first decades of the 20th century. Accordingly, in the midst of the publishing revolution, questions regarding the proper form of the printed word emerged again as new forms of print media appeared and the circulation of newspapers and magazines reached mass proportions. Key in initiating the 1921 reform cycle was Prime Minister Hara Takashi (1856-1921), who had served as president of the *Ôsaka Mainichi Shinbun* newspaper at the turn of the century.⁴⁶⁰ As a former newspaperman, Hara was keenly aware of both the need for standardized print and the role of newspapers and magazines in synchronizing orthographic policy. But Hara was killed by an assassin's bullet not long after forming the Committee, and it fell to the newspapers to lead the way in the practical implementation of the Committee's proposed reforms. In the following years, most newspapers adopted the newly proscribed list of nearly 2,000 "kanji for common use" (*jôyô kanjihyô*), a move encouraged by the

⁴⁶⁰ Hara joined the *Ôsaka Mainichi* company in 1897, becoming president in 1898 and serving until 1900. He then became Minister of Communications, from 1900-1904, and again in 1908. See Toeda Hirokazu, "Yokomitsu Riichi no 'gengokan' – sono dôjidaiteki haikai o megutte," in *Kawabata bungaku e no shikai* (Tokyo: Kyôiku shuppan sentâ, 1990), 114. Gottlieb, 76; 23; 50; 70. The close relationship between language reform, the Ministry of Communications, and the creation of a national communications, transportations, and print distribution network spans back to the early Meiji period. One of the most radical advocates of reform, favoring the abolition of kanji, was Maejima Hisoka (1835-1919), the first Postmaster General of Japan at the inauguration of the national postal system in 1871. Maejima's interest in reform actually pre-dates the Meiji Restoration, going back to his paper *Kanji gohaishi no gi* (A Proposal for the Elimination of Kanji), which was submitted to the last Tokugawa Shogun in 1866. The expansion of print was an important mediating component in this process, as Maejima also founded the important early newspaper the *Hôchi Shinbun* in 1872. As in the case of Gotô Shinpei and his reconceptualization of the structure of the city, the Ministry of Communication as a body that linked rail and postal networks seems to have been embedded in a complex dialectic with the idea of transforming language in modern Japan. Hara and Gotô were both instrumental in the creation of the national railway network, and Hara became one of Gotô's most important political backers.

Committee. In working with the newspapers, the Committee recognized high-circulation mass media as a means to recalibrate the relationship between the people and the printed language and avoid the danger of leaving their goals to fizzle as a series of position papers.⁴⁶¹ This close relationship between script reform and publishing can be traced to the early Meiji period, when Maejima Hisoka (1835-1919), Japan's first Postmaster General and founder of the *Hôchi Shinbun* (Postal News) newspaper, sought to radically simplify printed Japanese in part for the needs of the publishing industry.⁴⁶² In short, orthographic reform in Japan both facilitated the proliferation of print and served as the necessary medium for the practical execution of those reforms among the reading public.

The Special Committee's 1924 plan for orthographic reform provoked an eruption of debate on the character and function of the written language. Concerns over the adoption of the revised phonetic (*hyôon-shiki*) system extended well beyond the spheres of politics and publishing, and the proposed script reform became a heated topic amidst literary authors in the mid-1920s. Literati had played a key role in steering the terms of debate on written language for decades, since Tsubouchi Shôyô (1869-1935), Futabatei Shimei (1864-1909), Yamada Bimyô (1868-1910) and other writers experimented with multiple stylistic practices and wrote key texts in the early rounds of debates on the "unification of spoken and written language" (*genbun itchi*).⁴⁶³ The 1921 Special Committee was chaired by the writer Mori Ôgai (1862-1922) and included figures like the authors Shimazaki Tôson (1872-1943) and Arishima Takeo (1878-1923) and the

⁴⁶¹ Gottlieb, 77.

⁴⁶² Furuta Tôsaku, "Meiji ikô no kokuji mondai no tenkai," in Satô Kiyoji, ed. *Kanji kôza 11: kanji to kokugo mondai* (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1989).

⁴⁶³ Other important literary figures concerned with later language reform included Ozaki Kôyô (1867-1903) and Shimamura Hôgetsu (1871-1918), who both participated in the *Genbun itchi kyôkai*. Twine, 172.

critic Chiba Kameo (1878-1935).⁴⁶⁴ Ôgai was generally an opponent of phonetic *kana* reform and had played a role in revoking the pronunciation-based (*hatsuon-shiki*) system in favor of restoring the more traditional orthography in 1908. But Ôgai died in 1922, and Ueda Kazutoshi, the linguist who had been among the most radical reformers in 1902, was named head of the committee in his stead. Ueda's leadership, along with the influence of his former pupil Hoshina Kôichi (1872-1955) virtually assured the committee's decision to eschew the "historical" orthography (*rekishiteki kanazukai*) in favor of a modified and simplified phonetic (*hyôon-shiki*) system.⁴⁶⁵

Many authors responded vehemently in opposition to the Committee's announced reform, with the most overt and vocal criticism coming from the poetry journal *Myôjô* (Bright Star, 1900-1908; 1921-1927).⁴⁶⁶ In February 1925, several months after the

⁴⁶⁴ Other notable members of the committee included the critic Hasegawa Tenkei (1876-1940), the journalist Tokutomi Sohô (1863-1957) and professor of national literature at Tokyo Imperial University and literary historian Haga Yaichi (1867-1927). Ôgai had also served on the 1908 committee on *kanazukai* that rolled back the 1902-1903 reform policy.

⁴⁶⁵ Lee, 200-201. Opponents of the 1924-1925 plan for *kanazukai* reform frequently invoked Ôgai's name in their anti-reform arguments, lamenting that as committee chair he would have preserved the historical orthography had he not died. Yosano Hiroshi (1873-1935), cites Ôgai's earlier writings in order to build an argument against the new *kanazukai* policy, drawing on the second volume of Ôgai's collected works as the source for his citation. The *Ôgai zenshû* was released by the Ôgai Zenshû Kankôkai beginning in 1923, barely two years before. The proliferation of printed media and the creation of a textual archive allows Yosano to make his argument, as even a few years before, the retrieval of Ôgai's essays several decades old would have been much more difficult, and it is unlikely that Yosano would have had access to them. In this way, although the changing nature of print media in many sense served to precipitate the reforms, not least through the influence of former newspaper publisher Hara, it also created new possibilities for the critique of those very same reforms. See Yosano Hiroshi, et. al, "Kanazukai kaitei an kôgi," in *Myôjô* (II) vol. 5 no. 2 (Feb. 1925), 61-63. In addition to Yosano Hiroshi, the essay is signed by Yosano Akiko (1878-1942) and three other minor poets associated with the journal. From Yosano Hiroshi's editorial role in the magazine as well as the identification of Kyoto as the hometown of the writer in the article, Yosano can tentatively be assumed to be the primary author of the essay, and all further citations are listed as such.

⁴⁶⁶ The original incarnation of *Myôjô* was founded in 1900 by Yosano Hiroshi (then known by his pen name of Tekkan), and was a significant literary magazine with a major influence on the *bundan*. It focused largely on poetry and ran important works by figures such as Yosano Akiko, Mori Ôgai, Ueda Bin (1874-1916), Ishikawa Takuboku (1886-1912), and Kitahara Hakushû

reform was announced, the magazine ran two long-form essays expressing opposition to the proposed policy, one signed by the journal's editors Yosano Hiroshi (1873-1935) and Yosano Akiko (1878-1942), and one penned by the philologist Yamada Yoshio (1875-1958). Yosano and Yamada's critiques, which are both social and linguistic in nature, reveal a great deal of anxiety over what they saw as the Committee's vision of language as an instrumental, material, and malleable quantity. Yamada's and Yosano's essays in *Myôjô* charge the reformers with misunderstanding the relationship between everyday language usage and changes in linguistic form and detail the difficulty of achieving a phonetic language system. Instead, Yosano and Yamada argue that the modified syllabary would serve to destabilize the existing balance of sight, sound, and meaning embedded within the "historical" form of the written Japanese language.

The core of the social dimension of the *Myôjô* critiques of script reform is summarized in Yamada's declaration, "It is clear that things like the letters (*moji*) commonly used by the people (*minzoku jôyô*) are not something that should be reorganized (*kaihai*) via the power of legal ordinances and bureaucratic government."⁴⁶⁷ Yamada locates language within the sphere of everyday behavior of the common people, beyond the ken of law and policy. For Yamada, language transforms and evolves over time by virtue of its roots in the mutual activity of the masses, a sentiment echoed in Yosano's essay, which invokes an organicist metaphor:

This thing called language is very much like a plant (*shokubutsu*) – it has the character to develop naturally (*shizen ni hattatsu*) amidst the climate and customs (*fûdo shûkan*) of a country. Even were one to apply a number

(1885-1942). The journal folded after 100 issues in 1908; when Yosano revived it in 1921, it received little fanfare, and its influence paled in comparison to its original run.

⁴⁶⁷ Yamada Yoshio, "Monbushô no kanazukai kaitei an o ronzu," *Myôjô* vol. 2, no. 2 (Feb. 1925), 4.

of artificial limits (*jin'iteki seigen*), it would be impossible to change it from the roots.⁴⁶⁸

For Yosano here, the written word is possessed of an almost mystical quality, as Yosano labels “letters” (*moji*) the “highest expression of the lives of the Japanese people” and Yamada links language to a vaguely abstract “spirit of the nation’s people” (*kokumin no seishin*).⁴⁶⁹ Yet, neither Yosano’s nor Yamada’s formulation does not take language as a purely transcendental phenomenon beyond history. Yosano calls attention to the role of “customs” (*shûkan*), and Yamada is explicit in identifying the form of letters as “first of all a social and historical product” (*shakaiteki rekishiteki no sanbutsu*).⁴⁷⁰ Though Yosano and Yamada understand the written word as the site of a vital, spiritual, and nationalistic power located within “the people,” they are more immediately concerned with the ways by which language is transformed within the present, through both practical use and government policy.

⁴⁶⁸ Yosano, 69.

⁴⁶⁹ Yosano, 62. Yamada, 10. Yamada would later become heavily involved in wartime research on ancient languages and divinities and would go on to play an important role in the national study of Shintô during the expansion of the Japanese empire. My interest here is not to link Yamada’s response to the *kanazukai* policy and his later, highly politicized work or a nascent seed thereof, but to explore his view on the transformation of language in the present that is implied through the way he structures his argument in 1925. Here, Yamada and Yosano are “conservative” in the sense that opponents of script reform were identified as “conservative factions” (*hoshu-ha* or *hoshu-tô*) in the relevant debates. That said, the relationship between colonial governmental and educational policy and language reform, though not covered here, should not be ignored, though the relationship between the two becomes more explicit following the founding of the 1934 National Language Committee. On language policy and colonialism, see Lee, 228-310. On Yamada, see Lee, 188-190 and 201-207; Ono Susumu, “Nihongo kenkyû no rekishi (2) – Meiji ikô,” in *Iwanami Kôza: Nihongo 1: Nihongo to kokugogaku* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1976), 233-274. George Bedell, “Kokugaku Grammatical Theory,” (Ph.D. diss, MIT, 1968), 142-164.

⁴⁷⁰ Yamada, 10. Despite the evocation of tropes such as “2,000 years of Japanese culture” dating back to the times of the *Manyôshû* (8th cent.) and Shôtoku Taishi (6th-7th cent.), I would argue that the more important part of Yamada’s argument has to do with his concern over the fate of language within the modern age.

Central to the *Myôjô* critiques is a sense of language in which new linguistic forms arise from the everyday practices of speech and writing by the public at large. Yosano and Yamada's problems with the proposed reform are centered on the nature of the relationship between people and language that a new orthography might produce. Yosano takes issue with the reformers' decree that historical orthography is too difficult and prone to mistakes, accusing the Committee of privileging simplification for the sake of expediency (*bengishugi*). He takes the proposed orthographic reform to be sullied with an instrumentalist attitude in which language is reduced to a mere tool, thus facilitating the social ills of opportunism and convenience for its own sake:

The goal of the practical use (*jitsuyô*) of language by the people at large (*ippan shomin*) for their immediate convenience (*mokuzen no benri*)...is the road that is easiest to walk... This is one of the sicknesses of our nation in the present age...you can see it in the types of clothes the people wear, and in their manners. Even when you go to one of our nation's first-rate theaters such as the Imperial Theater, it's a disorderly state of affairs with people wearing baggy kimonos as if at a country lodging house, students watching the performance with their caps on, and the theater door opening and closing. Then there are people pushing to get on and off the train and stepping on each other's feet without apologizing once they're inside the train.⁴⁷¹

Yosano's analogy metaphorically places language itself firmly within the realm of contemporary urban life, in which it is subject to the same pressures and disorders that transform the other behaviors of people living in the modern world. To Yosano, an ideology of speed and convenience distorts the proper patterns of action, external appearance, and social behavior of modern subjects. For him, the Committee's reform encourages a similar bearing towards language itself, which is transformed by its subsumption into the larger frame of urban modernity, whereby it goes on to degrade the

⁴⁷¹ Yosano, 62-63.

minds and behavior of those who use it.⁴⁷² Although Yosano argues that the power to change language lies firmly with the people themselves, he opposes its reduction to the level of exclusively practical use, arguing, “it is not enough for letters (*moji*) to be used only for everyday purposes (*nichijō no yōji*),” since they are also bound up with the “historical spirit, scholarship, and art of the people (*kokumin*).”⁴⁷³ For Yosano, language, despite its ideally transcendental character, remains a necessarily historical quantity susceptible to subsumption into modern material life, for better or for worse.

Yamada is even more strident and explicit in his critique: “This reorganization is not merely the interchanging of letters (*moji no chikan*), but something that will influence all aspects of language (*genko no shogenshō*)...the reform (*kaikaku*) of language and letter (*mojigengo*) is akin to a type of social revolution (*issu no shakai kakumei*).”⁴⁷⁴ Thus, whereas Yosano rues how language is shaped by a society structured around speed and convenience, Yamada is interested in how new forms of written language might transform society itself. At the core of both their concerns is the relationship between the oral, visual, and semantic dimensions of language, as both Yamada and Yosano recognize an insurmountable gap between the phonetic sound and the printed word. Yamada argues: “To the degree that we are working with actually useable letters (*moji*), “the unification of spoken and written language” (*genbun itchi*) will never be achieved...it is clear that since time immemorial the letters used everyday by the people (*sejin*) have

⁴⁷² Another key term for Yosano is the “ideology of efficiency” (*nōritsushugi*). He sees the new language plan as part of a general strategy to build a more efficient society, beginning with the education of children, which he identifies as one of the key sites in the struggle over written language. He also sees the need for an expedient and efficient language as germane to the practice of journalism, claiming that the reforms are being foisted upon the nation by a clique interested primarily in the desires of the newspaper business; this is unsurprising given the roles of Hara Takashi and the Tokyo newspapers in attempting to effect reform policies.

⁴⁷³ Yosano, 61.

⁴⁷⁴ Yamada, 5.

never strictly represented voiced sound (*onsei*).”⁴⁷⁵ Yosano concurs, stating, “it is impossible that there might ever be kana that perfectly match pronunciation (*hatsuondôri*).”⁴⁷⁶ He notes that this state of affairs is not peculiar to Japan, but “no matter where one might go in the world, there is no country where letters are pronounced just as they are written...writing as PHONETIQUE...has never since antiquity been practiced in any land.”⁴⁷⁷ For Yosano and Yamada, the 1924 proposed script reform’s ostensible goal of phoneticization is doomed to failure. As they see it, the problem is not how to achieve the impossible task of unifying speech and writing, but how to manage the specificity of the internally bifurcated nature of language as both phonetic sound and written sign.⁴⁷⁸

Yosano critiques the ostensibly phonetic system of the new orthography for occluding significant differences in pronunciation, as multiple pronunciation variations are subsumed under a single syllabic sign. He notes that there is

A distinct difference between the pronunciations of “dzi and dzu” and “ji and zu” among people from Kyoto such as myself, as well as people from Tosa and other regions. This new orthography ignores “dzi and dzu,” but

⁴⁷⁵ Yamada, 10-11.

⁴⁷⁶ Yosano, 73.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid, 73. “PHONETIQUE” appears in Roman capital letters in the original text.

⁴⁷⁸ Yamada states that there can be no “true” *hyôon-shiki* (phonetic symbol) system of *kana*, only a comparative (*hikakuteki*) one vis-à-vis the conventions of the *jion-shiki* (script-sound) system. Interestingly, these debates immediately prefigure the translation and introduction of Ferdinand de Saussure’s (1857-1913) *Course de Linguistique Generale* (1916) into Japan. Saussure’s work was translated into Japanese by Kobayashi Hideo in 1928 as *Ippan gengogaku kôgi* (Tokyo: Oka Shoin). Saussure’s translator is a different Kobayashi Hideo from the renowned literary critic writing at the same time. Years earlier, in 1910, reform advocate Hoshina Kôichi described a phonocentric view of language in which speech (*gengo*) is identified as the represented (*hidaihyôsha*) and letters (*moji*) as the representer (*daihyôsha*), with speech as material object (*jittai*), and letters as code (*fuchô*). Hoshina, *Kokugogaku seigi*, quoted from Lee, 201. The view of the anti-reform writers might be seen as a partial reversal of this view, with the sense of materiality moving to inhabit written as well as spoken language, versus an understanding of the written language as a derivative abstraction.

I do not think that I will begin pronouncing “dadzu” as “dazu” or “hadzi” as “haji.”⁴⁷⁹

To Yosano’s mind, the phonetic quality of language cannot be fully folded into the function of language as a visual sign system. Here the social dimension of his linguistic critique of the problem re-emerges, as the repercussions of the proposed orthography unfold along a spatial axis and one particular relationship between sound and sign (that common in modern Tokyo) is privileged and exported across the country.⁴⁸⁰ Yosano, who was born in Kyoto and moved to Tokyo later in life, writes:

The matter cannot be settled with the pronunciation of only one region. Long ago, those who lived in the capital (*shufu*), stayed put and did not move around, so to a certain point, we can say that there was a pronunciation germane to those who lived in the capital. Essentially there were particular pronunciations of *miyakokotoba* (Kyoto speech) and *Edokotoba* (Edo speech). But in the capital today, people from many different places come together, and their pronunciation is varied. Tokyo is different from Edo. Edo language was swept away by those who came from the countryside in the Meiji period. The National Language Committee claims to base standard of language (*hyōjun*) on the Tokyo sound (*Tokyo-on*), but the Tokyo sound is a mixed-up colonial (*shokuminchiteki*) pronunciation, not a unified language fit to be the standard.⁴⁸¹

In this construction, a number of variant speech styles are gathered together into a “colonial” language that sits at the core of a seemingly unified system of pronunciation that radiates out across the country from the capital. Yosano fears that the dominance of the particular relationship between pronunciation and orthography in the metropole will occlude the variations of local and regional speech patterns. For Yosano and Yamada alike, the problem of modern language is an effect of urban modernity, as one particular relationship between sound and letter is reproduced across a geographic plane.

⁴⁷⁹ Yosano, 73-74.

⁴⁸⁰ Yamada makes a similar argument. Yamada, 15.

⁴⁸¹ Yosano, 73.

For these opponents of reform, the relationship between the auditory and visual components of language was a temporal as well as spatial problem. At the heart of Yosano and Yamada's linguistic critique is a constitutive differential of speed; spoken language transforms far more rapidly, and thus varies more widely, than written or printed script, which tends to remain relatively fixed in form and function over time.⁴⁸² Yamada recognizes the differential between changes to the structure of the verbal and written dimensions of language, stating:

Letters are a solid form (*kokeiteki no mono*). Voiced sound (*seion*) is a fluid (*ryūdōteki*) form, and thus, put extremely, it is something that changes from one moment to the next (*jijikokukoku*). As characters are a solid form, they momentarily become affixed to these sounds, and from that point on, their forms do not change...even if at that initial moment, the sound and the letter are entirely unified (*dōitsu*), with the passage of time the sound changes (*hensen*), and in the end takes on an aspect (*sō*) quite different from its original form (*katachi*).⁴⁸³

For Yamada, this differential between the speed of change of the sonic and visual registers forms the core of the problem of phonetic language. He argues that since the Japanese syllabary (or any alphabetic or orthographic system) does not have a broad enough capability to represent all possible variations in sound, pronunciation, and speech enunciation, “true” phoneticization would require a far more extensive and complex system of visual signs. The complexity required of a truly phonetic system of writing would produce an impossibly large number of signs, unable to be used in any practical sense as a language with social meaning:

If one truly wants to unify speech and writing (*genbun no itchi*), one would not reflect on the characters that are commonly used among various peoples (*kaku minzoku kan*), but rather use abstractly devised mechanical

⁴⁸² Yosano, 74. Yosano's comment suggests the interactions between the spatial and temporal dimensions of linguistic change, as the shifting internal geography of Japan and its relationship with foreign linguistic zones effects the speed of change in the spoken and written languages.

⁴⁸³ Yamada, 10.

signs (*kikaiteki kigô*) for the voice. These signs would not be used for language (*genko*), but simply as signs for sounds - there is no other way that they might be used. In this manner, specimens of mechanical signs are made into signs of the kind used in phonetics (*onseigaku*). This is the mere logging of the standard face (*sô*) of a certain type of sound, regardless of the specifics of the language. Progressing in this way, we would have sound signs (*onsei kigô*) shared worldwide (*sekai kyôtsû*). But how could such signs ever be used for everyday purposes among ordinary people?⁴⁸⁴

In Yamada's view, only a machine would be capable of systematically generating and processing visual representations of all possible phonetic sounds; in turn, those symbols would produce not a human language but a mechanized series. By taking the project of phonetic orthography to its most extreme limit, the creation of language as a machine for the representation of sound, Yamada aims to expose the abstraction and codification of convention inherent in any relationship between written word and spoken sound. This abstraction is based on a particular relationship between speech and the form of the written word, which both Yamada and Yosano understand as highly material and historically contingent. Yamada criticizes the government for "positing an extreme

⁴⁸⁴ Yamada, 10. Yamada's idea of a global phonetic language that could only be properly read or generated mechanically not only reveals an anxiety over the transposition of machines and voice, but could also be considered in terms of other concepts of international languages being developed at the time. Largely due to the growing strength of Marxian political and literary movements, Esperanto gained increasing traction in Japan at around the same time. Yamada's conceptual language, concerned exclusively with the exhaustion of the representation of all sound, stands in contrast to Esperanto and other international language projects (such as I.A. Richards (1893-1979) and C.K. Ogden's (1888-1957) Basic English of the following decade, which were focused primarily on communication and semantic meaning. For a discussion of the importance of Basic English in transforming the ideas of language and writing, see Lydia H. Liu, *The Freudian Robot: Digital Media and the Future of the Unconscious* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 84-97. Further analysis into Yamada's idea in the context of broader discourse on phonetics may provide an interesting frame for analysis. This period is also notable for the rise of vocal sound technologies; telephone usage became increasingly common in the 1920s, and radio experiments generated much interest in 1924 before the first official public radio broadcast in March 1925, the month after Yamada's essay was published. The opening broadcast of public radio in Japan was given by none other than Gotô Shinpei, who aimed to turn radio into a media commodity able to act as a factor in the cultivation of civilization. For more on Gotô and radio, see Satô Takumi, "Media jidai no seijika," in Mikuriya, ed., 184-195.

mechanical realism of sound (*oto no kikaiteki shajitsu*) without reflecting on how it might destroy the national language.”⁴⁸⁵

In essence, the reactions of Yamada and Yosano towards the seemingly benign orthographic changes proposed by the Special Committee belie an anxiety that a shift in the internal balance of meaning, sound, and visual signifier might evince larger, and largely negative, changes in social structure. Yamada, Yosano, and the Committee that they both oppose all agree that written language is a historical phenomenon, a system that can and should change over time. Where the two sides disagree is in regards to the way in which this change should occur, with the poet and the philologist favoring an evolutionary model and the reformers taking a more interventionist approach. If language was a material quantity subject to social and institutional pressures, then changes in the qualities of language could serve to restructure the institutions of society. What remained up for debate was just how the reordering of written language might be used as a means to remake the world in which it was used.

The Wages of New Words: Further Responses to Proposed Reform and a Materialist Theory of Literature

Yamada and Yosano’s skepticism towards the proposed orthographic reform found sympathy elsewhere in the literary realm. In March 1925, a month after the release of the special issue of *Myôjô* on the orthography problem, the author Akutagawa Ryûnosuke (1892-1927) published a brief commentary on the reform in which he comes

⁴⁸⁵ Yamada, 10. Yamada’s critique of phonetics as internationalist, mechanical sound that destroys the national essence might potentially be read as a concern over the growing power of the Communist movement, though there is nothing else in the essay to suggest such a directly metaphorical connection.

out as an ally of Yamada against the new script policy.⁴⁸⁶ Writing in an atypically ornate classical style as a gesture of resistance to the perceived simplification of language under the reform policy, Akutagawa posits that the Committee's plan for a more phonetic orthography sullies written literary language:

[The plan] fails to reflect upon the degradation of the Japanese language (*Nihongo*), and ignores the dignity of reason...it is akin to a blow from an unsheathed sword directed at the spiritual life of our people (*waga kokumin no seishinteki seimei*), and is a sin unforgivable in heaven and earth alike...This is a serious affront to our forebears Kôyô, Rohan, Ichiyô, Bimyô, Sohô, Chogyû, Shiki, Sôseki, Ôgai, and Shôyô. Moreover, it is a great affront to the frivolous work of all we hacks under heaven who have followed in their footsteps.⁴⁸⁷

The writers Akutagawa names played important roles in the long series of literary and stylistic experiments in the formation of the modern Japanese written language, and he fears that the new policy will produce a schism between present and this past. Akutagawa is concerned that literary language might be eschewed in favor of language as a means for practical communication. Like Yosano and Yamada, his argument arises from an anxiety that a shift in the balance of the relationship between sight and sound nestled within the printed letter possesses the potential to transform both language and society for the worse.⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁶ Akutagawa Ryûnosuke, "Monbushô no kanazukai kaitei an ni tsuite," in *Akutagawa Ryûnosuke zenshû* vol. 12 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1996), 118. Originally published in *Kaizô*, Mar. 1925. Akutagawa agrees with Yamada so strongly that he deprecatingly labels himself "a mere fly stuck to the tail of Yamada's donkey."

⁴⁸⁷ Akutagawa, 118-119. Ozaki Kôyô (1868-1903), Kôda Rohan (1867-1947), Higuchi Ichiyô (1872-1896), Yamada Bimyô (1868-1910), Tokutomi Sohô (1863-1957), Takayama Chogyû (1871-1902), Masaoka Shiki (1867-1902), Natsume Sôseki (1867-1916), Mori Ôgai, and Tsubouchi Shôyô were all major lights of Meiji literature who are notable for their stylistic experimentations in written language.

⁴⁸⁸ In Akutagawa's seminal critical essay "Bungeiteki na, amari ni bungeiteki na" (Literary, All Too Literary, 1927), he notes the tendency of literati such as Uno Kôji (1891-1961), Mushanokôji Saneatsu (1885-1976), and Satô Haruo (1892-1964) to "write more like one speaks" (*shaberu yô ni kaku*), though notes that he is not critical of the trend per se, though he laments that more authors do not "speak as one writes" as Natsume Sôseki (1867-1916) did. In *Akutagawa*

But this negative view of the orthographic reform shared by Yamada, Yosano, and Akutagawa was by no means the only opinion amidst the literati of the mid-1920s. A number of writers saw the proposed new script system as a step in the right direction, a development that opened up new aesthetic and political possibilities for literature. Coming out in support of the new policy was the young author Kawabata Yasunari (1899-1972), a core member of the literary coterie magazine *Bungei Jidai* (*Literary Age*, 1924-1927).⁴⁸⁹ Kawabata both supported the proposed script reform himself and exhorted his colleagues to embrace it: “I have one hope for the people of the literary establishment (*bundan*), that they might quickly adopt and employ the ‘new orthography’ (*shinkanazukai*) that has been announced by the Special Committee on National Language Inquiry.”⁴⁹⁰ The very newness of language engendered by the proposed reform was a major attraction for Kawabata, who, along with his *Bungei Jidai* cohorts, had urged the literary establishment to accept “the new” as a dynamic of perpetual transformation of written language in the evolution of modern literature.⁴⁹¹ For Kawabata, to support the reform was to recognize “newness” as the internal engine of language, literature, and society in a present where “Japanese is changing rapidly” and “words (*kotoba*) must continue to change” in accordance.⁴⁹² In his view, the rapid transformation of modern life produces constantly changing forms of letters, words, and grammatical structures, which

Ryūnosuke zenshū vol. 15, 160-161. Akutagawa’s view is discussed in Toeda, “Yokomitsu Riichi no gengokan – sono dōjidai-teki haikai o megutte.”

⁴⁸⁹ An extensive analysis of Kawabata, his involvement with *Bungei Jidai*, and his opinions on the concept of “the new” appears in Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

⁴⁹⁰ Kawabata, “Bangai hadō chō,” *Bungei Jidai* vol. 2, no. 3, (Mar. 1925), 46.

⁴⁹¹ For a detailed discussion of the opinions of Kawabata and other *Bungei Jidai* authors on the writing, the problem of the new, and the transformation of the realm of literary production, see Chapter Two of this dissertation.

⁴⁹² Kawabata, “Bangai hadō chō,” 46.

in turn can serve to open previously unthinkable frontiers of linguistic expression and social life.

Crucially, these new forms of language are manifest not only at the levels of narrative construction and sentence structure, but at the more atomistic level of letters themselves, as the orthographic prescription creates a new balance between sound, script, and meaning within a single syllable in its combination with others. Even Yamada, despite his vehement opposition to the new policy, implicitly agrees with Kawabata that the proposed reform would produce new, previously unknown permutations and combinations of signs and sounds.⁴⁹³ In fact, Kawabata's view of the kana reform comes surprisingly close to Yamada's, differing only in the final assessment of the change as positive rather than negative. But rather than highlight the potential for stylistic textual experimentation opened by the new orthography, Kawabata focuses on the new phonetic system as a means to engender clear and simple communication: “[Under the new system] there should be no problems to write as one pronounces (*hatsuondôri*). It will be easy to write (*kakiyasuku*), and easy to read (*yomiyasuku*). And, since kanji will be used in addition to kana, it will be neither difficult to understand (*wakaririkuku*) nor ugly.”⁴⁹⁴ Kawabata thus ultimately locates the transmission of meaning in the auditory sense of

⁴⁹³ “To give a specific example, they devise new forms (*shinkeishiki*) never seen before, such as ‘*aoi*’ (blue) and ‘*miyou*.’” Yamada, 15. The novelty of the seemingly conventional examples Yamada gives is presumably in their orthography – あおい rather than あをい for “blue” and みよう rather than みやう for “look.” Though it was likely that it was not uncommon for these words to be written this way prior to the 1924 reform policy proposal, Yamada emphasizes the radicality of the break with “historical” kana usage.

⁴⁹⁴ Kawabata, “Bangai hadô chô,” 46.

language, elsewhere naming the ideal sentence one “in which the meaning can be understood by listening only with the ears, not reading letters with the eyes.”⁴⁹⁵

In apparent contrast to Yamada’s view of language, in which the gap between the auditory and visual is essentially unbridgeable, Kawabata argues for an ideal of language as a nearly transparent medium for the transmission of meaning. But this auditory transmission stems from a secondary, rather than primary orality. The result is an evocation of speech produced by a specific system of print artifice (the new orthography), rather than the unmediated representation of speech itself. Although Kawabata seems to eschew the printed letter in favor of a theory of language structured around communicative rationality, for him the “easy to understand” remains in essence a reproduction of the auditory via the printed word, which mediates from the eye back to the ear.⁴⁹⁶ Likewise, in the quote cited above, Kawabata retains a crucial place for kanji, which he claims facilitate rather than hinder the transmission of meaning, as the presence of Chinese characters prevents writing from becoming “ugly and difficult to understand.” For Kawabata, the visual dimension of language, though denigrated, thus remains a minimum limit unable to be entirely reduced or removed; eventually he would reverse his opinion on the language reform and come to favor the “historical” orthography, writing numerous works of fiction emphasizing the visual, rather than semantic, qualities of written language over the following years.⁴⁹⁷

⁴⁹⁵ Kawabata, “Gendai sakka no bunshô o ronzu,” quoted from Toeda, “Yokomitsu Riichi no ‘gengokan,’” 123.

⁴⁹⁶ Rationality (*gôri*), though not used by Kawabata, was a key term in the discussion of script reform. Satô evokes it several times, and it was also an important concept for Hoshina Kôichi. See Lee, 200.

⁴⁹⁷ The most notable of these works is perhaps “Suishô Gensô,” (1928) a hallucinatory and surrealist work comprised of detached images evoked through extended strings of kanji. Toeda Hirokazu has pointed out the importance of Kawabata’s involvement in the production of the

In addition to generating optimism for the aesthetic and communicative functions of language, the 1924 orthographic reform proposal was also seen as an opportunity to re-orient the political functions of the printed word. Running next to Kawabata's essay in the June 1925 issue of *Bungei Jidai* was another polemic in favor of the Committee's plan for script reform, this one by Satô Ichiei (1899-?), a poet associated with the burgeoning proletarian literary movement. To Satô, the reform serves as an impetus for the self-destruction of the bourgeois literary realm, as the new orthography serves to dispel the specter of mystification from literary language, making room for the emergence of a new vernacular writing that arises from the masses:

In our present age, bourgeois organizations and bourgeois culture are working towards collapse...Language (*genko*) should already belong to the people (*minshû*). Literature will go out to pasture. The language of the people (*minshûgo*) must become literary language. In this process of capitulation, we have the limitation of kanji, the orthographic reform plan, proletarian literature, expressionism (*hyôgen-shugi*)...It is unthinkable that scholars of national learning (*kokugakusha*) or literary men might create a literature of the people and a language of the people. The only thing that they can do is make their language and literature extinct, along with themselves.⁴⁹⁸

Satô stops just short of a fully utopian view of the reform, and admits, “orthographic reform (*kanazukai kaisei*) will not itself save the people.”⁴⁹⁹ Instead, he locates the conditions of possibility for a popular and political literary movement within the new arrangement of letter and sound dictated by the reform. He sees the new orthography as

expressionist film *Kurutta Ichipêji* (*A Page of Madness*, 1926). See Toeda Hirokazu, “1926 Nihon, bungaku to eiga no sôgû,” *Hikaku bungaku kenkyû* no. 92, Oct. 2008. For a complete treatment of *Kurutta Ichipêji* see Aaron Gerow, *A Page of Madness: Cinema and Modernity in 1920s Japan* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Japanese Studies, 2008).

⁴⁹⁸ Satô Ichiei, “Kokugo bungakugo mondai no hôkô – shinkanazukai mondai o ijô suru hitobito ni ataeru kôkaijô,” *Bungei Jidai* vol. 2, no. 6 (Jun. 1925), 93.. The appeal of phonetic language reform for radical political ends is echoed in an essay entitled “Purorettokaruto to shite no rômajî” (Roman Letters as Proletkult) published in *Bungei Sensen* in Jan. 1925 and attributed to a writer named Tai Michiru.

⁴⁹⁹ Satô, 93.

part of a larger complex of emergent avant-garde literary movements, both political and aesthetic, that constitute a new vernacular able to revolutionize both literature and social life. This is contrasted to an “aesthetic feudalism” (*shinbiteki hōken*) based upon a fondness for an accustomed visual convention, which he associates with anti-reformists such as Yosano and Yamada.⁵⁰⁰ But the structure of Satō’s argument forms a near mirror image of Yosano’s and Yamada’s. Satō agrees with the anti-reformists that language emerges historically through mass activity, and differs from them only in his view of the reform as a way to throw language back to the people rather than take it away from them.

To that effect, Satō understands the engagement between the reader and the text to be a sensorial process in which the mediation from the register of sight to that of sound becomes the site for the generation of meaningful language. In his essay, he sketches out a process of the multiple sensory mediations at work in the act of reading, going beyond Kawabata in specifically identifying the path through which printed text produces sound:

Literary language functions only as “sight words” (*shigo*, glossed as *saito wazu*). Using the faculty of sight (*shikaku*), literature stimulates the pronunciation apparatus (*hatsuon kikan*) to become sound. No meaning will emerge unless it does this. Words must become “Oral words” (*kōgo*, glossed as *oraru wazu*)... Oral language (*kōgo*) is the passenger (*jōkyaku*), and visual language (*shigo*) is the vehicle (*norimono*). A “palanquin” becomes a “train,” and a “train” becomes an “airplane.”⁵⁰¹

This materialist approach to language traces a particular sequence of stimulation, reaction, and perception that arises from the reader’s meeting with the printed word. Satō metaphorically presents the printed words as technologies of transportation that evolve over time. These technologies come into direct, physical contact with the reader, who is understood as a body comprised of organs of sight, sound, and speech. Rather than

⁵⁰⁰ Satō, 94.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid, 93-94.

transmit meaning, literary language for Satô serves as a visual stimulus mediated through the reader's sensorium to produce a sound emerging from the "pronunciation apparatus." Combining this view of words with the political function of language denoted above, Satô's argument assumes an understanding of language as a material force with the potential to transform the social order at large.

Despite the stark differences in opinion as to the repercussions of the proposed language reform, all of the commentators discussed above share a concern that the proposed orthographic reforms would produce a series of literary and social effects extending far beyond the mere strokes used to write a given word.⁵⁰² Some, like Yamada, Yosano, and Akutagawa, worried that the new script style could debilitate literary language, while others like Kawabata and Satô, saw the reforms as a harbinger for a new form of language itself, from which new forms of literature and social organization could grow. In rearranging the internal balance of the auditory, visual, and semantic components of individual letters, the proposed script reform produced anxiety over the historical nature of the Japanese language as it appeared in print. This idea of the individual letter as a discrete physical quantity would have a lasting legacy, and it formed the crux of the materialist schema of language developed by Kawabata's former *Bungei Jidai* compatriot Yokomitsu Riichi (1898-1947) in the years following the attempted reform. Through a series of essays written in the wake of the coterminous transformations of literary media, urban space, and (via orthographic reform) letters themselves,

⁵⁰² Interestingly, of the writers listed here, the older generation was against the reform, while both Kawabata and Satô were born in 1899 and thus belonged to the first generation of authors to be taught with the national textbook system during previous cycles of reform and reverse course. It is possible that specifics of their educational experience and life growing up in a world of mass media might result in a view of language in which change itself is naturalized and perpetual, rather than something to be abhorred.

Yokomitsu argued that literature and consciousness itself were built through the rearrangement of objectified material letters:

Letters are material objects (*moji wa buttai de aru*). Furthermore, they are material objects manufactured by man (*ningen ga seizô shita*)... The works that we make (*egaita sakubutsu*), works of literature as the enumerations of letters (*moji no raretsu naru bungaku sakuhin*), are completely independent from the writer; they are material objects lined up as forms (*keishiki*) completely independent from the reader.⁵⁰³

To Yokomitsu, the work of literature is an independent and material quantity that comes into existence as a product alienated from its author. In this analysis, literature is an enumeration of letters as physical objects that comprise the form of the literary work.

Yokomitsu's approach is akin to analysis in the chemical or philosophical sense, in which the substance of a complex body is broken down and divided into increasingly smaller parts in order to comprehend the inner workings of the seemingly totalized object. In his conceptualization, letters are atom-like quantities containing their own internal mechanisms and constituting the structure of the completed work as apprehended by the reader.⁵⁰⁴ For Yokomitsu, "the fundamental element (*yôso*) of literature as literature

⁵⁰³ Yokomitsu, "Moji ni tsuite – keishiki to mekanizumu ni tsuite -," in *TYRZ* vol. 13 (Tokyo: Kawade Shobô Shinsha, 1982), 114-115. The essay originally ran in the March 1929 issue of the magazine *Sôsaku Gekkan* as "Keishiki to mekanizumu ni tsuite." The phrase "Letters are material objects" (*moji wa buttai de aru*) and similar phrases appear again and again in Yokomitsu's essays written in this period on similar topics and running in *Sôsaku Gekkan*, including "Yuibutsuron-teki bungakuron ni tsuite" (Feb. 1928) and "Aikyô to Marukushizumu ni tsuite" (Jan. 1929), as well as "Shinkankaku-ha to konmunizumu bungaku," which ran in the Jan. 1928 issue of *Shinchô*. All are included in *TYRZ* vol. 13. This formalist and materialist approach is a notable change from Yokomitsu's earlier, Neo-Kantian literary theory of 1923-1924, though considerable continuity exists in the shared focus on literature as a physical quality engaged with the human body. For a discussion of Yokomitsu's earlier approach, see Chapter 2.

⁵⁰⁴ The scientific quality of letters in Yokomitsu's essays of the late 1920s is not only a metaphor, nor am I the first to note it. Both Komori Yôichi and Yokomitsu specialist Yamamoto Ryôsuke deal in depth with Yokomitsu's interest in science, and quantum mechanics in particular, from whence he derives the idea of the "mechanism" (*mekanizumu*) in the atomistic letter. See Komori Yôichi, "Ekurichûru no jikû – sôtasei riron to bungaku" in Komori, *Kôzô to shite no katari* (Tokyo: Shin'yôsha, 1988), 455-506, esp. 496-506; Yamamoto, "Keishikishugi bungaku-ron no shûhen" in *Yokomitsu Riichi to shôsetsu no riron* (Tokyo: Kasama Shoin, 2008), 43-77. The topic

(*bungaku to shite*) lies in an understanding of letters as material objects,” which constitute “consciousness itself as a physical (*butsuriteki*) quantity.”⁵⁰⁵

Following this line of reasoning, the letter may serve as the minimal unit in the production of literature, but the literary work only comes into being as those letters are combined and manipulated into larger sets of units. It is through the agglomeration of these sequentially divisible units that a totality identified as the literary work (*bungaku sakuhin*) emerges:

The literary work (*bungaku sakuhin*) can only be made from complete form (*zenbu keishiki*). First the letters that are the initial form gather together, then they become the form known as a word (*kotoba*), and then they become the form of sentences (*ku*), and then the combination of those sentences become the form of “parts” (*pâto*), and then the combination of those parts become the form known as structure (*keisei*), and then for the first time the totalized form as literary work (*bungaku sakuhin to shite no zentaiteki keishiki*) is born.⁵⁰⁶

It is only this apparent totality of “complete form” with which readers come into contact. Yokomitsu’s goal is to explain the material base of the combination of letters that structures the text, but is occluded when the literary work is perceived as a whole distinct from its component parts.⁵⁰⁷ Though Yokomitsu does not specifically address the matter

is given a treatment in English in Gregory Golley, *When Our Eyes No Longer See: Realism, Science, and Ecology in Japanese Literary Modernism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008), 57-58, 60-61, 140-146. Golley specifically notes the influence of the physicist Ishiwara Jun (1881-1947) on Yokomitsu’s “theory of form” (*keishikiron*). The most obvious example of this is perhaps the essay “Aikyô to Marukushizumu ni tsuite” (Attraction and Marxism), which begins as follows: “What is attraction?” “Color.” “What is color?” “Waves.” “What are waves?” “Physical things (*bussuitsu*).” “What are physical things?” “Atoms (*genshi*).” “What are atoms?” “Electricity.” “What is electricity?” “Positive and negative charges.” “What are positive and negative charges?” “That which constitutes an atomic number.” “What is an atomic number?” “The difference between a positive ion and a negative ion”...” *TYRZ* vol. 13, 108-109.

⁵⁰⁵ Yokomitsu, “Moji ni tsuite,” 116.

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 116.

⁵⁰⁷ This dialectic of the whole and the part echoes the way Yokomitsu sketches the human body inside the department store in the 1927 short story “Nanakai no undo.” See Chapter 3, pp. 17-26 for a full analysis.

of print media in his essay, the “complete form” of the literary work independent of the writer exists practically as a circulating piece of print, such as a text to be read in a newspaper, magazine, or book. Yokomitsu’s model, in which individual letters are aggregated into increasingly larger and more complex units, mirrors the making of typographic text itself, in which as an iteration of individually set letters are arranged on the printing press to form first sentences, then full texts, then books to be bought and sold. Yokomitsu’s theory of literary expression thus parallels the process of production of the media on which it is written, displaying the consciousness of what Marshall McLuhan calls the “typographic man” towards the writing of literature.⁵⁰⁸

In outlining this dialectic of totality and fragmentation, Yokomitsu identifies a particular path through which the material sense of the letter (*moji*) can be linked to the problem of form (*keishiki*). Yokomitsu’s notion of form as “an iteration of letters that possess rhythm and transmit meaning,” is as concerned with the qualities of written (or printed) language as with literary style. Yokomitsu uses this view to argue for a formalist approach to literature, in which an author should “write as one writes” (*kaku yô ni kaku*), and respond to the incommensurability of speech and writing by embracing literary writing as a distinct mode.⁵⁰⁹ Yokomitsu’s approach is at once in line with and at odds with the approach of Akutagawa, as voiced in his seminal essay “Bungeiteki na, amari ni bungei teki na” (Literary, All Too Literary):

⁵⁰⁸ See Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1962).

⁵⁰⁹ Quoted from in Toeda Hirokazu, “Yokomitsu Riichi no gengokan.” Komori Yôichi also emphasizes the role of Yokomitsu’s emphasis on “letters” (*moji*) and turn to literary formalism (*keishikiron*) in what he calls the turn “from narrating to writing” (*‘kataru’ koto kara ‘kaku’ koto e*), which he links to both scientific and materialist approaches to literature taken by figures such as Natsume Sôseki (1867-1916) in his *Bungakuron* (1907) and the surrealist poet Nishiwaki Junzaburô (1894-1982), as well as an increased emphasis on the body and physicality (*shintai*). See Komori, 455-536.

I dare say that modern prose (*kindai no sanbun*) has gone down the path of writing ‘as one speaks’ (*shaberu yô ni*). As ready examples, I could list the prose of Musanokôji Saneatsu, Uno Kôji, and Satô Haruo... It is not that I do not possess the desire to ‘want to write as one speaks.’ It is that at the same time I also think of ‘wanting to speak’ as one writes (*kaku yô ni shaberitai*). To the best of my knowledge, the only writer who somehow truly “spoke as he wrote” (*kaku yô ni shaberu*) was Natsume Sôseki.⁵¹⁰

It is not surprising that Akutagawa wants to talk about ‘writing’ rather than ‘speaking,’ given his dim opinion of the attempts at the recent proposed orthographic reform to facilitate phoneticization of the written language. Both Akutagawa and Yokomitsu reserve space for writing distinct from speech, but Yokomitsu’s move is to replace one half of Akutagawa’s equation and posit writing in terms of itself, rather than in relation to an external spoken word.⁵¹¹

For Yokomitsu, writing as the arrangement of individual letters becomes a self-referential formal system distinct from the conventions of “colloquial style” (*kôgobun*), which is how Akutagawa refers to mainstream prose style in the late 1920s. In the late 1920s, Yokomitsu began advocating an explicitly formalist (*keishiki-shugi*) approach to the writing of literature and penned a number of formally challenging and stylistically experimental fictional texts during this period, such as the long novel *Shanghai* (*Shanghai*, 1928-1932) and the short story “Kikai” (The Machine, 1930).⁵¹² Yet, developing a

⁵¹⁰ Akutagawa Ryûnosuke, “Bungeiteki na, amari ni bungeiteki na,” in *Akutagawa Ryûnosuke Zenshû* vol. 15 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1997), 160. A discussion of this passage appears in Toeda, “Yokomitsu Riichi no gengokan.”

⁵¹¹ Yokomitsu Riichi, “Bungei jihyô,” *Bungei Shunjû* vol. 6, no. 12 (Dec. 1928). See also Toeda, “Yokomitsu Riichi no gengokan,” 115.

⁵¹² *Shanghai* was originally serialized in the magazine *Kaizô* on and off from 1928 to 1931, with different installments titled with different names and referred to overall as *Aru chôhen* (A Long Novel), before being compiled, revised, and released as *Shanghai* in July 1932 by Kaizôsha. For a summary of scholarly work on *Shanghai*, see Chapter 3, footnote 1. “Kikai” originally ran in the Sept. 1930 issue of *Kaizô*. For a discussion see, among others, Suga Hidemi, *Tantei no kuritikkû: Shôwa bungaku no rinkai* (Tokyo: Shichôsha, 1988) and Yamamoto Ryôsuke, 133-174. Nonaka Jun has noted the possibility of reading the work, which deals with a factory worker losing his mind, as an example of proletarian literature. See Nonaka, *Yokomitsu Riichi to haisengo bungaku*

practical program for a vaguely defined formalism remained a challenge, not only for Yokomitsu, but for a number of authors who became concerned with the problem of literary formalism in the late 1920s. In a period defined by the transformation of print media, audiovisual media, and urban space, the terms “form” (*keishiki*) and “formalism” (*keishiki-shugi*) circulated as overdetermined signifiers and served as sites for the negotiation of the aesthetic and social functions of literature.

Ideologies of Form and Function and the Lacunae of Proletarian Literature

The “primary goal” of Yokomitsu’s “formalist movement” (*keishiki-shugi undō*) was “to determine the value (*kachi o kettei*) of literature by addressing the reader and fixing not upon the form of the work itself (*sakubutsu no keishiki*) rather than upon his thought (*dokusha no shisō*).”⁵¹³ The ideal text is thus one that recognizes the relationship between the text and the reader as a relationship between material objects, rather than between an interiorized subject and an alienated object. But Yokomitsu’s reasoning is as much a statement on its own discursive context as a particular model of literary theory. Here, “thought” (*shisō*) not only refers to the inner workings of the human mind, but serves as a marker for Marxist thought in particular, which had attained a prominent position in literary and social discourse in late 1920s Japan. To Yokomitsu, the use of “thought” to determine literary value was to place ideology before practice, idea before matter, and politics before aesthetics. In light of Yokomitsu’s approach, it is tempting to apply a binary rubric in which bourgeois literature concerned with formalist aesthetics is

(Tokyo: Kasama Shoin, 2005), 26-157. Toeda Hirokazu has also linked Yokomitsu’s interest in formalism to his interest in film and film production.

⁵¹³ Yokomitsu, “Moji ni tsuite,” 119.

set in opposition to the socially and politically conscious writings of the proletarian literary movement; this has been the dominant framework through which Japanese literary historiography has understood the late 1920s.⁵¹⁴ Through a series of “formalist debates” (*keshiki-shugi ronsō*) spanning from roughly 1928 to 1930 and involving Yokomitsu, authors of the Japanese proletarian literary movement, and an assorted array of critics, the concepts of form and formalism took on a role as a central problematic in the literary establishment. But, rather than read these formalist debates as a schism between the aesthetic and political avant-gardes of prewar Japan, it is possible to understand the debates as a marker for a moment in which the concepts of form and materialism emerged as means to mediate the relationship between literature and social structure.

In November 1928, Yokomitsu Riichi lowered a scathing critique at Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke (1892-1931), Kurahara Korehito (1902-1991), and the rest of Japan’s “Marxist literary critics” (*Marukishizumu bungaku no hihyōka*), accusing them of believing that “form is determined by content (*naiyō*),” which Yokomitsu argues is consummate with allowing “subject to determine object (*shukan ga kyakkan o kettei*

⁵¹⁴ The standard version of the debate itself is constructed through the compilation of primary texts in Hirano Ken, Odagiri Hideo, and Yamamoto Kenkichi, eds. *Gendai Nihon bungaku ronsō-shi* vol. 1 (Tokyo: Miraisha, 2006), 565-632, and includes texts by the author Hirotsu Kazuo (1891-1968), the phenomenologist philosopher Tanikawa Tetsuzō (1895-1981), and proletarian critic Katsumoto Seiichirō (1899-1967), in addition to the authors discussed here. Originally compiled in 1956. The subject of literary historiography in this period is worthy of its own study; in essence, the co-edited volume effectively reduces a multivalent discussion to a binary debate between rival factions. A similar approach is taken by Usui Yoshimi (1905-1987) in his summary of the debate; see Usui, *Kindai bungaku ronsō* vol. 1 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1956), 263-286. To be sure, such literary historiography constitutes vital and penetrating works of criticism, but tends to occlude the full scope of the formalist problematic for the sake of delineating a factional history of modern Japanese literature. Recent work in English by Mariko Shigeta Schimmel has demonstrated the density of mutual connections between the “political” and “aesthetic” avant-gardes of prewar Japan, though her approach in a sense upholds the binary she seeks to pull apart. See Schimmel “Estranged Twins of Revolution: An Examination of Japanese Modernist and Proletarian Literature” (Ph.D. Diss Yale Univ, 2006).

suru).”⁵¹⁵ Yokomitsu claims that allowing “content to determine form” places the Marxists squarely in the camp of not materialism but “idealism” (*yuishinron*) and leaves them with a fundamentally “anti-Marxist theory of literature.”⁵¹⁶ The accused, Hirabayashi and Kurahara, were two of the most influential theorists of the proletarian literary movement in Japan. Hirabayashi was a journalist and editor who wrote literary and social criticism while serving as editor of the mainstream magazine *Taiyô* (The Sun, 1895-1928). Kurahara had returned from a tour of study in Soviet Russia in 1926, swiftly achieving a reputation as the central theorist of the Japanese proletarian literary movement and founding the Zen-Nihon Musansha Geijutsu Renmei (All-Japan League of Proletarian Artists, better known by the acronym NAPF, following its Esperanto name Nippon Artisto Proleta Federacio) and its associated literary journal *Senki* (*Battleflag*, 1928-1931), which served as the core journal of the movement in the late 1920s.⁵¹⁷

⁵¹⁵ Yokomitsu Riichi, “Bungei jihyô,” in Hirano, et. al., eds, 569-570. Yokomitsu’s text, a literary review, was originally published in the Nov. 1928 issue of *Bungei Shunjû*, and appears in *TYRZ* vol. 13 as “Bungei jihyô (II),” 147-157. Yokomitsu is citing and paraphrasing Kurahara’s essay “Geijutsu undo tōmen no kinkyū mondai” which ran in the Aug. 1928 issue of *Senki*.

⁵¹⁶ Yokomitsu Riichi, “Bungei jihyô (II),” 151-152.

⁵¹⁷ Both Hirabayashi and Kurahara are shockingly understudied in both Japanese and English. Hirabayashi, who wrote detective fiction and translated Edgar Allan Poe and Rousseau’s *The Social Contract* and *Emile*, in addition to working as a magazine editor, literary critic and film critic, is richly deserving of further attention. The only critical studies are Sugamoto Yasuyuki, *Modan Marukusu-shugi no shinkuronishiti: Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke to Warutā Benyamin* (Tokyo: Sairyūsha, 2007) and Ōwada Shigeru, *Shakai bungaku 1920-nen zengo – Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke to sono jidai bungaku* (Tokyo: Fuji Shuppan, 1992), which only gives a partial treatment to Hirabayashi, despite the title. H.D. Harootunian devotes several pages to Hirabayashi in *Overcome by Modernity: History, Culture, and Community in Interwar Japan* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2001). Kyoko Omori has written an in-depth discussion of Hirabayashi in English, but focusing primarily in his capacity as an author of detective fiction. Kyoko Omori, “Detecting Japanese Vernacular Modernism: *Shinseinen* Magazine and the Development of the *Tantei Shōsetsu* Genre, 1920-1931,” (Ph.D. Diss., Ohio State Univ., 2003), 107-152. Despite decades of critical output on a variety of subjects, Kurahara has gained a reputation of a doctrinaire and unrepentant Stalinist, and has to my knowledge never been the subject of a major study in Japanese or any significant treatment since the writing of postwar literary history by figures such as Hirano Ken and Honda Shūgo. In English, Mats Karlsson has recently attempted

By 1928, the Japanese proletarian literary movement had ascended to a position of relative power and prominence despite suffering with a series of divisive schisms and internal re-organizations.⁵¹⁸ “Proletarian literature” as such was still less than a decade old in Japan, having begun with the 1921 founding of the magazine *Tane Maku Hito* (*The Sower*, 1921-1923) by a group of students in northeastern Akita under the influence of the pacifist writings of Henri Barbusse (1873-1935).⁵¹⁹ The journal’s editor Komaki Ômi (1894-1978) and his comrades Imano Kenzô (1893-1969) and Kaneko Yôbun (1893-1985) moved to Tokyo and *Tane Maku Hito* folded in 1923, but the same group resurrected the magazine the next year under the new name *Bungei Sensen* (*Literary Frontline*, 1924-1934). The Akita group was joined by Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke and Aono Suekichi (1890-1961), a journalist for the *Yomiuri Shinbun* newspaper who would

to rehabilitate Kurahara as a major critic and thinker. See Karlsson, “Kurahara Korehito’s Road to Proletarian Realism” in *Japan Review*, 2008, no. 20, 231-273.

⁵¹⁸ A full overview of the various schisms between political factions and formation of assorted writer’s unions appears in G.T. Shea, *Leftwing Literature in Japan: A Brief History of the Proletarian Literary Movement* (Tokyo: Hosei Univ. Press, 1964).

⁵¹⁹ The founding of *Tane Maku Hito* was inspired by Barbusse’s 1919 novel *Clarte*, which also lent its name to a journal (*Kurarute*) founded and edited by the young Kobayashi Takiji (1903-1933), which ran five issues from Apr. 1924 to 1926. A scholarly reprint of the magazine was produced by Fuji Shuppan in 1990. *Tane Maku Hito* has received moderate critical attention in Japan, but has been little studied in English. See “Tane Maku Hito” “Bungei Sensen” o yomu kai, eds., *Furontia no bungaku – zasshi ‘Tane Maku Hito’ no saikentô* (Tokyo: “Tane Maku Hito” “Bungei Sensen” o yomu kai, 2005) and Anzai Ikurô et. al, eds., *Kurarute undô to ‘Tane Maku Hito’: Hansen bungaku undô ‘Kurarute’ no Nihon to Chôsen to no tenkai* (Tokyo: Ochanomizu Shobô, 2004), among others. Also noteworthy is Barbusse’s interest in Esperanto, which inspired the work of Akita Ujaku (1883-1962). Akita’s interest was also shared by Ôsugi Sakae, and Esperanto and Esperantism would grow as a part of the proletarian movement in general; most acronyms of proletarian organizations are from Esperanto rather than English. The often-overlooked context of the appeal of Barbusse’s pacifist writing in Japan is the so-called “Siberian Intervention” (*Shiberia shuppei*) of 1918-1922, in which Japan conscripted soldiers to join the forces of Western military powers in support of the White Russian forces against the Communists in the Russian Civil War. A largely forgotten event in the history of modern Japan, the Siberian Intervention was a major cause for concern in leftist and popular political discourse in the late 1910s and early 1920s; the proletarian author Kuroshima Denji (1898-1943) was sent to Siberia and several of his most famous stories deal with his experience there, including “Uzumakeru karasu no mure” (A Flock of Circling Crows, 1927).

become the proletarian movement's first major literary theorist.⁵²⁰ The magazine quickly became the center around which politically active authors of fiction and criticism gravitated to stake a place for leftist literature within the established sphere of literary production.

The publication of first *Tane Maku Hito* and then *Bungei Sensen* coincided with the foundation of the Japanese Communist Party (*Nihon Kyōsantō*) and a sharp uptick in labor disputes and social unrest as discontent over social inequalities rose with the rapid industrialization and urbanization of Japanese society.⁵²¹ As the movement grew larger, so did disagreements over the role of literature in building a new model of social organization, and an increasingly fractious array of artists and writers unions formed and

⁵²⁰ Aono was the first to rise to the position of most powerful proletarian literary critic, a role that would be succeeded by first Hirabayashi and then Kurahara. Aono's major contribution to proletarian literary discourse were the concepts of *shirabeta geijutsu* (investigated art) and *mokuteki ishiki* (purposeful consciousness). The former was inspired by the work of Upton Sinclair (1878-1962) in novels such as *The Jungle* (1906), and urged writers to witness and experience the working conditions that they aimed to represent; the idea provides an important seed for developments in political approaches to reportage and observation off which postwar critics would both build upon and distinguish themselves from. "Mokuteki ishiki" was contrasted to "shizen hassei" or "shizen seichō" (natural growth) in the essays "Shizen seichō to mokuteki ishiki" and "Shizen seichō to mokuteki ishiki sairon" in *Bungei Sensen* Sept. 1926 and Jan. 1927 respectively. Though a full analysis falls outside the scope of this dissertation, Aono's critical work marked a key turning point in the self-consciousness of proletarian writers towards their own subject positions and techniques of literary representation and a move towards artifice as a critical trope.

⁵²¹ After a period of initial organization, the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) was formally chartered in 1922, then dissolved in 1924 and eventually reformed in December 1926. Charter members included: Sano Manabu (1892-1953), Nabeyama Sadachika (1904-1979), Sakai Toshihiko (1871-1933), Yamakawa Hitoshi (1880-1958), Tokuda Kyūichi (1894-1953), Nosaka Sanzō (1892-1993). For an exhaustively detailed history of the JCP through the end of the Second World War, see George M. Beckmann and Okubo Genji, *The Japanese Communist Party 1922-1945* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1969). For more on the intellectual origins of the party and key figures in it, see among others Kuroiwa Hisako, *Pan to pen: Shakaishugisha Sakai Toshihiko to 'Baibunsha' no tatakai* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2010) and Kawaguchi Takehiko, *Nihon Marukusushugi no genryū – Sakai Toshihiko to Yamakawa Hitoshi* (Tokyo: Ariesu Shobō, 1983). For an overview of some of the riots that shook Japan in this period see Michael Lewis, *Rioters and Citizens: Mass Protest in Imperial Japan* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1990). For a discussion of the rise of labor movements, see Andrew Gordon, *Labor and Imperial Democracy in Prewar Japan* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1991).

split over theoretical disputes over the direction of the movement.⁵²² Nonetheless, in the span of less than a decade, socialist, Communist, and Marxist discourse had come to constitute a major force in modern Japanese literature and social politics.⁵²³ By the time of the formalist debate, the movement's center of gravity had shifted from *Bungei Sensen* to the new journal *Senki*, which held close ties to the Japanese Communist Party.⁵²⁴ NAPF had emerged from the factional struggles as the movement's most powerful writers' association, and Kurahara cemented his position as the movement's leading literary theorist through the publication of his seminal "Puroretaria rearizumu e no michi" (The Road To Proletarian Realism, 1928).⁵²⁵ Fittingly, it was Kurahara that first responded to Yokomitsu's attack on the proletarian literary movement. Kurahara's reply, entitled "Keishiki no mondai" (The Problem of Form) opens by questioning the binaries

⁵²² See Shea. A recapitulation of the Japanese proletarian literary movement in its many phases, divisions, and sub-categories falls beyond the scope of this project. Any assessment by default almost necessarily obscures the diversity of thought, style, and opinion in a literary movement spanning nearly 15 years.

⁵²³ The term "proletarian literature" in Japan includes a broad diversity of views and approaches to the function of political literature drawing from a wide variety of international threads of criticism. The rubric encompasses writers and critics working in the socialist, social democrat, Marxist, Marxian, communist, and anarcho-syndicalist traditions, and all the sub-delineations thereof, many of whom switched positions and changed stances over time. Proletarian movement writers in Japan conceptualized their work in an explicitly internationalist context, and engaged with the ideas of any number of Soviet, American, British, and German figures, including Upton Sinclair, Leon Trotsky (1879-1940), Anatoly Lunacharsky (1875-1933), George Grosz (1893-1959), and many others. Due to the occasionally random nature of translation and reception in Japan, approaches to literature that would have been unreconcilable in the Soviet Union often ran side by side in Japanese magazines such as *Bungei Sensen*, such as critical works associated with the Futurist avant-gardist *LEF* (Left Front of the Arts) journal (1923-1925; 1927-1929) of Osip Brik (1888-1945) and Vladimir Mayakovsky (1883-1930) and the Bolshevik RAPP (Revolutionary Association of Proletarian Writers) faction. Though it falls beyond the scope of this dissertation, a serious treatment of the approaches to the production of political literature in Japan in tandem with a re-evaluation of the complex landscape of Soviet criticism in the 1920s is needed. For a critical re-assessment of early Soviet criticism see Evgeny Dobrenko, *Aesthetics of Alienation: Reassessment of Early Soviet Cultural Theories* (Evanston: Northwestern Univ. Press, 2005).

⁵²⁴ *Senki* was the official magazine (*kikanshi*) of NAPF, which grew increasingly close to the party during the late 1920s.

⁵²⁵ For a summary of Kurahara's essay and in-depth analysis of his critical position, see Karlsson.

upon which Yokomitsu structures his accusation: “Is the form of art really its ‘object’ (*kyakkan*) and is its content really its ‘subject’ (*shukan*)? Or, put another way, is the form of art really ‘matter’ (*busshitsu*), while its content is ‘spirit’ (*seishin*)?”⁵²⁶

Kurahara applies a dialectical approach to pull apart the logic at the core of Yokomitsu’s argument, in which form and content are entirely distinct from each other, with one in a necessarily dependent relationship to the other:

Form and content are both important elements (*yôso*) in art, and we cannot say that one should be above or below the other. In any case, in art there is an inseparable unity (*fukabun na tôteisu*) of form and content... Formalists say that ‘content arises (*hassei*) from form,’ but Marxists do not say that ‘form arises from content.’ In regards to form and content, to borrow an expression from Hegel, ‘they arise reciprocally’ (*sôgo ni hassei shiau*)... Art is not, of course, born naturally (*shizen hasseiteki*), but is made by man. It is the needs of the lives of men (*ningen no seikatsu no hitsuyô*) that induces men to make art...⁵²⁷

In a “Puroretaria geijutsu no naiyô to keishiki (Form and Content in Proletarian Literature),” which was published in *Senki* in Feb. 1929 and written for the sake of furthering a formalist approach to the writing of proletarian literature, Kurahara further explicates his ideas:

The content of art is certainly not, as the formalists say, determined by its form, but rather just the opposite, in that the social (*shakai-teki*) and class (*kaikyû-teki*) content determine the artistic form that is set within the limits

⁵²⁶ Kurahara Korehito, “Keishiki no mondai,” in Hirano et. al, eds., *Gendai Nihon bungaku ronsô-shi*, 577. The essay originally ran in the Nov. 20, 1928 issue of the *Asahi Shinbun*; the venue of a literary column in a major daily newspaper testifies the degree to which “the problem of form” was seen as a theoretical concern of interest to literati and the general public alike. In the essay, Kurahara himself identifies “form” as “one of the central problems of literary criticism in Japan.”

⁵²⁷ Kurahara, 578. The mention of Hegel is a paraphrase rather than a direct citation. Kurahara’s opposition to “*shizen hassei*” follows Aono Suekichi’s doctrine of “*mokuteki ishiki*” (purposeful consciousness); the former, in which representation springs naturally from the proletarian subject was the line taken by Kurahara’s opponents Nakano Shigeharu and Kaji Wataru (1903-1982) in the debate over the “massification” (*taishû-ka*) of literature in 1928 and 1929, which is discussed below. Key is Kurahara’s move to eschew the “natural” in favor of artifice in the active development of political consciousness.

of formal possibility (*keishi-teki kanô no han'inai* which are remade through the production process (*seisan katei*) that determines form.⁵²⁸

Rather than reduce the relationship between form and content to a deterministic one, Kurahara argues that content, which remains the privileged term for him, is linked to a historically specific set of limits of the possibilities of form, which takes on a kind of enframing function. To Kurahara, literature (or any other art form) is first and foremost artifice, rather than a manifestation of unmediated expression that springs naturally a particular subject, spirit, or milieu. As such, it follows that particular styles and modes of literary expression change over time. In his writings on realism, Kurahara takes care to specify that for him “realism” is itself a temporally and spatially contingent mode, encompassing the works of figures spanning from the Edo author Ihara Saikaku (1642-1693) and the woodblock artist Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858) to Emile Zola (1840-1902) and Gustave Flaubert (1821-1880).⁵²⁹

Yokomitsu and Kurahara’s salvos were followed by months of squabbling over the chicken-and-the-egg question of whether form or content should sit in the dominant position.⁵³⁰ But the true import of the protracted conflict over form and content lies in the

⁵²⁸ Kurahara, “Puroretaria geijutsu no naiyô to keishiki,” “Puroretaria riarizumu e no michi,” in *Nihon puroretaria bungaku hyôronshû 4 – Kurahara Korehito* (Tokyo: Shin-Nihon Shuppansha, 1990), 173.

⁵²⁹ Kurahara, “Puroretaria riarizumu e no michi,” in *Nihon puroretaria bungaku hyôronshû 4 – Kurahara Korehito*, 116. It should be noted that Kurahara’s “proletarian realism” is by no means consummate with Soviet socialist realism as such, which did not become official doctrine until 1934 under Stalin. Kurahara himself makes it clear that the realism he describes is not that commonly referred to as “kitchen sink” realism, nor is it simply a rehashing of Naturalism. For a detailed analysis, see Karlsson. Kurahara subsequently became deeply interested in the problem of form as it pertained to the development of proletarian literature, and published a long work on the subject with *Puroretaria geijutsu to keishiki* (Proletarian Art and Form, 1930). Reading Kurahara against Lukacs’ writings on realism and formalism from the 1930s may prove enlightening for future research.

⁵³⁰ Representative is the proletarian critic Katsumoto Seiichirô’s (1899-1967) “Keishiki-shugi bungaku-setsu o haisu,” originally published in the Feb. 1929 issue of *Shinchô*. Yokomitsu would pen a number of essays criticizing what he called “communist literature” (*konmunizumu bungaku*),

fundamental assumption germane to the terms of the debate itself: the understanding shared by both camps of the literary work as a dialectical artifice comprised of form and content, whatever the relation between the two may be.⁵³¹ Likewise, the debating parties themselves were far from diametrically opposed. In fact, the formalists' attacks do not criticize their targets for being too Marxist but for not being Marxist enough.

Yokomitsu's ally Nakagawa Yoichi (1897-1994) presents literary formalism not as a means to overcome Marxist ideology, but as a potential path forward for Marxist literature in Japan, arguing that "formalism is the best path to materialism" and beseeching Japanese Marxist writers to embrace formalistic methods in their goals.⁵³²

Yokomitsu likewise makes a point of valorizing certain authors of proletarian literature that he identifies with a formalist style, namely Hirabayashi Taiko (1905-1972) and Hayama Yoshiki (1894-1945).⁵³³ Conversely, Nakagawa identifies himself and his allies

while his associate Nakagawa Yoichi (1897-1994) claimed that "Marxist literary theory in Japan... while retaining many truths, is fundamentally fallacious." Nakagawa, "Hanauta ni yoru keishiki-shugi riron no hatten" in Hirano et. al., eds., 596. Originally published in *Bungei Shunjū*, Feb. 1929.

⁵³¹ This approach stands in contrast to the way in which the problem was raised in 1922 in the "Debate over Content Value" (*naiyōteki kachi no ronsō*) between Kikuchi Kan (1888-1948) and Satomi Ton (1888-1983). Kikuchi argues: "Some experts might say that no value exists in a work outside its artistic value (*geijutsuteki kachi*). I do not think this is the case... I believe that in the literary work there really exists a value other than artist value... I shall call that value content value (*naiyōteki kachi*)." Kikuchi, "Bungei sakuhin no naiyōteki kachi," in Hirano et. al., eds., 71-73. Kikuchi's argument sows the seeds for the later debate, but here content is akin "pure content" that represents a particular social circumstance, and is not dialectically linked to form, as it is by critics on both sides of the formalist debate. In Kikuchi's work the two values are independent, whereas in the formalist debate it is understood that one "determines" the other. For a summary of Kikuchi and Satomi's debate see Edward Mack, "The Value of Literature: Cultural Authority in Interwar Japan," Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 2002, 231-238.

⁵³² Nakagawa, "Hanauta," quoted from Usui, 276.

⁵³³ Both Hayama and Hirabayashi were associated with the journal *Bungei Sensen* rather than *Senki*, which was more vanguardist in its stance. Yokomitsu sings the praises of Taiko in the same essay where he criticizes Kurahara, and his coterie magazine *Bungei Jidai* ran three installments of Hayama's novella "Dare ga koroshita ka" (Who Killed Them, 1928).

as “socialists attempting to create a new form of social life”.⁵³⁴ Yokomitsu, Nakagawa, and other self-identifying formalist authors were primarily concerned over the instrumentalization of literature as a tool of ideology. What troubles Yokomitsu about the rise of proletarian literature is not the “content” of ideology (Marxist thought), but the potential for the name of Marx to become the sole arbiter of literary and social value as such: “If the value of a product (*seisanbutsu*) is determined entirely by whether or not it possesses a Marxist illusion of life (*seikatsu gensō*), it is impossible for anything else to possess any value.”⁵³⁵ In essence, Yokomitsu is concerned with the reification of Marxism as a one-dimensional form of value, with the empty vessel of the name of Marx itself trumping the degree to which the form of language might serve as a medium for the critique of social consciousness. He warns his opponents: “Marx himself remained vigilant against the commercialization of Marxism, which leads to the forgetting of Marxist theory by those writing under his name.”⁵³⁶

Elsewhere, Yokomitsu attempts to demonstrate how Marx’s own rhetorical style and the structure of his language produces a particular understanding of material history. Responding to the proletarian critic Aono Suekichi’s exhortation of unadorned language and claim that “the use of adjectives is no good...they are mere gold plating,” Yokomitsu aims to show how adjectival phrases imply a particular logic of physical presence, rather than act as unnecessary embellishment of a pre-existing object:

Let us say that a thing moves (*busshitsu ga ugoita*)...neither verbs nor nouns nor pronouns have any ability to tell us how it moves. Adjectives

⁵³⁴ Nakagawa, “Hanauta,” quoted from Usui, 276.

⁵³⁵ Yokomitsu, “Moji ni tsuite,” 119. Yokomitsu briefly participated in a Marxist study group when he was younger, and one early story “Marukusu no saiban” (Marx on Trial) deals with a judge’s view on the law that changes after reading Marx. “Marukusu no saiban” was published in Aug. 1923 in *Shinchō*.

⁵³⁶ Yokomitsu, “Yuibutsuronteki bungakuron ni tsuite,” *TYRZ* vol. 13, 100.

alone can show us...Two things cannot exist in the same space at the same time...When one thing moves, it is necessary to clearly show how it moves in order to maintain its individuality (*kosei*). It is adjectives that best express this need...Literature is a thing (*buttai*) that expresses through letters the individuality of the movement of things. I would like to bring to the attention of Aono, who hates adjectives so much, the following quotation from Marx: “Trading nations, properly so called, exist in the ancient world only in its interstices, like the gods of Epicurus in the intermundia, or like Jews in the pores of Polish society.” (*Capital*, pt. 4). The above citation is not an example selected to mock the commercialism of Communist works, but rather an example to show how adjectives can be used most sharply and effectively in the service of materialism.⁵³⁷

Yokomitsu draws attention to Marx’s grammar, selecting the passage at hand to show how the strategic use of adjectival phrases lend historical specificity to his concepts. He argues that under Aono’s rubric, not only would Marx himself be considered a formalist, but his argument would be stronger for it.⁵³⁸ The passage in *Capital* immediately preceding Yokomitsu’s citation is:

[In] a society based upon the production of commodities, in which the producers in general enter into social relations with one another by treating their products as commodities and values...we find that the conversion of products into commodities, and therefore the conversion of men into producers of commodities, holds a subordinate place, which, however, increases in importance as primitive communities approach nearer and nearer to their dissolution.⁵³⁹

Yokomitsu has selected a passage detailing the passage from ancient and primitive modes of production into proto-capitalism, in which groups engaged in exchange arise, as

⁵³⁷ Yokomitsu, “Yuibutsuronteki bungakuron ni tsuite,” 98-99. Yokomitsu does not mention the location of Aono’s argument.

⁵³⁸ Yokomitsu’s term adjective (*keiyōshi*) appears as something closer to metaphor when his citation is translated into English. I have used Ben Fawkes’ translation for the citation of Marx. Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy Vol. 1* (New York: Penguin Book, 1976; 1990), 172-173.

⁵³⁹ Marx, 172-173. The section in question is part of Vol. 1 Chapter 1 “The Commodity” and appears in the subsection “The Fetishism in the Commodity and its Secret.” We can deduce that Yokomitsu at least had read at least the first chapter of one of the two popular translations of *Capital* released in Japanese in 1927-1928. The section at hand also mentions the “Asiatic mode of production.” See Chapter 1 for a discussion of the translation and marketing of *Capital* into Japanese.

traditional social relations are transformed into relations governed by labor, commodity exchange, and economic value. Yokomitsu draws attention to the way that Marx's choice of linguistic form is linked to the representation of a nascent yet interstitial commodity economy, demonstrating how Marx dispatches adjectival phrases to delineate historical specificity in the model he sketches. By reading Marx as a rhetorician, Yokomitsu shows how a particular form of language and argument makes it possible to historicize the rise of the commodity economy itself. Implicitly contrasted is the approach of Japanese Marxist literary theorists, whom Yokomitsu accuses of blindness to the reification of their own work, which he deems commercialized criticism ignorant of language itself and dependent on the name of Marx as a means to mark products with social or economic value.

A similar logic forms the crux of the critic Kobayashi Hideo's (1902-1983) critiques of both the Japanese Marxist literary movement and Yokomitsu's own "Neo-Sensationist" approach.⁵⁴⁰ In his seminal 1929 essay "Samazamanaru ishô" (Myriad Designs), as well as the following year's "Ashiru to kame no ko" (Achilles and the Tortoise), Kobayashi collapses the terms of the formalist debate, accusing Marxists and formalists alike of eschewing the literary materialism upon which both their positions are ostensibly based.⁵⁴¹ From Kobayashi's perspective, both sides have left behind criticism

⁵⁴⁰ Kobayashi uses the term *shinkankaku-ha* (Neo-Sensationist or Neo-Perceptionist), though the term had by that time already waned in literary discourse after the folding of *Bungei Jidai* in 1927. For an analysis of *shinkankaku-ha* as a critical trope, see Chapter 2.

⁵⁴¹ "Samazamanaru ishô" established Kobayashi's representation as a major critic when it took second place (following Miyamoto Kenji's (1908-2007) "Haiboku no bungaku" in the magazine *Kaizô*'s prize for criticism in Sept. 1929. Kobayashi Hideo, "Samazamanaru ishô," *Kobayashi Hideo zenshû* vol. 1 (Tokyo: Shinchôsha, 2002). Kobayashi, "Ashiru to kame no ko (I)," *Bungei Shunjû*, May 1930. Quoted from *Kobayashi Hideo Zenshû* vol. 1. The essay was the first of many with the same title. For discussions of Kobayashi in English, see Paul Anderer, "Introduction" in Anderer, ed. *Literature of the Lost Home: Kobayashi Hideo – Literary Criticism, 1924-1939*

as a personally imbricated mode of writing in favor of abstract theoretical designs detached from reality. He brushes aside Yokomitsu and company as practitioners of an empty formalism that has forsaken all connection to the Symbolism of Poe, Baudelaire, and Mallarme and left little more than “the weakness of their own ideas (*kannen no jakushô*).”⁵⁴² Kobayashi singles out Nakagawa’s treatise on formalism, “Keishikishugi geijutsu-ron” (Theory of Formalist Art, 1930), claiming that any such attempt to diagram the dialectics of form and content are “completely correct so long as they remain diagrams...but a diagram is nothing more than a style (*share*)...and has no meaning as anything other than a diagram...in the end [Nakagawa] does nothing other than very loquaciously reiterate the idea ‘form is important’ (*keishiki wa taisetsu da zo*).”⁵⁴³ For Kobayashi, simply equating form with material, as Nakagawa does, does not make a formalist theory of literature materialist by fiat, and serves only to cast the concept of form itself into abstraction.

Kobayashi levels a parallel criticism at the Marxist critics opposing Nakagawa and Yokomitsu, whom he claims have been rendered blind by the very object that they set out to critique:

Those who argue for the inseparability of the consciousness of modern man (*gendaijin no ishiki*) and Marxist materialism are doing little more than following their metaphysical whims. What controls (*shihai*) modernity (*gendai*) is not the ‘thing’ (*mono*) of Marxist historical materialism, but, as Marx clearly points out himself, the particular thing called the commodity (*shôhin to iu mono*)...Isn’t it so that in the brains of the Marxist literary critics of today, Marxist ideology (*marukusu*

(Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1995) and James Dorsey, *Critical Aesthetics: Kobayashi Hideo, Modernity, and Wartime Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Asia Center, 2009).

⁵⁴² Kobayashi, “Samazamanaru ishô,” 150. In the “Ashiru” essay, Kobayashi concludes that their identification of art as material substance (*busshitsu*) and form before content does not go beyond classical Symbolism as “the truth as stated by Edgar Allan Poe over 100 years before.” Kobayashi, “Ashiru to kame no ko (I),” 184.

⁵⁴³ Kobayashi, “Ashiru to kame no ko,” 179, 183-184.

kannengaku) has turned into something that is neither praxis based on theory, nor theory based on practice? It becomes an instance of the particular figure (*keitai*) of the commodity and wields the magic of the commodity (*shôhin no majutsu*). Marxism says that commodities rule the world (*shôhin wa yo o shihai suru*), but the design (*ishô*) of Marxism is a design spread wide through the minds of people, and it itself is a marvelous commodity. This transformation thus possesses the power to make people forget the simple fact that commodities control the world.⁵⁴⁴

Kobayashi is critical of approaches to criticism that understand Marxism as a prescriptive set of abstract analytical rules for application, rather than a means to critique the role of the commodity in structuring the contemporary experience of social life. Beyond identifying the commodity form as a key constituent of modernity and bearer of magical power, Kobayashi also begins the essay by identifying a similar power in language itself: “words (*kotoba*), bestowed unto humans along with consciousness, and our sole weapon (*buki*) in thinking (*shisaku*), continue to work their magic, as in ancient times.”⁵⁴⁵

Kobayashi thus begins by identifying language as the structural force that works in tandem with human consciousness and retaining a magical power.⁵⁴⁶ For Kobayashi, the failure of Marxist literary criticism in Japan lay in part in its inability to develop a robust theory and practice of language and expression. Although critics such as Kurahara went

⁵⁴⁴ Kobayashi, “Samazamanaru ishô,” in *Kobayashi Hideo zenshû*, 149-150. Kobayashi’s view on commodity and the consciousness is remarkably close to that forwarded by Miki Kiyoshi in the 1927 essay “Marukusushugi to yuibutsuron,” which I examine in Chapter 1. It is also similar to the argument of Georg Lukacs in *History and Class Consciousness*, which was translated into Japanese the same year and is a likely influence on Miki’s work. Fredric Jameson summarizes Lukacs’ argument on the point as follows: “It is commodities that structure our original relationship to objects of the world, that shape the categories through which we see all other objects.” Jameson, *Marxism and Form* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1974), 186-187.

⁵⁴⁵ Kobayashi, “Samazamanaru ishô,” 133.

⁵⁴⁶ Again, the logic and rhetoric about the magical power of words is strikingly similar to that of Miki Kiyoshi’s essays of 1927. Paul Anderer argues that Kobayashi is using the language of Marx’s *German Ideology* against the Marxist writers, much as Marx attacked the Young Hegelians. Anderer, 9. The direct reference to *The German Ideology* in Kobayashi’s text is unclear to me, but the structure of the critique is similar. Interestingly, *The German Ideology* was first translated by Miki for the Iwanami Bunko series in July 1930, roughly a year after the publication of Kobayashi’s essay.

on to attempt explicitly formalist theories of literary practice, the Japanese Marxist movement did not see the kind of deep engagement with linguistics as appeared in the Soviet Union with the Russian Formalists such as Viktor Shklovsky (1893-1984), Roman Jakobson (1896-1982), or Valentin Volosinov (1895-1936?), at least in the prewar period.⁵⁴⁷ Although Shklovsky's name was known in Japan by 1928, translators favored the work of party theorists such as Anatoly Lunacharsky (1895-1933), whose influence on the proletarian literary movement in Japan was substantial.⁵⁴⁸

However, though the proletarian literary movement in Japan may have failed to develop either a theory or practice of linguistic criticism, Kobayashi's evaluation is not entirely accurate. Although a substantial share of the rapidly expanding Marxist literary discourse of the late 1920s and early 1930s served to do little more than delineate increasingly fine fractures between political factions, a number of authors and critics addressed head-on the problem of commodification that Kobayashi lays out. As the circulation of leftist literature and thought in Japan became increasingly interwoven with

⁵⁴⁷ For example, Volosinov's *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (1929). Volosinov is sometimes considered to be an alias for M.M. Bakhtin (1895-1975). This is not to imply that Kobayashi was aware of such work or implicitly comparing Japanese critics to this strand of Soviet linguistic formalist criticism, but to acknowledge that in the prewar period, Japanese Marxist criticism did not take a significant interest in the problems of language as such. As I argue below, some writers and critics of the proletarian movement were concerned more with the media and means through which literature was produced, rather than its linguistic qualities. To be sure, though the movements were synchronous, the comparison itself is somewhat ahistorical, as the work of the Russian formalists was largely unread and untranslated in Asia or the West until the structuralist turn in literary criticism in the postwar period. See Fredric Jameson, *The Prison-House of Language: A Critical Account of Structuralism and Russian Formalism* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1975).

⁵⁴⁸ In "Hanauta ni yoru keishiki-shugi riron no hatten," a response to Kurahara, Nakagawa criticizes Shklovsky's attempt to "separate form from the author as a living being (*seikatsusha*) and understand form as technique (*gikō*) alone." Nakagawa instead argues that form "is not style...but existence. It is something material. It is the culmination of a process (*keika*)... Structure (*kōsei*). Specificity (*gutai*)...and mechanism (*mekanizumu*)." In Hirano, et. al., 598. Nakagawa's criticism itself is here written in a formalist style, using brief bursts of nouns rather than full sentences. It is likely that Hirano is referring to Shklovsky's *Literature and Cinematography* (1923), which was translated into Japanese in 1928 as *Bungaku to Eiga*.

the burgeoning consumer economy, proletarian writers crafted critiques concerned with the medium of print as the commodity by which their words and ideas reached the general public. In fact, the proletarian literary movement produced penetrating analyses of the publishing industry, the production processes of print media, and the role of print in structuring present and possible forms of mass social life.

The Economics of Political Literature and the Imagination of the Masses

The lacuna of which Kobayashi accuses Japanese Marxists is an inability to recognize their own literary and critical output within, rather than external to, the commodity market. Though many writers were indeed wrapped up in didactical squabbling, not all proletarian critics ignored this problem, including Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke, who anticipates Kobayashi's critique in a 1929 essay entitled "Shôhin to shite no kindai shôsetsu" (Modern Fiction as a Commodity):

For popular literature (*taishû bungaku*), selling well, that is to say commercial value (*shôgyôteki kachi*), is the first priority...this holds true not only for popular literature, but for all modern fiction...All fiction is becoming popular literature...and this means the commodification (*shôhinka*) of the literary work (*bungaku sakuhin*).⁵⁴⁹

⁵⁴⁹ Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke, "Shôhin to shite no kindai shôsetsu," in *Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke bungei hyôronshû* vol. 1 (Tokyo: Bunsendô Shoten, 1975), 305. Here, I have translated *taishû bungaku* as popular literature, but it can also mean "mass literature," which is how I translate it in most cases below. The term *taishû* is made difficult to translate by virtue of embodying both of these valences, and it is in fact the slippage between the two that allows Hirabayashi's argument to work. In the quote cited here, the first appearance of *taishû bungaku* refers to the genre of popular literature, whereas the last appearance of the term, "all literature is..." would perhaps more accurately be "mass literature," since Hirabayashi is no longer speaking of genre but commercial function. I have chosen to leave *taishû bungaku* as "popular literature" here, for the sake of unity since Hirabayashi is firstly dealing with the genre of literature itself. Below I generally use "mass literature," since the essays cited are concerned primarily with economics, though the intertwining of the two is the core of all the arguments discussed here.

In recognizing economic value as a function that supercedes genre in the era of mass-market print, Hirabayashi lays the necessary groundwork to think lucidly about the function of proletarian literature as a part of mass culture. Over the course of his argument, he moves from a concept of form as novelistic style to an idea of form as a problem pertaining to the economics of consumer society. Hirabayashi opens the essay with the rhetorical question: “Does the problem of the popularity (*taishûsei*) of the literary work really stop at the form (*keishiki*) of the literary work, as Lunacharsky says? Furthermore, is this a problem that is only internal (*naizai*) to literature?”⁵⁵⁰ In asking this question, Hirabayashi both anticipates Kobayashi’s critique and moves beyond the limited terms of Kurahara’s approach to formalism, which draws heavily on Lunacharsky’s literary theory.⁵⁵¹ Hirabayashi then answers his own question by claiming that “the popularity of a literary work is more than an essential (*honshitsuteki*) problem of literature (*bungaku*); it is a problem tied to commercialism (*shôgyôshugi*)...I truly believe

⁵⁵⁰ Hirabayashi, 302.

⁵⁵¹ Ibid, 302. The essay most likely to be informing Japanese critical discourse is Lunacharsky’s “Theses on the Problems of Marxist Criticism” (1928), which deals explicitly with the dialectics of form and content and privileges the latter; though as a reader of Russian recently returned from the Soviet Union, Kurahara would likely have read a much broader variety of texts. Lunacharsky’s essay was published in Japanese in the Sept. 1928 issue of *Senki* as “Marukusu-shugi bungei hihyô no ninmu ni kansuru têtze.” The essay is available in English translation in *On Literature and Art* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965), 11-27. Lunacharsky is generally remembered as a doctrinaire Leninist due to his role as one of the founders of the Proletkult movement and service as the People’s Commissar of Education from 1917 to 1929. But the work of Lunacharsky and his Proletkult co-founder and comrade Alexander Bogdanov (1873-1928) is complex in its structure and heritage and was originally condemned by Lenin in his 1908 work *Materialism and Empirio-criticism*. The work of Bogdanov in particular, who has garnered recent attention as the founding father of Soviet science fiction and systems theory, reveals the role of 19th-century discourse on theories of science and energy, such as Ernst Mach (1838-1916) on the evolution of Russian criticism. See Eugene Kendall, “Philosophy and Politics in Russian Social Democracy: Bogdanov, Lunacharsky, and the Crisis of Bolshevism, 1908-1909,” Ph.D. Diss, Columbia Univ., 1966. On Bogdanov and systems theory, see John Biggart et. al., eds., *Alexander Bogdanov and the Origins of Systems Thinking in Russia*. Bogdanov’s theory of “Tektology” anticipated by several decades the cybernetic ideas of Norbert Wiener’s work in mid-century America (1894-1964).

that the essential element of a work's popularity lies in the power of commercial publishing (*shuppan shōgyō no chikara*).⁵⁵²

Hirabayashi thus shifts his frame of observation from the level of the work itself to a broader analytical rubric that situates the literary work within the economic and social circumstances under which it is bought and sold. In doing so, Kurahara's dialectic of content and form as markers for "the opposition of political value (*seijiteki kachi*) to artistic value (*geijutsuteki kachi*) in Marxist works of literature" is sublated into a new dialectic of "artistic value against commercial value" in which commercial value becomes the master term.⁵⁵³ With this move, Hirabayashi places the production of political literature firmly within the economic sphere, arguing that any attempt to write "proletarian popular literature" (*puoretaria taishū bungaku*) should recognize the link between literature as a mass phenomenon and the different valences of artistic, political, and economic value that it seeks to create:

As long as one looks at the literary work as a commodity, the only value that is problematized is economic value...Of course, I am not saying that the problem of the popularity of literature (*bungaku no taishūsei*) has nothing to do with form (*formu*). In regards to the particular problem of proletarian popular literature (*puoretaria taishū bungaku*), it is possible to imagine that it is distributed for the purposes of propaganda (*senden'yō*) in addition to being sold as a commodity, so we might not choose to emphasize the commercial value. But even so, within this capitalist nation (*shihonshugi-koku*), proletarian popular literature cannot take the matter of economic value lightly...form (*formu*) itself is both an element (*yōso*) composing artistic value and an element composing commercial value.⁵⁵⁴

Here, "form" is the term that links artistic value to commercial value and captures the dual nature of the literary work as both literary art and economic object. Hirabayashi's

⁵⁵² Hirabayashi, 302.

⁵⁵³ Ibid, 303.

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid, 308-309.

concept of “form” itself undergoes a transformation in order to make these connections apparent. At the beginning of the essay, Hirabayashi uses the term *keishiki*, which is the word used in the context of the formalist debates, but by the end of the essay, Hirabayashi has switched to the transliteration of the English, *forumu*. In working through his analysis of the commodity character of the literary work, Hirabayashi’s “form” moves from a single term in a dialectic of art and politics that is external to economic concerns (*keishiki*), to a multivalent concept (*forumu*) that simultaneously evokes both literary form and the commodity form. A far cry from Nakagawa’s abstract diagram, Hirabayashi’s concept of form is built upon an understanding of the text as an object for sale in the market economy.

Hirabayashi’s short essay points towards a strand of proletarian criticism that reflexively addresses the qualities of the medium on which it is produced and circulated. In the late 1920s, as the market for Marxist writings expanded exponentially and proletarian literature gained increasing currency in the literary establishment, a number of critics associated with the movement turned their attention to the problem of print mass media. Essays by figures critics like Nii Itaru (1883-1951) and Takabatake Motoyuki (1886-1928) investigate the role of the publishing industry in the making of the masses and question the political efficacy of popular print media.⁵⁵⁵ These writings share Hirabayashi’s concern with the economics of publishing and the assumption of Japan as a

⁵⁵⁵ Nii Itaru was a graduate of the Tokyo Imperial University Faculty of Politics who worked as a reporter for the *Yomiuri Shinbun* and *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun* newspapers and eventually made his name as an anarchist social critic. He is perhaps best remembered for popularizing the term *modân gâru* (“modern girl”); on that topic, see Chapter 3, footnote 44. His major works include a history of anarchism *Museifu-shugi shisô-shi* (1930), but he was a major essayist on a variety of topics on political thought and modern society, and was also the first translator of Pearl S. Buck’s *The Good Earth* into Japanese in 1935-1936 (as *Daichi*). Takabatake was one of the founders of the journal *Shinshakai* (New Society) in 1915 and was the first to produce a full translation of Marx’s *Capital* into Japanese. He is discussed in more detail in Chapter 1.

society in which capitalism structured the production of all aspects of culture, including all forms of printed text. In a 1927 on “print capitalism” (*shuppan shihon-shugi*), the critic Nii Itaru describes the Japanese publishing industry as follows:

Truly capitalistic capitalism (*shihonshugi rashii shihonshugi*) has at last been established in the Japanese publishing industry (*shuppankai*)...the late-coming publishing industry has reached the point of fully matured (*kanjuku*) capitalism...it has entered the age of mass production (*tairyô seisan jidai*).⁵⁵⁶

Nii goes on to note that “publishers are now expanding the targets of their publishing endeavors (*shuppan taishô*) from the so-called ‘reading class’ (*dokusha kaikyû*) to the whole of society (*zenshakai*),” as the universalization of reading allows those producing books to imagine a social totality that both includes and transcends class divisions.⁵⁵⁷

Nii’s schema imagines the masses through their nature as readers and equates publishing with the “whole of society.” By dint of this development, commercial capitalism, the consumption of print media, and the structure of society at large are seen as consummate and mutually mediating forces, as the medium comes to constitute the masses. In other words, it is at the moment that the mass-production and large-scale consumption of print reached a point of virtual universality that the idea of “the masses” (*taishû*) emerged as a key trope in social discourse.

In April 1928, Takabatake Motoyuki penned an essay tracing the rise of the term *taishû* and the popularization of discourse on “the masses,” in which he notes that the term saw a rapid boom in popularity in the early 1920s, reaching a near universal prevalence by the time of the Great Kantô Earthquake of 1923.⁵⁵⁸ Citing the ubiquity with which the term as appended to everything from discount sales at sweetshop parlors

⁵⁵⁶ Nii Itaru, “Shuppan shihonshugi to chojutsuka,” in *Chûô Kôron*, Apr. 1927, 58-59.

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid, 58.

⁵⁵⁸ Takabatake Motoyuki, “Taishûshugi to shihonshugi,” in *Chûô Kôron*, Apr. 1928, 70-73.

to sectors of industry (*taishû kôgyô*), Takabatake claims that the popularization of the idea of “the masses” heralds the arrival of a new social age, but he remains unable to answer the question of precisely what the masses are:

What are the masses (*taishû wa nan de aru ka*)? The masses are the masses (*taishû wa taishû de aru*)...their identity is entirely unclear...there are as many interpretations of the meaning content (*imi naiyô*) of the masses as there are people, with each employing his own logic (*rikutsu*) as a justification to validate his own view’s legitimacy.⁵⁵⁹

Through its apparent self-evidence and according lack of definition, the idea of the masses serve as a sliding signifier, the meaning and value of which change dramatically with different visions of social life. Eventually, *taishû* as a signifier for lowbrow popular culture would come to be the dominant meaning of the term, but in the 1920s, the word *taishû* served as a site of struggle over the mobilization of the masses through modern culture.⁵⁶⁰ Accordingly, it was possible to imagine the fate of the masses as either mobilized workers or bourgeois national subjects:

According to the opinions of proletarian critics (*musantôteki ronkyaku*), the masses are just another name for the proletariat itself, but if one listens to the performances of bourgeois narrators (*yûsantoteki benshi no enzetsu*), the masses are something else; they use the term in a vague sense referring to a large number of people as national subjects (*kokumin*).⁵⁶¹

⁵⁵⁹ Takabatake Motoyuki, “Taishûshugi to shihonshugi,”

⁵⁶⁰ In the postwar period, *taishû* comes to refer generally to “mass culture” in a sense closer to the American use of the term, namely cheap disposable products for entertainment of all classes, and the lower-middle class in particular. Examples would be genre film, color magazines, comics, and so forth. A major recent study is Tsurumi Shunsuke’s (1922-) *Sengo Nihon no taishû bunka-shi: 1945-1980* (Tokyo, Iwanami Shoten, 1991); Tsurumi and his *Shisô no Kagaku (Science of Thought)* group active in the postwar were instrumental in taking up “mass culture” as an object of serious study, with works like Tsurumi’s *Taishû Geijutsu* (Tokyo: Kawade Shinsho, 1954). The re-evaluation of prewar “popular literature” (*taishû bungaku*), as compiled in Heibonsha’s 1928 *Nihon Gendai Taishû Bungaku Zenshû* (discussed below) was a crucial seed for this project. In the prewar, *taishû* similarly served as a referent for such strains of popular culture, but its other valence as a marker of the potentially revolutionary masses allowed the term to serve as a site for organizing political action. Takabatake himself was engaged in this practice, as with his publication of the short-lived weekly magazine *Taishû Undô (Mass Movement, 1920)*.

⁵⁶¹ Takabatake, “Taishûshugi to shihonshugi,” 70.

Takabatake's own idea of the masses remains relatively minimalist: "the unchosen many" (*erabarazaru tasû*) in contrast to "the chosen few" (*erabaretaru shôsû*) of Japan's population of 60 million.⁵⁶² According to this essentially numeric definition, the masses can only come into being in an age of large-scale production and consumption:

Today's world is a capitalist world (*shihonshugi no yo*). A capitalist world means an era of big business dependent on big capital (*daishihon*). Put another way, a capitalist world means an era of mass production (*tairyô seisan*). If we take our present age to be one of mass production, then the only applicable business principle is selling in high volume at low margins. The object (*taishô*) of these high-turnover low-profit (*hakuri tabai*) sales is nothing other than 'the masses' (*taishû*).⁵⁶³

Takabatake, author of the first complete translation of Marx's *Capital* into Japanese, argues that the masses are thus constituted through the circulation of goods; for him, the masses do not possess an independent subjectivity of their own, but emerge as the object of sales practices seeking to develop a large-scale consumer market.

Like Nii, Takabatake pays particular attention to the medium of print, but while Nii sees full-blown print capitalism primarily as an index of economic development, Takabatake argues that large-scale print capital plays a key role in constituting the masses as a self-aware entity: "They say that the masses have become self-aware (*jikaku*). This may be true. But the masses most certainly have not become self-aware autonomously (*shudôteki*). Rather, they were transitively (*tadôteki*) made self-aware by another force."⁵⁶⁴ Takabatake's primary example of the external forces bringing the masses into self-awareness is the newspaper, which he holds as the ultimate model of a product that is constantly reproduced, circulated, and sold widely at high speed and high volume.

Though he describes newspapers as "corporations (*kigyô*) dependent on mass

⁵⁶² Takabatake, "Taishûshugi to shihonshugi,"

⁵⁶³ Ibid, 71.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid, 72.

production...skillfully seizing upon the psychology of the masses (*taishû no shinri*) and never forgetting business profits,” his evaluation is by no means a cynical condemnation of the medium.⁵⁶⁵ Rather, for Takabatake, print mediums such as newspapers mediate an awareness of the masses’ own subjective existence even while taking advantage of the psychology of that new subject to facilitate the reproduction of print capital.

In making his argument, Takabatake eschews any attention to the content of particular newspapers, books, magazines, or other published products, focusing solely on the formal qualities of mass-market print media as such, namely their ability to be quickly produced and widely read.⁵⁶⁶ He goes on to claim that print mediums such as newspapers and one-yen books (*enpon*) possess inherent potential to encourage democratic tendencies and “resist state power...as an ally of the proletariat.”⁵⁶⁷ Yet, at the same time, Takabatake recognizes that these media might easily end up doing little more than pay lip-service to progressive causes while reinforcing repressive patterns of political and economic behavior. He adds the caveat: “[producers] must assume an appearance in which they act for the benefit of the consuming masses...but this can end up amounting to little more than a siren song of sympathy with the masses, a way to take

⁵⁶⁵ Takabatake, “Taishûshugi to shihonshugi,” 72.

⁵⁶⁶ The role of print media outlined here by Takabatake should be contrasted with the role of newspapers in the formation of nationalist discourse and a sense of shared national subjectivity in the Meiji period. In earlier decades, the circulation of political editorials among intellectual elites, as well as writings for a broader reading public and the reproduction of photographs of the Emperor and military subjects in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 played an important role in fostering a consciousness of what Benedict Anderson calls the “imagined community” of the nation. In those cases, both the form (mass-produced language) and the content (nationalist discourse) of the medium is key, whereas Takabatake’s argument relies on the form of the medium alone. Though the organization of the masses will shift depending on what they are reading, Takabatake’s masses as such come into being by virtue of reading at all, with identity as a national subject (*kokumin*) as only one possible outcome of the process.

⁵⁶⁷ Takabatake, 72. For more on *enpon*, see Chapter 1.

advantage of them and rid them of what's in their pockets."⁵⁶⁸ Essentially, Takabatake sees the potential for the publishing revolution to unfold as either a proletarian or a bourgeois revolution.⁵⁶⁹

By the late 1920s, Marxist, socialist, communist, and anarchist discourse spanning social, cultural, political, and economic critiques of life in modern Japan had become a fixture in all manner of print products.⁵⁷⁰ Following the First World War and the Russian Revolution, left-oriented literary fiction, journalism, criticism, histories, and translations came to garner increasingly large swaths of market space, selling thousands and carving out a sizeable piece of public attention.⁵⁷¹ Takabatake's own work was very much a part of this phenomenon; nearly concurrently with the publication of his essays cited here, the renowned left-leaning publisher Kaizôsha's edition of his translation of Marx's *Capital* was locked in a highly public battle for sales supremacy with a competing translation by Kawakami Hajime (1879-1946) for rival publisher Iwanami Shoten.⁵⁷² Takabatake is keenly aware of the delicate position in which his work and the work of other leftist writers lay vis-à-vis the need of publishers to promote their products:

⁵⁶⁸ Takabatake, "Taishûshugi to shihonshugi," 72.

⁵⁶⁹ This revolutionary metaphor is also used by the journalist and critic Ôya Sôichi (1900-1970) in an essay on "The Victors of the Publishing Revolution" (Shuppan kakumei no shôrisha) several months later in the December 1928 issue of *Chûô Kôron*. Ôya's evaluation of the state of publishing in Japan in the late 1920s is roughly parallel to Nii Itaru's, though Ôya is somewhat more specific about the nature of the changes: "With the rapid rise in the circulation numbers (*hakkô busû*) of popular magazines (*tsûzoku zasshi*) and the surprising success of the one-yen volume (*enpon*), the publishing industry (*shuppankai*) has undergone a complete industrial revolution (*sangyô kakumei*)."

⁵⁷⁰ For a complete analysis see Chapter 1. In Chapter 2, I also discuss the way in which publications on the Russian revolution were dispatched for profit by the avant-garde publisher Kinseidô. Although an analysis lies outside the scope of this chapter, popular political journalists such as Yoshino Sakuzô (1878-1933) and Sakai Toshihiko (1871-1933) also produced important critiques for popular consumption.

⁵⁷¹ The interest of the masses in leftist writing is evidenced not least by the venue in which Takabatake's essay was published: *Chûô Kôron*, one of the most powerful general interest magazines at the time.

⁵⁷² For more on Kawakami's translation for Iwanami, see Chapter 1.

There is certainly truth to Kaizôsha's left-wing image (*sakei kanban*), but Kaizôsha does not necessarily make its money off of left-wing books. Neither books of left-wing literature (*bungei*) nor thought (*shisô*) sell very well. It might seem strange for me to acknowledge it myself, but other than [my translation of *Capital*], Marxist works don't sell very much either...Kaizôsha's left-wing books rarely even make the 4,000 or 5,000-sold mark...But Kaizôsha's left-wing image has a sort of special life force of its own. Modern society moves along with stimulus and tempo (*shigeki to tempo ni ugoku*), and so it is necessary to deliver incredibly intense stimulations in order to gain people's attention. In this respect, Kaizôsha's left-wing image has had great effect.⁵⁷³

Takabatake presciently observes how socially conscious writing can be stripped of its critical content through its mass-marketing, as political works including his own are transformed into a sophisticated form of advertising that reaches the masses as little more than image. The masses here become a kind of giant body overwhelmed by the ever-intensifying stimulations delivered by the complex of visual, sensory, and mental impressions that make up modern life. Accordingly, Takabatake is wary of the reduction of Marxian thought to just another point in the nexus of stimuli besieging the consumer. Yet, at the same time, the ability provided by mass-produced print and advertising to broadcast radical thought into broad public discourse allowed the same currents of radical social thought to reach the masses by becoming a constituent part of mass culture.

Fanfare for the Common Company: Heibonsha, "Mass Literature," and the Selling of Social Thought

It was within this media landscape, in which the publication of proletarian writing had been integrated into the financial structure of mass-market consumer culture, that the "popularization" of political literature became a problem for the prewar leftist movement. As the masses emerged as a coherent social category vis-à-vis the expanded circulation of

⁵⁷³ Takabatake, "Yonin Yonshoku," *Chûô Kôron*, Dec. 1928.

mass-produced print, the way in which those masses might be revolutionized came to be a major concern. If the leftist literary movement in Japan was to build a revolutionary mass culture, it was necessary to address the relationship between the movement's political aims and proletarian literature's place in a literary marketplace where books and magazines sold by the tens of thousands. The advent of new forms of literary media immediately preceded not only the formalist debate discussed above, but also another, internal debate within the proletarian literary movement. In 1928, as Kurahara Korehito fended off the movement's external critics, he simultaneously participated in what is now remembered as the "Massification of Art Debate" (*geijutsu taishû-ka ronsô*). Kurahara sparred over the popularization of proletarian literature against the young writers Nakano Shigeharu (1902-1979) and Kaji Wataru (1903-1982). Nakano, a former disciple of the author Akutagawa Ryûnosuke and a follower of the Marxist theorist Fukumoto Kazuo (1893-1984) came out in favor of a vanguardist approach to the production of literature, in which a new revolutionary culture could arise only after the destruction of all tenets of bourgeois culture.⁵⁷⁴ Kurahara, who was joined by Hayashi Fusao (1903-1975), took a more moderate line, promoting a model in which existing forms of culture could serve as means to transform the social order, with proletarian culture emerging from, rather than against the extant bourgeois mass culture.⁵⁷⁵ While Nakano sought a way to build a

⁵⁷⁴ Crucial in the formation of the *Senki* group and the vanguardist wing of the proletarian movement was the *Shinjinkai* (New Man's Club) political circle at Tokyo Imperial University, of which Nakano was a member, as well as proletarian authors Hayashi Fusao, Takeda Rintarô (1904-1946), Kamei Katsuichirô (1907-1966), and JCP founders Nosaka Sanzô and Sano Manabu. See Henry D. Smith II, *Japan's First Student Radicals* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972). The word often used to describe Nakano, Kaji, and Fukumoto's approach is "liquidationist" (*seisanshugi*).

⁵⁷⁵ For a complete summary of the massification debate, see Usui Yoshimi, *Kindai Bungaku Ronsô* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobô, 1975), 231-248. In English, see Edward Mack, "The Value of Literature: Cultural Authority in Interwar Japan," Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 2002,

radically new proletarian model of culture, Kurahara argued for the proletarianization of popular literature.

As in the formalist debate, the two sides shared the same basic assumptions about the function of literature and differed primarily in which direction the future of literature should flow, there from form to content or content to form and here from popular to political or vice versa. The precondition for such a debate is a belief that the masses can be restructured through the promulgation of literature and other forms of shared culture. In turn, this idea of “the masses” is constituted in part through the consumption of a shared body of literature produced by the expansion of the institutions of print capital. The “massification debate” thus marks the proletarian literary movement’s confrontation with its own ambitions to become a mass, or popular genre. By the late 1920s, essentially all literature in Japan, be it vanguard, avant-garde, or otherwise, was being produced and consumed within a nexus of literature as a mass-market commodity. A salient development over the years preceding the debate was the prevalence of the term “mass literature” or “popular literature” (*taishū bungaku*); the term could both indicate a distinct literary genre of popular fiction and denote any widely read literature.

262-284. For a full analysis of the debate in regards to the problem of mass society, see Heather Bowen-Struyk, “Rethinking Japanese Proletarian Literature,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 2001, 126-139. Following the foundational critical work by the scholar of proletarian literature Kurihara Yukio, the debate and its vicissitudes are generally framed within the context of the political shifts and schisms that wracked the prewar leftist literary movement. See Kurihara, *Puroretaria bungaku to sono jidai* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1971), 113-152. The pressures exerted upon the Japanese proletarian literary movement first by the denunciation of both the “Yamakawa-ist” and “Fukumoto-ist” lines of Japanese communism by the Comintern in 1927, then by the mass arrests of leftist agitators by the government on March 15, 1928, were substantial, and led to an organizational re-orientation of the movement, with the major writers unions Nihon Puroretaria Geijutsu Renmei (Japan Proletarian Artists Union) and the Zen’ei Geijutsu-ka Dōmei (Avant Garde Artists Union) merging to form the overarching NAPF organization. The immediate conditions / triggers that provoked the debate can be traced to conflicts over movement methodology engendered by the tenuous alliance of factions within the still-nascent NAPF.

Taishû bungaku aimed at the entertainment of the masses and emerged as a discursive concept roughly parallel with the rise of proletarian literature. Authors had been catering to public tastes with serial bestsellers since the Edo and Meiji periods, but the first decades of the 20th century saw self-consciously self-identified “popular literature” discursively emerged as a distinct genre. Consisting of swashbuckling samurai tales, detective stories, romantic melodramas, and other forms of what could be called “genre fiction” written for popular consumption, *taishû bungaku* became a key critical trope in the mid-1920s. Nakazato Kaizan’s (1885-1941) epic samurai tale *Daibosatsu Tôge* (*Bodhisattva Pass*, 1913-1941) is often recognized as the most influential and archetypal work of *taishû bungaku*, but it would be a decade following the beginning of its serialization in the *Miyako Shinbun* (*Capital News*, 1884-1942) newspaper in 1913 until the terms *taishû bungei* and *taishû bungaku* took hold.⁵⁷⁶ New weekly magazines such as *Shûkan Asahi* (*Weekly Asahi*, 1922-) published by newspaper companies became a key venue for the promulgation of the new genre, as eager readers indulged in regular installments.⁵⁷⁷ Popular magazines such as Kôdansha’s *Kingu* (*King*, 1924-1957) filled their pages with genre fiction, and major publishers like Shun’yôdô began promoting what they called “light reading” (*yomimono*). In 1926, *Taishû Bungei* (*Popular Literature*, 1926-1927), a magazine devoted explicitly to popular literature was founded by the author Shirai Kyôji (1889-1980), whose seminal *Shinsengumi* (*Shinsengumi*, 1924-1925) ran in the *Sandê Mainichi* (*Sunday Mainichi*, 1922-) magazine. The establishment

⁵⁷⁶ Over the course of its decades-long serialization, *Daibosatsu Tôge* also ran in the *Yomiuri* and *Mainichi* newspapers. My discussion here provides only the most cursory introduction to *taishû bungaku*. See among others, Ozaki Hotsuki, *Taishû bungaku* (Tokyo: Kinokuniya Shoten, 1964), 19-60; Nakatani Hiroshi, *Taishû bungaku* (Tokyo: Tôgensha, 1973); Ikeda Hiroshi, ed. ‘*Taishû*’ *no tōjō: hîrô to dokushatachi no 20-30 nendai* (Tokyo: Impakuto Shuppankai, 1998) and Cecile Sakai, *Nihon no taishû bungaku* Asahina Kôji, trans., (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1997).

⁵⁷⁷ A major influence on these magazines was the American *Saturday Evening Post* (1897-1969).

of *Taishû Bungei*, which featured writing by popular authors such as Hasegawa Shin (1884-1963), Edogawa Rampo (1894-1965), and Naoki Sanjûgo (1894-1934), helped to cement the idea of mass literature in the mass mind.⁵⁷⁸

If, as Takabatake Motoyuki asserts, “mass-ism” (*taishûshugi*) and capitalism are “two sides of the same coin,” it was within mass-produced print media that parallel views of the political and populist masses could be seen most clearly. In the late 1920s, it was in fact one and the same company that achieved prominence as Japan’s premier publisher of both radical political writing and literary entertainment. Heibonsha (whose name can be translated as “common company” or “ordinary company”) made its name by publishing the first comprehensive anthologies of both proletarian and popular literature.”

Heibonsha’s output evidences these seemingly divergent views of the masses as readers, as they released parallel canons of the two via the one-yen books that Takabatake saw as “agents of democracy.” Through a brief examination of the company’s publishing projects in the years of the formalist and massification debates, it is possible to see the dialectic of two different, but not necessarily mutually exclusive visions of mass culture as manifested through print capital. In 1927, Heibonsha released the *Gendai Taishû Bungaku Zenshû* (*Anthology of Contemporary Popular Literature*), a massive multi-volume compendium of both Japanese and foreign fiction aimed at entertaining the public. It was *taishû bungaku* star Shirai and his Nijûichinichi-kai (Twenty-One Day Club) writer’s club that Heibonsha approached to assemble a sixty volume series aiming

⁵⁷⁸ Naoki, the penname of Uemura Sôji, was also known as “Naoki Sanjûichi,” “Naoki Sanjûni,” and “Naoki Sanjûsan” as he changed his name each year as he grew older until settling on “Sanjûgo,” the name by which he is remembered now. The founding of the Naoki Prize and its companion Akutagawa Prize by Kikuchi Kan in 1935 served to canonize the term to the present day. On the founding of the prizes, see Edward Mack, *Manufacturing Modern Japanese Literature: Publishing, Prizes, and the Ascription of Literary Value* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 181-222.

to compile the best in entertainment-oriented fiction available in Japanese.⁵⁷⁹ The resulting *Gendai Taishû Bungaku Zenshû* proved to be a huge success, quickly clearing a whopping 330,000 in sales.⁵⁸⁰

Heibonsha advertised its compendium of mass literature as a product whose appeal encompassed all classes and strata of society, running a two-page advertisement in the *Tokyo Asahi* newspaper that asked: “if there ever could be another anthology as passionately received by those of all classes (*arayuru kaikyû*) as this one?”⁵⁸¹ The advertisement also included words of support from public figures spread across the political spectrum, spanning from the socialist politician Abe Isoo (1865-1949) to the nationalist critic Miyake Setsurei (1860-1945).⁵⁸² In his words of support for Heibonsha, the conservative politician Tokonami Takejirô (1867-1935) thanks the company for doing the duty of delivering “literature necessary for the practice of life” (*jisseikatsu ni hissû no bungaku*).⁵⁸³ Here, literature is pitched as a practical good, a product acquired to fulfill certain needs of the general public.⁵⁸⁴ Accordingly, the enthusiastic reader responses to

⁵⁷⁹ Heibonsha Kyôiku Sangyô Sentâ, ed., *Heihonsha rokujûnen-shi* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1974), 83-84. The first volume of the series was Shirai’s *Shinsengumi*.

⁵⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 92. Heibonsha’s anthology was the latest in the flood of *enpon* (one-yen book) series following in the wake of Kaizôsha’s 1926 *Gendai Nihon Bungaku Zenshû* (Anthology of Contemporary Japanese Literature), which made the works of dozens of modern Japanese authors available to the public for an affordable price. Publishers rushed to stake out swaths of the literary market by becoming the first to release anthologies on themes ranging from modern literature to theater classics. Heibonsha staked its reputation on “popular literature” (*taishû bungaku*), which had become identified as a distinct genre over the previous years but had yet to be anthologized. For more on the *zenshû* boom, see Chapter 1.

⁵⁸¹ Heibonsha Kyôiku Sangyô Sentâ, ed., 86-87. The advertisement originally ran in the March 29th, 1927 issue of the *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun*.

⁵⁸² Notably, Takabatake Motoyuki and the literary critic Chiba Kameo also contributed support, in addition to a number of other religious, political, and economic leaders. *Ibid.*, 86-87.

⁵⁸³ *Ibid.*, 88.

⁵⁸⁴ The appeals also spoke to popular literature as a means to fulfill emotional needs. Kikuchi Kan, himself an editor and author of popular fiction states: “the average reader (*futsû ippan dokusha*) is constantly seeking comfort (*iraku*) along with art. When they become unable to find

the series focused as much on the physical qualities of the anthology as an object as on the specific literary content contained therein:

I read a page, then closed the book and took a look at the binding, then I read another page and again held the thick book, then after reading a little more, I gazed at the paper and the printing. Could Mr. Shimonaka [President] of Heibonsha have made a mistake in his calculations? While reading it, I somehow just can't believe that all this can be had for a single yen.

Yoshida Ryôzô, Kita-ku, Osaka⁵⁸⁵

This enthusiastic reader pays more attention to the form of Heibonsha's books than the content, as he is primarily impressed with the material qualities of his new book and the quality of product he received in exchange for his money, paying more attention to the form than the content; he achieves satisfaction through the book as an object to be bought, not a text to be read. The economic value of their product featured prominently in Heibonsha's appeal to potential buyers, with advertisements featuring a logo crying "1,000 pages for one yen" (*issen-pêji ichien*).⁵⁸⁶ In contrast to Takabatake's commentary, Heibonsha's advertisement displays no sign of the anxiety over the commodity character of the work for sale.

Concurrently with the publication of the *Gendai Taishû Bungaku Zenshû*, Heibonsha instigated other major projects that engaged the question of publication and politics far more explicitly. The company's founder Shimonaka Yasaburô (1878-1961) maintained close ties to the anarchist factions of the prewar leftist movement, and aimed to make his company into Japan's premier publisher of radical as well as popular

comfort in pure literature (*junsui na bungaku*), it is only natural that readers would demand popular literature (*taishû bungaku*)." Heibonsha Kyôiku Sangyô Sentâ, ed., 87.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid, 93.

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid, 90; 92.

literature.⁵⁸⁷ In 1928, hot on the heels of the success of the *Gendai Taishû Bungaku Zenshû*, Heibonsha went on to release the *Shinkô Bungaku Zenshû* (*Anthology of Emerging Literature*), which was the first attempt to systematically catalog, canonize, and anthologize leftist literature in Japan. As outlined above, the years prior to 1928 marked one of the most schismatic moments of the prewar proletarian movement, as assorted political factions and writers unions re-organized over finely delineated theoretical lines. In creating an overarching anthology, Shimonaka sought to build a broader framework within which to unify and legitimate political fiction and criticism of a diverse range of political stripes.⁵⁸⁸

Significantly, the final editing and promotional work on the *Gendai Taishû Bungaku Zenshû* immediately preceded the debate on the massification of art, as well as the mass arrests of proletarian writers on March 15th, 1928 and the subsequent founding of the NAPF league. On Heibonsha's committee to organize the anthology were the critics Nii Itaru, Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke, and Aono Suekichi, and the contents of the *Shinkô Bungaku Zenshû* reads like a virtual who's who of prewar leftist literature, including works by poets Tsuboi Shigeji (1897-1975), Hagiwara Kyôjirô (1899-1938), fiction writers Maedakô Hiroichirô (1888-1957), Kuroshima Denji (1898-1943), Yamada Seizaburô (1896-1987), Kaneko Yôbun, Hirabayashi Taiko, Hayama Yoshiki, and Hayashi Fusao, as well as contributions by the playwright Miyoshi Jûrô (1902-1958),

⁵⁸⁷ Shimonaka's own recollections on this period are related in "Omoide o kataru," in Shimonaka, *Shuppanjin no ibun: Heibonsha* (Tokyo: Kurita Shoten, 1968), 1-50.

⁵⁸⁸ The selections leaned more heavily towards writers associated with anarchist and social democratic, seeking to ameliorate the division between the factors that had been crystallized in the Anarcho-Bolshevik Debates (*Ana-boru ronsô*) between Yamakawa Hitoshi and Ôsugi Sakae in 1920-1922. For a summary, analysis, and primary texts of the debate, see Ôkubo Hitoshi, ed. *Ana-boru ronsô* (Tokyo: Dôjidaisha, 2005). As a result the anthology focuses more on writers associated with the earlier magazine *Bungei Sensen*, as the more Leninist *Senki*, which featured authors such as Nakano had just been founded that year.

visual artist Murayama Tomoyoshi (1901-1977), and the Esperantist Akita Ujaku (1883-1962).⁵⁸⁹ Even with such comprehensive coverage, Japanese texts made up less than half of the 24 volume series, which included works by the likes of Maxim Gorky (1868-1936), Sinclair Lewis (1885-1951), Eugene O'Neill (1888-1953), Jack London (1876-1916), Upton Sinclair (1878-1968), and Aldous Huxley (1894-1963).⁵⁹⁰

The organization of the anthology both presents a variegated view of texts couched under the heading of proletarian literature and belies a sense of the movement in Japan as part of a global grouping of literature associated with the international socialist movement.⁵⁹¹ While creating an internally cohesive arrangement of proletarian literature to present to the public, the *Shinkô Bungaku Zenshû* also stood at least implicitly parallel to Heibonsha's *Gendai Taishû Bungaku Zenshû* of the year before. Though sales for the *Shinkô Bungaku Zenshû* nowhere near approached the hundreds of thousands sold by its popular literature twin, the leftist collection also garnered full-page ads in the *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun*, and its release was heralded by major public lectures held at the Yomiuri

⁵⁸⁹ *Shinkô Bungaku* was also the name of a short-lived literary magazine that ran in 1922-1923 and was founded by the proletarian author and editor Yamada Seizaburô that was an early venue for proletarian fiction and criticism by figures such as Maedakô Hiroichirô and Nakanishi Inosuke (1887-1958). Both are unrelated to the later "Shinkô Geijutsu-ha" (Emerging Artists School) movement of the early 1930s that aimed to revitalize aesthetics in contradiction to the political writings of the proletarian movement. For a brief overview of that movement and the figures involved, see Omori, 25-30; 47. In 1930, the publisher Shinchôsha, who was an important supporter of that movement released a series called *Shinkô Geijutsu-ha Sôsho* (*Library of the Emergent Art School*), which collected "modernist" (*modanizumu*) fiction.

⁵⁹⁰ Many German authors were included as well, few if any of whom have been remembered to literary history.

⁵⁹¹ Although space does not allow for a full explication, a sense of the concurrent development of Japanese leftist literature within the international socialist movement was absolutely crucial for the proletarian literary movement in Japan. Sinclair's work was especially important, and served as the model for proletarian literary critic Aono Suekichi's major essay "Shirabeta geijutsu" (1925) and its sequel "'Janguru' o chûshin ni – 'shirabeta geijutsu' sairon" (1926), which dealt with *The Jungle* as inspiration for the representation of exploitative labor in Japanese proletarian literature.

Hall and the Asahi hall in central Tokyo.⁵⁹² In tandem with the *Shinkô Bungaku Zenshû*, Heibonsha also released the *Shakai Shisô Zenshû* (*Anthology of Social Thought*, 1928), which outlined an international genealogy of leftist thought flowing to Japan from the 19th century through the Russian Revolution. In a rhetorical style clearly influenced by the advertising copy of other anthologies of the moment, Heibonsha breathlessly announced their new compendium:

It is impossible to discuss the present without speaking the names of Marx and Lenin. Further, it is impossible to discuss social thought (*shakai shisô*) without knowing Kropotkin and Proudhon. It is impossible to grasp modern social science (*shakai kagaku*) without going back to Saint-Simon and Fourier. Trends are fleeting. Thought is forever (*shisô wa eien de aru*). The age in which we can deal with social problems by scraps rising from the scraps of knowledge in newspapers and magazines and the excerpts of ideas appearing in advertising pamphlets is over...All the disorderly scraps of thought need to be put into order (*seiri*) at once. They must be organized (*soshiki*). They must be compiled...It is this refined social thought that must properly become the bread of life of modern man.⁵⁹³

Heibonsha advertises their books as commodities with the unique ability to organize a broad number of ideas into a coherent framework to understand the present in historical context. It is the new form of the book medium that allows “thought” itself to coalesce

⁵⁹² Heibonsha Kyôiku Sangyô Sentâ, 104. The Yomiuri event, held Feb. 20th, 1928, featured speeches by Hayama Yoshiki, Kurahara Korehito, Hirabayashi Taiko, Hayashi Fusao, Maedakô Hiroichirô, Sakai Toshihiko, and Osanai Kaoru, among others. Karl Wittfogel, the German Marxist who later gained infamy through his 1957 book *Oriental Despotism*, was scheduled to deliver an associated keynote event at Waseda University, but was detained by police. The perhaps over-ambitious goal of Shimonaka’s project was betrayed at the release party following the speeches, which devolved into an all-out knock-down drunken brawl between political factions.

⁵⁹³ Heibonsha Kyôiku Sangyô Sentâ, 105-106. The anthology was also important in introducing a wide variety of contemporary Russian criticism into Japan, including thinkers such as Alexander Bogdanov (discussed in an above footnote). The anthology was initiated in 1928 and ran 40 volumes through 1933. In the series order, the first volume and symbolic origin point was reserved for Thomas More’s *Utopia* (1516), but the first volume to be distributed was volume six, which focused on Marx’s writings and included translations of “The Poverty of Philosophy” and “Capital and Wage Labor” by Sakai Toshihiko. This was almost certain due to economic concerns, as its release came immediately after the competing translations of *Capital* by Iwanami Shotena and Kaizôsha, and Marx sold far better than More in prewar Japan.

into a coherent concept, as different forms of print media are linked to different arrangements of ideas in Heibonsha's ad. Under a print regime dominated by magazines and newspapers, in which words and ideas are fleeting and unable to be preserved or collated, "social thought" remains a fragmented entity. Through the compilation and purchase of the new cheap book medium that Takabatake equates with an "inherent" tendency to democratic action, social thought can be imagined in its totality. In the rhetoric of the advertisement, the possibility of mass organization and the awakening of the ability to critique the present emerges only with the transformation of the medium itself. Like the masses themselves, thought needs to be organized if it is to sustain a new social order.

In a sense, Heibonsha's promotional copy reproduces in miniature Marx's narrative of society's passage into capitalism, in which a coherent social whole is separated into alien fragments that must be organized into a new totality under modernity. The movement from alienated individual to social organization in Heibonsha's ad can also be read as a kind of media history, as changes in the production, circulation, and consumption of print media underwrite the coherency of social thought leading to the birth of the company's books as a form of social revolution. Heibonsha's simultaneous release of the *Shinkô Bungaku Zenshû* and the *Shakai Shisô Zenshû* presents a picture of political writing that places the present in historical context. The advertisement for the *Shakai Shisô Zenshû* accordingly suggests that contemporary society can not be properly "read" or interpreted without first reading the full heritage of social thought, a task made possible only through the purchase of Heibonsha's series.⁵⁹⁴ Heibonsha thus positioned

⁵⁹⁴ Like Iwanami Shoten's journal *Shisô* (*Thought*, 1921-), and their paperback *bunkobon* series released the year before, Heibonsha's figuration hinges upon the flow of time, as the "eternal" is

itself as a company engaged with both the deepest currents of revolutionary thought and what popular fiction author Shirai called “the interests and inspirations (*kyōmi to kangeki*), shallow in form may they be, of that complete living thing (*kanzen na ikimono*) known as the masses (*taishū*).”⁵⁹⁵ The output of Heibonsha in the late 1920s thus embodies the apparent contradiction of the dialectic of popular and politicized image of the masses as a market for advertising and publishing. This tension demonstrates how the radicalization of the masses and the popularization of political discourse were not merely problems internal to the realm of proletarian discourse, but issues embedded within the changing state of print media itself, which served as a major means for the imagination of the masses themselves.

A Typesetter’s Tale: Tokunaga Sunao’s Road to Proletarian Writing

The rise of both proletarian literature and popular literature were deeply intertwined with the advent of an understanding of the masses as an effect of mass-market print culture. The two were closer to opposite sides of the same coin than inherently opposing phenomena; the proletarian movement in Japan aimed to build an alternate model of mass culture, in which proletarian fiction, film, entertainment, and education stood side-by-side with their popular counterparts.⁵⁹⁶ But competing with the

brought back into the present and made accessible through the mediation of the book commodity. See Chapter 1.

⁵⁹⁵ Nakatani, 33.

⁵⁹⁶ As such, movements for proletarian film, education, children’s literature and other aspects of modern culture accompanied and followed the proletarian literary movement in Japan. Journals promoting these movements include *Puroretaria Engeki* (*Proletarian Theater*, 1930), *Puroretaria Geijutsu* (*Proletarian Art*, 1927-1928), *Puroretaria Shi* (*Proletarian Poetry*, 1931-1932), *Puroretaria Tanka* (*Proletarian Tanka Poetry*, 1930-1932), *Puroretaria Bunka* (*Proletarian Culture*, 1931-1933), *Puroretaria Bungaku* (*Proletarian Literature*, 1932-1933), and so on, many of which were the official organs (*kikanshi*) of various organizations. Indeed, much

ever-expanding forces of consumer mass-culture proved a challenge for the proletarian movement, and despite the growing power and prestige of leftist cultural discourse in the late 1920s, producing a corpus of literature at once popular and politically radical was easier said than done.⁵⁹⁷ The work held as the pinnacle of success in fusing proletarian and popular literature was Tokunaga Sunao's (1899-1958) 1929 novel *Taiyô no nai machi* (*Streets Without Sun*), which sold tens of thousands of copies in book form following its serialization in the leftist literary magazine *Senki*.⁵⁹⁸ The novel, which was heralded as the solution to the "massification" debate of the preceding years, was feted not only by critics affiliated with the proletarian movement, but figures from the literary establishment like Kawabata Yasunari, who bestowed the work with glowing praise:

recent secondary scholarship on the Japanese proletarian movement has focused on these cultural activities and attempts to build an alternative to capitalist mass culture. In English, recent scholarship includes Mika Endo, "Pedagogical Experiments with Working Class Children in Prewar Japan," Ph.D. diss, University of Chicago, 2011; Peter David Rothstein, "Seeds for Change: Creating Alternative Space for Education in Taishô Japan," Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2010; Samuel Perry, "Aesthetics for Justice: Proletarian Literature in Japan and Colonial Korea," Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2007. On the proletarian film movement, see Makino Mamoru, "Rethinking the Emergence of the Proletarian Film League of Japan (Prokino)," in Abe Mark Nornes and Aaron Gerow, eds., *In Praise of Film Studies: Essays in Honor to Makino Mamoru* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Center for Japanese Studies, 2001).

⁵⁹⁷ Takeuchi Yô has argued that working class aspirations to middle-class life and its associated consumption patterns and cultural preferences, symbolizing the desire to transcend rather than identify with the working classes, made proletarian culture unappealing to the lower-class masses. In essence, Takeuchi argues, the masses would rather "buy up" than at their own class station. Takeuchi, *Kyôyô-shugi no botsuraku* (Tokyo: Chûô Kôron Shinsha, 2003). Sarah Frederick has offered an analysis of the mass culture of this moment in *Turning Pages: Reading and Writing Women's Magazines in Interwar Japan* (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawaii Press), 2006.

⁵⁹⁸ I owe my attention to the connection between Tokunaga Sunao and "mass literature" to the work of Heather Bowen-Struyk. See Heather Bowen-Struyk, "Rethinking Proletarian Literature," Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 2001. According to G.T. Shea, the first edition of *Taiyô no nai machi* sold 40,000 copies and was reprinted many times after. G.T. Shea, *Leftwing Literature in Japan: A Brief History of the Proletarian Literary Movement* (Tokyo: Hôsei Univ. Press, 1964), 281. Quoted from Bowen-Struyk, 122. Bowen-Struyk cites a letter from Nakano Shigeharu saying of Tokunaga's novel: "The bride has arrived. The exceedingly beautiful proletarian bride has arrived. The long-awaited bride has now come home." (translation Bowen-Struyk's). Whereas Bowen-Struyk focuses on the way in which the "popular" characteristics of the novel helped it to resolve in part the "massification" debate of the previous year, my analysis of *Taiyô no nai machi* deals with the novel primarily as a critique of print media and the publishing industry in the context of the 1926 Kyôdô printing press strike that inspired it.

I know nothing of the writer Tokunaga, and it may seem strange to review an unfinished novel, but I am happy to name this story as the one that has raised my spirits most out of the dozens of works that I have read this month. The reason why is not just because of the plot. I had heard that laborers (*rôdôsha*) were greatly enjoying the work, so I decided to give it a look. Upon doing so, I was impressed with the clarity of crisp expression and the power springing naturally from the healthy qualities of the whole work (*zentai*). There is the arrangement of the material (*zairyô*) and the freshness of the plot's development, as well as a certain level of sentiment (*kanshō*) and impact (*shōgeki*) – such things do not only please laborers... It should be praised as a model example of literature to which the masses (*taishū*) can draw near with ease.⁵⁹⁹

Despite the novel's political subject matter, a labor strike, and the venue of its original publication, a communist magazine, *Taiyō no nai machi* was received by the literary establishment first and foremost as a work of literature, rather than as a political polemic. Kawabata's review, which was published in the general interest magazine *Bungei Shunjū*, reveals the mainstream that was attention afforded proletarian literature within the general field of cultural production in the late 1920s.⁶⁰⁰

Both reviews by Tokunaga's contemporaries and later literary histories pay particular attention to the novel's role in answering the challenge of the massification debate and the author's class background as a laborer turned writer. As a life-long laborer with a low level of formal education, Tokunaga was seen as something akin to an organic intellectual arising from the proletarian class, thus furnishing a figure of authenticity to

⁵⁹⁹ Kawabata Yasunari, "Bungei jihyō," *Bungei Shunjū*, Aug. 1928. Quoted from Uranishi Kazuhiko, "Tokunaga Sunao'-hen kaisetsu," in Uranishi, ed., *Sakka no jiden 68 – Tokunaga Sunao* (Tokyo: Nihon Tosho Sentā, 1998), 274. Tokunaga recalls in an autobiography that he was shocked to see his name next to that of literary greats such as Shimazaki Tôson (1872-1943) and Mushanokōji Saneatsu (1885-1976) in advertisements and articles in mainstream magazines such as *Chūō Kōron*; Tokunaga Sunao, "Watashi no bungakuteki jijoden," Quoted from Uranishi, ed., 206.

⁶⁰⁰ Tokunaga's novel was and remains one of the most successful works of proletarian fiction, in terms of both critical and popular reception - it was made into a successful play directed by Murayama Tomoyoshi in 1930, as well as a seminal film by Yamamoto Satsuo (1910-1983) in 1954, and has earned a place in the canon of Japanese literature.

the work, which was based on Tokunaga's own experience as a strike organizer.⁶⁰¹ Generally overlooked in this discourse are the specifics of Tokunaga's life as a typesetting laborer, his route to writing the novel, and the particular subject of the novel itself, which narrates the circumstances of the historical 1926 strike at the Kyôdô printing plant in Tokyo. By paying attention to the series of steps leading from Tokunaga's formational experiences as a reader, writer, and worker to his debut as a novelist, I show how Tokunaga's experience with printed text as a material quantity leads him to critique the exploitation of labor inherent in a consumer society predicated on the mass-production of print. Read in this way, *Taiyô no nai machi* appears as a novel that not only narrates the struggle between labor and capital, but provides a critique of the production process at the core of the proliferation of print culture in 20th century Japan. In Tokunaga's work, the publishing industry serves as both a factory of alienated labor working for the reproduction of bourgeois consumer culture and a site for the fomenting of revolution.

Born in 1899, Tokunaga belongs to the first generation of Japanese authors to come of age as readers within the milieu of mass-market print media that expanded and diversified across the first decades of the 20th century. However, in contrast to other

⁶⁰¹ In this respect, Tokunaga is similar to Hayama Yoshiki, who will be discussed in a future version of this project; Hayama also began his professional life as a laborer and organizer before making his name as a writer of proletarian fiction. Significantly, both Hayama and Tokunaga were "discovered" by the critic Aono Suekichi, whose theory of "investigated art" privileged direct experience and observation of working conditions. This was in contrast to the situation of authors such as Nakano Shigeharu and Tokunaga's friend Hayashi Fusao, who became politically radicalized writers while students at Tokyo Imperial University. The binary emerges in the debate between Aono, Nakano, Hayashi, and Kaji Wataru over "shizen seichô" (natural growth) and "mokuteki ishiki" (purposeful consciousness) in 1926 and 1927; the relevant essays are compiled in Hirano et. al., eds., 425-462. Bowen-Struyk addresses the problem of authenticity in depth in her chapter on "'Real Experience': Prison in Hayama Yoshiki's *Life on the Sea* (Umi ni ikuru hitobito, 1926)" in Bowen-Struyk, 73-120.

young authors who began careers as writers in the 1920s, Tokunaga did not share in full the experience of nationalized education. Growing up in an impoverished household in Kumamoto prefecture, Tokunaga only attended several years of formal schooling before finding work as a typesetter in a local printing, transferring to night school, and eventually dropping out.⁶⁰² Accordingly, Tokunaga's genesis as a reader is distinct from that of his peers, such as his friend Hayashi Fusao, whom Tokunaga knew in Kyūshū before Hayashi left to attend Tokyo Imperial University, where he would make his name as an author of proletarian fiction.⁶⁰³ In "Watashi no bungakuteki jijoden" (My Literary Autobiography, 1937), Tokunaga recalls a youth spent reading not literary fiction but *kōdan*, the popular, often historical narratives rooted in oral storytelling and a staple of newspapers and popular magazines since the late 19th century.⁶⁰⁴ Tokunaga explicitly associates his turn to literature with his initiation into working life, noting that he began favoring contemporary literature over *kōdan* when he began his first job at a printing factory. Tokunaga thus becomes a reader of literature coterminously with his work as a laborer producing reading material.

Tokunaga's ability to read literature was circumscribed by his position as a laborer, not due to a lack of literacy, but as a result of economic constraints that

⁶⁰² Tokunaga, "Watashi no bungakuteki jijoden," Quoted from Uranishi Kazuhiko, ed., 198-199.

⁶⁰³ Hayashi, still known by his given name of Gotō Toshio, attended the 5th Higher School (Dai go kōtō gakkō) in Kumamoto before matriculating at Tokyo Imperial University.

⁶⁰⁴ This sort of material was a staple of the publisher Kōdansha; for a discussion of Kōdansha and oral popular culture, see Chapter 1. Tokunaga's autobiographical essay was originally published in the Sept. 1937 issue of *Shinchō*. Tokunaga, "Watashi no bungakuteki jijoden," 196-197. Tokunaga recalls reading books borrowed from a travelling book-lender (*kashihon'ya*), and states that he was the most well-read in *kōdan* in his primary school class. It was a few years later, "Right around the time when I started working at the Nakajima printing factory in Kumamoto city, that I first discovered "new fiction" (*shinshōsetsu*). Not the magazine *New Fiction* (*Shinshōsetsu*), but contemporary fiction in general (*genzai no sōsaku*). Ibid, 198.

prevented him from purchasing printed text.⁶⁰⁵ Working for middling wages as a junior trainee typesetter at a local printing press only contingently provided Tokunaga with the means to acquire reading material, as he could “just barely buy dog-eared editions at the used bookstore, since there was no way I could afford new magazines.”⁶⁰⁶ Tokunaga’s struggle to buy books underscores the reality that in early 1910s Japan, books, magazines, and other forms of print media, while widely circulating, remained largely expensive and far from universally available to large portions of Japan’s literary population. Tokunaga remembers:

I couldn’t buy magazines. I read serials in old newspapers posted to walls, I got my hands on ratty copies of women’s magazines, I read whatever I could. The word ‘monthly’ (*gekkei*) often appeared in advertisements, but I had no idea what it meant, and it took me a long time to figure it out... Even if I worked every day, there was no way I could afford a 15 or 20 *sen* magazine, as I was making 7 *sen* and had to factor support for my seven younger brothers and sisters into account on top my own expenses.⁶⁰⁷

Although his induction into the regime of wage labor corresponds to Tokunaga’s self-identification as a reader, the value of his labor is not high enough to be exchanged for the pieces of print upon which literature circulated, commodities which Tokunaga himself produced. At the same time, Tokunaga discovered that his ideas about reading were sharply at odds from the outlooks of the other youths he worked with at the printing plant:

My first printing factory (*insatsu kôjô*) job was a let-down (*shitsubô*). I had chosen the printing industry since I figured I would have the chance to read words and read books (*ji ga yome hon ga yomeru*), but most of the other boys who worked with me were essentially illiterate (*mugaku*), even though they know many letters (*moji*). As tradesmen, they had learned

⁶⁰⁵ For statistics on reading practices in this period, see Nagamine Shigetoshi, *Zasshi to dokusha no kindai* (Tokyo: Nihon Editors School, 1997). Another popular genre was the *jitsugyô zasshi*, or low-brow business magazine.

⁶⁰⁶ Tokunaga, “Watashi no bungakuteki jijoden,” 198.

⁶⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 198.

how to read typeset letters in their mirror-image (*katsuji no hidarimoji*), and they had no inclination whatsoever to learn them by means of study (*gakumon*). For printing press workers (*insatsukō*) like us, manuscripts (*genkō*) existed completely separately (*marukiri betsubetsu ni sonzai*) from the tens of thousands of type characters (*katsuji*) we used.⁶⁰⁸

At the printing press, the opposition between two different kinds of “reading” came into clear distinction for Tokunaga. Working with letters as blocks of metal type used to set and print newspapers and magazines, Tokunaga was confronted with a contradiction in which his sense of the literary text as a thing to be read could not be reconciled with his experience arranging letters as non-semantic objects on a machine tray. Though he first approached his job with the hope that he might be able to read as he worked arranging words and letters into texts, Tokunaga was quickly and painfully made aware of the contrast between his own idea of reading and that of his fellow factory boys, who “read” by recognizing reversed pieces of type as symbols to be set.⁶⁰⁹

Working at the printing press, Tokunaga was able to witness first hand the divide between the production and the consumption of print media, as well as behold the stages of mediation in the assembly of the literary text, as authorial manuscript was translated to an incommensurable arrangement of reverse letters that were then flipped again and transformed into a final product fit to be sold and read. Tokunaga is confronted with the realization that his yearned-for books, newspapers, and magazines are produced by the objectified labor of workers (including himself), who are no less commodities than the

⁶⁰⁸ Tokunaga, “Watashi no bungakuteki jijoden,” 199.

⁶⁰⁹ Tokunaga’s inability to read while working as a typesetter stands in interesting contrast to the story of the bookbinding boys who read galleys of Kagawa Toyohiko’s *Shisen o koete* in the factory in 1920. Publisher Kaizōsha’s skepticism as to the work was assuaged by the demands of the bookbinders for future volumes of the story. Thus it is only at the particular stage of the production process of printing at which Tokunaga worked that reading was impossible, as workers at the following stage, binding were able to read the text as text, rather than as inverted letters. For more on *Shisen o koete*, see Chapter 1.

printed text they produce. His experience, which leads to his eventual subject formation as a literary laborer, is akin to the germination of Georg Lukacs' notion of class-consciousness, here summarized by Fredric Jameson:

Even before [the worker] posits elements of the outside world as *objects* of his thought, he feels *himself* to be an object, and this initial alienation within himself takes precedence over everything else. Yet precisely in this terrible alienation lies the strength of the worker's position: his first movement is not toward knowledge of the work but toward knowledge of himself as an object, toward self-consciousness. Yet this self-consciousness, because it is initially knowledge of an object (himself, his own labor as a commodity, his life force which he is under the obligation to sell), permits him more genuine knowledge of the commodity nature of the outside world than is granted to middle-class "objectivity." For 'his consciousness is the self-consciousness of merchandise itself, or in other words, it is the self-consciousness, or the revelation to consciousness of capitalist society based on commodity production and exchange.'⁶¹⁰

This confrontation with his own dual nature as source of objectified labor in the print industry and would-be literary youth forms the kernel of Tokunaga's ability to critique the publishing industry as a whole.⁶¹¹ Tokunaga chose to face this antinomy head on, continuing to read and eventually learning to write while continuing to work as a laborer.

Tokunaga's literary aspirations were doubly restricted by his profession: employers "discouraged studying" and "the local group of literary youth (*bungaku seinen*) comprised largely of the sons of the bourgeoisie rebuffed the attempts of workers to join them."⁶¹² While working as a printer for the *Kyûshû Nichinichi Shinbun* newspaper, Tokunaga learned to read Sino-Japanese poetry (*kanshi*) and histories, including Rai San'yô's (1781-1832) *Nihon Gaishi* (Unofficial History of Japan, 1826). After "handling manuscripts for the first time while standing in front of the type case,"

⁶¹⁰ Fredric Jameson, *Marxism and Form* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1974), 186-187. For a discussion of Lukacs' *History and Class Consciousness* (1923), see the Excursus.

⁶¹¹ In this regard, Tokunaga might be thought of as a model of Kobayashi's view of the role of immanent experience in regards to the critique of the commodity.

⁶¹² Tokunaga, "Watashi no bungakuteki jijoden," 200-201.

Tokunaga eventually tried his own hand at writing. Although he was not so invested in literature as his friends who submitted their work to the magazine *Bunshō Sekai* (Literature World, 1906-1920), he penned an Ibsen-esque play that earned him the respect of the local literary youth.⁶¹³ By picking up a pen, Tokunaga comes to work in two dimensions of the production of literature: the writing of the text and the manufacturing of print media, just as his experience as a reader encompassed both the recognition of type and the reading of literary works.

It was around the same time, while in his early twenties, that Tokunaga became politically radicalized, “developing an interest in social problems (*shakai mondai*),” participating in labor unions, and working in radical theater.⁶¹⁴ He read Matsumoto Kaname’s abridged synopsis of Marx’s *Capital*, attended speeches by the social activist Kagawa Toyohiko (1888-1960) and future founder of the Japanese Communist Party Sano Manabu (1902-1953), and befriended a local literary youth “who was critical towards the Shirakaba-ha of Mushanokōji and Shiga and critiqued popular Tolstoyism from an anarchist perspective” and who introduced Tokunaga to the Gorky, Kropotkin, and Dostoevsky.⁶¹⁵ In 1922, at age 23, Tokunaga moved to Tokyo, where he was received by the socialist leader Yamakawa Hitoshi (1880-1958).⁶¹⁶ Tokunaga’s status as an avid reader thus led him to a certain perspective in regards to his labor in the publishing industry, which in turn prefigured his political awakening and his decision to become a writer.

⁶¹³ Tokunaga, “Watashi no bungakuteki jijoden,” 199; 201. Tokunaga mentions reading Nakajō (later Miyamoto) Yuriko’s (1899-1951) “Hi wa kagayakeri” (1917) as well as stories by Tanizaki and Kikuchi Kan around this time.

⁶¹⁴ Ibid, 202.

⁶¹⁵ Ibid, 201.

⁶¹⁶ Tokunaga arrived in the midst of the Anarcho-Bolshevik debate between Yamakawa and Ōsugi Sakae and in the nascent moments of the establishment of the JCP.

Striking Out in the *Streets Without Sun*

In Tokyo, Tokunaga cultivated friendships with writers like the anarchist Tsuboi Shigeji and tried his hand at fiction and poetry while searching for a new job in the printing industry. After his work received the recommendation of the critic Aono Suekichi, Tokunaga was poised to debut in the magazine *Kaihô* (*Liberation*, 1919-1923) as an author of proletarian literature. But the Great Kantô Earthquake of September 1923 crippled the magazine and threw the leftist movement into disarray following the murders of Ôsugi Sakae (1885-1923) and Itô Noe (1895-1923) by the police; Tokunaga's manuscripts were lost and never went to press.⁶¹⁷ But working as a writer in the proletarian movement was fraught with its own restrictions. Though writers were initially considered part of the Publishing Employee's Union (*Shuppan jûgyôin kumiai*), "working writers (*bunpitsu gyôsha*) were kicked out of the union, which was now only laborers."⁶¹⁸ Tokunaga came face to face with this "scorn for literature" (*bungaku keibetsu*) within the labor movement, and suffered a strict scolding by a supervisor who caught him writing a novel, which resulted in Tokunaga writing a formal letter of apology to the union that "Here after I shall never again dabble in literature" (*ikô issai bungaku nado wa yarimasen*).⁶¹⁹

⁶¹⁷ Earlier stories by Tokunaga were only in manuscript form until published years later after he gained fame with *Taiyô no nai machi*. See *Nihon Puroretaria bungakushû 24 – Tokunaga Sunao-shû* (Tokyo: Shin-Nihon Shuppansha, 1987).

⁶¹⁸ Tokunaga, "Watashi no bungakuteki jijoden," 204. Aono Suekichi and Yamakawa Hitoshi were both involved in the league.

⁶¹⁹ Tokunaga, "Watashi no bungakuteki jijoden," 205. In another essay of recollections, "Hitotsu no jiki," Tokunaga describes his terror when a labor leader finds a book under a pillow in the factory dormitory and asks "what damned sentimentalist" (*senchimentarisuto-me*) it belonged to; Tokunaga had been hiding a book, but the book in question belonged to another worker. Originally published in *Rôdô Hyôron* vol. 1, no. 4-5, Apr. 1946; Quoted in Uranishi, ed., 225.

After a stint as a printer at Tokutomi Sohō's Min'yūsha, Tokunaga found a job at the Hakubunkan printing press in 1922, where he put his literary ambitions on hold and focused his energies on labor activism, serving as an organizer in the communist-leaning union.⁶²⁰ The plant at which Tokunaga worked was the printing arm of the mass-media conglomerate Hakubunkan Capital (*Hakubunkan Shihon*), which had grown from the eponymous publisher that established itself as Japan's premier purveyor of popular magazines in the late Meiji period. In the 30 years since Hakubunkan had revolutionized Japanese periodical publishing with *Taiyō* (*The Sun*, 1895-1928), *Bungei Kurabu* (*Literary Club*, 1895-1933), and *Shōnen Sekai* (*Boys' World*, 1895-1933), the company had built a flight of some four-dozen magazines under its banner. Hakubunkan had also published the magazine *Bunshō Sekai*, to which a literary youth Tokunaga had submitted some of his earliest writings. In the early 20th-century Hakubunkan had continually grown, becoming the biggest producer of print media in East Asia, and a capital interest firm boasting over 3,000 employees and responsible for printing and pressing on contract the publications of numerous other companies.⁶²¹ In late 1925, the printing division of Hakubunkan absorbed the Seibidō and Nihon Shoseki imprints, renaming itself Kyōdō Printing (*Kyōdō Insatsu*).⁶²² By the time Hakubunkan morphed into Kyōdō, labor unrest had been stewing at the company for years, with the internal HP Club (*HP Kurabu*) union leading a successful strike over working hours and minimum wage in 1924. When the

⁶²⁰ Tokunaga, "Hitotsu no jiki," 227-230.

⁶²¹ *Taiyō* was established in 1895 by Hakubunkan and became the proto-typical "general interest magazine" (*sōgō zasshi*) in Japan. Interestingly, the final editor of *Taiyō* at the time of its cancellation was the proletarian literary critic Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke. For more on *Taiyō* and the early years of Hakubunkan, see Chapter 1.

⁶²² Importantly, Nihon Shoseki was a major printer of national textbooks (*kokutei kyōkasho*). Yokoyama Kazuo, *Nihon no shuppan insatsu rodo undō senzen senzchu-hen* vol. 1 (Tokyo: Nyūsusha, 1998), 227-228.

Nihon Rôdô Kumiai Hyôgikai (Japan Labor Union Council) took over worker organization after the Kyôdô merger, the plant boasted 2,500 unionized workers. Following a reduction of working hours announced over the New Years' holiday of Dec. 1925, the workers struck in January 1926, shutting down the factory. After months of work stoppage, violence, negotiations, and arbitrations, the strike ended in mass firings, blacklistings, and a crushed union.⁶²³ As a worker and union leader in the plant, Tokunaga was deeply involved in organizing the strike, in the years following its end, he set out to put its story in writing.

In “*Taiyô no nai machi wa ika ni seisaku sareta ka?*” (How Was Streets Without Sun Made?, 1930), an essay published shortly after the novel’s release in book form, Tokunaga recalls the experience writing the novel. Tokunaga claims that he initially saw the work as something closer to reportage, and recalls:

There was a long period of time in which my life and my literature were totally unrelated (*seikatsu to bungaku to wa zenzen betsu na mono*)...Even when I bought *Kaizô* or *Chûô Kôron*... There was a long period in which I didn’t even look at the creative writing section (*sôsakuran*). I had nothing but ‘scorn’ (*keibetsu*) for it... So my motive (*dôki*) when I first began writing *Taiyô no nai machi* was certainly not fiction or any thought of the literary establishment (*bundan*).⁶²⁴

It seems that Tokunaga had internalized the ‘scorn for literature’ evinced by the labor movement, going so far as to ignore even the proletarian literary movement. In a later memoir, he claims that he “didn’t even know of the existence of the literary magazine

⁶²³ For a complete and detailed narrative of all aspects of the strike, see Yokoyama, 491-589. The Hyôgikai union was eventually crushed in 1928 under the Chian keisatsu-hô (Police Law for the Preservation of Peace). For further history of the strike in the context of publishing labor struggles, see Mizunuma Tatsuo, *Meiji Taishô-ki jiritsuteki rôdô undo no ashiato* (Tokyo: JCA, 1979).

⁶²⁴ Tokunaga, “*Taiyô no nai machi wa ika ni shite seisaku sareta ka,*” in *Kôki puroretaria bungaku hyoronshu 2* (Tokyo: Shin-Nihon Shuppansha, 1990), 246. Originally published in *Puroretaria geijutsu kyôtei*, no. 3, April 1930.

Senki” until his friend Hayashi Fusao submitted the manuscript of *Taiyô* for him.⁶²⁵

Whereas he had once attempted to maintain the contradictory types of reading and writing innate to his work at a printing press, by the late 1920s, the two had become totally separate for Tokunaga, as like for the printing press boys in his youth, labor was labor and literature was literature.

It was through transforming the story of the strike into narrative that Tokunaga was able to embrace this contradiction and become a “literary worker” (*bunpitsu gyôsha*) of the type that had been expelled from his labor union. Ironically, he did so by recreating the routine of factory labor, and approaching the writing of the manuscript as if it was labor in the printing press itself:

Each and every day for just about three years, I walked inside the campus of Kyôdô Printing, doing my best to piece together memories of the still raw old battlefield while commuting to the local factory. It went from simple to complex (*tanjun kara fukuzatsu e*), and then at last from complex back to simple (*fukuzatsu kara tanjun e*)...I decided on five or six hours of productive labor time (*seisaku rôdô jikan*)...I sat down at 8 in the morning and worked at it until two in the afternoon. Perhaps because I wasn't used to this kind of labor, I found it harder than factory work...I lived on the second floor of a small factory, so I arranged a work space, writing in the rooms of friends who were off at the factory and posting up a notice on the door stating: “At work, no visitors” (*jûgyôchû menkai shazetsu*). I felt it was necessary to take care of everything just as one keeps their tools for work (*shigoto dōgu*) at the factory in good shape.⁶²⁶

In order to write the story of the strike, Tokunaga endeavors to reproduce as nearly as possible the conditions of factory labor, turning his factory work routine into a writing routine. He begins every day by commuting to the site of the strike, and then devotes

⁶²⁵ Tokunaga, “Watashi no bungakuteki jijoden,” 206. Tokunaga recalls that he used to read and occasionally try submitting stories to the earlier proletarian journal *Tane Maku Hito* and other magazines in the early 1920s, but fell out of touch with the literary scene and was completely unaware of the work published in *Bungei Sensen* in the mid-1920s. He also cites Fyodor Gladkov's (1883-1958) 1925 novel *Cement* as an important influence on his work. Tokunaga, “*Taiyô no nai machi wa ika ni shite seisaku sareta ka*,” 246.

⁶²⁶ Tokunaga, “*Taiyô no nai machi wa ika ni shite seisaku sareta ka*,” 249.

himself to a day of labor that he describes as more difficult than his work in the factory. Yet, by reproducing yet reversing the labor process, Tokunaga is finally able to achieve the synthesis of the dissonance between his being as a worker and a writer, a reading literary youth and a typesetter, producing a manuscript where previously it was only possible to arrange the text of others. In doing so, he is able to achieve an unalienated labor process from which he can represent the contradiction of labor and capital in the printing industry in narrative form.

Rather than a straightforward narrative of events focused on a single protagonist, *Taiyô no nai machi* tells the story of the Kyôdô strike by presenting a multi-faceted montage of the motivations of the many people and parties involved in the action. Tokunaga's novel follows a variety of figures, ranging from female laborers and their families to city councilmen and company owners as they participate in and observe the strike as a social phenomenon.⁶²⁷ The novel's Daidô printing company is explicitly modeled after Kyôdô printing, and the first book edition contains an endnote apologizing to union members for using real names but changing the facts.⁶²⁸ But despite this attention to the details of the historical strike, Tokunaga does not overtly concern himself with the specificities of labor at the publisher, as the novel opens after the strike is already well under way. For the most part, *Taiyô no nai machi* could be about a strike at a

⁶²⁷ The plot pays particular attention to the familial and romantic relationships of a pair of sisters, one of whom is a strike leader, though a plurality of the novel is spent following a wide variety of characters. Tokunaga later states that he was able to write the novel "as if he was approaching theater" (*shibai*) by developing a "central thread of plot development of the strike," which was supplemented with additional related episodes (*ikutsu mo no episôdo*). Tokunaga, "*Taiyô no nai machi wa ika ni seisaku saretaka*," 247.

⁶²⁸ The December 1929 first book edition of the novel was published by Senkisha, the publisher of the magazine *Senki*, which first serialized the story from June through September, then October of the same year. The official publisher (*hakkô insatsujin*) is listed as the proletarian author and critic Yamada Seizaburô; the printer listed is "Yunionsha Insatsu." All citations for v

textile mill, glass plant, or iron works with little change to the plot. The largely generic character of the novel's strike story speaks to the fungibility of exchange of mass-produced commodities, telling a general story about the struggle between labor and capital through narrating the particular event of the printing press strike. As Nii Itaru pointed out in 1927, the full subsumption of the production of print media into the mass-market economy becomes a marker for the arrival of an advanced phase of consumer culture.

Yet, Tokunaga by no means ignores the specificity of the printing press as the site of the strike and the subject of his novel. *Taiyô no nai machi* is the outgrowth of Tokunaga's own experience as a laborer in the print industry, and can be read as a critique of the role of print media in structuring social space. The concern over the fate of the newspapers, magazines, novels, and textbooks produced at the novel's Daidô plant is shared by everyone from rank-and-file workers to newspaper reporters to the Imperial Crown Prince and many others in between. The diversity of characters appearing in *Taiyô no nai machi* speaks to the degree to which the circulation of printed text has become a constituent element of modern Japanese society by the end of the 1920s. The novel's numerous plot threads are held together at the core by the sudden cease in the production of mass-media commodities that form a key element of the communication network of social relations in urban Tokyo, an event that precedes the start of the narrative. Tokunaga foregrounds this function of print in the first section of the novel, which is entitled "The Handbill" (*bira*). The opening lines of *Taiyô no nai machi* begin with a

sudden stoppage in the passage of people and traffic moving through the city streets:

The train stopped. The car stopped. – The bicycle, the truck, and the motorcycle with the sidecar barreling forward at full tilt twisted to a halt one after the other.
 –What happened?
 –What is this, what’s going on?
 The crowd’s starkly simple faces stuck out crudely amidst the terrible dust beneath the yellow October sun.
 The throngs of people pushed forward, wriggling as if they were a school of tadpoles in a puddle of water.
 –His Majesty is passing by – it’s His Majesty Prince XX’s Royal Procession!
 In an instant, whispers at the front of the crowd spread to the back. The cars stopped their blaring horns and people took off their caps...⁶²⁹

The Crown Prince himself does not appear in the scene, as the masses’ attention quickly turns to a commotion that breaks out when detectives chase a man through the gathered crowd:

–Thief!
 The throngs fell into a state of mayhem...
 –Pickpocket!
 –No it’s not, it’s a socialist!
 Uniformed and plainclothes police officers jumped into the crowd, lurching after the criminal. But the man in the half-length coat had slipped away and was nowhere to be found.
 –Did you get one of the handbills? He was passing them out...⁶³⁰

Shortly thereafter, Tokunaga reproduces the handbill in question in full, a manifesto-like flyer addressed to the people of the neighborhood and beseeching them for their support in the struggle against Daidô. The handbill is boxed off and separated from the main text

⁶²⁹ In the original book (*tankôbon*) version published by Senkisha in 1929, the Prince’s name is censored by the editors as “XX”; this censorship is retained in the 1971 reprint of this edition. Later editions of the text, such as that appearing in the 2 volume selected works of Tokunaga published by Shin-Nihon Shuppansha in 1987 and 1990 as part of a larger anthology of proletarian literature, replace the XXs with the name “Sesshō.” Tokunaga has never received an authoritative *zenshū* collected edition of his works. The long dashes in the citation above are markers used in place of quotation marks throughout the original text.

⁶³⁰ Tokunaga, *Taiyô no nai machi*, 3. Interestingly, “pickpocket” (*suri*) is censored in the original book edition, but “socialist” (*shakaishugisha*) is not.

of the narrative, centered on the page and reproduced in the form of a flyer that spans two pages of the book.⁶³¹

When the main narrative resumes, the police briefly examine the handbill that has just been presented to the reader, eventually deciding to give up their search for the agitator:

The plainclothes officer's eyes jumped from letter to letter (*katsuji to katsuji no aida*) like a bird in the treetops...

The cars honked their horns. The train started to move. But the crowd remained spread out across the intersection, like the dirty mark left by an elementary school student's eraser.

—Something must have happened.

What an unreasonable amount of commotion for a single handbill.⁶³²

The strike flyer is thus reproduced in the space between the stoppage and resumption of the movement of people and vehicles through the city streets, as the commotion caused by the handbill quickly surpasses the interest in the Prince's passage. Although the striking laborers have refused to continue working to produce commercial print objects for the profit of the publishing industry, they have elected to self-produce a different form of print in order to draw attention to their situation and their cause.⁶³³ In doing so, the manual laborers that work to produce print media both disrupt and initiate the movement of the masses, with their own piece of print, the handbill, standing in the interstitial space between. Significantly, this passage appears at the very start of Tokunaga's novel,

⁶³¹ The flyer begins with an address to "Dear people of Koishikawa-ku and people of Tokyo!!" and details the numbers of workers involved in the strike, naming their struggle "the front line of the proletarian class across Japan (*zen-Nihon musan kaikyû no saizensen*)."⁶³² Tokunaga, *Taiyô no nai machi*, 4-5.

⁶³² Ibid, 5-6. The metaphor of the crowd as writing unable to be erased is intriguing.

⁶³³ Bowen-Struyk reads this scene as an example of competing acts of interpellation of the masses as imperial subjects versus the masses as revolutionary subjects. She also points out the importance of the circulation of text for the proletarian movement, comparing the handbill in question to the journal *Senki* itself. Although my approach is not at odds to this reading, I focus more on how the scene points towards the possibility of reading the novel as a critique of the publishing industry itself, as discussed below.

serving to mark the narrative as a critique of the economics of publishing. Although the narrator ascribes the commotion to “a single handbill,” Tokunaga’s novel and in a sense proletarian literature as a whole fulfill a similar function to the bill, producing an alternative picture of mass society that highlights the role of labor in keeping commodities circulating smoothly.⁶³⁴

Several pages later, Tokunaga reasserts the necessity of defamiliarizing the masses’ perception of event as it is represented in mass-media and finding a new way to represent the production process of that medium itself. The next section of the novel “Opposing Camps” (*taiji suru jin’ei*) opens with an extended citation of an unnamed newspaper article followed by the narrator’s commentary:

‘The strike (*sôgi*) at Daidô Publishing Company in Koishikawa-ku Hisakata-chô has reached an unprecedented size, and as yet there is no hope of a settlement in sight. It has been more than 50 days since the factory has been shuttered, with 3,000 strikers holding firm in their resolution and the national Hyôgikai labor union contributing funds from across the country... After the first round of negotiations were scattered, the company has shifted their tactics, steeling their reserve and aiming for the total elimination of leftist unionists... The strike at Daidô has had profoundly negative effects on people doing business in the surrounding areas, continuing to debilitate the prosperity of various *chô* as it drags on...’

The *Tokyo Nichinichi*, the *Asahi*, the *Hôchi*, the *Tôkai*, and all of the newspapers in Tokyo ran the same kind of article on the strike. But the citizens (*shimin*) are busy. Though the news of this unprecedented huge strike appeared in large print letters (*ôkina katsuji*) right before their eyes every two or three days, it didn’t stick in their brains. There were the results of the Diet election, the ins-and-outs of the political parties, the vacillations of the economy, which looks to be barreling right towards a worrisome stop sign, and so on, and so on, and so on.

Maybe the good people of Tokyo had been struck with amnesia, or maybe they’d gone crazy. Luckily for them, the great events spiraling around

⁶³⁴ Similar handbills continue to circulate throughout the course of the novel.

them were mostly forgotten as if they were newspapers left inside the train as they busily ran out into the clear autumn morning.⁶³⁵

For Tokunaga, newspapers and mainstream mass media are part of the problem not by dint of their position within the publishing-industrial complex against which the workers are striking, but due to the particular view of the present that they present to their readers. Like Takabatake Motoyuki, Tokunaga sees the newspaper as a medium that begets a fragmentary understanding of current events that is easily forgotten and never synthesized into a systemic worldview. Tokunaga's commentary on the representation of the strike in the mass media echoes Takabatake's fear that political activity can all too easily be sublimated into a system of sensations that ends up doing little more than overwhelming the modern reader and throwing him into a state of forgetfulness.⁶³⁶ The urban populace is perpetually overwhelmed by the stimulations of city life, and the significance of the event is lost almost immediately in a constantly circulating tide of information.⁶³⁷ As in Heibonsha's ad copy for the *Shakai Shisô Zenshû*, any sense of totality between events or ideas is dispelled and scattered as they are disseminated through serially produced and consumed forms of print. Yet, at the same time, Tokunaga understands that print remains the only medium through which to reach a broad audience and incite them to action, as in the handbill incident that opens the novel and in the publication of *Taiyô no nai machi* itself as a popular proletarian novel.

In striking, Tokunaga and the printshop workers at Kyôdô recognize their role in the production of print media as a commodity whose circulation structures the

⁶³⁵ Tokunaga, *Taiyô no nai machi*, 25-26.

⁶³⁶ This position is strikingly similar to Kataoka Teppei's opinion that the myriad sensations produced by the array of commodities in the department store produce forgetfulness. See Chapter 3.

⁶³⁷ Tokunaga metaphorically parallels transportation and communication as these scraps of social activity are left behind as scraps of printed text a commuter train carrying the salaried masses.

communication network of modern Japan. Accordingly, stopping the presses disrupts the distribution of cultural products such as books and magazines, which, by the mid-1920s, have come to be construed as necessities of modern life.⁶³⁸ One of Kyôdô Printing's major clients was the publisher Kôdansha, which had succeeded Hakubunkan in becoming Japan's premier purveyor of entertainment-oriented magazines in the 20th century.⁶³⁹ In addition to numerous magazines for children, housewives, theater enthusiasts, and more, Kôdansha's flagship magazine *Kingu* became the first magazine in Japan to break a monthly circulation of a million copies in January 1927.⁶⁴⁰ When the strike shut down the Kyôdô plant, the company was forced to turn over printing duties to rival firms Toppan and Shûeisha, who stepped in to prevent the cessation of Kôdansha's line of magazines, proving the difficulty of shutting down the circulation of mass-media with even a massive single strike.⁶⁴¹ Recognizing Kôdansha's role as a key client for Kyôdô, the strikers turned to the company's founder Noma Seiji (1878-1938) to arbitrate the dispute, hoping that the man responsible for the largest single share of content produced at Kyôdô could mediate between the opposing camps.

The arbitration scene appears in *Taiyô no nai machi*, with the company thinly veiled as Yamato Kôdan Shuppan, and Noma renamed Kunio. Tokunaga's narrator notes that "Kôdansha is said to control a full 20 percent of published media in Japan, and all of their magazines, books, and textbooks are made at Daidô Printing"⁶⁴² and calls Kunio

⁶³⁸ For more on the idea of printed text as a necessity for modern life, see Chapter 1.

⁶³⁹ Yokoyama, 523. Kôdansha's magazines (which were printed by Hakubunkan), included children's magazines for boys and girls, women's magazines, gardening magazines, cooking magazines, photo magazines, and many others.

⁶⁴⁰ Insatsu Hakubutsukan, ed., *Mirionserâ tanjô e: Meiji Taishô no zasshi media* (Tokyo: Tokyo Shoseki, 2008), 15.

⁶⁴¹ Yokoyama, 524.

⁶⁴² Tokunaga, *Taiyô no nai machi*, 110.

“the total master of the kingdom of the global publishing world” who “holds nearly absolute power over Daidô as a client.”⁶⁴³ Though the arbitration fails, the appeal to Kôdansha marks an important shift in consciousness on the part of Tokunaga and the workers. Elsewhere, Tokunaga characterizes workers as readers of “Kôdansha products like *Kingu* and *Fuji*, the *Asahi*, *Bungei Kurabu*, and the kind of magazine serials that Heibonsha releases in book form;” the striking workers are thus the targeted customers of Kôdansha’s entertainment-oriented fiction.⁶⁴⁴ Implicit in the worker’s overture to Noma is an understanding of Kôdansha not only as the wellspring of their own entertainment, but as an economic agent through which they can leverage their opponents in the struggle. In seeking arbitration through Noma, the workers recognize their dual position as both producers and consumers of the print media that they both make and buy. Through arbitration, Kôdansha ceases to become a marker for mass entertainment and instead serves as an agent in the expansion of print capital, and as such is integrated into Tokunaga’s novel as part of the narrative of the dispute.⁶⁴⁵

By threatening to stop the production of print media at the largest printing press in Asia, the Kyôdô strike not only damages the ability of a single company to produce a single good, but resembles a transportation strike. Disrupting the flow of information and goods across a broad communication network. In Tokunaga’s work as both a writer and

⁶⁴³ Tokunaga, *Taiyô no nai machi*, 91. In the book, the company is named Yamato Yûben Kôdansha as opposed to its real full name, Dai-Nihon Yûbenkai Kôdansha. Tokunaga describes the necessity for the company to make the deadline for publishing the new years’ special issue of *Kingu*, the name of which is censored in the original edition, but appears in later versions of the text. The novel also includes a description of the luxury of Noma’s estate, which is replete with a menagerie of rare birds and animals, expansive rooms, and a full detail of servants in judo uniforms. Tokunaga, *Taiyô no nai machi*, 88-90.

⁶⁴⁴ Tokunaga, “*Taiyô no nai machi wa ika ni seisaku sareta ka*,” 246.

⁶⁴⁵ For the historical details of the arbitration negotiations with Noma, see Yokoyama, 531. The final strategy of the striking workers was to call for a nationwide boycott of all products printed at Kyôdô, including Kôdansha publications. Yokoyama, 557.

an activist, this disruption draws attention to the material conditions of production of literary media, pointing towards the exploitation of physical labor in the creation of printed text itself. Accordingly, by virtue of their control over the means of production of print cultural commodities, publishing industry unions played a disproportionate role in the political movements of prewar Japan. In 1919, the Kakushinkai newspaper printers union initiated a strike resulting in the stoppage of nearly all major newspapers in Tokyo.⁶⁴⁶ For the first four days of August of that year, the 16 largest newspapers in Tokyo released no editions, an event unprecedented in modern Japanese history.⁶⁴⁷ The same year saw the first major strike at Hakubunkan, in which over 1,000 people threatened to stage a mass suicide in a nearby temple to protest working conditions and low wages in the printing factory. More strikes at major papers followed in 1920, and printers unions remained some of the most active in Japan.⁶⁴⁸ Japan's first May Day rally was held in 1920, and newspaper and magazine printing unions formed the backbone of the protests; leading groups included the Hakubunkan union, as well as the Keimeikai educator's union, in which Heibonsha founder and president Shimonaka Yasaburô was a leader.⁶⁴⁹

Strikes continued with regularity throughout the first half of the 1920s leading up to the climactic Kyôdô strike. Unrest in the publishing industry was largely centered in the northern band of central Tokyo stretching through Ôji, Waseda, Ushigome, Koishikawa, Hakusan, and Ôtsuka, the areas in which the most publishers and printers were located; Tokunaga's titular "streets without sun" were located in this latter zone.

⁶⁴⁶ Mizunuma, 110-115.

⁶⁴⁷ The *Tokyo Yûkan Shinbun* (Tokyo Evening News) was one of the few papers to continue publication in this interval. Yokoyama, 220-225.

⁶⁴⁸ The Kakushinkai union broke up later that year. Yokoyama, 227-231.

⁶⁴⁹ Heibonsha Kyôiku Sangyô Sentâ, ed., 59-67.

Tokunaga's novel does not overlook this spatial dynamic, seizing on the connection between the location of the printing press and its connection to the social space of the city. The question of bifurcated urban space constitutes the theme of the second chapter of the novel, immediately following "The Handbill." The chapter is entitled "High and Low" (*ue to shita*) and addresses the sharp spatial opposition between the world of the workers and the rarified world above them:

The Crown Prince's front garden spread out over the natural hillside, with an expansive lake surrounded by a lush thicket of trees at its center. Oaks, pines, cedars, and other grand trees gave a view of the mountain as it had been in antiquity...

-What a beautiful view. It's truly astonishing that such amazing scenery exists within the city of Tokyo.

Verily! From atop the bridge, the scenery to the southeast was worthy of stopping the illustrious feet of the Prince...

-What's between those forests over there?

The military men were taken aback. Even if the Prince's officials had a telescope, would they be able to see what was between the forests? It was impossible to imagine using only one's naked eye (*nikugan*)...

In those four blocks (*chō*), the lives of workers (*rōdōsha*) and merchants (*shōshōnin*) rose and fell, and the Daidō Printing dispute grew worse every day right before their eyes...

The sun played hide-and-seek, sliding from mountain to mountain.

The "streets in the ravine" (*tanisoko no machi*) were truly "streets without sun" (*taiyō no nai machi*).

The Senkawa ditch had lost any riverine qualities as it thrust between the countless tunnel-like row-houses perched upon the dirt. The river lost its shape, sinking beneath kitchens, curving through bathrooms, and carrying dust, grime, husks of coal, empty bottles, rags, and scraps of paper, only showing itself when it flooded...

At the center of these streets was the Daidō printing company... Merchants lined the front streets. Lunch shops, bars, fishmongers, dry-goods shops, sundries, medicine, liquor, and on, and on, and on...⁶⁵⁰

Tokunaga's sketch of the contrast between the two sides of the city echoes the view of urban space seen by the unnamed protagonist in Yokomitsu Riichi's 1924 story "Machi

⁶⁵⁰ Tokunaga, *Taiyō no nai machi*, 8-10.

no soko” (The Depths of the Town).⁶⁵¹ The distinction between the two spaces in both stories could not be more extreme, with the city’s upper reaches characterized by expansive greenery and gentry in silk hats, while the lower depths hold little but the perpetual circulation of filth and excess matter.⁶⁵² In Yokomitsu’s story, the protagonist shuttles between the two spaces, as the bifurcated physical topography gives way to reveal a structural vision of the city built upon a pile of coins. At the conclusion of “Machi no soko,” the protagonist obtains coin of his own by exchanging a stack of old magazines, as the print object stands in for that which allows him to see the city in its dialectical totality and the diametrically opposed picture of wealth and poverty is replaced by a sense of the system of economic exchange that structures urban space and social relations. *Taiyô no nai machi*, though more sprawling in structure, might be read in a similar fashion, with the printing press itself standing in for the stack of magazines in Yokomitsu’s story. Located at the “center of the streets,” Tokunaga’s Daidô Printing produces the mass media that circulates through the city, country, and empire. Over the course of its narrative, *Taiyô no nai machi* renders visible to the reader that which

⁶⁵¹ For a full analysis of “Machi no Soko,” see Chapter 3.

⁶⁵² In addition to the opposition of high and low, the novel also constructs a picture of Tokyo in terms of center and periphery. One of the middle sections of the novel, entitled “Gusts of Wind” (*toppû*) provides an interesting view of the urbanization and suburbanization of Tokyo, as Tokunaga describes a shifting spatial dynamic to the metropolis, in which factories move from the center of the city to the outskirts allowing for a stark separation between different classes of people and cultural practices: “Like all of the worlds modern cities (*sekai kakkoku no kindai-teki toshi*), Tokyo is nearly surrounded by factory zones (*kôjô chitai*) that cling to its outer rim... The factory zones on the outer rim (*gaikaku*) are the lungs of the metropolis (*daitoshi no haizô*). Seven-story buildings casting shadows across the pavement streets, the mansions of the wealthy, huge department stores spinning out trends, the temple that is the National Diet Building, the dance halls of the great hotels, theaters, music halls, the artistic architecture of the big banks – the arterial blood that lets all of these function is pumped out from the lungs of the factory zones. The suburban trains (*kôgai densha*) that connect the outer layers are blood-veins held together in their red-skinned trunks. Ever so safely and elegantly, they are sent out from the center pivot point (*chûsû*) of the metropolis... Very intelligent bourgeois politicians put a plan into the Diet to drive out factories from inside the city. Houses that are nice to live in have to be put in order.” Tokunaga, *Taiyô no nai machi*, 187-188.

“cannot be seen by the naked eye” of the Crown Prince and his retinue perched atop the hill. This is not only the space of the slum itself, but the way in which the publishing industry in the age of mass-media connects all strata of mass society, and the reality that the production of that media is predicated on the exploitation of labor.

Tokunaga arrived at the writing of *Taiyô no nai machi* through his unique experience producing the literary work as both an author and a printing press worker, thanks to his time as a typesetter and organizer prior to establishing himself as a writer of proletarian fiction. With his novel, Tokunaga attempts to synthesize the complex struggle of social forces in the strike and demonstrate the potential in stopping the circulation of the mass media that connects working families to businessmen to bureaucrats to the Crown Prince. Print is both the disease and the cure of modern consumer society in *Taiyô no nai machi*, the force that makes the masses forgetful and the means by which to urge them to movement. Like the other writers and critics of his generation assessed over the course of this project, Tokunaga saw the production of the literary text as the making of a material artifact; these texts circulated via the medium of mass-produced print to be consumed by readers of Japan’s modern mass society. In taking the means of production of industrially manufactured typographic text as a site of both struggle and representation, Tokunaga laid bare the ways in which the consumption of literature and the possibility of popular critical discourse was made possible by laborers whose work made print a shared medium of communication for metropolitan Japan.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored how ideas of language and language itself changed in tandem with the transformations of the print industry, the horizons of literary writing, and the physical and cultural landscapes of metropolitan Japanese consumer society. This reorientation of language took place not only at the level of literary writing, but at what might be called the atomic level of the letters themselves, as written and print orthography and the sounds and shapes of words came to be seen as constitutive qualities of modern life. Letters (*moji*) and words were understood by writers like Yamada Yoshio, Yosano Hiroshi, and Yokomitsu Riichi as material quantities, the aural and visual components of which both shaped and were shaped by patterns of social intercourse. As such, language was wielded as a material object, one subject to the vicissitudes of historical change and contingency. In Chapter 2, I detailed how the authors associated with *Bungei Jidai* addressed the balance and tension between the senses contained in the letter, and how the materiality of letters might precipitate new modes of writing, grammar, and open new perspective on human perception. Here, I follow an alternate interpretation of the problem of “literary materiality,” exploring how print objects played into the programs for revolutionary social organization outlined by the proletarian political movement. If literary materiality can be defined as the sense of the letter, the word, and the typographic text as physical objects used to effect and rearrange the building blocks of experience, the proletarian literary movement sought to integrate this critical framework with the historical materialism of a Marxian worldview.

The idea of the text as an agglomeration of objects bore a significant structural parallelism to Marxian views of mass society as an agglomeration of alienated people and

goods constituting a larger social totality akin to the text as a complete economic object on the market for sale and exchange. At the same time, given the simultaneous changes in the forms of letters and literary language, as well as the formats of print media itself, the concepts of form (*keishiki*) and formalism (*keishikishugi*) became key tropes for authors to explore the role of literature in the projects of aesthetic and political revolutionary movements. These parallelisms allowed an opportunity for critics such as Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke and Takabatake Motoyuki to address the contradiction at the heart of the proletarian literary project and address the challenge posed by Kobayashi Hideo, namely how an aspiring mass movement could overcome its own commodification in order to further the dissemination of its ideas.

By critiquing the structure of the publishing industry itself while recognizing its necessity for the achievement of a revolutionary mass culture, proletarian critics were able to identify the particular structural quality of mass-market typographic print as a commodity constitutive of the possibility and social discourse. Like Miki Kiyoshi in Chapter 1, authors such as Tokunaga Sunao reflexively recognized the mutual interdependence of movements that sought to overcome capitalism and print as commodity. Tokunaga's response as a typesetter and labor activist was to return to the materiality of the letter itself, shutting down the production process of publishing itself in order to make visible the exploitation of labor upon which modern Japan's medium of literary communication was predicated. By concluding here, I return to the start of this dissertation, as Hakubunkan, the printing corporation against which Tokunaga strikes, is the same company that revolutionized the publishing industry and ushered in the age of mass-market magazines with *Nisshin Sensô Jikki*, as discussed in Chapter 1. In the three

decades from the Sino-Japanese War to the rise of the proletarian literary movement, Japan had seen the rapid and large-scale transformation of its media landscape. Mass-produced typographic text, as an irretractably economized medium, came to serve as a naturalized means of mass communication, constituting the central constellation of the social logos. As I have outlined throughout this dissertation, this process had epochal repercussions for ideas and practices of reading and writing, aesthetics and politics, sensation and perception, and senses of language, self, and space in modern Japan.

Conclusion:**Printing Revolution Repetition**

If it has a future, the book to come will no longer be what it was.

-Jacques Derrida, “The Book to Come”
(1997)⁶⁵³

The first decades of the 20th century were an important interval for the history of reading, writing, media, and space in modern Japan; the structural transformations that took place during this period, which also saw the rise of a robust consumer mass society, would open an era of print that continues to the present day. Across this span of time, the modes of production, consumption, and circulation of typographic printed text, as well as the form and materiality of those texts, changed dramatically. The buying and selling of mass-produced print media, including newspapers, magazines, and books, became an increasingly complex process intimately integrated into the highly developed and rapidly diversifying consumer market of imperial Japan. As I argued in the introduction, the reconstruction of modern Japan’s media landscape around print as a universally shared medium helped engender new realities of reading and writing for the literate masses. In the conclusion below, I briefly summarize some of the most significant changes wrought by the naturalization of mass-produced typographic print, and then turn to the shift from printed type to digital text and electronic media that is currently playing out in Japan, North America, and across the world. The speedy and simultaneous transformations of the medium of communication, reading practices, and senses of space and the human body alongside the solidification of consumer society in early 20th century Japan provide

⁶⁵³ Jacques Derrida, “The Book to Come,” in Derrida, Rachel Bowlby, trans., *Paper Machine* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2005), 9.

remarkable parallels with the present day and can help us to understand the epochal change in our own era. By viewing the print to digital shift in historical context with regards to the experience of Japan in the previous century, I identify what I see as the major dynamics involved in the still unfolding transition to digital media for reading and writing.

Over the course of this dissertation, I have shown that mass-produced print media served as a site from which authors and critics attempted to challenge the aesthetic, spiritual, linguistic, and political horizons of prewar Japanese social life. Authors who matured as readers within this new media landscape understood themselves and their writings as intractably ensconced within an already extant system of monetarized publication. These writers, such as the members of the *Bungei Jidai* coterie, recognized the ways in which economic exchange and material life prefigured their own acts of writing, and they aimed to transform the dynamics of the literary realm from within. They began by focusing on the human body itself and reconsidering the relationship between the perceptory organs of the sensorium and the printed text, which was understood as an equally material quantity. In order to shift the readers' perception of his or her own body, the text, and the unequivocally material realm through which both moved, authors like Yokomitsu Riichi and Kawabata Yasunari wielded unconventional grammar, montage-like style, onomatopoeic devices, and other techniques of writing that problematized the visual and auditory effects of written language. For writers of this age, literature became a means by which the body could be both fragmented and reconstituted in the processes of interpreting and imagining the nature of experience vis-à-vis the ever changing barrage of new things and ideas brought on by modernity.

This new approach to literary writing also helped readers to make sense of the corpus of the city, itself akin to a giant body composed of constantly circulating people and products. Like the human body and the printed text, critics understood metropolitan life as a totality that could be best grasped through the rearrangement of its many fragments. Over the same interval that the rapid proliferation of typographic print pushed the boundaries of the discursive space of literary writing, the topography of Tokyo itself continued to expand, as the metropolis was remade into an imperial capital and a concentration of consumer practices, which were then exported back out beyond the city's limits. Mass-produced print, in turn, moved far beyond the borders of the traditional literary realm to encompass readers across the nation as well as in Japan's growing colonial holdings. Likewise, print products were not only exported, but also served as vectors for the importation of new ideas from beyond the reaches of Japan's empire. Affordable books and magazines helped bring the latest ideas and art movements from overseas into direct contact with the active and increasingly cosmopolitan intellectual scene at home. Tokyo's emergence as a locus of consumer culture on the rank of New York, Paris, and Berlin, along with a growing number of venues for the translation of foreign-language writings, helped foster a sense of global simultaneity and synchronicity between Japan and the world at large in the years following World War One.

The most strident component of this burgeoning internationalism could be found in Japan's prewar proletarian movement, a confederation of socialist, social democratic, communist, and anarchist authors who were able to imagine themselves as part of a worldwide movement in large part thanks to the power of print. By seeking a global

workers' solidarity that transcended national boundaries, authors and critics associated with the proletarian literary movement sought to understand their own fragmented working lives within the larger totality of international capitalist exchange. The most astute of these writers deduced that their own art and ideologies could not be extracted from that economic system, and turned to the problem of mass-produced print and publishing as a site from which to launch self-reflexive critiques of capitalism. As Miki Kiyoshi, Tokunaga Sunao, and many of the other authors discussed herein realized and recognized, the mediums of the book and the magazine, as both commodities and means of communication, offered unique opportunities to problematize the ways in which the very possibility of social life and discourse was predicated on the commodity form and the exploitation of labor.

In sum, the book (or magazine, or other piece of reproduced print) might not only be called, following Richards, "a machine to think with," but also "a commodity to think with," a technology that engenders an entirely new framework through which one can know the world and act to change it. As an industrial technology, mass-produced print in Japan transformed expression, consciousness, and social structure across the several decades-long period of its naturalization. By telling the story of how print became a what McLuhan calls a "natural resource," I have shown how new forms of media precipitated new practices of reading and writing, which intersected with changing notions of literature, political organization, space, the human body, and the materiality of language itself. At present, a similar set of transformations is in the process of unfolding in Japan, America, and across much of the world, as digital text and electronic devices become increasingly prevalent media for the dissemination of the written word. Today, the

available variety of texts of all types, the ease with which those texts can be accessed and read, and the ability for the reader to write are all exponentially higher than ever before.

As in the large-scale shift from xylography to typography in Japan in the late 19th century, this new constellation of media differs from the older media landscape in terms of the material qualities of the surface of inscription, the means of inscription, the channels through which it circulates and reaches the reader, and the practical and physiological ways in which text is read. Whereas print books are produced by industrial workers and machines setting type to paper, digital text is made up of nearly instantly and infinitely malleable electronic charges arranged via computer code. Digital text is stored in a system of databases and accessed through a series of networked telecommunications channels and downloaded to a user interface. Readers access this text through a wide variety of screens and devices calibrated to the desires of the reader, and the nature of the text. The direct exchange of text for money may or may not happen, depending on the producer of the text, the structure of the databases on which the text is hosted, and the channels through which the readers access the text.⁶⁵⁴ In short, the mediations between the writing of the text via electronic means and the reading of the text via electronic means are distinctly different and significantly more complex than in the realm of typographic print. The rise of digital text has precipitated changes in reading practices as well. In my discussion of reading practices in early 20th-century Japan, I noted how

⁶⁵⁴ This discrepancy is due both to the wide variety of text types and the consistently changing landscape of digital publishing. For example, an digital book may be sold for use on a reading device much as a paper book is sold at a book store, but widespread piracy might also make that same book available on the same or other devices available for free. Most online text is freely available, but some articles, such as subscription based newspapers or magazines charges fees and use access limitations; other text providing sites (which may or may not have a direct connection to the writer of a given text) monetize through advertising overlaid with content rather than sell text as such in the sense that manuscripts are sold to magazines which are in turn sold to readers bundled with advertisements.

literacy as such is distinct from the habit of reading as a mass phenomenon. Although over ninety percent of the Japanese population was deemed literate by government definition at the turn of the 20th century, it would be several more decades before books and magazines became objects that were bought and read on a regular basis by the average reader. Likewise, while consumer computer technology has been available for decades, it is only recently that new data storage and retrieval technologies and the expansion of online networks have made digital devices a popular and viable means for everyday reading. The remediation of the book into digital form is an even more recent development made possible by portable access technologies and publishing fee systems to control the circulation of e-books.

The practical and physiological relationships between the reader and the text has changed as well, as it did with previous shifts in the medium and materiality of the reproduction of text. In mid 19th-century Japan, a book was printed with wood, bound with string, and borrowed from a lender to read while hunched over a desk or floor; reading often meant reading aloud, and often to or in communal circumstances. By the 1920s, a book had become an industrially produced piece of typographic text sold by mail or at a local bookstore and able to be easily read in public spaces as well as in private. Today, an electronic book can be downloaded as digital text onto a computer, phone, tablet, or other device and accessed nearly anywhere. A reader's movement both within a text and between texts transforms as well, as hyperlinking, scanning, and the use of electronic paratextual systems replaces the flipping of pages, indexing, and traditional

strategies of cross-referencing and information management.⁶⁵⁵ Further, the possibilities and impossibilities of the management of text as information suggests questions about the necessity of the human body and subject in the act of reading, as the sheer volume of digital text available through a single access device or database exceeds the ability of any human processor, which precipitates a notion of the reader as information manager.⁶⁵⁶

Conversely, the shift to electronic text affects not only the strategies through which the reader engages with the text, but the physical relationship between the body of the reader and the medium, as well as theoretical understandings of the physical nature of the body. With the arrival of typographic print as a near-ubiquitous medium of communication in early 20th-century Japan, a critical discourse emerged in which the printed text was considered a material quantity able to affect the senses of the reader. The reader in turn, was understood as an irreducibly physical body, an agglomeration of nerves and sensory organs that could be moved and transformed through the text in the process of reading.⁶⁵⁷ With the shift to digital text, it is possible to delineate a near reversal of this process, as material stratum is disembodied as it is reimagined from the stratum of data. N. Katherine Hayles has traced the historical processes through which “information lost its body,” as information ceased to be thought of as the “visible

⁶⁵⁵ For an insightful history of paratext, archiving, and referencing tools with particular attention to the problem of information management, see Ann M. Blair, *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age* (New Haven: Yale, 2010).

⁶⁵⁶ Similar concerns were already apparent in discourse on proposed phonetic reform in mid-1920s Japan; the philologist Yamada Yoshio (1873-1958) suggests that the diversity of possible human speech sounds could only be reproduced and likewise only catalogued by a machine. See Chapter 4. The way in which the process of observing and managing humans as agglomerations of data transforms the observer is nascent in the early work of Kon Wajirō, which I discuss in Chapter 3.

⁶⁵⁷ On this topic, see the discussion in Chapter 2.

physical quantity” that it was regarded as by engineers at Bell Labs in the 1940s.”⁶⁵⁸

Hayles demonstrates how the evolution of the cybernetic paradigm has led “information and materiality” to be understood as “distinct entities,” as a turn towards a logic of virtuality has separated both language and the human from a sense of “embodiment.”⁶⁵⁹

As such, the organization and conceptualization of disembodied information through pattern recognition becomes the means through which the “reconstituted corpus” can be imagined “as a body of information.”⁶⁶⁰ Lydia Liu has addressed how the concept of code in genetic science and the isolation of the DNA molecule has engendered a concept of the body itself as a kind of biological supercomputer.⁶⁶¹ In addition to reorienting the concept of the body, some scholars have argued that in addition to begetting a “likeness of computer networks to living bodies” and generating a cybernetic conjunction between body and electronic technology “so profoundly interconnected that [computers] may

⁶⁵⁸ Christian Marazzi, *Capital and Affects: The Politics of the Language Economy* trans. Giuseppina Mecchia (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2011), 87. N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetic, Literature, and Informatics* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1999), 2. On Bell Labs and the concept of information see Jon Gertner, *The Idea Factory: Bell Labs and the Great Age of American Innovation* (New York: Penguin, 2012) and James Gleick, *The Information: A History, a Theory, a Flood* (New York: Pantheon, 2011), among others.

⁶⁵⁹ Hayles, 12. Hayles identifies this division as the fundamental target of her work, as she historicizes its genesis. Virtuality for her is “the cultural perception that material objects are interpenetrated by information patterns.” Hayles, 13-14.

⁶⁶⁰ Hayles, 42. This strategy through which the body can be recognized and imagined as a contiguous and totalized whole stands in contrast to the strategies of narrative and the circulation of material commodities that I discuss in Chapter 3. For example, Yokomitsu Riichi and Kon Wajirô represent the reconstitution of the body through the movement of money and the purchase of goods in the department store within a pre-information consumer economy. In her analysis Hayles significantly notes that “when bodies are constituted as information, they can be not only sold but fundamentally reconstituted in response to market pressures,” pointing to the specifics of the economics of exchange in the post-industrial era; I discuss this theme further below.

⁶⁶¹ Lydia H. Liu, *The Freudian Robot: Digital Media and the Future of the Unconscious* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2010), 61-75. Liu cites the work of Eugene Thacker in *Biomedica* (2004).

behave like parts of the body,” new forms of digital media may “affect the body of the user at the profound level of altering DNA.”⁶⁶²

For the reader engaged with text as an electronic arrangement of information rather than as a series of type on paper, the reading of written text is inseparable from the prevalence of visual, auditory, and other forms of media. Today, the formatting of digital text takes place through the remediation of older forms of print media; blogs have developed magazine-like advertising and editorial staff and online newspapers and e-books are rapidly gaining prevalence. However, prior to becoming a medium for the dissemination of the written word, portable electronic devices first served as means for accessing digital audio and video.⁶⁶³ In the computer age, screens of digital text themselves are complexly imbricated with images, hypertext links, videos, sounds, advertisements, and other forms of embedded media, changing the nature of the relationship between the reader and the word itself.

In addition to these transformations to the boundaries of the book and the reader’s body, ideas and practices of writing itself undergo changes with the rise of digital text. At present, unconventional grammar, syntax, usage, orthography, and so forth that emerge from the sphere of online discourse and the particularities of programming language and symbol usage outside the phonetic alphabet are challenging the established limits of the

⁶⁶² Mark Poster, *The Mode of Information: Poststructuralism and Social Context* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1990), 4. Through his concept of “synaptogenesis,” Bernard Stiegler argues that certain tools precipitate qualitatively different arrangements of brain synapses; he links early flint tools to cortical development in the prehistoric period and cites several studies on the physiological repercussions to brain development for children raised in contact with digital devices from infancy. Stiegler, *Taking Care of Youth and the Generations*, trans. Stephen Barker (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2010), 17-22.

⁶⁶³ For a discussion of the role of visual media and oral performance in facilitating the expansion of the market for typographic text in Japan, see Chapter 1.

literary realm.⁶⁶⁴ These transformations take place not in a vacuum, but within the social world of the present, what Kawabata Yasunari called the “new lifestyle” (*atarashii seikatsu*) when describing the rapid changes to his world in 1924. The cosmopolitan character of Tokyo as an urban metropolis in Kawabata’s time helped he and his fellow writers gain a sense of simultaneity with the experience of everyday life in other consumer capitals such as New York, London, and Berlin. In the last decades of the 20th century, Tokyo has further grown into this role in becoming an international finance capital and what Saskia Sassen calls a “global city.”⁶⁶⁵ The growing ease of international travel since the 1970s, and the speed of movement of goods and information, has served to create a sense of globally shared space and time.

A corollary to this development has been the standardization and functionalization of architecture, which has acted as a homogenizing force on the shape and experience of space itself. Mark Auge has called this the age of the “non-place,” as the distinctiveness of the local lifeworld is overcome by interchangeable and indistinct locations such as airports, super-highways, and suburban developments.⁶⁶⁶ As Harold Innis has shown, all mediums of communication possess particular biases of space and time, but digital communications exert an especially salient effect on understandings of space. Mapping and location technologies recalibrate a user’s relationship to the physical world through the overlaying of electronic data and information with the representation of space.

⁶⁶⁴ For a discussion of a similar process in Japan in the 1920s, see Chapter 2.

⁶⁶⁵ See Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2001). It should be noted that the characterization of Tokyo as a “global” finance capital has more to do with the function of the city in the world economy than with the lived experience of most citizens, though even the lives of those living a far from “cosmopolitan” lifestyle are in a sense supported by the economy of the city as a whole within the international financial network.

⁶⁶⁶ Marc Auge, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* trans. John Lowe (New York: Verso, 1995).

Further, the sheer size and complexity of the discursive spaces based upon electronic telecommunications is such as to both obscure and compliment the processes identified by Auge, as movement to a particular node or place on the digital network is possible even while the physical body is in an airport, suburban home, or other spatially indistinct place.

The book historian Robert Darnton has noted how “computerized texts communicate a specious sense of mastery over space and time. They have links to the web, and we think of the web as infinite...such a notion of cyberspace has a strange resemblance to Saint Augustine’s conception of the mind of God – omniscient and infinite, because His knowledge extends everywhere, even beyond time and space.”⁶⁶⁷ Darnton’s quote demonstrates how the new realm of digital text evokes a sense of space that goes beyond the human to extend into the realm of the universal, eternal, and infinite. In short, the new medium is imbued with an almost religious and philosophical significance, as it conjures in the imagination a corpus of human knowledge accessible anywhere at any time. Google’s Books program’s goal of universal knowledge through the digitization of the entirety of human knowledge bears remarkable parallels to the rhetoric used by Iwanami Shoten upon the promulgation of the Iwanami Bunko series in Japan in 1927.⁶⁶⁸ Yet, as with Iwanami, Google’s gesture towards the liberation of wisdom unto the masses cannot be separated from the logics of economics and sales. For Iwanami, the idea that the company’s publishing work was part of a “project of eternity”

⁶⁶⁷ Darnton, “Lost and Found in Cyberspace,” in *The Case for Books* (New York: Public Affairs, 2009), 60.

⁶⁶⁸ For a complete discussion, see Chapter 1. Interestingly, the rhetoric of freedom is explicitly invoked both in Iwanami’s ideology and in the maxim coined by Silicon Valley pioneer Stewart Brand (1938-), “Information wants to be free,” which forms the basis of the ideological orientation of Google and many other contemporary digital technology companies.

(*eien no jigyô*) served not only as a lofty goal, but as a marketing strategy to sell their new medium of communication, the paperback, as a product in a competitive market.

The same might be said about Google's project. Darnton, who helped broker negotiations for book digitalization with Google while serving as Director of Harvard Libraries, has since expressed his skepticism to the repercussions of the archiving project after glimpsing the financial machinations and potential for information monopoly at work.⁶⁶⁹ Darnton's misgivings betray the complex ways in which the shift to digital text and electronic telecommunications technologies are tied to the emergence of a new Post-Fordist structure of economy and business that has developed in tandem with the rise of everyday computing. The de-regulation of global finance capital following the scuttling of the Bretton-Woods system in the early 1970s combined with a shift in the work force of economically advanced democracies towards "knowledge work" set the stage for the computer, the database, and electronic telecommunications networks to become tools for new, post-labor economies.⁶⁷⁰ This preceded their use as media for the production, dissemination, and consumption of literary, journalistic, informational, expressive, and other forms of written text within a broad public discursive sphere predicated on the digital screen as a medium for reading.

The shift from physical labor to knowledge work is intimately tied to the problem of disembodiment and the rise of information and digital media. As tools for both work and play, the computer and other electronic communication technologies facilitated the

⁶⁶⁹ See Darnton, "Google and the New Digital Future" and "Google and the Future of Books" in *The Case for Books*. Darnton's concerns suggest the continued efficacy of Harold Innis' concept of "monopolies of knowledge" as detailed in *Empire and Communications*. For an analysis of Innis' work, see the Introduction.

⁶⁷⁰ On the concept of "knowledge work," see Alan Liu, *The Laws of Cool: Knowledge Work and the Culture of Information* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2004), 23-72.

further blurring of the boundaries between production and consumption and communication and monetization. As such, consumer culture progressed to a new era in which “the real work...is capitalizing the concept of culture.”⁶⁷¹ Christian Marazzi has argued that in the Post-Fordist era, “communication and production overlap, and in fact they are now one and the same...we have a ‘speaking, ‘communicating’ production process, and the technologies used in this system can be considered true ‘linguistic machines,’ whose main focus is to facilitate and accelerate the circulation of data.”⁶⁷² For Marazzi, this “communicative mode of production” is based on the commodification of language itself, which, as disembodied communication, is central to the “information flows that are the basis of today’s immaterial economy.”⁶⁷³

This new stage of commodification meets with digital text much in the way that the book form and the commodity form coincided in Japan in the late 1920s. In Japan, printed typographic text as a material medium for communication became “ready-to-hand” as it was integrated into a consumer market based upon mass-production and industrial labor. Today, seemingly immaterial digital text circulating through electronic telecommunications networks constitutes an increasingly central medium of communication for a new economy based upon the commodification of ideas, images, language, and the self. Whereas in the typographic era the discrete units of exchange were consummate with the word and the letter as pieces of type, in the era of digital text, the individual electronic units that constitute text at the material level are too small to be perceived by the human eye. Alan Liu argues that in the digital age, “information

⁶⁷¹ Alan Liu, 54.

⁶⁷² Marazzi, 23. Marazzi places great importance on the concept of “just-in-time” flexible production, which interestingly can be traced to the “production and distribution models...born in Japan in the 1950s in the Toyota factories.” Marazzi, 25.

⁶⁷³ Marazzi, 59.

consumer without concern for technological mediation...is our contemporary habitus.”⁶⁷⁴

Fictions of immateriality and immediality surrounding electronic text conceal complex networks of economic exchange, processes of environmental extraction and physical labor, and the inescapable materiality of even digital media. At the same time, despite its impending rise, digital text remains the remediation of an older medium for reading that will continue to co-exist with the new means of communication for some time to come.⁶⁷⁵

Robert Darnton summarizes the situation as he makes the case for books: “Marshall McLuhan’s future has not happened. The web, yes; global immersion in television, certainly; media and messages everywhere, of course. But the electronic age did not drive the printed word into extinction...The “Gutenberg galaxy” still exists, and “typographic man” is still reading his way around it. Consider the book...it has proven to be a most marvelous machine.”⁶⁷⁶

⁶⁷⁴ Alan Liu, 41.

⁶⁷⁵ An interesting discussion of the way in which the form of the paper page continues to structure the reader’s relationship with text even beyond the paper era appears in Jacques Derrida, “Paper or Me, You Know...(New Speculations on a Luxury of the Poor),” in Derrida, *The Paper Machine*, 41-65.

⁶⁷⁶ Darnton, “E-Books and Old Books,” in *The Case for Books*, 67-68.

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