

SATA INEKO AND HIRABAYASHI TAIKO: THE CAFÉ AND *JOKYŪ* AS
A STAGE FOR SOCIAL CRITICISM

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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Sedimentations of transformations and experiences empowered the 20th century writers Sata Ineko and Hirabayashi Taiko as writers. Because of their mutual belief in the early principles of the proletarian literary movement—writing the reality of the working class from their perspectives—both produced works centered on daily life. In not only delineating but also examining the daily occurrences, their stories and critiques acutely exposed the issues, the conditions, and the exploitation of the working class under capitalism, particularly the unfair and unreasonable treatment of women and women workers under the patriarchal slogan “Good Wives and Wise Mothers” and the discrimination of women workers and writers even within the proletarian movement.

The café proved the best site for both to offer keen analyses. Materializing the actual working experiences of *jokyû* (café waitresses), they exposed the superficiality of Japanese modernity in the 1920s and 30s, the suppression and oppression of women under patriarchy, commodification and exploitation of working women under capitalism, and the ultimate consequences—social myopia and deterioration of human life. While the café was for *jokyû* a site of exploration and challenge by overturning the dominant

power hierarchy practiced in society, for Sata and Hirabayashi, writing about the café challenged the prejudice and confinement of existing categorizations such as “women,” “women workers,” *jokyû*,” “women writers,” and “proletarian writers.”

Both Sata and Hirabayashi treated the café and *jokyû* as realistic and multifaceted. To strengthen this realism, both writers relied on their own corporeal experiences and sensations, supporting honest illustrations of power dynamics and the dual-system oppression of women at play within and beyond the café environment. Both acknowledged the body as a site of complication and possibility. Through their acknowledgments beyond the surface inscriptions that restrict and limit who and what lies within, both Sata and Hirabayashi contended that the body was an interactive and potentially productive catalyst for change. For them, the corporeal experience proved more effective for gaining consciousness, obtaining class-consciousness, and eventually achieving ideological resolution than through doctrinal readings and teachings.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

“*Tôsei Ginza-bushi*” was a song released by Japan Victor Company in 1928. Written by Saijô Yaso, its lyrics paint a portrayal of Ginza cafés and *jokyû*.¹

Tokyo Ginza is a scary place
With Lion and Tiger serving sake
Mii-chan and Haa-chan will finish work
Their poured liqueur always heartless
Even after one hundred visits
No love for a 20-sen tip²

The Lion and Tiger appearing in the song refer to Ginza’s Kafé Raion, established in 1911, and the Kafé Taigâ, which opened in 1926. Throughout the late 1920s and 30s, many songs delineated the life of café and *jokyû*. Another of Saijô’s songs, titled “*Jokyû no uta*,” was made for the 1931 film “*Jokyû*” based on the novel “*Jokyû: Sayoko no maki*,” written by Hirotsu Kazuo.³

¹ “Café waitress” is the closest English translation of *jokyû*. Since *jokyû* has endured added special functions beyond those of a server of drinks and goods, this project uses the Japanese word *jokyû* rather than the English translation to signify the difference.

² Lyrics by Saijô Yaso, music by Nakayama Shimpei, 1928. Nishizawa Sô, *Zatsugaku Kayô Shôwa shi* (Tokyo: Mainichi Shimbun sha, 1980), 13.

³ Originally, Hirotsu Kazuo serialized his story “*Jokyû*” in *Fujinkôron* for eight months beginning in July 1930.

I am a bar flower, blooming at night
Red lipstick and sleeves of silk
A dancing maiden in neon light
Wrapped in sadness and sparkling silk, I am a flower of tears

I wish I could leave and live with my boy
I am a bar flower, sad for my son
Singing this lullaby to him⁴

Portrayed in popular songs as heartless capricious women or sad suffering mothers of small children, most portrayals of *jokyû* in literary fiction by male writers strongly reflected their own desires, pursuing the erotic sexual object or enigma. The characters were often mystified, glamorized, and idealized,⁵ indeed, sometimes exaggerated and empowered as well as trivialized for pure entertainment.⁶ Proletarian literature by male writers often depicted *jokyû* as victims of society awakening to class-consciousness or as understanding supporters of revolutionists.⁷

The café is also portrayed as an entertaining spot, comforting conformed worn-out nerves of monotonous life under capitalism. Another popular 1928 song, “*Dôtonbori Kôshinkyoku*,” states as follows:

⁴ Lyrics by Saijô Yaso, music by Shiojiri Seihachi 1931. Nishizawa Sô, *Zatsugaku Kayô Shôwa shi* (Tokyo: Mainichi Shimbun sha, 1980), 264-65.

⁵ Naomi in *Chijin no ai* by Tanizaki Jun'ichirô in 1924, and Kimiyo in *Tsuyu no atosaki* by Nagai Kafû in 1931 are good examples.

⁶ Hirotsu Kazuo wrote two stories about *jokyû*. Both stories in first-person narrative presented confessions of Sayako and Kimiyo that were sensationalized as well as trivialized. Hirotsu Kazuo, *Jokyû: Sayoko no maki* (Tokyo: Chûôkôron sha, 1931) and *Jokyû Kimiyo* (Tokyo: Chûôkôron sha, 1932).

⁷ Kobayashi Takiji wrote a short story called *Takiko Sono ta* in 1928, portraying Takiko with class-consciousness and an understanding of the urgent need for social revolution to eliminate exploitation such as prostitution. Kobayashi also wrote *Tô-seikatsusha* in 1932, and described the female protagonist Kasahara's sacrifice of becoming a café worker as helping her partner's proletarian mission.

Red lights and blue lights at Dôtonbori
Gather for love on the river's surface
How can I forget this café

When babbling drunk, she's a shameless hussy
When calm and composed, she's the queen of the café
How can I forget Dôtonbori⁸

Illustrating “modern” contrivances—outdoor neon signs, fancy décor, colorful lights playing the darkness of the dining room, exotic scents, cocktails—the lyrics patronized and sexualized the café. Self-proclaimed café connoisseurs also glamorized and sexualized cafés of late 1920s Ginza.⁹ As observers as well as café customers, they delineated the atmosphere, emphasizing characteristics of each *jokyû* as well as audio effects, such as jazz music and the laughter of patrons and squeals of *jokyû*. They objectified *jokyû* as stage décor, sexualized with descriptions of physical flourish, facial and body features including particular hairstyles and detailed description of kimonos—suggesting strategies of victory over *jokyû*.

The social critics projected their deeply rooted egos onto the nearby object of *jokyû* and enjoyed experiencing a mood of fulfilled desire.¹⁰ The critics explained their

⁸ Lyrics by Hibi Shigejirô, music by Shiojiri Seihachi, 1928. Nishizawa Sô, *Zatsugaku Kayô Shôwa shi* (Tokyo: Mainichi Shimbun sha, 1980), 114.

⁹ *Ginza Saiken* by Andô Kôsei (Tokyo: Shunyôdô, 1931), *Kafêtsû* by Sakai Mahito (Tokyo: Yonrokushoin, 1930), and *Ginza* by Matsuzaki Tenmin (Tokyo: Ginbura gaido sha, 1927) exemplify books focusing more on the contrivances of café life.

¹⁰ Onoda Somu, in the section of *Ginza jokyû fûzoku* (*Ginza Jokyû and Their Manners*) in his book *Ginzatsû*, describes *jokyû* as in between a *geisha* and a movie star, but criticizes the unpolished manners of *jokyû* as lacking the gorgeousness of a modern movie actress and the eroticism of a *geisha*. Onoda Somu, *Ginzatsû* (Tokyo: Shiroku Shoin, 1930), 39-40. Kitagawa Kusahiko presents a similar argument, saying that *jokyû* is a deformed creature (*kikeina mono*), neither a prostitute (*inbaifu*) nor the daughter of anyone (*reijô*), she is also not a maidservant (*jochû*). He criticizes their pretensions and imitations, and argues that *jokyû* is “a phony in the ‘ultramodern’ entertainment and amusement business” in comparison to cabaret

expectations of *jokyû*—of obtaining the polished professional qualities of a new urban entertainer and symbol of modernity. However, superimposing modernity on *jokyû* and expecting *jokyû* to be a “modern girl”¹¹ reflected their own desire: claiming to be a connoisseur of “modern and urban” trends, overcoming the unsophisticated developing nature of *jokyû*, and ultimately creating “trendy women in current Japan.” Such expectations ironically expose twisted egos: men claiming to be trendsetters but at the same time being no different from conventional men who objectify women as sexual objects and expose their sexual appetite for a new kind of female entertainer.

“The café plays the two major roles in the process of a woman’s liberation.” This is the statement made by Murobushi Kôshin in his article *Kafé Shakaigaku (Café Sociology)* contributed to *Chûôkôron* in February 1929. Murobushi explains that the café provides a working opportunity for underprivileged women without any vocational training, firstly helping women break the bonds of the household and avoid becoming slavelike servants and prostitutes, and secondly offering the possibility for true love. This type of viewpoint did not seem strange or extreme at the time. In the very first sentence of the section *Jokyû* in his book *Ginza Saiken*, Andô Kôsei expressed the same

women, who are “representative of urban pleasure on the European continent.” Kitagawa Kusahiko, “Kafé, Bâ, Kyabarê,” in *Ryôki Sentan no kôsatsu: Gendai ryôkisentan zukan* (Tokyo: Shinchôsha, 1932), 16-18.

¹¹ For a comprehensive discourse on the modern girl phenomenon, see *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense: The Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times* by Miriam Silverberg (Berkeley and Los Angeles, Calif.: University of California Press, 2006). For detailed perceptions of the modern girl by Japanese intellectuals, see “The Moga Sensation: Perspectives of the *Modan Gâru* in Japanese Intellectual Circles during the 1920s” by Barbara Hamill Satô (*Gender & History*, vol. 5 no. 3, Autumn 1993), 363-81.

view.¹² Andô emphasized the many benefits of this new occupation coming with the advent of women's liberation, pointing out its availability to women of any background and a wide range of ages, with no required skills, simple regulations, and a chance for financial independence. Finally, by listing all women writers with experience as *jokyû*, Andô indicated that the lives of *jokyû* would be a touchstone for the liberated woman.¹³ For these male critics, *jokyû* became an excellent object of research; they were enchanted with the potential of liberating a woman. These views lay bare a problem for social critics: their inability to face up to reality even when their research project was phenomenology.

In the field of social critique, *jokyû* were often categorized as prostitutes and became targets for social criticism and control by law, since their jobs were considered immoral and “loose.”¹⁴ Even women's movement groups excluded them from their organizations because of the “indecent of their job.”¹⁵ Discriminated against by other

¹² Andô Kôsei, *Ginza Saiken* (Tokyo: Shunyôdô, 1931), 127.

¹³ Ibid. He listed: Uno Chiyo, Hayashi Fumiko, Hirabayashi Taiko, Nakamoto Takako, and Sata Ineko.

¹⁴ Kusama Yaso'o, *Jokyû to baishôfu* (Tokyo: Bonjinsha, 1930), 5 and 315-16. While categorizing *shôgi* (娼妓), *geigi* (芸妓), *shakufu* (酌婦), *meishuya-onna* (銘酒屋女), *kôtônaiji* (高等内侍), and *gaishô* (街娼) as professional prostitutes (職業的売笑婦—*shokugyô-teki baishôfu*), Kusama categorizes café *jokyû*, dancers, and women clerks as occasional prostitutes (臨機的売笑婦—*rinki-teki baishôfu*). Kusama recognizes this “occasional prostitute” as a new type of prostitute, and characterizes their prostitution as a compromise within a “regular” job, based on their choice, and conducted inconspicuously.

Dôke Seiichirô, in his research book on the pleasure facilities of Tokyo between 1912 and 1924, *Baishunfu-ronkô*, categorizes café *jokyû* in the group of women “poisoning public decency and morals” (社会風教を毒する女の群—*shakaifûkyô o dokusuru onna no mure*). Dôke Seiichirô, *Baishunfu-ronkô*, ed. Minami Hiroshi, Hayashi Kiyohiro, and Ono Tsunenori. vol. 10, *Kindaishominseikatsushi: Kyôroku · Sei*. (Tokyo: San'ichi shobô, 1988), 279-82.

¹⁵ Fujime Yuki, *Sei no rekishigaku* (Tokyo: Fuji shuppan, 1998), 289-90. *Shokugyô fujin renmei* (Working Women's League), launched in Osaka in 1926, refused membership for *jokyû*, since café work was “sinful”

labor organizations, only proletarian women unions invited *jokyū* to join and fight for their rights.¹⁶

There were, however, researchers who conducted extensive investigations on *jokyū* and their multiple issues. Detailed observations by Osaka Mainichi Shimbun news reporter Murashima Yoriyuki and Japanese sociologist Ôbayashi Munetsugu revealed cruel mechanisms of the café under capitalism and patriarchy, particularly the commodification of women through sexual exploitation.¹⁷ Both clearly considered *jokyū* as victims and advocated the urgent need for *jokyū* unions as well as their recognition as *shokugyô fujin* (workingwomen).

For Sata Ineko (1904-1998) and Hirabayashi Taiko (1905-1972), the writers featured in this project who established their careers in the late 1920s, the café was just another working place: being *jokyū* was always part of the everyday lived experience. Their café stories expose the painful experiences of *jokyū* and illustrate the tension between the eroticism sought by customers and the repulsion felt by *jokyū*. Their highly

and *jokyū* were dishonorable. For a more detailed explanation of discrimination against *jokyū* by women's "progressive" organizations, see the section on "Jokyū to sono undô" in *Sei no rekishigaku* by Fujime. Fujime, 288-90.

¹⁶ Ibid., 290. The *Osaka jokyū dōmei* (Osaka Jokyū League) was established in April 1922, fought together with other workers by participating in rallies and labor disputes, and marched in the May Day demonstrations of 1922. (For a more detailed explanation of unionization efforts, see footnote 212.) However, in July 1922, the Osaka branch of *Nihon rôdô sôdōmei* (Japan Confederation of Labor) dismissed *jokyū* from union membership citing a lack of serious spirit and criticizing them as harming the activism of the overall labor movement. The section "Jokyū to sono undô" in *Sei no rekishigaku* explains more about their union activism and dismissal. Fujime, 292.

¹⁷ Murashima Yoriyuki, *Kanraku no ôkyū kafé* (Tokyo: Bunka seikatsu kenkyūkai, 1929), *Osaka kafé dan'atsushi* (Tokyo: Chûôkôron sha, 1929), and *Kafé Kôgengaku* (Tokyo: Nichinichi shobô, 1931). Ôbayashi Munetsugu, *Jokyū no shinkenkyū: Osaka-shi niokeru kafé jokyū no chōsa* (Tokyo: Ganshōdō, 1932).

individualized voices rarely found acknowledgement in discourses of *jokyû* by historians, social critics, literary scholars, and writers of fiction. With the absence of voices of workingwomen in historical discourse and the resulting lack of focus on the individual experiences of these *jokyû*, overgeneralization adds itself to an incomplete cultural investigation and analysis of workingwomen and *jokyû* alike.

On top of that, in the 1920s and 30s, such works by Sata and Hirabayashi were highly marginalized, labeled as “women’s literature,” and often the subject of negative scrutiny by male writers and literary critics. While their stories were evaluated as not good enough to fulfill the expectations of “fine literary art” as established by contemporary male critics and writers, the stories were also judged to be too personal, trivial, and weak in proletarian literary circles. It was under such scrutiny and criticism that both Sata and Hirabayashi produced the works in this project, writing about the lived experience of *jokyû* for the public readership. In addition to exposing the life of *jokyû* as a lived experience, both writers unveiled the complexity of the politics of gender and sexuality in cafés and offered a new understanding of women’s life in general. By using opportunities to voice the issues of *jokyû* in their stories, they rejected passive roles and explored innovative avenues to free themselves from existing power mechanisms in their fiction and in their own lives. At the same time, each writer sought to express their own literary form and, importantly, their own voice beyond the established and tightly constructed restrictions of the existing literary circle and movement.

This dissertation will analyze texts by Sata Ineko and Hirabayashi Taiko to fill the various gaps in the discussion of *jokyū* created by historians, writers, and literary scholars, and shed new light on gender politics in cafés and the realm of women's literature. The project will primarily analyze two short stories from each writer: *Ikari* (*Anger*, 1929), and *Resutoran Rakuyō* (*Restaurant Rakuyō*, 1929) by Sata Ineko, and *Rôdôsha no tsuma* (*The Worker's Wife*, 1929), and *Haru* (*Spring*, 1934) by Hirabayashi Taiko.

To help grasp the roles of the café and *jokyū* as Sata and Hirabayashi cast them in their works, Chapter II explains the history and mechanism of the café. To help comprehension of the struggles and desires of *jokyū* under the strong influence of superficial transformation and against the unshakable continuity behind the slogan Good Wives and Wise Mothers, this chapter also contours the history of womanhood between the Meiji era through the early Showa, which greatly affected and controlled the lives of both writers.

In addition, Chapter II provides background on the Japanese proletarian movement and the Japanese proletarian literary movement, since both writers were deeply involved in them. Through careful observation of each writer's actions and reactions to repeated metamorphoses within movements, the project can help specify their writing philosophies and characteristics, more accurately clarifying the style and content of their works in the milieu of the proletarian literary movement.

The chapters for each writer (Chapter III and Chapter IV) begin with the introduction of their life from birth until the end of World War II. Before analysis of the main texts, the project introduces critiques of their works by their contemporary literary critics and writers, and discusses the problems of such critiques. The project also investigates their philosophy of writing, including the early influences to their writing styles and their innovative writing techniques.

The analysis of the main texts will be carefully accompanied by an extensive reading of other writings such as their essays, social and literary critiques, and their approach to the social issues: all were written around the same year as the main texts, permitting the presentation of a holistic new approach and critique to their works. Finally, the project concludes with the purpose of the café and *jokyû* as their chosen stage for social criticism.

In this project, the listing of Japanese names will be employed in the order of family name first, given name second, throughout the text. Unless indicated, the author of this dissertation translated all works not published in English.

CHAPTER II
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

1. The Japanese Café

a. The Multi-functionality of the Japanese Café

In the early Meiji period, a *Yokohama ijin-kan* (a house built in foreign style for the residential comfort of foreign dignitaries in Yokohama) became the first place to offer western-style coffee service in Japan. The customer had come to see a foreigner who lived at the settlement, and ordered a cup of coffee.¹⁸ In April 1888, Zheng Yongqing opened *Kahhisakan* in Shitaya Nishikuromonchô, Tokyo.¹⁹ *Kahhisakan* blended a Chinese teahouse design with a western-style café, which together “provided an international and cultural atmosphere.” With massive importation from the west, foreign things to see and to consume primed the curiosity and opened the pocketbooks of spectators. Enticing male customers with drinks such as coffee, milk, and wine, and

¹⁸ Hatsuda Tohru, *Kafé to Kissaten: Modan toshi no tamariba*, INAX Album vol. 18 (Tokyo: INAX, 1993), 11.

¹⁹ Zheng Yongqing, who came from the family of a Chinese interpreter in Nagasaki, went to study at Yale University at the age of sixteen, but was not able to finish his study because of kidney disease and returned to Japan.

providing newspapers and magazines as well as fitness equipment,²⁰ Zheng had created a new space specifically westernized for the socialization and relaxation of city men.²¹

To all this, the Japanese café of the 1900s soon added its greatest attraction—attentive service by women. In 1905, *Taiwan Kissaten* opened in Tokyo's Ginza district selling aromatic Oolong tea and providing western food served by women—the first café to employ female servers. *Taiwan Kissaten* later grew to serve forty-five kinds of western alcohol, and function as a salon for celebrities, writers, and artists.

Historically in pre-modern Japan, *meshimori-onna* (literally, food-serving women) and *chakumi-onna* (literally, tea-serving women) had served food and drinks, and the occasional exotic service, to male customers.²² But the sweeping nature of the twentieth century brought an unexpected departure even from the French café—ostensibly the model for the Japanese café and whose servers were exclusively men—Japan's café industry had produced the advent of women servers. City life created a market for serving food and drinks to working men by beautiful young women; coming

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Andô Kôsei (1900-1970), an art historian, introduces the history of the Japanese café in his book *Ginza Saiken*, and comments that *Kahhîsakan* was made to satisfy Zheng's curiosity as a westernizer. Andô Kôsei, *Ginza Saiken*, 71.

²² *Meshimori-onna* worked at inns and way stations, providing food, drinks, and exotic services. For more information, see *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense* by Miriam Silverberg. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006), 79. *Mizujaya* (a teahouse serving drinks and food) opened in Edo in 1775, and became popular during the *Bunka bunsei* period (1804-1830). A woman server, *chakumi-onna* received a tip from a customer while providing food, drinks, and erotic service. Some *chakumi-onna* were so popular that woodblock artists, such as Kitagawa Utamaro, Suzuki Harunobu, and Torii Kiyonaga printed their portraits. More detailed information is available in Nishizawa Sô, 50-51.

to a café was sure to be more appealing to a man in the throes of modernity at the end of a day than home to a meal with a worn-out domestic partner.²³

Combining old and new pleasures and excitements, the Japanese café became a space for male entertainment. Early cafés of Tokyo, *Meizon Kônosu* (Maison Kônosu) in 1908, and *Kafé Purantan* (Café Printemps) in 1911, in addition to the brilliantly innovative employment of female personal attendants, also exemplified a design for nostalgia for foreign countries such as France.²⁴ *Kafé Kisaragi*, *Kafé Mikado*, and *Kafé Namba* opened in the early 1910s in Osaka, also shared the same functions (providing a

²³ Many self-proclaimed café connoisseurs and reporters expressed their excitement and pleasure at being served by beautiful young women. Andô, 71, and Murashima Yoriyuki, *Kafé jidai* (Tokyo: Aporosha, 1931, 13-14). Murashima Yoriyuki explains there are social reasons to trigger the changes in café industry. He explains how much people in a modern age get exhausted from tedious labor and how seriously they need something exciting to ease their fatigue and worn-out nerve. This new modern fatigue accelerated its degree of stimulation: from just café itself (as a stimulant) to exciting atmospheric effects and spontaneous sensations. The business of capitalism did not miss this opportunity to make the café a place to arouse human senses, cure worn-out bodies and nerves, and generate a profit. Murashima Yoriyuki, “Kafé Kôgengaku,” in *Kafé Kôgengaku* of Murashima Yoriyuki chosaku senshû, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Kashiwa shobô, 2004), 13 and 17.

²⁴ *Meizon Kônosu*, serving French food with a woman server, was built in Nihonbashi Koamichô, Tokyo. The owner, Monsieur Okuda loved art and literature and published a magazine, *Kafuee yowa*. This café was popular among “highly educated men” such as Kitahara Hakushû, Takamura Kôtarô, and Yosano Akiko. Wada Hirofumi commented that for artists and writers who had already been to Paris, this café truly provided a space to recall France. The magazine introduced a poem about a woman server. Wada Hirofumi, *Tekusuto no modan toshi* (Tokyo: Fûbôsha, 1999), 135-38. Wada Hirofumi, “Modan toshi no kafé,” in *Kafé of Korekushon Modan toshibunka* vol. 12 (Tokyo: Yumani shobô, 2005), 841-42.

Kafé Purantan, the first shop to use the word “café,” opened in Ginza Hiyoshichô, Tokyo. Intellectuals who had returned home from abroad desired to have a gathering place similar to ones they had experienced in Europe, a café in the city where they could drink and socialize. A young playwright, Osanai Kaoru named a café “Printemps,” which means spring in French. The café served western food and western cocktails using a “woman boy” (onna booi). At this time, women servers were not yet called *jokyû*. A news reporter and a self-proclaimed café connoisseur, Matsuzaki Tenmin, commented that this was the beginning of young and beautiful women working as waitresses. Matsuzaki Tenmin, *Ginza*, 75. For more information about *Café Printemps*, see *Ginza Saiken* by Andô, and *Kafé to Kissaten: Modan toshi no tamariba* by Hatsuda.

salon for the intellectuals) and characters (western alcohol served by women).²⁵ By the 1910s, the woman server had become the face of the Japanese café.

In August 1911, the large scale *Kafé Raion* (Café Lion), built in Ginza, Tokyo, featured many young *jokyū* in matching *kimonos* and white aprons.²⁶ In the same way that earlier cafés had catered to intellectuals, *Kafé Raion* conjured a foreign atmosphere of newness and provided excitement and stimulation through the presence of a live orchestra and women servers.²⁷ This new style of serving alcohol with alluring erotic charm—thus emphasizing more than drink and food—strongly exhibited capitalism’s growing commodification of anything profitable, and as a result made the café accessible to men of varying status by the early 1920s.²⁸

In 1923, the year of the Great Kanto Earthquake that devastated Tokyo, the café industry underwent a major shift regarding its size and for-profit business. The size of

²⁵ Murashima, *Kafé jidai*, 21-23.

²⁶ *Kafé Raion* was a three-story building: the first floor was a bar and salon, the second floor was equipped a dining hall and entertainment room, and the third floor had small compartmentalized rooms. This café may have been modeled on London’s Café Lyon.

²⁷ Nishizawa Sô, 254-55. Wada Hirofumi, *Tekusuto no modan toshi*, 139-40 and *Modan toshi no Kafé*, 843-45. In November 1911, *Kafé Paurista* (Café Paulista) started serving Brazilian coffee. Differentiating from cafés serving alcohol by *jokyū*, *Kafé Paurista* became known for serving coffee as well as western food such as curry rice by boy waiters. Andô, 79.

²⁸ Male pleasure was enticed by not only the presence of a woman beside him but also excitement of a game-like relationship or exchange with *jokyū*. Their stimulation comes from controlling and winning “a maidenly and respectable, daughter-like woman.” Murashima points out in his words “the modern man, living in a speed age, appreciate the speedy, simple and informal, and inexpensive procedure to enjoy *jokyū* than the time-consuming and complicated process to play with a *geisha*.” Murashima, *Kafé Kôgengaku*, 23. Murashima also explains differences between *geisha* and *jokyū*: while *geisha* is too professional with a conventional interest and attire and gives an impression of a woman in business, *jokyū* is more free and amateurish, and looks like a maiden or the daughter of somebody. The façade of *jokyū* appeals to a modern customer. Murashima, *Kafé Kôgengaku*, 181.

the café was increased, and to pay for this business trend, they began preying more on the desires of male customers in the unprecedented way of the lure of exotic foreignness, sensationalism, and female sexuality.²⁹ *Kafé Taigâ* (Café Tiger), started business in Ginza, Tokyo in 1924, marketed beauty of *jokyû* and erotic service aggressively. By minimizing physical distance between *jokyû* and customers, this café changed a role of *jokyû*, from serving food and drinks to attracting a customer with female eroticism.³⁰

b. Mechanisms of the Café

It is no exaggeration to say that café functioned as a stage with mechanisms to entice desires and to ease and stimulate the exhausted senses of workingmen, and its atmospheric effects served powerfully to relax their mind. The incentive smell of alcohol and the aroma of perfume worn by the *jokyû* enchanted customers.

Adorned with fresh designs, foreign plants, and western-style furniture, the interior lighting of the café was also newly devised to create an eroticized space and enhance the sexual attraction of *jokyû*.³¹ For exterior visual sensationalism, cafés used

²⁹ Other devices to maximize exoticism as well as newness was using foreign words, such as English and French, for part of a café's name. The name of foreign countries and popular movie stars were often used. Even Japanese words were written in *katakana* to add a foreign flavor. To make customers remember a café, its matchbox designs were elaborate, with avant-guard compositions and erotic drawings. The matchbox was handed out by *jokyû* on the street to draw more customers into the café.

³⁰ A news reporter Matsuzaki Tenmin explains that the major difference between Café Lion and Café Tiger is the qualities of *jokyû*: “homely *jokyû*” at Lion and “cheerful, flamboyant, beautiful, and erotic” *jokyû* at Tiger. Matsuzaki, *Ginza*, 78-81. Wada Hirofumi points out that difference of *jokyû* at the two cafés is not derived from their individual characteristics but from transformation of a role of *jokyû*. Wada, *Modan toshi no kafé*, 844-45.

³¹ The Osaka café started this stage-management method, using elaborate lighting in the early 1920s. The elaborate lighting—darkening the interior and using colorful ceiling and table lights—made *jokyû* “a flower

neon signs to attract customers,³² and often displayed unexpected large-scale objects of decoration.³³

To appeal auditory senses, cafés used live orchestras and jazz bands.³⁴ Murashima describes the sorrowful sobbing sounds of the saxophone and how the jazz sound caressed the nerves of customers,³⁵ and with coquettish and seductive laughter, and every sexy whisper, the audio effect only increased their intoxication.

The white apron had imparted powerful images of neatness, cleanliness, and purity.³⁶ At the same time, a body wrapped in *kimono* with flapping white apron had given *jokyû* a sexualized synonym in “a butterfly at night” (*yoru no chô*).³⁷ The mixture

of the night,” and the trend quickly spread to other cafés in Tokyo. Wada, *Tekusuto no modan toshi*, 145-46. “Red light, blue light” became a synonym for café, and as mentioned in the Introduction, the lyrics of popular songs of the 1920s and 30s incorporated this phrase.

³² Murashima describes walking across the café district of Tokyo “like walking through a tube of neon signs.” Murashima, *Kafé Kôgengaku*, 136-37.

³³ *Kafé Kuroneko* (Café Black Cat) is one example, with the exterior shaped like a trading vessel. This café might have used Café Chat-Noir in Paris as a model. Wada, *Tekusuto no modan toshi*, 142-44. Some cafés decorated their exteriors with Moulin Rouge in five-color illuminations. Ôbayashi, 182.

³⁴ With the development and popularization of the phonograph record, jazz was fully utilized at cafés.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 17-19. Jazz was brought to Japan by a Philippine band that played Kôbe Oriental Hotel. In the middle of 1920s, Kôbe Oriental Hotel lost its business. The band began playing at a dance hall in Dôtonbori, Osaka, and eventually at Osaka cafés. Combined with Japanese ballads (*kouta*), jazz quickly became popular. Murashima, *Kafé Kôgengaku*, 17-18.

³⁶ Pointing out the poem contributed by Yosano Akiko to *Kafuee yowa* in 1923, Wada Hirofumi explains how a female server with a white apron superimposes the image of the Holy Mother, the Virgin Mary. Yosano Akiko composed the following poem: *Ofuyan o Santa Maria to omou made yowa ni you hitori to narinu* (literally, “I became intoxicated by a night story until I began to think of Ofu as Santa Maria”). Wada, *Tekusuto no modan toshi*, 135-37.

³⁷ Nishizawa explains that the word butterfly (*cho*) derived from the bowknot (*chô musubi*) on the white apron. Nishizawa, 260.

of exoticism in an apron with lace trimmings from a foreign country and purity—and a desirable virginity—in the color white, superimposed sexuality on the *jokyû*.

Abandonment in the early 1920s of the white apron in Osaka at last changed the nature of the café for *jokyû* everywhere;³⁸ the clean white apron—the part of the uniform that had signified *jokyû* as mere carriers of food and drink—was intentionally “stripped away.” While the Japanese café did not begin as a place for serving female eroticism, the profitable innovations emerging in Osaka were quickly adopted in Tokyo, and even in the many Tokyo cafés that still allowed white aprons, customers entered no longer eager for food and drink but instead in expectations of the “erotic” service of *jokyû*. As café owners continued to maximize the beauty and eroticism of *jokyû* by demanding more of them—emphasis on out-of ordinary and normality³⁹—the shift pressed *jokyû* into much more intimate services.

Meanwhile, the physical proximity between *jokyû* and customer was minimized so that customers had “the pleasure of sensing the softness and warmth of a *jokyû* and the beat of their pulse through a thin kimono.”⁴⁰ This proximity was also manipulated by

³⁸ Both Murashima and Ôbayashi conducted extensive research on *jokyû* in Osaka and reported that Kobori Katsuzô, the owner of *Kafé Yunion* (Café Union) in Osaka, had initiated this change that proved so significant for the café industry.

³⁹ To emphasize their difference from an ordinary wife, *jokyû* were required to wear expensive *kimonos* made of silk crepe rather than muslin, to adopt various hairstyles to accentuate their facial features, and to apply elaborate makeup. Sexual charm was called “itto” and was encouraged and desired. “Itto” originated from the 1927 American film “It” featuring Clara Bow, whose character possessed an abundance of “it.”

⁴⁰ Murashima, “Osaka kafé dan’atsu-shi,” 424-25.

special seating, called box seats so a customer could sit beside *jokyû*.⁴¹

Compartmentalizing with high walls to serve a customer in a private manner went to extremes, and one-on-one service introduced by the Osaka café industry guaranteed customer satisfaction and a changed life for all *jokyû*.

From the late 1920s, cafés came to Tokyo using money from Osaka, overwhelming the existing café industry in Tokyo. Their distinctive stage-management and ability to create unprecedented events and provide erotic services popularized the café. By presenting *jokyû* as easy and friendly lovers, Osaka-style cafés enticed men of any means.⁴²

2. The Construction of Ideal Womanhood

While the body of *jokyû*, integral to café décor, was commodified as an erotic sexual object, the rise of ideal womanhood traversed numerous parallel phases throughout Japanese history, with the Confucian paragon of womanhood, Good Wives and Wise Mothers (*ryôsai kenbo*) adding layers and presenting “altered” images. Before the implementation of specific laws and policies during the Meiji era, beginning 1868, only a small number of women limited to the upper class had received formal education

⁴¹ With sitting side-by-side on a train considered romantic, this box seat was also called a romance-car seat.

⁴² Beginning with *Kafé Yunion* in 1928, the advance of cafés into Tokyo with money from Osaka continued. In 1929, *Saron Haru* opened with a bright neon sign, *Bijin-za*, brought thirty *jokyû* from Osaka by airplane in June 1930. Transport of passengers by air started in Japan in 1928, and airfare was expensive. Bringing thirty *jokyû* to Tokyo by air was sensational or *sentan* (trendy and ultramodern). *Nichirin* shone at night by decorating a whole building with a neon light in October 1930.

in Confucian disciplines. The vast majority of Japanese women lived without this opportunity, but at the same time unrestricted by Confucian ethics.⁴³

In the first years of the Meiji period, however, the government set out to control every aspect of daily life under the rubric of creating a modern industrialized society, and in this process, creation of a “proper” image of womanhood became useful to the nation-state. The ideology of womanhood dictated by the Meiji government’s new laws gradually penetrated deep into family life in tangible forms, from compulsory elementary school for girls as well as boys, to the presence of influential discussions in popular magazines. These forces served to distill the various aspects of women of all classes into the constructed ideal woman.

Considerable Japanese economic development from the 1900s on into the Taisho period (1912-1926) also significantly influenced the concept of womanhood, reflecting changes in material life (from feudalist to capitalist economy), economic strength (wartime production booms), and international affairs (the advent of imperialism). Newly introduced studies from the West in human physiology, sexology, and psychology further perturbed the concept in these and subsequent years.

Due to their prevalence in daily life, these influences ultimately coalesced to create expectations and severely restrict women, and the lives of Sata Ineko and Hirabayashi Taiko were no exception. Both depict in their writings the superficiality of

⁴³ Nagahata Michiko, *No no onna: Meiji josei seikatsushi* (Tokyo: Hyōronsha, 1980), 25-26.

the transformation, the confused concept of new womanhood, and how the attempted manufacture of ideal womanhood profoundly affected girls, women, wives, and mothers.

a. Sources of Construction

The government project of constructing womanhood began with the Family Registration Act (*Kosekihō*) of 1871. This act established a “household system” (*ie-seido*) wherein each household became a unit of society with men at the head, and clarifying and bestowing inheritance rights solely on them.⁴⁴ This new system established a hierarchy subordinating women by legally defining the status and role of women in the household. The woman’s role was firmly defined as motherhood and the management of the domestic sphere, with the objective of strengthening the moral foundations of male society by raising children. Indeed, women were to help their nation in gender-specific ways by creating obedient children for a strong army.⁴⁵

While the newly designated system restricted their role to the inside of the home, marking them as socially incompetent, the government also excluded women from public affairs.⁴⁶ In 1890, the cabinet promulgated the Assembly Ordinance (*Shūkaijōrei*),

⁴⁴ Nishikawa Yūko, “Sumai no hensen to ‘katei’ no seiritsu,” in *Kindai*, vol. 4 of *Nihon josei seikatsushi*, ed. Joseishi sōgō kenkyūkai (Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 1990), 31. Nishikawa explains the transformation of the conventional concept *ie*, which varied among class and area, to *ie-seido* (household system), which was standardized. As to succession, various cases such as inheritance by eldest sister or youngest child were also regulated to allow the eldest son to claim inheritance.

⁴⁵ Nishikawa explains that *ie* used to fall under the jurisdiction of a feudal domain or village community. Under the control of the Meiji government, *ie* functioned as the basic register system for the modern nation.

⁴⁶ Hirota Masaki, “Bunmeikaika to josei kaihōron,” in *Kindai*, vol. 4 of *Nihon joseishi*, ed. Joseishi sōgō kenkyūkai (Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 1982), 5-6.

blocking women from participating in political meetings or joining political parties,⁴⁷ and in 1900, Article 5 of the Public Police Law (*Chian Keisatsu Hô*) reiterated the prohibition of women from all political activities.⁴⁸ Another new regulation, the Meiji Civil Code (*Minpô*), reshaped the legal framework of family relations in 1898. This code strengthened the patriarchal family, affording men authority over all basic life decisions.⁴⁹

These legal acts gave men a clear preponderance of power over women in both public and family affairs, and reinforced the construction of female domesticity as embodied in the slogan “Good Wives and Wise Mothers.”

The government also issued consecutive education orders⁵⁰ clearly promoting Confucian ethics by designating different roles for boys and girls,⁵¹ with the elementary curriculum placing special emphasis on training boys as authority figures, and girls as

⁴⁷ Peter Duus, *Modern Japan*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998), 131.

⁴⁸ Vera Mackie, *Feminism in Modern Japan: Citizenship, Embodiment, and Sexuality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 5.

⁴⁹ Ikeda Ryôji, “Meiji minpô to josei no kenri,” in *Kindai*, vol. 4 of *Nihon joseishi*, ed. Joseishi sôgô kenkyûkai (Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 1982), 41-76.

⁵⁰ The Education Order of 1872 (*Gakusei*) launched a system of compulsory education. Another Education Order of 1879 (*Kyôikurei*) constituted a separate class education for girls and boys. In 1890, the national censorship system of textbooks was launched. In 1891, The Middle School Order and The Order of Separate Education of Men and Women (*Danjo betsugaku no kunrei*) were issued. The Girls High School Act of 1895 and 1899 (*Kôtôjogakkôrei*) required each prefecture to have at least one public girls high school and to control the subjects taught.

⁵¹ Nagahata Michiko, “Ryôsaikenboshugi kyôiku ni okeru ‘ie’ to shokugyô,” in *Kindai*, vol. 4 of *Nihon josei seikatsushi*, ed. Joseishi sôgô kenkyûkai (Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 1982), 154.

Good Wives and Wise Mothers.⁵² Furthermore, the publishing and circulation of the government-approved textbook *The Elementary School Order (Kokutei kyôkasho)*,⁵³ attempted to emphatically clarify stratified abilities of males over females based on idiosyncratic biological differences.

Overall, these educational reforms helped establish the general perception that the role of women was to serve the household without authority, thereby stabilizing the patriarchal system.

Along with the resurgence of Confucian ideology, a new intelligentsia—scholars, officials, and journalists studying popular writings and translations of Western books—began to express opinions on womanhood and the household system. Enlightenment intellectuals such as Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835-1901) criticized the inequality between men and women, the feudalistic hierarchical values of family and marriage, and the ethical ideals propagated by Confucianism. Arguing that monogamy was the only proper kind of marriage and advocating the importance of women’s education, the new intellectuals emphasized that men and women should be equal as human beings.⁵⁴

In 1891, Iwamoto Zenji (1863-1943), publisher of *Jogaku zasshi (Women’s Education Magazine)*, advocated monogamous marriage based on Christian ethics and

⁵² The government emphasized “Confucian ethics” such as diligence, frugality, order, thoughtfulness, discipline, and cooperation. The curriculum for girls was restricted to how to manage a household: etiquette, childcare, sewing, housekeeping, and home economics.

⁵³ 1903, revised in 1910.

⁵⁴ Hirota, “Bunmeikaika to josei kaihôron,” 19.

emphasized “the home” as organized around the family nucleus of husband and wife rather than a dominating patriarch. In further discussions on the concept of family, magazines changed “housekeeping columns” (*kasei-ran*) to “family columns” (*katei-ran*), and increasingly promoted as acceptable conjugal ties by “true love”⁵⁵ as opposed to arranged marriage.⁵⁶

Radical though these expressions were, such male critics neither actively supported equal rights nor advocated independent action by women in political, social, and economic fields. Within the Enlightenment ideology, the stratified roles of men and women in the household, and female consent to the strict division of labor between the sexes, remained expected outcomes. In fact, the discourses on the husband as provider and wife as dependent merely established anew the familiar hierarchy: husband rights replaced paternal rights and the wife was officially designated “woman of the house” (*shufu*) and the central figure in family management.

Iwamoto, for example, supported both the equality of men and women in the household *and* the division of labor,⁵⁷ in effect endorsing women as subservient. Many such “progressive” male thinkers fell into this pitfall, thereby preserving the concept of women as made for the inner world (*uchi*) and men for the outer world (*soto*). Under the

⁵⁵ A marriage based on a woman’s choice of partner rather than prearrangement by families.

⁵⁶ Hirota Masaki, “Raifu saikuru no shoruikei” in *Kindai*, vol. 4 of *Nihon josei seikatsushi*, ed. Joseishi sôgô kenkyûkai (Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 1990), 255. Hirota lists the magazines that had family columns. *Jokan* (*Women’s Mirror*, 1891) changed from *kasei-ran* to *katei-ran* in 1902, and *Fujin Sekai* (*Women’s World*, 1906) as well as *Fujin Hôten* (*Women’s Guide*, 1904) had *katei-ran*.

⁵⁷ Hirota, “Bunmeikaika to josei kaihôn,” 25-27.

new façade of a family system based on “love between a wife and husband,” the concept continued to uphold the division of labor based on biological difference.

Discourses on hygiene also exaggerated the definitions of male and female, setting a fixed standard of differences and functions. The hygiene of women, recognized as different from men, reinforced the notion that managing sanitation was another household duty inherent upon women.⁵⁸ Hygienic concepts of scientists, including sexologists, physiologists, as well as general medical doctors, designated women as sex objects for bearing children, and supported division of labor by sex.⁵⁹ Attempting to regulate the most intimate relations, discussions touched upon sex life, prescribing intercourse between wife and husband to strengthen the family and have children. Such discourses, all from male sources, penetrated privacy to control sexual mores and in the process annihilated other kinds of sexual relationships for women.⁶⁰

Strong government efforts to promote an ideal image of the woman was a response to a chain of concerns of the state that began during the late 1870s and 1880s, particularly the sudden expansion of labor forces following industrialization, a lack of improvement in labor conditions, and a democratic movement (*Jiyûminken undô*).

Women activists in the democratic movement, among them Kishida Toshiko (1863-1901),

⁵⁸ Narita Ryûichi, “Eisei kankyô no henka no naka no josei to joseikan,” in *Kindai*, vol. 4 of *Nihon josei seikatsushi*, ed. Joseishi sôgô kenkyûkai (Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 1990), 106.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 109.

⁶⁰ Hirota, “Bunmeikaika to josei kaihôn,” 111-17.

criticized the household system and advocated equal rights,⁶¹ and when women-worker strikes occurred in the 1880s and 90s in fields as various as silk mills and prostitution, the prevention of women from involvement in labor issues became an even greater priority.

Another concern that grew for the state was Japanese self-awareness after the Sino-Japanese War. The revision in 1895 of the treaty between Japan and China after Japanese victory in the war created a situation in which both Japanese and Chinese lived close together in the interior of Japan. This resulted in forcing the state to recognize the necessity of nurturing Japanese women to become conscious of being Japanese. Good Wives and Wise Mothers was elevated as a paragon of Japanese womanhood to the extent that entire educational policies followed this ideology⁶² and the model of the family woman conveniently expanded to present a model of the national woman.

A similar concern arose following the annexation of Korea after the 1905 Japanese victory in the Russo-Japanese War. This time, the model Japanese woman became the ideal Asian woman, and *Fujo shimbun* (*Women's Newspaper*) called on Japanese women to become “citizens of the first-class nation” (*Ittôkoku no kokumin*) and “women of the first-class nation” (*Ittôkoku no fujin*). On top of that, the magazine urged its women readers to become the leading women of Asia. Again, these ideologies

⁶¹ Wakita Haruko, Hayashi Reiko, and Nagahara Kazuko, ed. *Nihon joseishi* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kôbunkan, 1987), 195-98.

⁶² Furukawa Masashi, *Zôho: Ryôsaikenboshugi no kyôiku* (Tokyo: Reimeishobô, 1890).

stipulated roles and tasks by gender, and elaborately established a womanhood relationship intertwined with family and nation.⁶³

b. Womanhood and the Economy

Although the construction of an ideal womanhood seemed secure by the 1900s, a dramatic shift occurred when the outbreak of World War I reversed Japan's weak economic situation. The war triggered the expansion of heavy industry, creating vast job opportunities in cities, and gains in profits, wages, and productivity. While large-scale production required the development of secondary industries in management, sales, and distribution—producing an explosion of white-collar positions particularly between 1914 and 1919—the massive increase of workers itself spawned a tertiary industry to service their daily needs; restaurants and shops offering basic items and distractions from working life sprung up across cities.

The immense growth of the spinning industry and steady increase in basic service industries after the war led to a considerable boost in the quantity of women in the labor market. However, most jobs required little training and offered neither high pay nor promise of promotion, and as businesses served customers competitively, many women workers were increasingly expected to provide “sex appeal” to keep their employers competitive—as women in the workplace became routine, youthfulness and sexuality

⁶³ Wakita Haruko, Hayashi Reiko, and Nagahara Kazuko, ed. *Nihon joseishi*, 225.

became greater commodities.⁶⁴ These economic conditions, whether good or bad, were powerful forces in shaping the image of ideal womanhood in Japan.

“First-generation migrants,” sons and daughters who left their larger countryside families to work in cities, formed a new unit—the nuclear family—with the husband as breadwinner and his wife and children as dependents. Household gender roles in the new nuclear family structure reinforced the previous household hierarchy.

At the same time, the expanding economy produced new white-collar positions for men, such as company managers, middle bureaucrats, academicians, and teachers. Earning stable incomes in the form of a monthly salary, these professionals constituted a new middle class called “salary man” (*sararii man*), a term coined at the end of World War I.⁶⁵

Middle-class family interest in culture grew, and many sought to obtain education for their daughters in girls’ high schools, exposing them to state ideologies. While placing more value on the education of their offspring, the middle class began to adopt a lifestyle from the West, “marked by ‘scientific’ rationality, efficiency, and functionality.”⁶⁶ In the thriving city environment, women were more apt to read—in women’s magazines such as *Katei no tomo* (*Family Friend*) and *Fujin no tomo* (*Women’s Friend*)—about western pragmatism, efficient styles of living, scientific methods of

⁶⁴ Fujime Yuki, *Sei no rekishigaku*, 288.

⁶⁵ Duus, 197.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

childrearing, and new commodities for a practical and successful life. This information on western housekeeping advocated the necessity of new skills, techniques, and styles of domestic duty, and actually required more family money and, more importantly, time invested by women. Housekeeping had become a full-time job designated exclusively to the wife. The concept of division of labor in the family was strengthened, and a new social term was born: *senjyô shufu*, the full-time housewife.

Magazines for women published between the 1890s and 1910s were major contributors to the discourse on motherly love and the construction of the model of Good Wives and Wise Mothers.⁶⁷ The discussion on the Protection of Motherhood among Yosano Akiko (1878-1942), Hiratsuka Raichô (1886-1971), and Yamakawa Kikue (1890-1980) in 1918 and 1919 accelerated the emphasis on maternal love, even though each had different perspectives on motherhood.⁶⁸ In the 1920s, discourses on motherly love (*boseiai-ron*) emphasized that all women possessed the instinct of motherly love and that therefore women should bear and rear children, deterring women from deviating from this standard.⁶⁹ Influenced by the massive flow of new information on housekeeping and childrearing from Western science, the discourse contended that instinctive motherly love should be transformed into a more rational and pragmatic love

⁶⁷ E.g. *Jogaku zasshi* by Iwamoto Yoshiharu, 1891-1909, *Katei zasshi* by Tokutomi Sohô, 1892-1898, *Katei zasshi* by Sakai Toshihiko, 1903-1909, *Katei no tomo* and *Fuji no tomo* by Hani Tomoko, Taishô period, *Fujinsekai*, *Fujinkôron*, *Shufu no tomo*, *Jidô kenkyû*, *Fujin to kodomo*, *Onna isha*, *Sekai fujin*, *Fujin mondai*, *Fujin no risô*, and *Shinjokai*.

⁶⁸ A later section details the discussion of protection of motherhood by these three prominent women.

⁶⁹ Duus, 197.

with the help of scientific methods of childrearing.⁷⁰ This new theory was deemed the only model for a mother's relationship with her child, emphasizing home education, and recommending that money be saved for education.

Expected to remain inside their homes, take good care of their families the whole day, and become good educators of their children, this new version of Good Wives and Wise Mothers behind the veil of a new "cultured life" (*bunkateki seikatsu*) merely mirrored the previous household system of the woman as subordinate to man and burdened by the unequal division of tasks. While imposing the methodology of childrearing, the discourse also negated other relationship avenues between mother and child, such as would exist in the daily life of a working mother.

Due to the relatively stable income of the new middle class, daughters began to enjoy higher education, acquire skills for gaining financial independence, and find work outside, liberating them from household chores. With images of independent workingwomen from England and America prominent alongside the active movements of "Taisho democracy" within Japan,⁷¹ the emergence of women workers with varied backgrounds in age, family, education, and reasons for working became prominent and tolerated, and their occupational categories grew. Society came to recognize teachers,

⁷⁰ The "scientific and rational and pragmatic child-rearing method from America" recommended that childrearing be fully designated to and conducted only by the mother who gave birth to the child, enthusiastically promoted breastfeeding, and frowned upon the habit of a mother carrying the baby in her arms. See Wakita Haruko, Hayashi Reiko, and Nagahara Kazuko, ed. *Nihon joseishi*, 241.

⁷¹ Tazaki Nobuyoshi, "Joseirôdô no shoruikei" in *Kindai*, vol. 4 of *Nihon josei seikatsushi* (Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 1990), 183.

office clerks, typists, reporters, nurses, and telephone operators as *shokugyô fujin* (literally “workingwomen”).⁷²

As women emerged into the workplace, active discussions on workingwomen and self-reliance grew among both male and female critics.⁷³ It was at this time that discussions regarding the protection of motherhood took place among three women critics, Yosano Akiko, Hiratsuka Raichô, and Yamakawa Kikue. Recognizing that rapid development of capitalism heavily affected women, all three advocated women’s emancipation and asserted that society could not ignore the various issues of workingwomen and motherhood.⁷⁴

⁷² Ibid., 185-86. The definition of *shokugyô fujin* was often ambiguous. A study of *shokugyô fujin* issued by Tokyo City in 1924 loosely stated that, “*Shokugyô fujin* is generally a woman engaged in a certain work.” On the other hand, a 1931 survey of women workers by Tokyo City strictly defined *shokugyô fujin* as “A woman with a fixed job who leaves home to receive pay and offers labor under a contract of employment.” A survey conducted by Kyoto City in 1927 defined *shokugyô fujin* as “A woman having a job that requires little intelligence and belongs to the intellectual classes” exemplified as follows: kindergarten teacher, teacher, missionary, writer, journalist, doctor, pharmacist, musician, artist, office clerk, typist, saleswoman, store clerk, midwife, nurse, telephone operator, driver, conductor, guide, beautician, factory director, and housekeeper. Tazaki, 180-82.

In 1930, Ôbayashi Munetsugu wrote an extensive analysis of *shokugyô fujin*, “*Shokugyô fujin ni tsuite*,” covering the following aspects: social significance, history and transformation, economics, hygiene and health, and protection. Ôbayashi compared the definition of *shokugyô fujin* to the definition of *rôdô fujin*—providers of physical labor requiring little intelligence—and concluded that there was not much difference between the two, as workingwomen of both categories used physical and intellectual powers. Ôbayashi Munetsugu, *Jokyû seikatsu no shinkenkyû*, 195-253.

⁷³ In *Toyôjiron (Opinions on Current Issues in the East)*, male critics such as Takano Jûzô and Abe Isoo supported workingwomen and advocated gaining women’s independence from men by training themselves, acquiring skills, developing individuality, and securing their own finances. On the other hand, female critics such as Hatoyama Haruko and Shimoda Utako warned that a woman’s duty remained with the household as a fully engaged good wife and wise mother. See Wakita Haruko, Hayashi Reiko, and Nagahara Kazuko, ed. *Nihon joseishi*, 233-34.

⁷⁴ Yosano Akiko argued that the national protection of motherhood during pregnancy and childbirth as advocated by Hiratsuka Raichô proved women’s reliance. Yosano stressed the necessity of complete financial independence of women without special protection. Yamakawa pointed out that without advocating a change in the current economic system, the arguments of both Yosano and Hiratsuka could not solve the problems. Yamakawa recommended the participation of men in childrearing. Among the three, the goal of women’s emancipation also varied: while Hiratsuka sought social recognition of the right of

Enduring enthusiastic discussions enhanced by positive images of workingwomen from outside Japan, however, did not mean that Japanese society regarded women's advancement as an achievement. Prejudice, opposition, and discrimination against workingwomen remained tenacious. Coinciding with the rise of industrialization after the Russo-Japanese war and increased employment of war widows, the image of the woman worker connoted shades of economic weakness, and in the social strata, they sank to the bottom disdained, a discrimination against women workers deeply fixed in society.⁷⁵

As more families suffered higher taxes and economic depression after the wartime boom, more people from rural areas took city jobs to help family budgets, and more daughters from middle class-income households looked for work. The number of women seeking employment grew tremendously, all vying to become workers in the service sector, such as *jokyū*, shop clerks, office workers, and telephone operators.⁷⁶

motherhood, Yamakawa, from a socialist perspective, aimed at eliminating financial instability and coercion from society for both men and women. Yosano, on the other hand, hoped for a collective society and nation wherein women were free and independent and able to work according to their capabilities. As a logical conclusion, while Hiratsuka opposed the idea of a working mother, both Yamakawa and Yosano stressed the importance and inevitability of work by women in the course of liberation. Yosano Akiko, "Bosei henchō o haisu," published in *Taiyō*, February 1916. Hiratsuka Raichō, "Boseihogomondai ni tsuite futatabi Yosano Akiko shi ni kisu," published in *Fujin kōron*, July 1918. Yamakawa Kikue, "Boseihogo to keizaiteki dokuritsu," published in *Fujin kōron*, September 1918. All articles appear in "Jiga no kanata e kindai o koeru feminizumu," *Kaihō to henkaku*, vol. 22 of *Shisō no umi e*, Kanō Mikiyo, ed. (Tokyo: Shakai hyōronsha, 1990).

⁷⁵ Tazaki, 182.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 177-80. *Jokyū* was a popular job in the service industry, considered relatively easy to do without education, training, skills, and former work experience. The 1930 national census listed *jokyūji*, "woman servants" as the fourth most common job among women. The first three were silk-reeling factory workers, nurses, and telephone operators. Tazaki, 175.

Despite acquiring the new social term *shokugyô fujin*, stereotypes remained fixed toward women workers; prejudged as poor, inferior, and improperly raised, they were unsuitable candidates for Good Wives and Wise Mothers.

After 1923, a new term—modern girl—arose to set the trend of the era.⁷⁷ With repeated discourses regarding feminine virtue and sexual morality, images of the young modern girl and images of the unmarried workingwoman collided to form a collective criticism of all workingwomen wherein the workingwoman was presumed to be pleasure loving and decadent.⁷⁸ Workingwomen, even though not of one mind or kind, became a single entity on par with juveniles. In this manner, even with the strong necessity for a female labor force and recognition of the positive aspects of working somewhere other than inside the household, a deep-rooted prejudice grew in society. On the job, workingwomen faced gender discrimination: as well as suffering physical and verbal harassment, they received work only as assistants, shorter hours, and much less money.⁷⁹ Upon marriage and/or childbirth, they also faced expectations to return to live in the household.

⁷⁷ Along with the perceptions of the modern girl by Japanese intellectuals such as Kitazawa Shûichi, Nii Itaru, Kume Masao, and Ôya Sôichi during the 1920s as introduced by Barbara Hamill Satô in her article, Kiyosawa Kiyoshi, and Kataoka Teppei also analyzed and defined the modern girl. Kiyosawa Kiyoshi, *Modân Gâru no kenkyû*, ed. Minami Hiroshi, Sakata Minoru, and Namase Katsumi. vol. 1, *Kindaishominseikatsushi: Ningenseken*. (Tokyo: San'ichi shobô, 1985), 143-58. Kataoka Teppei, *Modan Gaaru no kenkyû*, ed. Minami Hiroshi, Sakata Minoru, and Namase Katsumi. vol. 1, *Kindaishominseikatsushi: Ningenseken*. (Tokyo: San'ichi shobô, 1985), 159-89.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 193-94.

⁷⁹ Hirota, "Raifu saikuru no shoruikei," 282-83.

Clashing most with the concept of Good Wives and Wise Mothers were workingwomen of the service sector, in restaurants, cafés, dance halls, and department stores. To qualify for these jobs, with youth and a graceful figure in increasing demand, women had to be young, unmarried, and childless. Thus, they were doubly disdained as impure beings (*fujunna mono*) and juvenile delinquents (*furyô shôjo*).⁸⁰ Ironically, because of their unfavorable working conditions and strong discrimination, the stable life of a full-time housewife under the slogan Good Wives and Wise Mothers became the object of envy for many such women.⁸¹

c. Complexities of Ideal Womanhood

By the late 1910s, the façade of the ideology of Good Wives and Wise Mothers showed its complexity. While the fundamental principle of conventional womanhood and the status of women both in the household and society persisted, women were also expected to be ladies of a first-class country as well as leaders of Asian women, able and willing to assist their husbands in serving their nation. After wars, women were expected to provide a strong national consciousness, to support the nation as Good Wives and Wise Mothers.

Another complexity of the notion of Good Wives and Wise Mothers was its discriminatory nature. As a national slogan, every woman should pursue ideal

⁸⁰ Tazaki, 191-93.

⁸¹ Hirota, “Raifu saikuru no shoruikei,” 282-83.

womanhood, but the slogan narrowly defined the ideal woman, called for specific characteristics, and added more requirements under the veil of desirability. A woman had to be a full time homemaker and fully commit to a child's education if she had one. She should have the education and, more importantly, time to assimilate new information, such as scientific methods of childrearing and styles of domestic duty based on western pragmatism.

However, in the urban setting, the massive wave of new techniques and commodities for housekeeping arrived unequally between those who could afford and those who could not. Underprivileged women who had stopped their education due to poor family finances, who worked outside to support their family, who were single mothers supporting children, and who were divorced without support for children, were because of their circumstances automatically disqualified from the pursuit of ideal womanhood, socially prejudged as inferior and incapable of becoming a good wife and wise mother.

3. The Japanese Proletarian Literary Movement

a. The History of Proletarian Literature and the Proletarian Literary Movement

As the previous section explains, the national slogan Good Wives and Wise Mothers developed a discriminatory nature. Underprivileged women, often prejudged, suffered tremendous social pressure for failing to meet the requirements of ideal womanhood. Sata Ineko and Hirabayashi Taiko fell into this category, disqualified by

unequal, even unrealistic standards. Both had begun working at an early age to support family finances; in fact, Sata had given up her elementary school education. Both were divorced women and Sata was a single mother. So, while fully capable of understanding new information and technology about ideal womanhood, as featured in popular magazines, it was apparent to both that society considered them wholly incapable of embodying the ideal woman.

Through their multi-layered sufferings—gender inequality of the patriarchal household system, unreasonable social requirements for women, and the harsh conditions under capitalism for women workers, including ubiquitous physical and verbal abuse—Sata and Hirabayashi both reached the conclusion that the proletarian movement could abolish class and gender discrimination, and that the proletarian literary movement seemed a suitable forum for their personal pursuit of these goals.

Examining their involvement in the proletarian literary movement brings greater appreciation for their lives. While often referred to as women writers representative of the proletarian literary movement, not only their works but also their metamorphoses in the literary movement exemplify the complexity and fluidity of proletarian literature under the bigger umbrella of the general movement. A more careful investigation of their standpoints and the issues they faced within the movements avoids the dangers of categorizing the two writers based on their affiliations with a group. Therefore, this section examines the development of proletarian literature and the literary movement, and

the writers' involvement in both the proletarian literary movement and the wider proletarian movement.

At the beginning of his article on the history of the proletarian literary movement, literary critic Takahashi Haruo analyzes the coinage of the word *puoretaria bungaku* (proletarian literature) and explains that the common phrase “proletarian literature” arose around 1922.⁸² Proletarian literature, however, had strong roots before flourishing in the 1920s: social criticism and critical views based on class-consciousness existed in literary circles long before the proletarian literary movement.⁸³ The notion of class-consciousness accelerated with the reception of socialist ideology, originating in part from post Russo-Japanese War social novels (*shakai shōsestu*),⁸⁴ written by such authors as Uchida Roan (1868-1929), and which had emerged from a need to describe the more complicated social circumstances of the war.⁸⁵ Meanwhile, naturalist writers had

⁸² Takahashi Haruo, “Puroretaria Bungaku,” in *Nihonbungakushinshi: Gendai*, ed. Hasegawa Izumi (Tokyo: Shibundō, 1986), 41.

⁸³ As the democratic movement in the Meiji era (*Jiyū minken undō*) grew popular, political fiction (*seiji shōsetsu*) and translation novels (*hon'yaku shōsetsu*) appeared and had great influence on readers. However, they died out with the failure of the movement. Reportages emerged such as *Saiankoku no Tokyo* (*The Darkest Tokyo*), but literary works portraying oppression by capitalism had not yet developed. For a more detailed discussion, see Yamada Seizaburō, *Puroretaria bungakushi (Jō)* (Tokyo: Rironsha, 1968), 68.

⁸⁴ Yamada lists the characteristics of *shakai shōsetsu* explained in *Waseda Bungaku (Waseda Literature)* published in 1898. In summary, compared to conventional novels portraying love romance, *shakai shōsetsu* portrays reality of the lower strata and covers broader social issues, including politics and religion, centering society around individual characters and emphasizing social phenomena rather than individual psychological states. Its function was to create the currents of the time and portend society. See Yamada Seizaburō, 95.

⁸⁵ Yamada Seizaburō, 174. *Kannen shōsetsu* (ideal fiction), criticizing contradictions and unreasonableness in society, and *hisai shōsetsu* (tragic fiction), portraying social misery and tragedy, were also produced. However, they did not depict the full scope of social problems.

depicted the inner life of ordinary people and often portrayed the social conditions and feelings of the oppressed. Magazines that popularized labor issues flourished in the Taisho period. One of the earliest magazines was *Kindai Shisô* (*Modern Thought*) founded by Ôsugi Sakae (1885-1923) and Arahata Kanson (1887-1981) in 1911.⁸⁶ This phenomenon led to the development of a new literary genre, *rôdô bungaku* (worker's literature), featuring writers such as Miyajima Sukeo (1886-1951) and Hirasawa Keishichi (1889-1923).

In 1920, Nakano Hideto (1898-1966) claimed in his critical work *Daiyonkaikyû no bungaku* (*Literature of the Fourth Class*) that the greatest writers are fourth-class citizens—proletarians—and that people who come to their senses are always proletarian.⁸⁷ His statement catalyzed the discussion of class-consciousness in art, and Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke (1892-1931), Miyajima, and Arishima Takeo (1878-1923) actively joined in.⁸⁸ Writers from the working class, such as Miyajima and Hirasawa, began producing works centered on the lives of workers and exposing the reality of such life.

⁸⁶ In 1919, six more magazines were published: *Shakaimondai Kenkyû* (*Social Issue Study*, January), *Warera* (*We*, February), *Rôdô Bungaku* (*Worker's Literature*, March), *Kokuen* (*Black Smoke*, March), *Kaizô* (*Reconstruction*, April), and *Kaihô* (*Liberation*, June).

⁸⁷ Published in *Bunshô sekai*, September 1920. German socialist Ferdinand Lassalle (1825-1864) coined the term “the fourth class” in reference to working people struggling as a fourth class against the third class, the bourgeoisie.

⁸⁸ While in January 1922, Miyajima published the article “Literature of the Fourth Class” in *Yomiuri Shimbun*, Hirabayashi, also in January 1922, wrote an article of the same name for *Kaihô*.

In the midst of the emergence of so many writers and advocating the slogans “criticism and action” (*kôdô to hihan*) and “internationalism” (*sekai shugi*), the magazine *Tanemaku hito* (*The Sower*) was published by Komaki Ômi (1894-1978) in 1921, providing a strong launching point for the proletarian literary movement.⁸⁹ The magazine demonstrated inclusiveness with contributors covering a broad range of political affiliation from anarchism to Marxism.

In his critical work “*Bungei undô to rôdô undo*” (*The Literary Arts Movement and the Labor Movement*) published in *The Sower* in 1922, Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke clarified the relationship between the art and labor movements:

The proletarian art movement is a proletarian movement before it is an art movement. This should be everyone’s first concern; the general principle should support the proletariat but not art for art sake. Liberation of the proletariat is the main principle of the proletarian literary movement.⁹⁰

With this statement, Hirabayashi clearly established the political superiority of the labor movement over the art movement and set the course of proletarian literature toward Marxism.⁹¹ The following year in his article, “*Class Struggle and Art Movement*” (*Kaikyûtôsô to geijutsu undô*), Aono Suekichi (1890-1961) claimed the same principle for

⁸⁹ Takahashi, 43.

⁹⁰ Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke, “Bungei undo to rôdô undo,” in *Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke, Aono Suekichi, Kurahara Korehito, Nakano Shigeharu*, vol. 78 in *Gendai Nihonbungaku Zenshû* (Tokyo: Chikuma shobô, 1957), 14.

⁹¹ Both Sata Ineko and Hirabayashi Taiko were caught up in the ambivalent relationship between the two movements, which often appeared in their works.

the movement, asserting emancipation of the proletariat as the goal of the proletarian art movement and reinforcing the idea of a joint front for all art movements.⁹²

In the chaotic aftermath of the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923, *The Sower* discontinued publication. However, in June 1924, members of *The Sower* launched another magazine, *Bungei sensen (Literary Battlefront)*, confirming the unity of art movements for the proletariat. Although the Japanese Communist Party was illegal when founded in 1922,⁹³ the proletarian movement flourished because of its presence, and even later, despite the repression of political activists after the enactment of the New Peace Preservation Law (*Shin chian iji hō*) of 1925, aspects of socialism remained cohesive. The split between anarchists and Marxists in the field of art and literature was obscured to the point that writers of both tendencies joined the same art groups, such as Mavo, and wrote for the same journals, such as *Bungei Sensen*.⁹⁴ They also joined the Japanese Proletarian Literary Arts League (JPLAL, *Nihon puroretaria bungei renmei*), established in December 1925.

The formation of JPLAL, a group for leftwing artists, accelerated the rapid development of proletarian literature, and produced well-known works written by Hayama Yoshiki (1894-1945), Tsuboi Shigeji (1897-1975), and Fujimori Seikichi (1892-

⁹² Takahashi, 44.

⁹³ The Japanese Communist Party (JCP) was formed with the leadership of Yamakawa Hitoshi and Sakai Toshihiko under the guidance of the Third International (Comintern).

⁹⁴ However, one leading activist, Aono Suekichi, had already recognized the difficulties of forming a united front in the proletarian movement. He acknowledged the freedom of choice in individual ideology and action.

1977), as well as debut works by Kuroshima Denji (1898-1943), Satomura Kinzô (1902-1945), Hayashi Fusao (1903-1975), and Hirabayashi Taiko (1905-1972).

At this stage of development, the general principle of the literary movement remained to encourage literary work by proletarians and proletarian writers. Therefore, the number of proletarian writers exceeded the number of intellectual writers. However, in 1926, Aono wrote *Shizen seichô to mokuteki ishiki* (*Natural Development and Purposeful Consciousness*), and pointed out the necessity of knowing the goals of the proletarian class struggle and of emphasizing art for the sake of these goals.

The proletarian class grows naturally. As the proletarian class grows naturally, the desire for expression also grows. Proletarian literature is one of the concrete examples of this growth. This is a natural growth, not a movement. On the other hand, the proletarian literary movement is the effort to plant goal-oriented consciousness. The proletarian literary movement covers all of the movements for the proletarian class.⁹⁵

He vehemently added that proletarian literature should not simply be produced by proletarians to spontaneously portray their own lives, but to implant a clear class-consciousness into the proletariat to stimulate the movement. This influential principle became the standard for writing proletarian literature, and literature by the proletariat clearly shifted to literature *for* the proletariat.

JPLAL as a wide-ranging united organization ultimately transmuted into the Japan Proletarian Arts League (JPAL, *Nihon puroretaria geijutsu renmei*) and made clear

⁹⁵ Aono Suekichi, "Shizen seichô to mokuteki ishiki," in *Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke, Aono Suekichi, Kurahara Korehito, Nakano Shigeharu*, vol. 78, of *Gendai Nihonbungaku Zenshû* (Tokyo: Chikuma shobô, 1957), 77. Originally published in *Bungei Sensen* in September 1926.

its Marxist position. Economic deterioration around 1920 led to the increase of bankruptcies of smaller businesses and the downsizing of large enterprises. Labor and tenant farmers frequently rebelled as a result. As concern increased over the disorganized and unproductive nature of the anarchist movement, the labor movement and its unions began shifting toward Marxist ideology. Due to this metamorphosis, arguments about the role of art and aesthetics in revolutionary politics emerged, and activists with anarchist tendencies were not able to accept the Marxist principle of reducing art and literature to the role of political tools. As a result, in November 1926, JPAL expelled anti-Marxist activists, including Tsuboi, Nii Itaru (1888-1951), Katô Kazuo, and Miyajima, who rejected any oppression of individual liberty to protect the integrity of their art. On the other hand, Kurahara Korehito (1902-1999), who had returned from the Soviet Union, and many young Marxist students from Tokyo University, joined the League. Thus, JPAL developed a stronger tendency toward Marxist ideology.

Between 1926 and 1927, the leftist movement was dominated by *Fukumoto shugi* (Fukumoto-ism), which centered on *ideology* to lead the masses and emphasized Fukumoto Kazuo's (1894-1983) idea of organizing and systematizing the movement "through both splits and mergers" rather than ideological debate.⁹⁶ In 1927, those

⁹⁶ Yamada Seizaburô, *Puroretaria bungakushi (Ge)* (Tokyo: Rironsha, 1968), 108-9. In October 1925, Fukumoto Kazuo, the radical theorist of the proletarian movement, advocated that the movement develop through many splits and mergers (*bunri to ketsugo*) over ideological issues in *Marukusu shugi (Marxist Ideology)*. His statement derived from Lenin's proposition in *What Should be Done?* Namely, if you want to bear fruit, you must split completely before joining together. Since the proletarian literary movement was a movement and not a literary genre, constant transformation was inevitable. In 1926, Fukumoto was appointed a director of the Japanese Communist Party political department and played a major role as a

expelled from JPAL organized their own literary group, the Japan Proletarian Literary Arts Federation (*Nihon musan bungei renmei*), which published the magazine *Kaihō* (*Liberation*) and criticized Fukumoto Kazuo's radicalism in JPAL for misunderstanding the nature of art and for mixing art with politics.

The ideological conflict became obvious even in the Communist Party, as Yamakawa Hitoshi (1880-1958) condemned Fukumoto's strong emphasis on ideological combat rather than actual mass movement, and criticized Fukumoto's separation from the populace as deterring actual involvement in the proletarian movement. Ultimately, JPAL faced its own split in 1927 after Kaji Wataru (1903-1982), a follower of Fukumoto's, emphasized the role of art as full-scale participation and cooperation with the political movement. Kaji argued that proletarian literature was a bugle-like call for the masses to organize and unify through political exposure, and advocated that everything should be subordinate to the victory of the proletarian revolution.⁹⁷ A group of writers championing Fukumoto's radicalism, including Kaji, Nakano Shigeharu (1902-1979), and Kubokawa Tsurujirō (1903-1974), dismissed sixteen other writers who disagreed with Fukumoto's principles, including Aono, Hayama, Hayashi Fusao, Kurahara, and Kuroshima. These sixteen writers, along with others such as Fujimori and Hirabayashi Taiko, promptly founded a new literary group, the Worker Peasant Artists League

leader of Marxist theory. A later section explains the consequences of Fukumoto's radical stance in the proletarian movement.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 115.

(WPAL, *Rônô geijutsuka renmei*), and published their own magazine *Bungei Sensen* (*Literary Battlefield*), in which Kurahara criticized the consequences of Fukumoto's ideology: the separation of activists from the populace, the serious division among labor groups, and the growing sectarian nature of the movement.

However, WPAL too faced a breakup in 1927 due to a disputed vote on publishing Yamakawa's criticism of Fukumoto's ideology in their magazine. Some Communist Party supporters, such as Fujimori, Hayashi, and Kurahara, withdrew from the group, founded a new one, the Vanguard Artists League (VAL, *Zen'ei geijutsuka dômei*), and published the magazine *Zen'ei* (*Vanguard*).

Overall, within just two years, the proletarian literary movement had rippled through three groups: JPAL, WPAL, and VAL. Then, in what might sound like waltzing acronyms if put to music, VAL began working toward a merger with JPAL centering on support for the illegal Communist Party.⁹⁸ Orchestrating Fukumoto's proposed splits and mergers to establish a new organization at last producing unification through metamorphosis, on March 13, 1928, Kurahara proposed a compromise for art-movement groups and founded the Japan Leftist Literary Artists League (*Nihon sayoku bungeika sôrengô*) comprised of seven art-movement groups. However, following a major government crackdown just two days later on March 15, the two main groups, VAL and JPAL alone, instead decided to merge on March 25 as the All Japan Federation of

⁹⁸ Takahashi, 50.

Proletarian Arts, or NAPF (*Zen Nihon musansha geijutsu renmei*), and published *Senki* (*Battle Flag*). Therefore, the newly merged group, the Japan Leftist Literary Artists League, dissolved soon after.

Replacing Aono as the leader of Marxist theorists in 1928, Kurahara presented the concept of “proletarian realism” and advocated the methodology of creative work as “drawing reality through the eyes of the most vanguard of the proletariat” (*Zen’ei no me o motte genjitsu o egake*).⁹⁹ Kurahara’s principles followed the program of the Comintern: the superiority of politics (literature should be subordinate to politics), the view from the vanguard (a man should have a communist perspective), the partisanship of literature (a man of letters should be a member of the Communist Party), and an enthusiastic theme (a theme should present the realities of exploitation by capitalists and landlords and the struggles against them).

From 1928 through 1932, NAPF stood side by side with WPAL, and both the proletarian literary movement and the general proletarian movement blossomed.¹⁰⁰ However, while Japanese fascism wielded its power on course toward the Manchurian Incident, suppression of the movement also grew, culminating in the April 16, 1929 and May 5, 1930 wholesale arrests of NAPF leaders. Under continuous suppression in 1931,

⁹⁹ Kurahara Korehito, “Puroretaria riarizumu eno michi,” (The Road to Proletarian Realism) originally published in *Senki*, May 1928. Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke, Aono Suekichi, Kurahara Korehito, Nakano Shigeharu, vol. 78, in *Gendai Nihonbungaku Zenshū*, 158.

¹⁰⁰ Kobayashi Takiji (*Kanikōsen*), Tokunaga Sunao (*Taiyō no nai machi*), and Nakano Shigeharu (*Harusaki Kaze*) were major devotees of Kurahara’s theory and contributed to the proletarian movement with their literary works.

and in response to Kurahara's proposal, NAPF along with other artist groups became the Japan Proletarian Culture League (KOPF, *Nihon puroretaria bunka renmei*), established itself as a united group of writers, and published *Puroretaria bunka (Proletarian Culture)*. In 1932, a subdivision of KOPF, the Japan Proletarian Writers League (NALP, *Nihon puroretaria sakka dômei*) joined the International Revolutionary Writers League (*Kokusai kakumei sakka dômei*). However, KOPF leaned more toward extreme leftwing thought and became more ideological and political. Its leaders emphasized organizing more unions and increasing JCP membership by creating a social group and holding more demonstrations. This policy posed conflicts for writers, who focused more on increasing readership than on solidifying the JCP.¹⁰¹

Later in 1932, a concentrated raid of KOPF resulted in imprisonment of its leaders, Tsuboi, Kurahara, Nakano, Murayama, and Miyamoto Yuriko (1899-1951), and the proletarian movement went underground. Miyamoto Kenji (1908-2007) and Kobayashi Takiji (1903-1933) attempted to pursue underground activities, but in February 1933, Kobayashi was tortured to death at Tsukiji Police Station.

After the death of Kobayashi Takiji, the proletarian movement quickly declined. The two top leaders of the JCP, Sano Manabu (1892-1953) and Nabeyama Sadachika (1901-1979), made statements that the communist movement under the guidance of the

¹⁰¹ A similar conflict had already started in 1932 regarding the emphasis on either systemization of the Communist Party or creation of literary and critical works. After discharge from prison in 1932, Hayashi Fusao thought of enlightening the proletariat by writing more literary and critical works for the proletariat. However, because of the transformation of principles of proletarian movements, his belief was not accepted and was criticized as opportunist (*hiyorimi shugisha*). Kurihara Yukio, *Puroretaria bungaku to sono jidai* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1971), 204-215.

Comintern did not apply to the JCP and that they disagreed with the idea of overthrowing the Emperor system. Their conversion of the political view rippled out to the activists of proletarian movements, and many imprisoned activists came to conversion as well.

On top of that, in February 1934, a reform bill, the New Peace Preservation Law (*Shin Chian iji hō*), was placed on the agenda in the Diet, sentencing from two years to life imprisonment for any person who organized, joined, or merely associated with any group supporting change of national policy. This created great anxiety among activists and writers in NALP, since NALP supported KOPF, and consequently led to more conversions.

Amid continued crackdowns and suffering, WPAL broke up in 1932, both NALP and KOPF dispersed in 1934, and by 1935, the phrase *proretaria bungaku* (proletarian literature) had disappeared.¹⁰²

b. Sata Ineko and the Proletarian Literary Movement

The proletarian literary movement was the major catalyst for Sata's life transformation. Her personal relations with leading members of the proletarian movement¹⁰³ helped establish her writing career and helped her to gain a new

¹⁰² Takahashi, 55.

¹⁰³ Sata Ineko became acquainted with leading figures of the literary movement, Nakano Shigeharu and Kubokawa Tsurujiro (1903-1974), who had witnessed the launching of JPLAL in December 1925. Sata's first encounter with them was in March 1926 at a café where she was working, and in April she attended the inauguration of their magazine *Roba (Donkey)*. For a detailed discussion on this matter, see the section on the life of Sata Ineko.

consciousness.¹⁰⁴ She strongly agreed with the principle of proletarian literature that a new consciousness be formed among working people, and a new type of literature be born from such class-conscious proletarians.¹⁰⁵ This early principle, along with encouragement and support from both Nakano and Kubokawa, gave Sata the confidence to write the novel *Kyarameru kôba kara* (*From the Caramel Factory*). With this first writing, Sata consciously contemplated her contribution to the proletarian culture movement,¹⁰⁶ and expressed her excitement at finding a way to articulate her feelings.¹⁰⁷ Describing how her affiliation with these intellectuals gave her a sense of security and camaraderie that she had never experienced before, Sata adhered to the theory that the proletarian movement aimed at revolution through abolishing the class system, and was satisfied with her new role as a writer for the movement.

¹⁰⁴ Before meeting Nakano and Kubokawa, Sata believed that class difference (poor vs. rich) was an inherent circumstance and hierarchy (ruler vs. ruled) was the world order. Sata even accepted feudalistic views toward women and thought that defiance and revolt against such conservatism showed disgraceful behavior. Sata Ineko, “Me wa hirakarezu, jûatsu dake ga atta,” in *Sata Ineko Zenshû*, vol. 17 (Tokyo: Kôdansha, 1979), 272. Originally published in *Ikiru to iu koto* in March 1965.

¹⁰⁵ Sata Ineko, “Seikatsu to sakuhin: Jibun no keiken kara,” in *Sata Ineko Zenshû*, vol. 17, 80, and “Sakuhin no naka no watashi,” in *Sata Ineko Zenshû*, vol. 17, 235-37.

¹⁰⁶ Sata Ineko, “Toki to hito to watashi no koto (15): Waga tojô no omoi,” in *Sata Ineko Zenshû*, vol. 16, (Tokyo: Kôdansha, 1979), 433.

¹⁰⁷ After failing to become a proletarian actress despite strong encouragement from Nishizawa Ryûji in 1927, Sata decided to write a story with the advice and support of Nakano. Sata Ineko, “Toki to hito to watashi no koto (1): Shuttatsu no jijô to sono koro,” in *Sata Ineko Zenshû*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Kôdansha, 1979), 427. In her essays, Sata repeatedly mentions the peculiarity of her writing opportunity, coming without finishing a formal elementary education, and that she owed her career to “proletarian culture and the proletarian literary movement.” Sata Ineko, “Gakureki nashi no ririkisho,” in *Sata Ineko Zenshû*, vol. 17, 258. Originally published in *Gakkô wa denakutemo jûichi-nin no meishi no ayunda michi* in June 1957.

Throughout the proletarian literary movement, Sata was a useful agent: a prolific writer¹⁰⁸ as well as an active communist member willing to risk her life.¹⁰⁹ Ironically, due to her enthusiastic commitment to the movement and faithful implementation of its principles,¹¹⁰ Sata is a good example of one who was affected by changes in the movement's theory and principles. She also felt ambivalence in her status as a working-class writer who was not born a worker,¹¹¹ and as a writer who was not from the intellectual class.¹¹² Through the repeated shuffling of proletarian literary groups, Sata stayed with the organization that was most rigidly Marxist, but struggled to maintain

¹⁰⁸ 1931 was Sata's most prolific year: she produced a novel, an essay, and a critique, joined KOPF, became a member of both the Women's Committee of Japan Proletarian Writer's League and the Women's Council of Culture League, and joined the editorial staff of *Hataraku Fujin* (*Workingwomen*).

¹⁰⁹ As Kurahara advocated, Sata became a member of the Japanese Communist Party in 1932 during the major crackdown on KOPF, and served as a lifeline for underground activists. Sata viewed the Japanese Communist Party as a well-established organization providing clear guiding principles for the proletarian literary movement, and happily gained more confidence in writing from these guidelines. Sata, "Seikatsu to sakuhin: Jibun no keiken kara," 80.

¹¹⁰ Sata was a strong believer and follower of Kurahara, holding the belief that proletarian literature would make progress along with the growth and development of the proletarian class. Disagreeing with the criticism of proletarian literature as having an "inartistic quality and rigidity" and "pressures and limitations" imposed by the organization, she argued that creative artistic desires of the individual writer were always emphasized by the principle of proletarian literature. Stressing individual freedom for the creation of stories with class-consciousness, Sata emphasized that a writer who is well under control of the organization should be able to cultivate their skills by following the correct course of proletarian literature. Sata Ineko, "Puroretaria bungaku no sekai," in *Sata Ineko Zenshū*, vol. 16 (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1979), 39. Originally published in *Bungei shunjū* in March 1931.

¹¹¹ Sata expressed concern over her background, that her work might reveal the lack of strength, toughness, and cheerfulness of a born worker. The daughter of a salary man who worked as an administrative secretary at the office of Nagasaki Mitsubishi Zōsenjō until her family moved to Tokyo, Sata's work experiences began late. Sata explains that she wrote *Kyarameru kōba kara* with surprise and suppressed anger toward the lives of women factory workers and that her work was not a memoir of a worker. Sata, "Seikatsu to sakuhin: Jibun no keiken kara," 81.

¹¹² She confessed her passivity and lack of initiative in writing critical essays or reviews and in leading the literary movement, and thought that her lack of academic intellectualism and ideological background hindered her initiative. Sata, "Toki to hito to watashino koto (15): Waga tojō no omoi," 434.

balance between her art and activism. To overthrow the social hierarchy, participating in an actual movement was considered more effective and valuable than writing a novel.¹¹³

Nakano and Kubokawa had been involved in practical movements and became proletarian activists, and with their influence, Sata's own self-awareness as a writer diminished and her desire to become a practical activist grew.¹¹⁴

Sata experienced first-hand the conflicting gaps in proletarian literature, realizing the difficulty of balancing the implementation of class-consciousness and ideology with the actual emotions and sensitivities of daily life.¹¹⁵ Finally she could not ignore gender discrimination among revolutionary activists in the movement. Sata describes how much energy she sacrificed to endure these obstacles to help the movement by participating in the class struggle.¹¹⁶ Sata viewed her obstacles as the same as those of any workingwoman, to be resolved when the class struggle was won.

¹¹³ Sata, "Seikatsu to sakuhin: Jibun no keiken kara," 77 and 81.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 77 and 82. Comparing herself to Kobayashi Takiji, Sata admired his achievement of balancing writing and activism. Sata considers Takiji as a person with a strong class-consciousness first and enthusiasm as a writer second, and concludes that with his clear consciousness and passion for depicting class conflict, Takiji proudly represents creative activism. However, Sata later criticizes that the significance of the proletarian literary movement within the larger proletarian movement was underestimated and a collective view on the function of literary works was lacking in the early stage of the movement.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 78. Again, Sata praised Takiji's talent of presenting the purpose of the proletarian movement, provoking class-consciousness, and conveying sympathy for the suppressed. Sata claimed that ardent humanism penetrated Takiji's works, and that he depicted to the best of his ability the human passion of actual daily life, an essential quality of literature.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 72.

True irony came to Sata after World War II. Even though she had been an enthusiastic activist in the proletarian literary movement, because of her war “responsibility,” she was rejected from the group that founded the New Japan Literary Association (*Shin Nihon Bungakukai*). Feeling a sense of defeat, she reexamined her life to reflect on her place in the proletarian literary movement.¹¹⁷ In the process, she wrote a collection of short stories, *Watashi no Tokyo Chizu (My Tokyo Map)*, recounting her standing as an ordinary person throughout the movement.¹¹⁸ These works, however, revealed her true nature as an extraordinary writer who portrayed ordinary citizens, workers, activists, and party members from their points of view, depicting their emotions, pain, and struggles in daily life.

c. Hirabayashi Taiko and the Proletarian Literary Movement

Just as *The Sower* had served as a great foundation for the proletarian literary movement, its inaugural issue made a tremendous impact on Hirabayashi Taiko. In 1921, by the age of sixteen, she already believed in the necessity of proletarian emancipation by social revolution, and this magazine reinforced lessons from her early life that social action was more effective than writing literary works.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Sata Ineko, “Watashi no Tokyo Chizu,” in *Sata Ineko*, vol. 34 of *Sakka no jiden*, ed. Hasegawa Kei. (Tokyo: Tosho sentâ, 1995), 272.

¹¹⁸ This collection of short accounts appeared separately in several magazines between March 1946 and May 1948. For a detailed discussion, see the chapter on the life of Sata Ineko.

¹¹⁹ Hirabayashi Taiko, “Bungakuteki jijoden,” in *Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshû*, vol. 12 (Tokyo: Ushio shuppan, 1979), 28. Originally published in *Shinchô*, December 1935.

Hirabayashi had many youthful learning experiences to cultivate her perspective of life under capitalism. Helping with her mother's small business to support the family's adverse financial circumstances while still in elementary school, and seeing the reality of factory worker's lives by watching her two elder sisters at a silk-reeling factory in Suwa, Hirabayashi realized how capitalism thrived on people's endless need for more money and willingness to work for so little.¹²⁰

Meeting her fifth grade teacher, Kawakami Shigeru, and experiencing his radical ideas on special education for gifted children added a strong consciousness to her life. Developing a rebellious spirit with the outlook that life should be full of defiance toward the establishment, she believed in individual freedom.¹²¹ Through intensive reading of Japanese naturalist writers and stories from the magazine *Shirakaba*, she cultivated a perspective that socio-economic circumstances created perpetual misery and sorrow.

While her literary interests included the translated works of a broad range of writers¹²² and helped awaken her to socialism, lectures by local social activists¹²³ helped

¹²⁰ Hirabayashi Taiko, "Watashi no rirekisho," in *Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshū*, vol. 12, 45. Originally published in *Nikkei Shimbun*, 1966. For a detailed discussion, see the section on the life of Hirabayashi Taiko.

¹²¹ Hirabayashi Taiko, "Bungakuteki jijoden," 27. For a detailed discussion, see the section on the life of Hirabayashi Taiko.

¹²² Hirabayashi, "Bungakuteki jijoden," 27. She read works by Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Turgenev, Chekhov, Goncharov, and Gorkii, as well as Maupassant and Daudet. She was also inspired by Zola's *Geminal* and Marx's *Das Kapital*. Hirabayashi Taiko, "Shisō to danse i henrekishita seishun," in *Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshū*, vol. 12, 36. For a detailed discussion, see the section on the life of Hirabayashi Taiko.

¹²³ She attended local lectures by Hasegawa Nyozeikan, Suzuki Bunji, and Kamijō Aiichi. For a detailed discussion, see the section on the life of Hirabayashi Taiko.

her recognize injustice and inequality in her immediate environment. She acquired a strong belief that it was necessary to awaken workers to their exploitation and oppression and convince them to join in proletarian revolution for the complete destruction of the old order and creation of a new progressive world.

Encouraged by the first issue of *The Sower* emphasizing the idea that art can be a form of rebellion against the established convention and can lead the proletarian revolution, Hirabayashi began living in Tokyo, and became involved more in anarchistic actions than in literary creations. After experiencing a chaotic and fruitless lifestyle with her partner and other anarchist artists,¹²⁴ Hirabayashi reached a crucial conclusion that patriarchal systems persistent throughout society also enveloped her personal relationships with anarchists and was quite visibly evident in their self-congratulatory, self-indulgent tendencies.¹²⁵

With this repugnant unproductiveness and their complete failure to contribute daily to advancing social justice in mind, Hirabayashi found a more proactive vitality within Marxism through the acquaintance of JPLAL members, Aono, Nakano, and Hayama. The proletarian literary movement under Marxist ideology helped her pursue her original goal of social revolution, and its historical and dialectical approach guided her in creating works to awaken readers.

¹²⁴ After moving to Tokyo, her life became chaotic, with arrests, the earthquake, journeys to both Korea and China with anarchist partner Yamamoto Torozô, a pregnancy and miscarriage, and a painful return to Japan. For a detailed discussion, see the section on the life of Hirabayashi Taiko.

¹²⁵ Hirabayashi Taiko, “Watashi no rirekisho,” in *Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshû*, vol. 12, 56-58.

Hirabayashi analyzes Marxist ideology as the most effective and comprehensive outlook on the world. While explaining her understanding of Marxist principles—dialectic materialism and historical materialism—she concluded that the social project under Marxist principles made revolution more likely.¹²⁶ Furthermore, relative to the preposterous plans and incoherent arguments among her former anarchist comrades, Hirabayashi found Aono Suekichi’s critical 1926 work, *Shizen seichō to mokuteki ishiki*, both logical and phenomenal.¹²⁷ Inspired by Aono’s advocacy of creating literary works with purposeful consciousness, Hirabayashi began applying class-consciousness in writing on everyday social issues.

Hirabayashi also upheld principles of the proletarian literary movement such as writing with realism themes of everyday life and the clear goal of leading readers out of unjust circumstances.¹²⁸ Hirabayashi’s insightful examination based on aforementioned principles and deep belief in freedom from oppression persuaded her to carefully monitor the movement’s changing policies and principles. In defense of original principles, she denounced ideological indoctrination and authoritarian control over writers by radical

¹²⁶ Hirabayashi Taiko, “Puroretaria sakuhin no ruikeika ni tsuite,” in *Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshū*, vol. 10 (Tokyo: Ushio shuppan, 1979), 356. Originally published in *Shinchō*, November 1930. Hirabayashi explains that Marxist principles require special qualities—keen consciousness, deep insight, and broad recognition. With her understanding and analysis, materialism helps recognize various and rich reality as it is, dialectic leads the notion that everything, being in flux, experiences constant change, from small transformations to big leaps, and historical materialism assists in observing small changes in detail and analyze each phenomenon in historical context. For a more detailed explanation, see “Hirabayashi’s theory of proletarian literature.”

¹²⁷ Hirabayashi, “Bungakuteki jijoden,” 29.

¹²⁸ Hirabayashi Taiko, “Puroretaria sakuhin no ruikeika ni tsuite,” 357-58.

intellectuals, especially as advocated by Fukumoto and Kurahara.¹²⁹ She upheld her fundamental belief in proletarian literature, that politics never control art and that the fabrication and glorification of reality never prevail over realism. Yet, ultimately, along with other writers who had labor experiences and were passionate about the individual freedom of the art movement, Hirabayashi left JPLAL due to disagreements over literary principles, and together in June 1927, they founded WAPL.¹³⁰

During the two years of 1928 and 1929, Hirabayashi wrote several critical works pointing out problems of proletarian literary works exposing self-restrictive tendencies in patterned themes and storylines, stereotyped characters, narrow perspectives, fabrication of reality, over-emphasis on political ideology and class-consciousness, and tendency toward quantity over quality.¹³¹ Amid the indoctrination of the ultra leftist ideology in the movement and the repeated splits among various proletarian literary groups,

¹²⁹ Hirabayashi Taiko, "Puroretaria riarizumu to kanren shite," in *Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshū*, vol. 12, 314-16.

¹³⁰ See the previous section for a detailed explanation of splits and mergers in the proletarian literary movement.

¹³¹ In September 1928, she wrote *Puroretaria riarizumu to kanren shite* in *Nyonin geijutsu*, and criticized literary principles presented by JPAL by pointing out problems of ultra-left ideology advocated by Fukumoto Kazuo. In the same year, she contributed the critical work, *Puroretaria bungaku undo no ichinenkan* in *Nyonin geijutsu*, reiterating the goals of the proletarian literary movement and criticizing current tendencies of proletarian writers. In January 1929, her *Tsune ni yōi seyo!* in *Bungei sensen* warned of the easy tendencies of proletarian writers and suggested precautions and solutions. In April and July 1929, she consecutively wrote *Sakka no oboegaki (1): Puroretaria bungaku ni okeru suji no henka* and *Sakka no oboegaki (2): Hyogen ni tsuite*, analyzing problematic issues of current proletarian literature: restricted and patterned storylines, conservative plots without turmoil, and creation without reality of life. In *Shōsetsu no naka no ronriteki yōso* published in *Bungei sensen* in October 1929, she gave a brief historical overview of literature, and pointed out problems of current proletarian works.

Hirabayashi chose to withdraw from WAPL and finally abandoned all affiliations with political art groups in 1930.¹³²

Hirabayashi recognized sexual differentiation within the literary establishment, but on top of that, she also experienced exploitation in her personal relationships with socialist men and sexual discrimination within the proletarian movement.¹³³ In her essay *Fujin sakka yo, shôfu yo (To Women! To Prostitutes! 1925)*, Hirabayashi strongly denounced the innocence of Japanese women in general and women writers specifically, and exposed the reality of consciousness.¹³⁴ She tried to help women see patriarchy as a social, cultural, economic, and political construction, and to provoke the destruction of male dominance. Throughout her involvement in the proletarian literary movement, she exposed and fought against sexual discrimination and oppression in bourgeois society, seeking resolution of gender discrimination and social hierarchy through economic justice.

¹³² Hirabayashi, “Bungakuteki jijoden,” 32. Her critiques of the proletarian literary movement and proletarian literature never stopped even after ending affiliations with political art groups. *Danso* in August 1930, *Puroretaria sakuhin no ruikeika ni tsuite* in November 1930, “*Yuibutsubenshohôteki hôhô*” to *iu kotoba* in April 1932, and *Handôki no sakuhin* in March 1934 are some examples.

¹³³ All of her semi-autobiographical accounts (*Himawari: Waga donzoko hanseiki*, 1931, *Bungakuteki jijoden*, 1935, *Shisô to dansei o henrekishita seishun*, 1965, *Watashi no rirekisho*, 1966) touch upon exploitative relationships with socialist men and gender inequality and discriminatory attitudes against women in the proletarian movement.

¹³⁴ For a detailed introduction and discussion, see A New Critique in the section on the works of Hirabayashi Taiko.

CHAPTER III

SATA INEKO

1. The Life of Sata Ineko

In the postscript of her last volume of *Sata Ineko Zenshū*, Sata expressed concern about her chronological record (*nempu*). She felt that, although the volume was a detailed account, *nempu* could only show half the truth of her life. While affirming that all of the acts in the record were what she did and felt she had to do, she raised the weakness inherent in *nempu* in giving an accurate account of “her nature, inclination, and inner feelings” along with those acts.¹³⁵ Taking into consideration the ostensible nature of *nempu*, therefore, Sata cautioned readers not to neglect the influences on her by outside circumstances. In so doing, it is not hard to identify four main forces that influenced her: Japan’s proletarian literary movement, the multiple fluidities in her life, natural disasters and other deadly incidents, and literary works and the literary world of

¹³⁵ Sata gives an anecdote in her interview with Japanese literary critic Hasegawa Kei explaining this discrepancy. Whereas Hasegawa asserted Sata had challenged life, Sata responded that she did not challenge but only adapted to environments and struggles against adverse circumstances. Sata Ineko, “Toki to hito to watashi no koto (17): Hito o shinobi, nempu o omou,” in *Sata Ineko Zenshū*, vol. 18 (Tokyo: Kôdansha, 1979), 473.

the 1910s and 1920s. This section investigates the latter three forces¹³⁶ and analyzes the contours of her life from her birth in 1904 to the early postwar period.¹³⁷

Sata's autobiographical fiction¹³⁸ *Watashi no Tokyo Chizu (My Tokyo Map)*

begins with a section titled *Hanga (Woodblock Print)* as follows:

My Tokyo maps were carved and printed on my heart in the sequence of paths I took over a period of thirty years. Therefore, towns and streets changed with the passage of time, and the map on my heart is sometimes drawn with ancient-looking scenes, like woodblock prints from a guide to the main sights, and sometimes composed of scenery as in an artist's glossy black and white photograph.¹³⁹

Comparing steps of her journey to woodblock prints that print separate sequences to form a whole picture, Sata describes her life as a great and colorful mosaic, emphasizing that she took multiple walks on different paths and that all of the scenes are intimately engraved on her heart. Indeed, throughout her life—from the change of her name at birth to her different residences, the shuffling of residents within households, her various jobs, and major disasters that had a more global impact—Sata adapted to constant fluidity.

¹³⁶ As to the influence of Japan's proletarian literary movement, see the previous section.

¹³⁷ Satsuma Michiko conducts an extensive historical biography of Sata Ineko from her birth to the close of the Pacific War in *Uncommon Ambition: The Early Life of Sata Ineko* (Ph.D. diss., University of Hawaii, 1998). This dissertation focuses on four main forces leading to Sata's polyrhythmic and multilayered personality.

¹³⁸ Sata wrote this account, recalling her life, after the war. Although the contents are based on her own experiences, this project considers the account an "autobiographical fiction."

¹³⁹ Sata Ineko, "Hanga" of *Watashi no Tokyo Chizu* in *Sata Ineko*, vol. 34 of *Sakka no jiden*, ed. Hasegawa Kei, 29.

a. Early Life in Tokyo

Sata's journey began in Nagasaki. Born in 1904 to Tajima Masabumi, a father 18 years old, and Takayanagi Yuki, a mother only 15 years old—too young to be officially married—Sata was registered at birth as an illegitimate child and underwent adoption and a name change. Once reunited with her parents, her name changed back again.¹⁴⁰ In 1911, at the age of seven, the death of her mother portended a turbulent future: in haphazard fashion, her father repeatedly married and divorced, resulting in frequent new residences and new residents within his wayward household. Amid this fluidity, Sata developed an interest in literature with the help of her uncle, Hidemi, a subscriber to magazines such as *Taiyo* (*The Sun*), *Shinshōsetsu* (*New Novel*), and *Chūōkōron* (*Central Review*).¹⁴¹ Her reading flourished when he introduced her to the local library at the age of eight,¹⁴² and her talent for writing was recognized soon after, when at the age of nine, her account of an excursion to Fukuoka was considered so good that her elementary school teacher submitted the composition to the Emperor in Tokyo. With this recognition,

¹⁴⁰ Her name changed from Ine at birth, to Fumiko during adoption, then back to Ine after reregistering with her biological parents.

¹⁴¹ Iwatani Daishi, *Monogatari joryūbundanshi-ge* (Tokyo: Chūōkōronsha, 1977), 90. Hidemi, a student at Waseda University, later published the magazine *Sakebi* with Waseda Professor Nakagiri Kakutarō. Hidemi also wrote a long novel called *Kyōki* (*Weapon*), joined Geijutsuza led by Shimamura Hōgetsu, and wrote theater reviews.

¹⁴² Her reading list included the family novels *Hototogisu* and *Konjikiyasha*, the popular stories of *Tachikawa Bunko* such as *Sanada Yukimura*, *Sarutobi Sasuke*, and other serialized novels in the magazines and newspapers her father subscribed to, e.g. *Chūōkōron*, *Taiyō*, *Shinshōsetsu*, and *Yorozuchōhō* (Sata Ineko, “Watashi no dokusho henreki,” in *Sata Ineko Zenshū*, vol. 17 (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1979), 110. Originally published in *Nihon Yomiuri Shimbum*, April 2, 1952.

her father promised to make her a woman writer (*onna bunshi*) and told her about a women's rights movement led by *Seitôsha* (The Bluestocking Company).¹⁴³

Between the time of her mother's passing in 1911 and her first marriage in 1924, Sata's residences changed with dizzying rapidity, with her father's resignation of his job in Nagasaki and the family relocation to Tokyo in 1915, her father's new job in Hyôgo in 1917, and then finally living on her own. By the end of this period, Sata's adopted hometown of downtown Tokyo had also undergone kaleidoscopic changes that helped her learn how to quickly adapt.¹⁴⁴ Her description of areas in Tokyo where she lived superbly exhibits the actual penetration and integration of these places into her own life. Sata's camera-like eyes traverse through activities in small alleyways, tracking through people who live and work there, and introducing us to such particular colors, sounds, and smells of life, as only its residents can possess. Her observation of the rhythms of everyday life and each new environment imprinted their ambience on her heart and collectively became the polyrhythmic sediment at the foundation of her being.

Sata's job experiences also imprinted themselves. From the time she was an elementary student immediately after moving to Tokyo in 1915, she continuously held jobs, as factory worker, servant, maid, saleswoman, and *jokyû*, supporting the family

¹⁴³ It is rare to find any reference to or contribution from *Seitôsha* in her works.

¹⁴⁴ Sata Ineko, "Shitamachi" of *Watashi no Tokyo Chizu* in *Sata Ineko*, vol. 34 of *Sakka no jiden*, 57. Sata makes the distinction between *urusato* (古里) her birthplace, and *kokyô* (故郷) her hometown, stating that downtown Tokyo was her adopted hometown, the place for which she felt emotional attachment.

finances up until her first marriage in 1924 at the age of twenty.¹⁴⁵ Though too busy to enjoy literature while working in Tokyo as a youth, Sata closely observed adults in their *shitamachi* (downtown neighborhood communities). This helped construct her attitude toward life and acquire “a stylish and conscientious way of living.”¹⁴⁶ And once she began living with her father again, in Hyôgo in 1918,¹⁴⁷ she plunged herself into the literary works of Futabatei Shimei (1864-1909), Kunikida Doppo (1871-1908), Takayama Chogyû (1871-1902), Natsume Sôseki (1867-1916), William Shakespeare (1564-1616), Victor Hugo (1802-1885), and many others. She also began composing short poems (*tanka*) and short compositions (*tanbun*), and in 1918, Sata’s poems appeared in *Shôjo no tomo* (*Girl’s Friend*) and *Jogakusekai* (*World of Schoolgirls*).

By the time she began working at Seiryôtei for the second time in 1920, her intellectual curiosity had grown beyond learning only from books and the relationships between women and men inside the small restaurant. Feeling confined, she began to desire life in Nihonbashi, Ginza, and Hongô, the new downtown area of Tokyo, and yearned to be *haikara* (quite modern; from “high collar”). At Seiryôtei, Sata was

¹⁴⁵ Because of her father’s unemployment after moving to Tokyo, she had to quit elementary school and take financial responsibility for her family. Her first experience as a worker came at a caramel factory just after her family arrived in Mukôjima, Tokyo. In her 1928 semi-autographical account, *Kyarameru kôba kara* (*From the Caramel Factory*), Sata depicts the hardships for such a young girl in the working environment. She then worked in a Chinese noodle shop at the age of eleven, as a maid at the age of twelve at Seiryôtei—a Japanese style restaurant in Ueno—and at age thirteen as a factory worker at a Mukôjima knitting mill, where she lived on the floor of the factory.

¹⁴⁶ Hasegawa Kei, “Kaisetsu,” in *Sata Ineko*, vol. 34 of *Sakka no jiden*, 273. Sata explains that in *shitamachi* people are required to handle various matters smoothly, to have the sensibilities to perceive and flow with situations without trouble.

¹⁴⁷ He finally obtained a job with Harima Zôsenjo and moved to Hyôgo in 1917. Sata joined him there in 1918.

especially disappointed that nobody, not even the distinguished writer and customer Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, noticed her special character. While she skillfully adjusted to new environments and imprinted new rhythms onto previous ones and her multiplicity and singularity grew, this lack of recognition marked the beginning of her struggle with the irreconcilable gap between the observations and expectations of others and what she believed she really was.

Moving from the small back-alley restaurant to the main street in Nihonbashi to work at the prestigious Nihonbashi Maruzen Bookstore,¹⁴⁸ the change from restaurant servant to saleswoman in a famous store should have been a big step up. However, Sata's self-realization of her polyrhythmic life and its lonely consequences continued; she had simply expanded her Tokyo map from Ueno to Nihonbashi, another experience imprinted on her heart. She recognized that her taste and manners, coming from her acquired *shitamachi* flavor, set her apart from other clerks. She prided herself on this dissimilarity, later describing herself as possessing a mixture within her body.¹⁴⁹

But Sata also noticed the multiplicity and polyrhythmic lives of her Maruzen co-workers,¹⁵⁰ and wondered whether having her own flavor made much difference and how significant she was if nobody recognized her individuality. Amid the monotonous

¹⁴⁸ Nihonbashi Maruzen Bookstore imported western books, clothes, and cosmetics. In 1921, she applied for a position at Maruzen advertised in a newspaper, and became *joten'in* (a saleswoman) overseeing a section of goods. She worked at Maruzen for three years, both before and after the Great Kanto Earthquake, and was a model employee.

¹⁴⁹ Sata Ineko, "Banka," of *Watashi no Tokyo Chizu* in *Sata Ineko*, 104.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 104-5.

repetitive walks to and from her impoverished home in Mukôjima during this time, regulated by the uniform schedule of city life, her sense of suffocation grew. Superimposed on the loneliness and isolation of people in the heart of Tokyo as she drifted into pessimism and thoughts of suicide, Sata later described this dreary and wearisome period as a “discouraging and boring life regulated by time” and “driven by a governed current,” with “stony silent people floating in shadows created by refracted light,” along “a tiresome and lonely walk through endless poverty.”¹⁵¹

A positive influence during her time at Maruzen came from a fellow worker and literary enthusiast. As a result, Sata read more extensively¹⁵² and developed her own literary style close to those of Akutagawa and Sôseki.¹⁵³ At the recommendation of her colleague at Maruzen, Sata joined the literary coterie of the magazine *Bunshô Kurabu* (*Literary Club*),¹⁵⁴ regained her interest in composing poetry, and wrote poems during work. Eventually these poems, which were by her own admission full of girlish sentimentalism, appeared in *Shi to Jinsei (Poetry and Life)*.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 101.

¹⁵² Iwatani Daishi, 92. She read books by Strindberg, Ibsen, Anatole France, Tolstoy, Chikamatsu Monzaemon, Kurata Hyakuzô, and Shimada Seijirô. She was particularly impressed with *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* by Darwin.

¹⁵³ Sata Ineko, “Watashi no dokusho henreki,” in *Sata Ineko Zenshû*, vol. 17, 110.

¹⁵⁴ *Bunshô Kurabu* was edited by Ikuta Shungetsu (1892-1930) and later became *Shi to Jinsei (Poetry and Life)*.

¹⁵⁵ Sata Ineko, “Toki to hito to watashi no koto (1): Shuttatsu no jijô to sono koro,” in *Sata Ineko Zenshû*, vol. 1, 428. Sata received a recommendation letter from Ikuta Shungetsu (1892-1930), known for his sentimental symbolic poetry, recognizing her as one of five rising women poets and suggesting the possible publication of her poem in his magazine *Bunshô Kurabu*.

b. Overcoming Tragic Events

People on the verge of death often spontaneously alter their perception, recognizing themselves in everything because their past is no longer relevant. This happened to Sata in September 1923 with the Great Kantô Earthquake; its lethal natural destruction shook her personally. At work in Maruzen Bookstore when the earthquake occurred, her experience had been so vivid¹⁵⁶ that despite a longtime obsession with the idea of taking her own poverty-stricken, hopeless, and monotonous life, the sudden violent change blew away her dark state of mind and instilled a motivation to live.¹⁵⁷

The second destructive experience in her adult life came with her first marriage in 1924. Once again dreaming of escape from poverty, Sata's superior at Maruzen introduced her to Kobori Kaizô, the son of a wealthy family.¹⁵⁸ Unfortunately, her arranged marriage with Kobori, who proved to be mentally unstable, and her move away from downtown to the uptown residential areas of Hasunuma and Meguro brought about unfamiliar circumstances that increased Sata's sense of confinement. Within the first year of the marriage, Sata and Kobori repeatedly attempted double suicide, but after the third attempt, she took the initiative to leave Kobori, and in June 1925 bore her first child.

¹⁵⁶ Sata observed the scope of destruction and tragedy while walking from Nihonbashi all the way back to her house in Mukôjima.

¹⁵⁷ Sata Ineko, "Me wa hirakarezu, jûatsu dake ga atta," in *Sata Ineko Zenshû*, vol. 17, 272.

¹⁵⁸ Kobori could afford to be a student at Keiô University at the age of twenty-six, but was under constant stress due to conflicts with his brothers over property rights. Sata admits that during her time with her first husband in Mita, Hasunuma, and Meguro, she closed her eyes to outside situations, could not adjust to the environment, and did not acquire a local flavor—a rejection of an imprint on her heart. See Sata Ineko, "Magari kado," of *Watashi no Tokyo Chizu* in *Sata Ineko*, 179.

The birth of her child Yôko changed Sata drastically: Sata decided to live on her own, free herself from all restraint, and take a defiant attitude toward life,¹⁵⁹ setting the stage for another new twist.¹⁶⁰ In 1926, she became a *jokyû* at Kafé Kôryoku at Dôzaka in Hongô, and later at Kafé Juraku in Asakusa.¹⁶¹ Though she worked as a *jokyû* for only one year, it was a life-changing experience.

With the significant transformation of her life following suicide attempts and childbirth—no longer held back by the judgments of others and pursuing what she believed—Sata felt new imprints forming on her heart. Moving to Komagome with its hometown-like neighborhoods motivated her to enjoy a different trajectory and helped her center herself after living uncomfortably in unfamiliar places. Meanwhile, at Caf   Kôryoku, Sata met a coterie of the literary group *Roba no kai*.¹⁶² An exciting atmosphere surrounded its young literati,¹⁶³ and Sata shared in the publication of the inaugural issue

¹⁵⁹ Sata Ineko, “Meguriawase to kikkake,” in *Sata Ineko Zenshû*, vol. 17, 199. Originally published in *Shôsetsu shinchô* in December 1955.

¹⁶⁰ During her first marriage, Sata did not produce any literary works. After her divorce and childbirth, she thought about participating in a novel competition for money sponsored by *Asahi Shimbun*, but passed up this opportunity.

¹⁶¹ Hayashi Fumiko came to Kaf   Juraku in Asakusa with Miyajima Sukeo in 1926. Hayashi was still a regular visitor to Tokuda Shûsei’s house at this time before she wrote *Hôrôki*. Sata recalled in her memoir Hayashi’s words: “I like you. Please do not be corrupted!” Hayashi herself also worked at a caf  . Later in 1942, Sata, with Hayashi, Koyama Itoko, and Mizuki Yôko went to the fronts in Singapore and Sumatra to report on the war.

¹⁶² *Roba no kai* was established by Nakano Shigeharu, Kubokawa Tsurujirô, Hori Tatsuo, and Nishizawa Ryûji, and was supported by Murô Saisei and Akutagawa Ryûnosuke. Since the group was formed during a transitional period in the literary current, the group exhibited complexity with a mix of writers of proletarian literature from Tokyo University and other writers seeking to produce artistic expression. The common ground was “Love the aesthetic and cling to a keen artistic sense.” See Odagiri Hideo, *Nihonkindaibungaku no shisô to jôkyô* (Tokyo: Hôsei daigaku shuppankyoku, 1965), 328.

¹⁶³ The members often came to Kaf   Kôryoku on their way back from the house of Saisei in Tabata.

of their magazine *Roba (Donkey)*.¹⁶⁴ She felt her “everyday life was in literature” and that she had “stepped in the middle of this excitement.”¹⁶⁵ She listened to the coterie’s serious conversations on the definitions of literature, the differences between *bungakuteki* and *tsûzoku* (literary and popular) literature, judgments and perceptions of everyday life from literature, and relentless criticisms of literary work.¹⁶⁶ She admired their artistic philosophy of recognizing beauty even in the small and modest, of knowing falsehood in the exaggerated, of feeling camaraderie with the poor, and of living modestly.¹⁶⁷ With the influence of this group and of Akutagawa, Sata was reassured of her innate perspective, her inner reality, and could thereby more definitively question the norms and mores of society.

The fresh start of Sata’s life with her daughter was superimposed on the background of her new and revitalizing association with *Roba no kai*. She soon found a partner within this group, Kubokawa Tsurujirô, and began living with him. In 1927, Sata quit the café and began working at Bungeishunjû Publishing Company, and with support

¹⁶⁴ After glancing at the listed names of the coterie, which included Akutagawa, Saisei, and Satô Haruo, her memory went back to the time when she happened to serve the writers Akutagawa, Kikuchi Kan, Kume Masao, Uno Kôji, and Eguchi Kan as a maid in the reception room of the small Japanese restaurant Seiryôtei in Ueno Ike no hata in 1920. According to her memoirs she did not have any chance to speak with them at that time; they were artists beyond reach for whom she had deep respect. Sata Ineko, “Seiryôtei no koto,” in *Sata Ineko Zenshû*, vol. 17, 108. Originally published in *Bungei* in July 1952.

¹⁶⁵ Sata Ineko, “Seikatsu sonomono,” in *Sata Ineko Zenshû*, vol. 17, 267. Originally published in *Bungakukai* in April 1960.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 268.

¹⁶⁷ Sata Ineko, “Roba no dôjintachi,” in *Sata Ineko Zenshû*, vol. 18, 101. Originally published in *Asahi Shimbun*, March 25, 1969.

and encouragement from new husband Kubokawa and Nakano Shigeharu, she contributed two pieces of poetry to *Roba*. Sata points out that these poems published in *Roba* exhibited an objective perspective to life due to strong influence from Nakano who was already active in class strife. However, at the same time, when Sata pondered the genuine quality of poetry, she concluded that she felt ill qualified to write proletarian poetry because she was not an “authentic laborer,” and thus eventually quit writing poetry.¹⁶⁸

In July 1927, in the midst of her stable and happier life, Sata faced the sudden tragic suicide of Akutagawa. Sata had known Akutagawa from the time she worked at Seiryôtei in 1920.¹⁶⁹ Hearing of his death while resting in the *jokyû* room of Kafé Juraku, she was completely shocked. She had visited him at his house in Tabata just four days earlier, and during their conversation, he had asked her intimate questions about her multiple suicide attempts and whether she still harbored a desire for death.

Akutagawa’s death had a dramatic impact on the entire literary world, ultimately leading members of *Roba no kai* to take a strong communist position and involve the leftist movement more actively.¹⁷⁰ Nakano, Nishizawa, and Sata’s husband Kubokawa took up active roles in the leftist movement, and Sata began reading works by Engels and

¹⁶⁸ Sata Ineko, “Toki to hito to watashi no koto (1): Shuttatsu no jijô to sono koro,” in *Sata Ineko Zenshû*, vol. 1, 430. With her administrative-class family history, she was anxious about her possible weakness in presenting the working class.

¹⁶⁹ Sata Ineko, “Asu Kappa-ki,” in *Sata Ineko Zenshû*, vol. 17, 154. Originally published in *Asahi Shimbun*, July 23, 1961.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

Lenin. *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* by Engels was a particularly eye-opening piece that changed her perception of class relations from natural order to social construction and helped develop her class-consciousness.¹⁷¹ On the advice of Nakano and Kubokawa, she opted for a career as a writer and in 1928 wrote her introductory work *Kyarameru kôba kara* (*From the Caramel Factory*).¹⁷²

As the previous chapter explored, the proletarian literary movement was turbulent with inner splits and constant government crackdowns. In the midst of the hardship experienced by the movement after the March 15 arrest of leftists in 1928, Sata began producing works consistently and publishing them in various magazines such as *Roba* (*Donkey*), *Wakakusa* (*Young Grass*), *Senki* (*Battle Flag*), *Sôzaku Gekkan* (*Monthly Creation*), and *Hi no Tori* (*Firebird*).¹⁷³ Her relationship with another women's magazine *Nyonin Geijutsu* (*Women's Arts*) also began in July 1928,¹⁷⁴ and in January 1929, she published *Ikari* (*Anger*) in *Hi no Tori*. Sata was asked to write a story in

¹⁷¹ Sata Ineko, "Watashi no dokusho henreki," in *Sata Ineko Zenshû*, vol. 17, 111. Originally published in *Yomiuri Shimbun* in April 1952.

¹⁷² This work appeared in *Puroretaria Geijutsu* (*Proletarian Art*) in February. The anonymous criticism in *Yomiuri Shimbun* assumed that the writer was not a woman even though the name was that of a woman, leaving Sata with a strange happy sensation about this mistaken identity. (Sata Ineko, "Meguriawase to kikkake," in *Sata Ineko Zenshû*, vol. 17, 202).

¹⁷³ Founded by Watanabe Tome, the wife of a titled husband, *Hi no Tori* was published exclusively by women and edited by Katayama Hiroko, a close friend of Akutagawa and Hori Tatsuo.

¹⁷⁴ Founded by Hasegawa Shigure, *Nyonin Geijutsu* was written and edited by women. Sata acknowledges that this magazine launched the literary movement for women and established many writing careers (e.g. Hayashi Fumiko, Ozaki Midori, and Enchi Fumiko). In her memoirs, Sata often expresses her appreciation and respect for Hasegawa Shigure, and talks about her generosity and open-mindedness. Sata Ineko, "Toki to hito to watashi no koto (1): Shuttatsu no jijô to sono koro," in *Sata Ineko Zenshû*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1977), 434.

Bungeishunjū, and in September 1929 wrote *Restaurant Rakuyō*, a story about *jokyū* based on her experiences at Café Juraku in Asakusa.¹⁷⁵

By February 1933, in the midst of another crackdown on leftist activists by the military government, Sata had become a liaison for illegal activists in the Communist Party,¹⁷⁶ and as Japan walked a path toward colonialism and imperialism, Sata's life was thrown into turmoil with the tragic loss of Kobayashi Takiji. Takiji, who had gone underground, was arrested on the same street where Sata had made contact with him just three days before. He was tortured to death at Tsukiji Police Station.¹⁷⁷

Sata poured out her anger, grief, and vexation at Takiji's death in a literary account (*hōkoku bungaku*), *Nigatsu Hatsuka no ato (After February Twentieth)*. Her friend and contemporary writer and critic, Miyamoto Yuriko, summarized Takiji's death as committed by Japanese bourgeoisie and the brutal military government: "Again they have murdered another activist (*Mata koroshiyagatta!*)."¹⁷⁸ Ruthless crackdowns followed protests against Takiji's violent death, and due to the loss of so many activists, Sata left the frontlines of the movement to edit the magazine *Hataraku Fujin (Workingwomen)* and become the chief editor of both *Taishū no Tomo (The Mass's*

¹⁷⁵ Ibid. This was a result of the goodwill of Kikuchi Kan who had known her from Seiryōtei.

¹⁷⁶ See the section on Sata Ineko and the proletarian literary movement.

¹⁷⁷ Sata Ineko, "Kobayashi Takiji no bungaku," in *Sata Ineko Zenshū*, vol. 17, 76. Originally published in *Shin Nihon Bungaku* in March 1949.

¹⁷⁸ Sata Ineko, "Nigatsu hatsuka no ato," in *Sata Ineko Zenshū*, vol. 1, 383. Originally published in *Puroretaria Bungaku* in May 1933.

Friend) and *Puroretaria Bunka (Proletarian Culture)*.¹⁷⁹ With this step, she took on more responsibility for and gave more commitment to the proletarian movement.

c. Through the Pain

The longest life and death threat to Sata arrived with increased Japanese aggression on the Asian continent; from the early stage of Japanese colonialism through to the postwar era, her journey was like a roller coaster. Sata's metamorphosis—from criticizing the imperial war and women's groups that supported the war¹⁸⁰ to participating in the war effort by visiting the front¹⁸¹ and writing to promote public support¹⁸²—significantly hurt her career following the war in 1945, with the harshest criticisms coming from people closest to her: Miyamoto, Nakano, and Kurahara. Exposed to such strong criticism, Sata was excluded from the group of founding members of the New

¹⁷⁹ Miyamoto had been chief editor of *Hataraku Fujin*, but was arrested during the crackdowns.

¹⁸⁰ She wrote an essay critical of the war effort conducted by women. Sata Ineko, "Teikokushugi no atooshi o suru fujin dantai," in *Sata Ineko Zenshū*, vol. 16, 11-17. Originally published in *Hataraku Fujin* in August 1932.

¹⁸¹ With the logic that women could be helpful for the nation, their abilities and skills were acknowledged and requested, and even progressive women gave in and began supporting the war. At the same time, while suppressing the increased anxiety and doubt of war widows, the military government mobilized women writers to write accounts from the front for the purpose of inspiring the public. This group was known as the *Shōsetsuka imon butai* (Writer's Comfort Pen Squadron). (Miyamoto Yuriko, *Fujin to Bungaku* (Tokyo: Kadokawa shoten, 1958), 228.

¹⁸² Sata Ineko, "Chūshi no heitai-san tachi," in *Zoku josei no kotoba* (Tokyo: Takayama shoin, 1940) 54-55. In Sata's own words, "Our women's hands widened a gateway of hope for a new life" (*Onnade wa kibō no mon*), suggesting that women were needed to provide intense efforts on the home front and that women writers were therefore requested to participate in the *Shōsetsuka imon butai*. From 1940 to 1943, Sata made trips to Korea (with Tsuboi Sakae in 1940), Manchuria (with Osaragi Jirō, Hayashi Fumiko, and Yokoyama Ryūichi in 1941), Taiwan (in 1942), China (with Masugi Shizue in 1942), and Southeast Asia (with Hayashi Fumiko, Koyama Itoko, and Mizuki Yōko from 1942 to 1943).

Japanese Literature Society (*Shin Nihon Bungakukai*).¹⁸³ However, Sata's explanation reveals the complicated circumstances surrounding the war effort: pressure by military control, financial dependence on newspaper and magazine companies under military rule, her sensitivity to the opinions of neighbors,¹⁸⁴ and her sympathy for neighbors suffering from the war tragedy.¹⁸⁵

Various issues are revealed by taking a closer look at what and how Sata wrote about places, people, and enemies in colonized lands. The process of imperialism occurred on cultural and social levels as well as economic and political, but while hiding traits of colonialism, the use of colonial language and rhetoric exposed its fundamental ideology. In Sata's reports from the front, Japanese soldiers are never portrayed as aggressors, and the real hardship of military life, human suffering, is absent while the

¹⁸³ A literary group theoretically founded only by writers who resisted the imperial war.

¹⁸⁴ Being a writer who had disturbed the Maintenance of Public Order Act and been arrested many times, she felt isolation and loneliness living in her neighborhood.

¹⁸⁵ Hasegawa Kei adds to the reasons for Sata's decision to go to the front the writer's egotistic desire and the remnant or continuation of the philosophy of the proletarian movement: staying with the masses and sharing their hardship and sorrows. (Hasegawa Kei, "Senjika no teikô to kussetsu," of *Sensô to Bungaku*, in *Josei no kotoba, zoku josei no kotoba*, vol. 5 of *Senjika no joseibungaku* (Tokyo: Yumani shobô, 2002), 2. In "Michi," the last chapter of *Watashi no Tokyo Chizu*, Sata touches upon the writer's egotistic desire to witness the front with their own eyes; thus Hasegawa's point should not be ignored. Miyamoto Yuriko revealed the complexity of the mobilization of women writers pointing out the lure of financial security and self-enrichment. For women writers, being called into national service by the government was considered a triple benefit, providing job security at a time of restricted working opportunities, self-improvement as a writer, and a secure position in the literary world that was already restricted for women. Miyamoto also explained that women writers who went to the front considered themselves representatives of Japanese women in general. In her reports, Sata often referred to her mission of representing women of the homeland and letting the soldiers know that they were living properly in support of them (Miyamoto Yuriko, 228). But Sata's mission went far beyond this point: in *Onnade wa kibô no mon* (*Women's Hands are a Gateway of Hope*), she clearly expressed that a Japanese woman should be able to present herself as a highly qualified and enriched woman in China, Manchuria, and other countries, and propagate the idea that every Japanese woman should have "the self-awareness of being a Japanese woman" and awaken to national pride with determination.

qualities of a war hero—selflessness, high spiritedness, and individual courage—are glorified and told sentimentally with tears.¹⁸⁶ Instead of actualizing co-prosperity in Asia, her reports on the war indicate that she understood Japan’s imperialistic motivation for colonization: the war was justified as a collaboration of good will between Japan and China, and the elimination of anti-Japanese forces thus rationalized.¹⁸⁷

Observation, evaluation, and judgment—the gaze—and the appropriation of one’s mind, body, and land, are never separate from colonial discourse. The gaze signifies exclusion as well as the ubiquitous right to examine and inspect, implying power, and Sata’s reports were full of these practices.¹⁸⁸ Expressing colonialist attitudes and comments, Sata’s reports fulfilled the goal of the Japanese government to “enlighten” the homeland populace by propagating the notions of goodwill with Asia and a “readiness for single combat.”

Undeniably, Sata withheld criticism of Japanese imperialism and supported the war.¹⁸⁹ In 1978, Sata admitted her sympathetic attitude toward the war effort, saying that

¹⁸⁶ Sata Ineko, “Senjō ni miidasu ninjō no utsukushisa,” in *Zoku josei no kotoba*, 63.

¹⁸⁷ Sata Ineko, “Chūshi no heitai-san tachi,” in *Zoku josei no kotoba*, 42.

¹⁸⁸ The following example is a crucial one that led to severe criticism by Miyamoto Yuriko. When Sata went to Manchuria, she visited Manmō Wool Factory in old Shenyang and saw women factory workers, who were regular Chinese wives, old women, and physically challenged girls. Sata expressed no objection to the brutal colonialist mindset of the Japanese factory owner: “...utilizing well these good-for-nothing humans in society for their own profit,” and praised the way of “recycling whatever they can” under the name of “mobilization.” (Sata Ineko, “Manshū no shōjokō,” in *Zoku josei no kotoba*, 94.) Miyamoto severely criticizes Sata’s attitude and cruelty as that of “a slave master,” pointing out the radical departure from her own childhood experience at the caramel factory.

¹⁸⁹ Hasegawa Kei examined Sata’s work during the war. See *Sata Ineko ron* (Tokyo: Orijinaru shuppan sentā, 1992), 138-226. Kitagawa Akio conducted extensive research on Sata’s involvement in the war by analyzing her works. See *Sata Ineko kenkyū* (Tokyo: Sōbunsha shuppan, 1993). On the other hand,

she had cried for Japanese soldiers at the front but not for the oppressed people of occupied lands.¹⁹⁰ In 1945, faced with the death of her literary career, she undertook a grave self-examination and after long contemplation expressed her experiences in new stories,¹⁹¹ thus surviving and establishing a position in the postwar literary world.

For Sata, fluidity was the true source of power. Indeed affirming Sata's concern regarding *nempu*, her chronological record tells only what she did or had to do. How she acted and reacted, and what influenced her are all left out. Thus, to comprehensively grasp her life, a careful contemplation of the spaces between the lines of *nempu* is required. Her acquisition of a polyrhythmic life constituted the foundation of her identity as a complex individual. Sata's stories portray the journey of characters, most often women, struggling to reconcile the gap between evaluation and judgment by others and the inner truth just as she herself struggled on her multiple trajectories. In her interview with Hasegawa, she explained that whenever she seemed on the verge of destruction, she reexamined herself and gained a new consciousness through tremendous pain. Only

Kobayashi Emiko examined both Sata's novels and short stories written in the late 1930s and concluded that Sata, while participating in the Writer's Comfort Pen Squadron, presented her antiwar attitude by portraying the misery and restraint of war widows and revealing how the social and political mechanisms pushed more women to support the war. Kobayashi also pointed out that Sata supported the war to prove that women could do what men do. See *Shōwa jūnendai no Sata Ineko* (Tokyo: Sōbunsha shuppan, 2005).

¹⁹⁰ Sata Ineko, "Toki to hito to watashi no koto (4): Senjichū to haisen no ato," in *Sata Ineko Zenshū*, vol. 4 (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1978), 446.

¹⁹¹ Sata wrote the following stories: *Watashi no Tokyo Chizu* (1947), *Onna sakusha* (1947), *Kyogi* (1948), *Hōmatsu no kiroku* (1948), *Aruyo no kyaku* (1959), *Haiiro no gogo* (1959), and *Toki ni tatsu* (1975).

through such recognition and awakening does the full image of Sata's life become complete.

2. Critiques of the Works of Sata Ineko

As the previous chapter examined, Sata eagerly learned from literature, both existing and new, through intensive reading and observation of discussions among young intellectuals. Works by male naturalist writers, as well as Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, Hori Tatsuo, and the men of *Roba no kai*, became models for Sata, and soon the less constricting form of proletarian writing emerged. Along with the changing policies of the proletarian literary movement, ideological and theoretical writing became dominant.¹⁹² Since standards were set and monitored by male writers and critics, it was expected that women writers would write the way men wrote; that is, if a woman wanted to be in a literary circle, she should succeed on the same level as a male while also taking care of the household. Early on, Sata felt compelled to meet this established expectation of literary circles, but when she felt she succeeded, her attempts were criticized as weak, ineffective, and unoriginal relative to the standards and expectations of men. This evaluation system reflected patriarchal power, an added hardship for the women who actively participated and eventually succeeded in literary circles.

¹⁹² Models of ideological and theoretical writing were established by male leaders of the proletarian literary movement, e.g. Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke, Aono Suekichi, and Kurahara Korehito. For a detailed discussion, see the section on the history of the proletarian literary movement.

At the same time, the overall categorization of writers produced a general misjudgment of works. Because critics began with a prejudged view of a certain literary group, limited their views without investigation, and carried out their critique by comparison and contrast with other writers of the same category, Sata's works suffered from bias against two categories: women's literature and proletarian literature.

a. Within the Scope of Women's Literature

When male critics write a review of a work written by a woman, they tend to assess the work based on the idea of "two cultural differences," man vs. woman and ultimately superior vs. inferior; they see through a blurred lens of characteristics usually attributed to women, and apply peculiar requirements differing from men. With femininity scrutinized and work assessed in terms of female characteristics designated wholesale in the process of evaluation, the process forever fixes a woman writer in the womanly role, preventing her escape from lower status.

Critiques of Sata's works expose this tendency to emphasize "womanly" qualities.¹⁹³ The overall consequence is an evaluation that characterizes her style as possessing womanly calmness and meticulous attention.¹⁹⁴ However, since male critics

¹⁹³ Both positive and negative evaluations of her writing style often use a particular word, *onna rashii* (womanliness), and feminine-like adjectives such as serene, delicate, gentle, meticulous, and pure.

¹⁹⁴ For example, while praising her reserved and gentle manner of writing ("good ethics held by women and the people who taste the hardship of life"), Kubokawa Tsurujirô finds a "weak and mild form" in her work and asserts her need for stronger structure. Kubokawa Tsurujirô. "Boku no kibô," in *Shinsakka no Purofiru* (3): *Kubokawa Ineko o kataru*, in *Shinchô* 3 (1931), 104-8.

do not delineate and define womanly qualities with concrete examples, their remarks are—using the language of gender prejudgment in reverse—impotent.

These expectations, arising from previous and contemporary male “great literary masters,” also led male critics to scrutinize women’s work at every level males achieved, aesthetically, intellectually, and ethically attempting to identify the same complexity, skill, and perspective in their work. Unfairly, Sata’s talent was nearly overlooked. Poet and supporter of *Roba no kai* Murô Saisei mentioned that Sata made her appearance under the guidance of Kubokawa.¹⁹⁵ Takashiyama Osamu also attributed her writing to her marital relationship, collaboration with Kubokawa.¹⁹⁶ Both suggested Sata’s works would not exist without Kubokawa’s partnership.

Since the criteria for appropriate themes were instituted by male literary critics in a patriarchal system, they asserted that themes related to women’s oppression were not universally valid and not for the general reader. A woman writer’s thematic criticism of patriarchy, therefore, fared terribly, was often dismissed as “narrow,” and ultimately considered immature and of low quality. The obliteration of themes on women’s oppression and pain under patriarchy according to this criterion obligated women writers to create works within its narrow scope.

¹⁹⁵ Murô Saisei, “Kyôkakufûna Ineko san” in *Shinsakka no Purofîiru (3): Kubokawa Ineko o kataru*, in *Shinchô* 3 (1931), 96-99.

¹⁹⁶ Takashiyama Osamu, “Sakka Kubokawa Ineko” in *Shinsakka no Purofîiru (3): Kubokawa Ineko o kataru*, in *Shinchô* 3 (1931), 99-102.

Sata included in her works not only the issues of workers but also the everyday reality of women: suppression and harassment by men in both the working place and the household. Because of the ignorance and apprehension of the critics toward any themes of women's oppression, they underestimated and devalued what Sata wrote, concluding that her works were personal and non-political.

Hardcore proletarian male writers such as Kobayashi Takiji and Aono Suekichi, could not recognize the importance of Sata's multiple themes and layered content and undervalued her works. Kobayashi dismissed her work as non-political and episodic, and criticized the narrowness of her themes and trivialities in her content.¹⁹⁷ Aono evaluated Sata's *Kurenai* (*Crimson*, 1936) as "a revulsion and complaint towards men," adding that the work neither saw through nor deeply investigated the issues.¹⁹⁸

Among male proletarian critics, however, Nakano Shigeharu evaluated *Kurenai* differently, appreciating Sata's genuine account of everyday issues through careful observation and meticulous writing.¹⁹⁹ Nakano underscored Sata's straightforward

¹⁹⁷ Kobayashi Takiji, "Bungei jihyô (2): Fujinsakka no ippanteki keikô," in *Kobayashi Takiji Zenshû*, vol. 8 (Tokyo: Kasuga Shobô, 1958), 278.

¹⁹⁸ Aono Suekichi, "Kubokawa Ineko ron," in *Kindai joryûbungaku: Okamoto Kanoko, Hayashi Fumiko, Hirabayashi Taiko, Sata Ineko*, ed. Nihon bungaku kenkyûshiryôkankôkai (Tokyo: Yûseidô, 1983), 223.

¹⁹⁹ Nakano Shigeharu, "Kurenai no sakusha ni koto yosete," in *Hirabayashi Taiko, Amio Kiku, Sata Ineko, Tsuboi Sakae*, vol. 38 of *Gendai Nihonbungaku Zenshû*. (Tokyo: Chikuma shobô, 1955), 400-404. Nakano analyzed the characteristics of her meticulous writing and pointed out that genuine meticulous writing requires two qualities: the ability to produce elaborate depictions of trivial things and skill and enthusiasm for writing energetically about human reality. Nakano attributed both qualities to Sata.

attitude towards the issues of women and women writers, and pointed out that Sata presented all of their pains on behalf of them.

Women critics presented similar views. Miyamoto Yuriko analyzed Sata's work, claiming that all of it, while actively presenting a theme of the working class, illustrated many aspects of women's struggles, and particularly of a woman's stress in the midst of class conflict.²⁰⁰ Miyamoto emphasized Sata's mission of describing the struggles of women as slaves to the conventions and mores in Japan, and of exposing the real fetters of women's misery and pain.

Hirabayashi Taiko also highlighted the danger of evaluation inherent in patriarchy,²⁰¹ and demanded a new evaluation for Sata. While Hirabayashi referred to the passivity and weakness of Sata's characters, she emphasized that these reflected her sensitivity and sensibility and were necessary to create a work without exaggeration and distortion.²⁰² Hirabayashi pointed to Sata's ability to reach out to the proletarian woman, and concluded that only Sata's own sincere words and expressions could depict the real feelings of proletarian women.

²⁰⁰ Miyamoto Yuriko, 213-6. Miyamoto, pointing out the blindness of Aono's critique of *Kurenai* ("as a revulsion and complaint toward men"), declared that *Kurenai* was a story of women who painfully long for self-elevation and cultivation.

²⁰¹ Hirabayashi Taiko, "Kubokawa san no sakuhin," in *Shinsakka no Purofiiru (3): Kubokawa Ineko o kataru*, in *Shinchō* 3 (1931), 102-4. In her critique, Hirabayashi listed ubiquitous words in the established opinion of Sata's work: *yasashii* (gentle), *jūjun* (submissive), and *onna rashii* (womanly; feminine), and expressed her dissatisfaction with the critic's bias in evaluating Sata's works.

²⁰² Hirabayashi obviously compared Sata's writing principles with the problematic approach and principles of the proletarian literary movement. Hirabayashi thought that the active proletarian writer's works often distorted reality by being too strictly disciplined and narrowly focused.

Nakano, Miyamoto, and Hirabayashi all acknowledged Sata's careful observation of society and inclusion of women's issues in her works, and that such issues were politically important enough to describe. For them, exposing women's pain in society, even within the proletarian literary movement, was as valid as revealing the condition of workers under capitalism.

b. Within the Scope of Proletarian Literature

Under the label of proletarian writer, Sata's works were often judged against the background of characteristics attributed to proletarian literature: of presenting political reality, describing the world of the vanguard proletarian, and leading the masses to class-consciousness and, eventually, revolution. Critics expected her to write "political" themes based on these norms, and when her works did not overtly feature them, the critics drew two conclusions, "non-ideological but original" and/or "weak and useless." Comparative critiques of her works with other proletarian works often came with criticism of her involvement in the proletarian literary movement.

In 1929, critic Kobayashi Hideo wrote of Sata in *Tokyo Nichinichi Shimbun* (*Tokyo Daily Newspaper*), emphasizing her "originality" as "straightforward and sincere"²⁰³ while criticizing the inability of other proletarian writers to get a firm grip on the lives of workers. He added that her works were neither the result of something

²⁰³ Kobayashi Hideo, "Bungei geppyō (3): Kubokawa Ineko no orijinarutei," *Tokyo Nichinichi Shimbun*, July 27, 1931.

learned or borrowed nor meant to stir up ideology, and concluded that her works, even without class-consciousness, ideology, and strong resistance, proved her originality. The noted writer Kawabata Yasunari wrote an overview of creative activities in 1931, pointing out Sata's "modest and true writing in the midst of a congestion of proletarian literary works."²⁰⁴ Both critiques begin from the premise of proletarian literature characteristics and evaluate Sata's work within that premise.²⁰⁵

On the other hand, raising womanly qualities again, Takashiyama Osamu regarded her "womanly meticulous care" as trifling and worried about her possible inability to "write proletarian literature that offers various issues agitation and propaganda for a cause."²⁰⁶ Kobayashi Takiji severely criticized her writing style as having "a feminine calmness and non-protesting manner" that led to passivity and subdued enthusiasm for proletarian literature, referring to the episodic style of her writing as "bourgeoisie."²⁰⁷

²⁰⁴ Kawabata Yasunari, "Shōwa rokunen: Hitotsu no seiriki: 1931 nen no bundan," in *Kawabata Yasunari Zenshū*, vol. 17 (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1973), 351. Originally published in *Shinchō* in December 1931.

²⁰⁵ These critiques were themselves criticized by proletarian writers such as Kobayashi Takiji and Nakano Shigeharu. Takiji criticizes Sata's non-political writing, saying that her works were praised by bourgeois critics because of it. Nakano asserts that "bourgeoisie writers" try to pull Sata into their literary circles. On the other hand, Kubokawa Tsurujirō explains that Sata's gentle and rather weak writing style makes a favorable impression on progressive bourgeoisie women and attracts them to her works. Kobayashi Takiji, "Bungei jihyō (2): Fujin sakka no ippan keikō ni tsuite," *Tokyo Asahi Shimbun*, September 26 to October 2, 1931. Nakano Shigeharu, "Bungeikai no shomondai 2: Fujinsakka no koto," *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 25 September 1931. Kubokawa Tsurujirō, "Boku no Kibō," in *Shinsakka no Purofiuru (3): Kubokawa Ineko o karatu*, in *Shinchō* 3 (1931), 104-9.

²⁰⁶ Takashiyama Osamu, 101.

²⁰⁷ Kobayashi Takiji, "Bungei jihyō (2): Fujinsakka no ippanteki keikō," *Kobayashi Takiji Zenshū*, vol. 8 (Tokyo: Kasuga shobō, 1958), 278.

The critics also severely criticized her themes as useless and non-political. Takashiyama expressed concern for her “narrow” proletarian themes, and as the previous section introduced, Kobayashi criticized Sata for remaining aloof from clear proletarian advocacy.

c. A New Critique

Any new critique of Sata’s work should avoid the aforementioned dangerous pitfalls and open a broader perspective. The act of writing became Sata’s form of resistance against many issues and very significant as a means of expressing the reality of life via the fundamental ideology of the proletarian literary movement—new consciousness, new emotions, and new sensibilities among the working class.²⁰⁸ Sata did not limit her writing to proletarian themes, but touched upon various problems and views toward women, including the feudalism and patriarchy present in everyday life and her own experiences.

Thanks to keen observation and insight, Sata’s writings provide more realistic descriptions and views than other writers following proletarian principles and ideology. She recognized the reality of modern Japan, the real nature of capitalism, and exposed issues she could not ignore: the lapse of the modern self under capitalism, the non-existence of the self for women in modern Japan under patriarchy, and the problems

²⁰⁸ Sata Ineko, “Seikatsu to sakuhin: Jibun no keiken kara,” in *Sata Ienko Zenshū*, vol. 17, 80-81.

within the proletarian literary movement at large—the conservatism, impatience, and dominant position of men within political ideology.

The premise of modern society was respect for the awakening of the modern self, wherein an unrestrained inner desire for self-realization should be valued and guaranteed. In all aspects, institutionally, politically, socially, ideologically, and customarily, freedom and rights were promises to everyone in society. Under capitalism, however, this premise is partial and the democratic promises of freedom and rights only actualized for a selected exclusive class; people without capital end up neglected, and their modern self unrealized and extinguished.²⁰⁹

Though both men and women in the movement were presumed progressive and understanding, the reality was far different. The roots of patriarchy remained strong in modern society and in the proletarian movement. Women activists were treated as second-class citizens and given tasks serving men activists; while abolishment of the social hierarchy was set forth, the dominant position of men above women was an issue left untouched.

Sata ultimately comprehended the issues after her scrutiny of society through proletarian eyes, and recognized that the proletarian activists, including writers, did not have deep roots in the people. While pushing on the masses the policy that ideology was superior to empirical philosophy, the blindness of the ideology and an impatience for revolution resulted in greater distance between the activists and the masses. As both

²⁰⁹ Odagiri Hideo, “Nihon kindai no jiga no rekishi,” in *Nihonkindai no shisô to jôkyô*, 5-50.

Miyamoto and Hirabayashi characterized, Sata had an insight into the problems of the movement; grounded in realism, her works avoided this separation from the masses.

The 1930's documentary-like work, *Jokyū no seikatsu (Jokyū Life)*,²¹⁰ is an excellent example, presenting Sata's objections to the inconsiderate attitudes of proletarian activists and incisively criticizing the movement. While activists projected a typical image of the exploited worker under capitalism onto *jokyū* and considered them objects of their unification and unionization, Sata explains that *jokyū* focused much more on daily survival than revolting against the bourgeoisie or fighting capitalism with class-consciousness. Sata makes the bold statement that for *jokyū*, standing together and uniting against systems is almost laughable²¹¹ as they are too preoccupied simply living, surviving, under the deadweight of capitalism and patriarchy, with no time or inclination to consider an organized commitment to change society. In this case, the café shows the limitations of and obstacles to the unilateral implementation of the proletarian movement and the swift and willing unification of laborers.²¹²

²¹⁰ Sata Ineko, "Jokyū no seikatsu," in *Sata Ineko Zenshū*, vol. 16, 386.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² To investigate the "effects of *jokyū* on general social life," Ōbayashi Munetsugu researched *jokyū* working under the tip system in thirteen districts of Osaka and wrote an extensive report, *Jokyū seikatsu no shin-kenkyū*, in 1931. In explaining the unique relationship between *jokyū* and café owners under the tip system, Ōbayashi emphasizes that *jokyū* were not waged workers employed by café owners. As opposed to ordinary employers, café owners only gave permission for *jokyū* to conduct business in the café and did not pay a salary. Technically not employed by the café owner, therefore, *jokyū* relied wholly on tips from customers for their income. Under this system, *jokyū* depend on the café for their income and survivability. According to Ōbayashi's report, *jokyū* lack the collective consciousness for self-defensive action and thus fail to unionize.

In his research on the café in *Kanraku no ōkyū kafé* (1929), Murashima describes a lack of class-consciousness among *jokyū* and points to the café's unique tip system (he explains that "tip" literally meant "To Insure Promptness"). Under this tip system without labor-management relations, *jokyū* must pay

Critic Honda Shûgo pointed to “nihilism” in Sata’s works²¹³ while Hasegawa Kei found “darkness,” seeing no hope in them for changing current conditions or human nature. Just as Aono had earlier spoken of an “absence of motivation and effort to step forward in her work,” Hasegawa judged Sata’s attitude as sorrowful and desperate, and commented on Sata’s “relinquishment of a motive for criticism” and “eclipsing an effort for a moral leap.”²¹⁴ Both Honda and Hasegawa noted that the end of Sata’s works were not necessarily uplifting and hopeful. This is, however, the reality that Sata and the people and workers around her endured. Since she wrote about people and their lives as they were, she grasped and incorporated the circumstances as they were, showing that the

owners for all expendable supplies used in their services, such as napkins, toothpicks, and matchboxes. The owners collect money from *jokyû* for their meals and for the expenses of other workers at cafés. This was called *desen* (expenses) in Tokyo and *kisoku* (rules) in Osaka. Usually fifty-*sen* to one-*yen* were imposed daily by the owner. *Jokyû* were moreover imposed fines for lateness and absence even though not technically café employees. Murashima concludes, “*Jokyû* rarely have the class-consciousness to threaten a labor dispute.” Murashima, *Kafé Kôgengaku*, 290.

Despite the difficulty of unionization, in another report, *Osaka kafé dan'atsu-shi* (1929), Murashima describes the *Osaka Jokyû Dômei*, founded in April 1921. Playing a central role in this movement, *jokyû* of Nishi-kujô Asahi-ya Shokudô demanded abolition of the tip system that forced *jokyû* to flirt with customers for money, introduction of a fair salary system, shorter work hours, and the illegalization of forced personal activities by an owner. Wearing white aprons, *jokyû* began demonstrating and delivering speeches in labor towns, and assisting other union movements. In doing so, they gained popularity and participated the May Day rally of 1922. Murashima mentions the special support of male laborers in organizing this union.

Contrary to the views of Sata, Ôbayashi, and Murashima, Japanese historian Fujime Yuki looks at the success of *jokyû* unionization. Fujime conducted research into the organization of Osaka *jokyû* during the interwar era, yielding the following information: the history of the *jokyû* union in Osaka, the issues and demands presented by *jokyû*, movements they worked with, and particular discriminations and difficulties *jokyû* unions faced in the overall labor movement. Fujime Yuki, “*Jokyû to sono undo*,” in *Sei no rekishigaku*, 288-94.

²¹³ Honda Shûgo, “Issen no nihirizumu,” in *Kindai joryûbungaku: Okamoto Kanoko, Hayashi Fumiko, Hirabayashi Taiko, Sata Ineko*, 234-35.

²¹⁴ Hasegawa Kei, “Sata Ineko note: Sono bungakuhassô,” in *Kindai joryûbungaku: Okamoto Kanoko, Hayashi Fumiko, Hirabayashi Taiko, Sata Ineko*, 294.

act of writing about what cannot be done is as important as writing about what can be done.

3. Sata's Writing Style

a. Early Influences

In 1935, Sata wrote about her perception of writing in a short essay, *Bunshô to sakusha tono kankei* (*Relations Between a Writer and Her Sentences*),²¹⁵ and defined a literary work as a living thing (*ikimono*). In her own terms, a literary work was a sincere reflection of a writer, an exhibition of the character of its creator.²¹⁶ Sata explained that a sentence could reflect the spontaneous feeling of a writer on a certain day, and at the same time carry an undeniably true expression of their long-term nature. Sata particularly noted that style reflects what a writer reads and studies.

This multi-layered and unpredictable yet flexible nature of writing is important and effective in examining the circumstances of Sata's exposure to life experiences and literary works and movements. In so doing, her dynamic polyrhythmic style comes as no surprise. With no formal training, the idea of becoming a writer seemed out of the question, but Sata intensively studied literary works produced in both the Meiji and Taishô periods, and especially admired the writings of Shiga Naoya. *Roba no kai* and the

²¹⁵ Sata Ineko, "Bunshô to sakusha to no kankei," of *Bunshô zakkan* in *Sata Ineko Zenshû*, vol. 16, 93. Originally published in *Gekkan Bunshô kôza* in 1935.

²¹⁶ Sata added "a writing characteristic" (*bungakuteki seikaku*) put in parentheses after a phrase: a characteristic of a writer (*sakusha no seikaku*).

proletarian literary movement were new and influential phenomena for her, but Sata began her adventure as a writer by modeling her work on both existing and newly presented literature.

Literary critic Ômori Morikazu noted a trace of the adoption of naturalist writing in Sata's work: presenting the realities of life through intense observation and detailed description and making the most of her own experiences in her work. Ômori, however, differentiated Sata's writing style—of setting up others who watch the self—from the style of naturalist writers with respect to her escape from narcissistic self-indulgence and the naturalists' lack of social awareness.²¹⁷ Critic Sasaki Kiichi stated that Sata's writing style came close to the *shi shosetsu*, I-novel style, but pointed out her absence of sentimentalism, which so often appeared in the I-novel.²¹⁸ Sakamoto Ikuo compared her style with that of *rôdô bungaku* (*Labor Literature*), which was limited to actual accounts of the everyday life of workers, and contrasted it with her new style of drawing closer to reality with clearer class-consciousness.²¹⁹

Sata recalled how much literary influence she received from Shiga Naoya in a short note written in 1971,²²⁰ how she read his works and looked up to him as her literary

²¹⁷ Ômori Morikazu, "Sata Ineko," in *Joryûbungeikenkyû*, ed. Mawatari Kenzaburô (Tokyo: Nansôsha, 1973), 195.

²¹⁸ Sasaki Kiichi, "Sata Ineko shû," in *Kindai joryûbungaku: Okamoto Kanoko, Hayashi Fumiko, Hirabayashi Taiko, Sata Ineko*, 247-48.

²¹⁹ Sakamoto Ikuo, "Sata Ineko ron" in *Kindai joryûbungaku: Okamoto Kanoko, Hayashi Fumiko, Hirabayashi Taiko, Sata Ineko*, 267. Originally published in *Nihon bungaku*, March 1967, 25-37.

²²⁰ Sata Ineko, "Shiga Naoya-san no koto," in *Sata Ineko Zenshû*, vol. 18, 129-30. Originally published in *Shinano Mainichi Shimbun*, October 22, 1971.

mentor well before she started writing. For Sata, Shiga was a landmark in literature because of his strict realism. Even from the perspective of the proletarian literary movement, Sata explained that Shiga's literary expression and spirit should be appreciated.²²¹

In a short account written in 1960, Sata recalled the significant influences she received from the artists of *Roba no kai*, and explained that these were reflected in her writing style immediately.²²² As the previous section explained, Sata learned what literature should be by overhearing writers discuss literary theory.²²³ The group shared Akutagawa's literary philosophy—that stripping off the skin of the existing absolute morality exposes the hidden reality—and wrote about the hidden human ego. The motto of the group was “harmony between aesthetics and ethics,” “consistency between ideology and life,” and “challenge the popular morality and common sense.”²²⁴ Taking their discussions literally, Sata felt contempt for vulgar work and used only regulated and reserved expressions in hers. Sata also reflected the goal of *Roba no kai*—living in harmony between a sense of beauty and morals—in her “humanistic” writing style.²²⁵

²²¹ Ibid., 130.

²²² Sata Ineko, “Seikatsu sonomono,” in *Sata Ineko Zenshū*, vol. 17, 267-69.

²²³ The members denounced popular literature because of its vulgar and catering nature, and condemned it as non-literature (*hi-bungaku*).

²²⁴ Kobayashi Hiroko, *Sata Ineko: Taiken to jikan* (Tokyo: Kanrin shobō, 1997), 297.

²²⁵ Sasaki Kiichi (Sasaki 1961, 248), Sakamoto Ikuo (Sakamoto 1967, 265), Odagiri Hideo (Odagiri 1965, 327-28) and Kobayashi Hiroko (Kobayashi, 1997, 11-12) mention the strong influence of *Roba no kai* on Sata's writing style, and emphasize the special impact on her from both Akutagawa and Hori.

Sata believed that the best writer could capture a subject precisely in the tersest of sentences and that a wordy expression was the result of a writer's laziness. She pursued conciseness rather than the cultivation of her overflowing imagination, and the conciseness of each sentence contributed to create the rhythm and colorful ambience that ultimately gave power to her works.

b. Characteristics of Sata's Writing

Sata introduced her methodology as a proletarian writer in her essay of 1932, at the height of her career.²²⁶ She delineated proletarian writers as portraying whatever can be observed through anyone's eyes, capturing immediacy and materializing what they sensed, emphasizing sincerity rather than personal interpretation. As evidence, her portrayals were like collages of many vivid pictures of scenes and characters. Sata utilized actual conversations and actions of her characters in poignant scenes to capture moments, never depicting a scene or character from a heroic ideological perspective. She described various phenomena in actual lives involved in a particular historical flow, portrayed influences on individuals from outside historical, socio-political, and economic forces, and avoided judgmental statements of narration.

Sata believed that each sentence of a work echoes the essential sentiments that have settled naturally like sediment into the writer's being. It is hard to know someone's nature, but in Sata's case, the reading of her work *Watashi no Tokyo Chizu* (*My Tokyo*

²²⁶ This essay was written in her response to Hirabayashi Taiko's criticism on proletarian writing in 1932. See "Honshitsu no ue ni kakerareta ooi," in *Sata Ineko Zenshū*, vol. 16, 54-55. Originally published in *Miyako Shimbun*, May 26-28, 1932.

Map) helps illustrate this essence in her writing style. As the previous section introduced, *Watashi no Tokyo Chizu* is a postwar reexamination of her work, the orchestration of an objective investigation of herself to find her standpoint and identity. Resulting in the exposure of her inner nature, the work is an important showcase for the fundamental elements of her writing style.²²⁷ The beginning of almost every section is filled with sensations of new environment. A perceptive reader soon recognizes how quickly Sata captures daily life in each one. The answer is in her extraordinary viewpoint, always low, often at street level. In the Asakusa section, her eyes scan a board covering a ditch to see her own image crossing the puddle upon it. The reader can smell the air and hear the clatter sound of her *hiyori* wooden clogs. When her eyes scale the surface of the Sumida River, she sees a line of two-storied houses across it without lifting her gaze.²²⁸ This is the level where she lived and wrote.

Her direction moves readers from façade to interior, from a main street through alleys and finally into a residence and the lives within: in Asakusa, her eyes sweep in from the bustling main street, through the interior of a store, and come to rest on its workers; in Nihonbashi, she darts quickly away from the main street representing

²²⁷ The work is composed of twelve sections that introduce the contours of her life with multiple maps that her life in Tokyo drew. It begins with her childhood in Asakusa, and moves into the next story whenever her mind produces a new map.

²²⁸ She clearly shows her distaste for the “big tall building,” the Matsuya Department Store. *Watashi no Tokyo Chizu*, 30.

commerce to the back streets and small alleys where local people shape their own world—she brings us into their fragile and tender lives.²²⁹

Another feature of her descriptiveness is the proximity to the objects they see. Sata is definitely not a distant observer or bystander. Once moving into a store, her eyes fall upon objects specifically related to her daily life or work, with detailed and colorful descriptions of the sounds of conversation and smells within.

Outside, her rhythm and speed show that her perspective is not one of a sightseer but of residents and workers. Her eyes touch upon a shop girl in a display window and, without ceasing, continue down the main street in Ginza amid strollers enjoying various window displays and passing other people on the street. The viewpoint ultimately widens to reveal that the shop girl was not part of an exhibition in a store window, just a laborer. Her rhythm and speed in this scene equals the rhythm and speed of the worker in the window.

The coverage of detail is panoramic and deep, and conveys idiosyncrasy and complexity rather than uniformity. Asakusa is the best example of this, symbolizing multiplicity with various kinds of buildings, businesses, and people: as Japanese critic Maeda Ai pointed out, the sacred (Sensōji temple) and the profane (the entertainment and

²²⁹ Sata also emphasizes how usefully the main streets and back alleys are constructed for business, social, and family relations.

amusement district) are intermingled here.²³⁰ Sata's eyes capture the diversity, the temple, the graves of the famous artists Kikaku and Utamaro, the eating houses and residents, all so closely existing and carrying on their daily lives—and over everything floats a thick smelly blanket of cooked grease. Her eyes never avoid crowdedness, intermixture, or the higgledy-piggledy conditions wherever she goes, and gather all of these features in a positive light, embracing their colorfulness. Such scenes are a bouquet as their people constantly reflect a polyrhythmic life, and, we feel, Sata's eyes accept and enjoy this prosperity of images, too, for this is how she writes.

Another breathtaking trait of her style is the use of a dual motif. Sata often uses optical illusion and a limitation of observation to reveal frustration in dealing with duplicity or discrepancy between façade and inner reality. Her characters are often confined by multiple social constraints and struggling to cope with their inner selves. This style derives from her own experiences of living under scrutiny while working in various places, adjusting to expectations, and becoming a model or ideal worker while growing her inner self and realizing the limitations within the pursuit of inner truth itself.

Whether or not she was conscious of her particular nature at the time of her writings, Sata's works are unfailingly radiant with complexity and richness, and always vibrant with possibility.

²³⁰ Maeda Ai, "Gekijō to shite no Asakusa," (Asakusa as Theater: Kawabata Yasunari's "The Crimson Gang of Asakusa") in *Text and the City: Essays on Japanese Modernity*, ed. James A. Fujii (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004), 148-51.

4. *Ikari* (Anger)

a. Story Background

As the previous chapter explained, the proletarian literary movement shifted with the repeated splits of 1927, the crackdown by the military government on March 15, 1928, and the founding of the All Japan Federation of Proletarian Arts (NAPF) through the merger of JPAL and VAL. Kurahara had replaced Aono to become the leading Marxist theorist, and proposed the new principle of writing actuality through the class-conscious eyes of the most advanced proletarian activists, to lead the masses into revolution.²³¹

This principle came to dominate the movement.

In 1928, strongly believing that a proletarian writer should write stories with both a clear class-consciousness and their own creativity and artistic passions, Sata experienced her first success with the debut of *From the Caramel Factory*. *Ikari* then followed exhibiting characteristics of late 1920s proletarian literature in content as well as methodology. However, the actualization of Sata's belief in well-balanced writing between political and artistic aspects met with criticism by her compatriot writers that she either did not understand or ignored the themes of proletarian writing.

²³¹ For a detailed discussion, see the section on the history of the proletarian literary movement.

b. Text Analysis

Ikari is the story of Oshino, a recently divorced mother of four working in a café to support her family.²³² Her only pride is her previous experience as a *jokyû* in a famous first-class café, which unfortunately does not grant her privileges or ease her work in the café where *Ikari* is situated. Because she is middle aged, attracting clients is not easy, and Oshino regularly ends up playing a secondary role, pleasing her few customers and assisting her young colleagues in pleasing theirs. One day, an apprentice cook humiliates Oshino, asserting that she is a mistress for money (*mekake*). Oshino reacts furiously and tries to bring the cook with her to a police station to prove that she is not a mistress. Later, she blames herself for the entire situation, saying, “This is all my fault,” regretting her decision to divorce and work outside of home in a café. After this humiliating experience, Oshino swallows her pride and begins currying favor with Eiko, a younger *jokyû*. Soon she will greet Eiko’s young but rich regular customer politely and subserviently.

In 1920s and 30s Japan, modern rational words overall were insufficient to express the growing emotions of the general populace. Lacking neither the training nor the appropriate words to appeal to others, the exploited class and particularly women workers clearly did not have a means of effectively expressing their emotions. Since Sata possessed an ability to freely express views on any topic, she chose in this short story to

²³² *Ikari* was published in *Hi no Tori (Firebird)* in January 1929. This project uses the edition from *Sata Ineko Zenshû*. “*Ikari*,” in *Sata Ineko Zenshû*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Kôdansha, 1978), 68-73.

cast light on the daily lives of the voiceless people of society and depict them from their own perspective.

Sata presents Oshino as a real person in her actual everyday life, describing characters, spaces, fight scenes, and other circumstances as they are without opinion or narrator's interpretation. Through objective description, Sata provides an acute account of the exploited class under capitalism and patriarchy. Under capitalism, men and women workers are exploited; under patriarchy, women are the most oppressed—Oshino embodies entrapment by both.

Sata wastes no time enumerating the issues Oshino has to deal with in her daily life. The first paragraph presents Oshino's state of living—her age, marriage and economic status, working experiences, and motherhood.

More than twenty women work at the café, and Oshino is senior in age among them. Oshino has four kids and left her husband by divorce this spring. Because of her working experience at a café in her girlhood, she believes that she can somehow manage to take care of four kids and her mother if she determines to work as hard as she did previously. She left her smallest child, born last year, to her mother's care, and began working at this café, bringing her one and only silk crepe *kimono* with her.²³³

With the juxtaposition of Oshino's current multiple states in the very first paragraph, Sata quickly indicates the gap between the enduring social norms and expectations toward women and single mothers in the 1920s. Oshino tries to comprehend the values of society toward family, motherhood, and conjugal ties, and to see herself in these values,

²³³ Sata Ineko, "Ikari," in *Sata Ineko Zenshū*, vol. 1, 68.

but, like many people, she does not recognize the complexity and transformative nature of the social system. Oshino devotedly values her experiences and sacrifices as a mother, and believes in the national slogan of sustaining both society and nation by meeting the standards of “Good Wives and Wise Mothers.”

As a citizen of the nation, Oshino wants to fulfill one of the social requirements of her age, being a wise mother by raising four children who will be future national assets. However, while nurturing and supporting her children and mother financially, showing high productivity as well as maturity and abundant experience were becoming unappreciated values of motherhood by the 1920s.

Under the newly upgraded Good Wives and Wise Mothers philosophy, the woman’s ideal role was to focus on the home, protecting the family in support of a husband who worked for the nation. The slogan forced an international consciousness on Japanese women that being a supportive wife and wise mother was of great value to society.²³⁴ Unfortunately, Oshino’s beliefs reveal an anachronistic understanding of the slogan far from contemporary expectations. Oshino’s childbearing and nurturing experiences were not good enough to characterize her as a wise mother, divorce disqualified her as a good wife, and working prevented her from finding a new husband devoted to the nation and giving her children closer attention. Such women as Oshino were deviations from motherhood.

²³⁴ For a detailed discussion, see the section on the construction of womanhood.

For her own survival, Oshino single-mindedly believes her devotion is pure and that her conduct and decisions derive from righteous instincts and are not a disgrace. At the same time, Oshino recognizes that this wholehearted belief is no longer valued on the outside, therefore rendering her inner belief vulnerable. Ultimately, she surrenders her self-righteous strength, gives in to the enforcement of social norms by pressure, feels inferior and regretful, and envies the persistent image of motherhood portrayed in media.

Another demand of Good Wives and Wise Mothers was efficient and industrious management of the household. This quality required women to have “three sacred treasures” of new education, new knowledge, and new techniques.²³⁵ Oshino’s lack of time and finances as a single working mother put such required treasures impossibly out of reach, thus barring her from the paragons of motherhood. Oshino’s pre-employment period as a mother managing a household and children held no value under the updated edict.

Amid discussions of qualities of motherhood, Oshino is representative of women who deviate far from the proper model, but she exhibits at least one vital motherly quality—a strong consciousness of “one’s own child” (*wagako ishiki*). She expresses her motherly love through financial devotion and uninterrupted concern for them. Sadly, while Oshino believes her work is a legitimate and total sacrifice for her children that should be recognized as a paragon of maternal love, her quality is irrelevant to the

²³⁵ For a detailed discussion, see the section on the construction of womanhood.

widespread ideal of maternal love sweeping in from the West with images of being only a mother, breastfeeding at home, and putting money away in a jar for future education.

Oshino had given up the daily care of her one-year-old child to her mother. Thus, her biggest worry, far from preparing for her children's education, is the influence of her status as *jokyū* on her older elementary school child; a worry she feels each time she travels to and from work in public wearing her heavy *jokyū* makeup. All the qualities Oshino takes great pride in that give her the ability to adapt to conditions and continue to provide as a mother are considered by the outside world peculiar, and—necessarily in the café—invisible. Indeed, she must hide any signs of being a mother.

At the start, when her breasts were full, she often went to the toilet to squeeze out and discard the milk. With her sandals, she stepped on a splash of milk spilled on the floor and completely wiped it away as though it never existed.²³⁶

Describing Oshino disposing of milk and how her milk is wasted, Sata exposes the erasure and denial of motherhood in the café environment. The qualities of motherhood—producer of milk, pipeline of wisdom to children, nurturer of a nation—are only legitimate when pursued in the household.

Oshino holds deep subjective impressions within her: she possesses the qualifications (motherhood and maternal love) and productive motivations (supporting her family for a better life) that society should approve of and support. While she believes these attributes will work for her, the final judgment comes down unilaterally by

²³⁶ Ibid., 68.

society's dominant systems. In a way, Oshino is narcissistic and naïve, and mystified by her circumstances, she constructs her own values. Her beliefs are single-minded and self-congratulatory in the way she romanticizes her working experiences and efforts to support her family. But in the end, Oshino is just a woman from a dysfunctional family accused of selling herself, and who cannot possibly be both a nurturing mother and an independent workingwoman.

Theoretically, Oshino's status as a workingwoman was acceptable in the late 1920s, and at the same time, her previous experience in a famous first-class café should have made it easier to find a similar job that granted her better conditions and a more privileged position in seniority. But, in her new café environment, she suffered unfavorable treatment from both male and female co-workers, and was forced to confront the unwritten stereotype of women workers.

Three unwritten but expected "qualifications" for *jokyū* were being young, unmarried, and childless. Though her age should have been emblematic of maturity and wisdom, the young were superior in the hierarchy: the younger the *jokyū* the more customers and money she received, thus a superior position in the café. The reversal of society's standard hierarchy rendered seniority meaningless. Oshino had to compensate for this disadvantage by adopting a subservient attitude toward younger co-workers through flattery and constant apology.

The central conflict in the story—the altercation between Oshino and a young apprentice cook—portrays the depth of prejudice. Believing that her age and previous experience rank her higher than an apprentice cook, Oshino “disregards him insensitively” by speaking snobbishly as if she were superior. The apprentice cook, meanwhile, feels quite the opposite. Less tolerant of older women like Oshino than of younger prettier ones, the cooks and bartender moreover hold *jokyû* in contempt as despicable creatures serving men, yielding profits from their patrons, and living comfortably. They look down on *jokyû* and harass them in loud voices; their sense of moral superiority over *jokyû* obscures any shared need for money. The cooks also assume that *jokyû* chose their jobs from other possible opportunities, while, particularly in Oshino’s case, there were no choices. The consequence of the discrepancy between her narcissistic vision of her qualifications and the actual social scrutiny and judgment she receives is a collision of two worlds.

Despite her age, Oshino does not mind flattering younger *jokyû* and shows restraint toward them, apologizing subserviently whenever useful. Sata explains Oshino’s tendency as follows.

Oshino always attends to both the customer and his favorite *jokyû* with polite manner and speech; in front of the customer, she pays compliments equally to both. In this secondary, supporting role, she sometimes feels embarrassed at her excessiveness, but there is always something reserved in her manner toward young *jokyû* in the café.²³⁷

²³⁷ Ibid., 70.

In playing a secondary role, Oshino also serves as a foil for young *jokyū* to survive café life. Then, after long tolerating the constant abuse and harassment from the bartender and apprentice cook, she angrily explodes when the apprentice makes a false accusation regarding her reasons for work. She feels his contempt and determines to prove her uprightness. Sata describes the tense atmosphere of this dramatic exchange between the two.

“Here is the butter, you importunate bitch!”

The thrown butter tray hits a serving table, and a tin plate on the table makes an empty noise. Greasy water splashes on Oshino’s *kimono*.

“Oh, no! Please be careful. My *kimono* got stained.”

“Being *jokyū* is a lucrative business. You can buy as many *kimonos* as you like!”

“Stop joking. If that was so, I wouldn’t suffer so much.”

“Bullshit. I know you are somebody’s mistress.”

“What a strange pretext! When did I become a mistress?”

“Well, you are a mistress, aren’t you?”

The man’s conclusive manner of speaking stiffens Oshino. Immediately, she recalls her children. The man feels Oshino glaring fiercely at him, and he becomes unable to face her. Oshino feels a lump in her throat. Both sides of her nose start twitching and flaring.

“Damn it!” she shouts hoarsely, throwing the butter tray back.

The butter tray hits the front of the stove and falls. The man is taken aback and dodges, but Oshino grabs and holds him fast. He struggles to escape. Oshino puts her forehead against his chest and shouts in fragments, her face contorted with pain. The man turns deadly pale with fright as Oshino tugs on him rapidly.

“Come to the police station with me! Come to the police station with me!” she cries out and, with one hand, tries to untie her apron and take it off.²³⁸

The violent exchange with the greasy butter has significance. The kitchen is a filthy place for Oshino: everything is in disorder and stained with oil, the space is very cramped,

²³⁸ Ibid., 71.

and cooks and their young apprentices are rough and dirty. She is very cautious about her *kimono* since it is most important for business; she keeps it pristine to earn from it. Although sharing the working space with cooks, Oshino clearly shows her disgust in her authoritative tone and attitude to the apprentice. For the apprentice cook, there is little difference between the butter and Oshino's *kimono*. Butter enhances the look and taste of a commodity and satisfies a customer's appetite, and *jokyû* dressed up in *kimonos* do the same. Also, café customers typically give *kimonos* to *jokyû* as reward for being their mistress, thus *kimonos* in the mind of the apprentice are a "dirty" result of the consumption of *jokyû*. In that sense, both the butter and *kimono* are filthy and despicable; the cook's action of throwing a filthy object at Oshino is equivalent to staining one despicable object with another. In fact, the apprentice doubly stains Oshino, physically with the splash of buttery water, and psychologically with the accusation of being somebody's mistress. The least Oshino can do is to throw the physical filth, the butter, back where it belongs, away from her best *kimono*, which was not a gift from a customer but a sacrifice from her own wardrobe for the sake of survival.

A considerable consequence of this fight is Oshino's sudden realization of the insignificance of her beliefs, and that the justifiable reasons for her work are invalid for others, especially men. Her initial reaction is to furiously prove her innocence, pushing her to pursue the irrational idea that a police officer—a representative of patriarchy—can verify her scrupulousness. Finally and ironically, her reaction to humiliation

subconsciously triggers her real feelings toward the job of *jokyû*—hatred and rejection. Emblematic of *jokyû*, the act of crumpling her white apron into a ball and spoiling it with tears symbolizes her anger and disappointment.²³⁹ Judgment by others overwhelms her so tremendously, however, that Oshino starts blaming herself, and in the end, she recognizes and surrenders to patriarchal power to survive; certain that she would not have been accused of being a mistress if working at a different kind of job, she regrets working as a *jokyû* yet adopts a stereotypical submissive attitude.

Oshino's painful reflection of the altercation shows the considerable ripple effect on her psyche. Her status as *jokyû* rushes to the fore, prevailing over her pride as a self-sacrificing mother and independent woman. This recoil reminds her that her heavy makeup noticeably reveals her occupation, and to make matters worse, she feels remorse for divorcing her husband.

“Since I'm in this sort of place, I am looked down upon by such a brat,” Oshino starts bemoaning again when she is left alone. She feels a bit chilly, and for once misses her children. “It's all my fault,” she thinks groundlessly. She even worries about her child who has just started school, about going in and out of the house with her powdered face. “Is there any other job that will feed my four kids and mother if I quit this one?” Oshino thinks of her divorced husband...and with him in mind, she cries again.²⁴⁰

Oshino made the choice to divorce for a better life because her husband was “disgusting,” “dull,” and physically abusive. Constantly suspicious of her chastity, his conduct in *Ikari*

²³⁹ As mentioned in the introduction, the white apron was part of the original uniform for *jokyû* as servers of food and drinks. For Oshino, the apron represents proof that she is not a prostitute.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 71-72.

follows the dictatorial nature of patriarchal power. Sata does not use a proper name for Oshino's husband, introducing him to the reader simply as "husband" (*otto*). In this way, Sata presents him as a representative of most men at that time, and implies that compared to Oshino—an individual making her own choices and carrying them out—her nameless husband exhibits no redeeming qualities, no difference from the many unreasonable autocratic men of the time.

Oshino's decision to separate from him symbolizes the awakening of women, and her decisiveness conveys independence. However, no one in the story respects or supports her act, and there is little conversation among *jokyū* beyond admonishments and the topic of money. Some might sympathize with her hard work to support her family, but nobody cares about her decision to divorce and work as a *jokyū*. No matter how rational her departure from her destructive husband was, Oshino is viewed monolithically as divorced and thus beyond the pale of normality.

Therefore, receiving far more hardship than respect, support, or encouragement for her decision, Oshino ends up feeling remorse, reluctantly accepts "normal" social values by judging herself through the eyes of others, and feels envious of stable full-time housewives, even with the probability of enduring an autocratic husband.

Another exploited group was the working proletariat. Sata presents the conditions and situations of daily life under capitalism by using concrete and intimate examples of the erasure of a worker's identity through the devaluation of their body. Oshino's

disposure of breast milk and erasure of its faint traces from the bathroom floor—equivalent to shame and self-denial as a mother—signifies the deep penetration of capitalism’s mechanics, wherein its outcomes (money and products) are celebrated, and anything that lies behind the production of commodities, including the individual, is an insignificant part of its inner machinery. Even though Oshino struggles to cope with her natural condition (overflowing breast milk), her struggles are irrelevant, as are those of the entire proletariat.

In addition, controlled by the repetitive monotonous metronome of capitalism, human spirits adapt to or fade into the rhythms of technology. Even at the café, the lives of workers and natural cyclical body conditions—indestructible natural rhythms—are counterproductive and effectively obliterated from “reality.” Through the detailed description of Oshino’s preparatory time before work, Sata reveals the conflict of lifecycles, contrasting the café’s strict schedule with the neglect of that schedule by Oshino. Frequently reprimanded for violating the schedule, Oshino stubbornly keeps to her own timelines for bathing, makeup, and smoking. Oshino is an embodiment of the breakdown of uniformity in the presence of diverse individual rhythms, and shows the alternative rhythms still existing within the regulated and confined life of capitalism: her immediate apologies allow her to deal with this confinement.

Sata depicts the slave-like café life in the mental as well as physical separation of café workers caused by capitalism’s implementation of division of labor. Sata does not

introduce the café as one entity, but presents different parts one by one, reflecting the system at the time. Sata breaks down the café into three places: the *jokyû* room (*jokyû beya*), the dining room (*shokudô*), and the kitchen (*kokkuba*), and describes each of these through Oshino's perspective.

The *jokyû* room is at the top of steep stairs, and the milieu is cramped, crowded, messy, and filled with cigarette smoke. This is the space where *jokyû* prepare for work, where Oshino takes time to put on her makeup. The kitchen is a dirty working space where Oshino's eyes take in the oil stains, dampness, crudeness, and crowdedness. This is where cooks and their apprentices slave away, and as they work, Oshino and other *jokyû* call out orders to them. In the dining room, desolation and coldness dominate, and there is no sound except for the footsteps of the bartender.

Just a few days ago, the artificial decorations of tinted autumnal leaves were removed from the café, and the dining room looks so empty and dark now.

Oshino, feeling a chill after her bath, shivers as if utterly helpless.

After her partner leaves for a meal, only the sound of her folding the napkins breaks the dead-silence of the dining room.²⁴¹

Although the dining room is the primary space to entertain customers in the café, the story here introduces how *jokyû* use the dining room before serving their customers more intimately. Throughout the rest of the story, the dining room is not mentioned. This emphasizes the perspective of the café waitress: for her the dining room is just another working space.

²⁴¹ Ibid., 69.

Sata shows additional divisive effects of capitalism regarding human relationships—hierarchy, competition, deception, manipulation, emptiness, and detestation—and how money becomes the object of human desire, fueling greed. The occasional decency among *jokyû* is purely superficial. Behind the scenes in the *jokyû* room, there is not much conversation except Oshino's repeated apologies for being late to work. Competition over money is very serious and *jokyû* easily feel antipathy toward one another. While *jokyû* usually serve customers in turn, some scheme to block their competitors from serving at all. Among *jokyû*, there is no camaraderie, no sisterhood, no sense of solidarity—the power of money prevails.

Jokyû behavior and demeanor reveal hierarchy based on monetary value, with the youngest most popular *jokyû*, Eiko, at the top and the oldest *jokyû*, Oshino, at the bottom. Fellow *jokyû* are as important as customers are: like parasites, the unpopular *jokyû* depend on popular *jokyû* to make a decent earning, receiving a tiny share of profits for assisting popular *jokyû* in pleasing their customers.

The kitchen makes the power struggle most visible. It is almost a battlefield between cooks and *jokyû* as both groups vie to establish hierarchical control. The exchange of bitter words between the young cooks and *jokyû* are ubiquitous while their relationships revolve around providing food for customers. A mixture of jealousy and a twisted sense of moral superiority over *jokyû* completely separate cooks from *jokyû*.

Under capitalism, money prevails over personal emotions and self-confidence, and when the apprentice insults Oshino, her inner suffering is indescribable. A young *jokyû* puts her hand on Oshino's shoulder to soothe her after the humiliation.

Oshino sits upright against the wall in the *jokyû* room and, without realizing it, crumples the white apron she had removed into a ball. She cries while pressing it against her face.

"Take your time. It is unwise to leave early. After all, with considerable effort, you came here to work." Putting her hand on Oshino's shoulder, the woman, like a doll in a shop window, finally stands up.

"Oh, thank you. Thank you very much for your concern." With a tear-stained face, Oshino pays a respectful bow.²⁴²

Sata's depiction of the younger woman "like a doll in a shop window" (*shôuindô no ningyô no yôna onna*) articulates her characteristics: this woman appears so artificial like a doll because there is no emotional involvement. Sata does not even give her a name, evoking a lack of individualism. Her physical touch seems meant not for healing Oshino's humiliation, but for persuading Oshino that she should swallow her humiliation and not lose money by leaving work early. Sata's depiction of the artificial-like woman also touches upon profitability: by using body movements like a doll in a shop window, she attracts customers, and money, more easily.

Oshino also displays artificiality, and acts as a secondary *jokyû* to make the younger *jokyû* look even more appealing. Her artificial behavior, flattering her fellow *jokyû* and customers, is profitable, earning money for her family. Oshino's polite façade does not mean that Oshino thinks this way, but she will earn what she needs to survive.

²⁴² Ibid., 71.

Another *jokyū* Sata introduces in detail is Eiko, a name that literally means “prosperous child.”

Wearing a gaudy silk crepe *kimono* with long sleeves, a woman of small stature steps into the *jokyū* room and walks on tiptoe in a prim manner. With an annoyed look, the woman ignores Oshino—who is presently dwelling on a tip—and tries to leave the room while gazing intently at a photo of herself taken from a small box.²⁴³

Beautiful and popular, Sata depicts Eiko as self-indulgent. In a way, Oshino is also self-indulgent: her girlhood experience as *jokyū* at a famous first-class café is her pride, and she indulges her skills of polite speech and manners effectively to earn money and avoid confrontations. Thus, Oshino’s self-gratification is not much different from Eiko’s narcissism. Moreover, the relationship between Oshino and Eiko reveals a symbiotic nature as far as profit from work is concerned. Oshino needs Eiko to survive in this café, since Eiko has rich regular customers, and Oshino is a useful supporting actor for Eiko because she makes Eiko’s appealing features more prominent. Absent respect and fellowship between the two, Sata successfully depicts the dominance of profit-oriented relations under capitalism by displaying the shallowness of its principles and the cold and lonely futility of its society.

At the end of the story, Sata shows how money bestows the privilege to exercise power over others by introducing Nakajima, Eiko’s young customer. “Mr. Nakajima is a great customer who comes to see Eiko everyday. He is just a high school student who is

²⁴³ Ibid., 72.

not yet twenty years old.”²⁴⁴ Nakajima’s youth is not at all disadvantageous thanks to his financial power. He can build relationships of systematic domination over *jokyū* simply through money, and Sata’s banal final statement brings the story to its end with an image of contrasting differences between the rich (the bourgeois class) and poor (the working class): with Nakajima’s extraordinarily young age, the ending portends an uninterrupted future of domination and victimization under capitalism.

c. Writing Style

Male literary critics, including male proletarian writers and activists, often criticized Sata’s work for its restraint and weakness in exposing capitalist society. Indeed, however premature these criticisms were, Sata does not overtly declare the necessity of social and economic revolution in *Ikari* when compared to the works of Kobayashi Takiji, *Yuki no yoru* (*The Snowy Night*, 1927), and *Takiko sono ta* (*Takiko and Others*, 1928).

Using the voices of male customers and female prostitutes, both of Kobayashi’s works²⁴⁵ convey to readers an urgent necessity for fundamental change in the economic system and the abolition of the social system because of exploitation and suppression of the poor. Kobayashi depicts an obvious process of inner development with class-consciousness among characters (such as the prostitute Takiko in *Takiko sono ta*), and makes strong advocates or semi-heroes appear in his stories, characters who assert that,

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 73.

²⁴⁵ Kobayashi Takiji, “Yuki no yoru,” and “Takiko sono ta,” in *Kobayashi Takiji, Tokunaga Sunao shū*, vol. 88 of *Nihon Bungaku Zenshū* (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 1974).

without the overthrow of the evil socio-economic system, depraved conduct and despicable occupations will continually expand.

Sata, on the other hand, neither uses such terms as “abolition,” “overthrow,” and “solidarity,” nor directly advocates revolution. This does not mean that Sata does not state anything. On the contrary, Sata knows the limitations of such language, used mainly by male writers and activists, and in short feels it unnecessary to use this language in her story, choosing a different approach to represent the issues and persuade readers. She does not create a story based on her ideological stance, but portrays what really happens in everyday café life. She does not explain and analyze characters and their psychology, and does not give an account of their characteristics, but painstakingly depicts their characteristics only through how they behave and what they say.

From the start, with the introduction of the café as Oshino gets ready for work, Sata uses a film-like tracking shot to show Oshino’s actions in detail from behind when returning from the bathhouse. The camera follows her everywhere she goes, exposing the whiteness of powder on her neck symbolizing her job as a *jokyû*. With this method, Sata’s sentences exhibit Oshino’s constant movement as a habitual rhythm. The violent thumping of Oshino’s heart after rushing up the stairs is almost audible as she enters the rear of the café, where colors, smells, and more sounds are described.

The scene is done in an almost unconcerned, innocent, and natural manner, as if merely documenting a day in the life of a *jokyû*. However, Sata’s entire description

reveals the point of her story: Sata chooses to introduce the café spaces that are used by workers and invisible from the front—the congested, dirty, smelly back interior and noisiest parts of the café—clearly contrasting with the shining glamorous façade. In this way, victimization within society’s peripheral margins—the gray areas where the person is suppressed and the system is dominant—is exposed.

d. Conclusion

With her sparse but stabbing personal economy with words, Sata rips through the veil to expose the painful social relations behind it. The ambience of the three spaces—the *jokyû* room, the dining room, and the kitchen—and of the activities in those spaces, emphasize similarities more than differences. Even though the players are specialized and physically separated, in the end they are all—*jokyû*, bartenders, and cooks—one hapless café labor force hopelessly confined to the same grindingly disgusting environment.

Sata describes the artificial, narcissistic, and self-indulgent behavior of Oshino, her fellow *jokyû*, and Eiko. By depicting the fetishism of all three, Sata again emphasizes that there is not much difference among them; when it comes to how and why they act as they do and what they ultimately get, they are very much alike—all of them are slaves to money, victims of capitalism. Nor are there many differences among all characters and groups in the café despite their various efforts to establish a hierarchy. Sata points out their vain and petty power struggles, and juxtaposes their futility within the larger socio-

economic hierarchy. The power scramble among them is meaningless compared to the bourgeoisie (leading class) versus the proletariat (working class). Again, all are slaves to capitalism.

An analysis or interpretation of Oshino's life as "shameless and audacious" rings false with a shallow sense of justice. As a waitress in a café amid the throes of capitalism, Oshino is exploited as a worker, a woman, a workingwoman, and a *jokyû*. Therefore, she establishes her own rhythm of survival in quick surrender and apology. Through the vivid depiction of the fight with the apprentice cook and Oshino's quick transformation, Sata exposes the reality of *jokyû* life, underscoring the value of money over personhood.

Sata's most important point is that Oshino cannot do anything else—this is Oshino's only way of survival, and she is a representation of the majority of society. As Sata conveys Oshino's anger and recovery, the title of the story (*Anger*) evokes more specific questions: whose anger should it be, at what should the anger be directed, what should Oshino be angry about, and how can this anger be resolved. Sata portrays Oshino's anger as personal, emotional, temporary (a quick shift from angry to servile), bestial (Oshino's physically violent reaction), and eccentric (the need to try to prove her innocence at a police station).

While Oshino's story is a microcosmic rebuke of the frustrating values of capitalism that categorize and control people, *Ikari* is also a tale of wholesale societal constipation. Emphasizing a common dysfunction among classes with detailed

descriptions throughout, Sata suggests that everyone suffers the same antagonism and that this societal frustration could be resolved through an orchestrated sensible rhythm. By describing everyday life in the café and of *jokyû*, and the extent of Oshino's anger in poignant detail, Sata exposes the veiled dangers of capitalism, leading readers to conclusions about seeking real change in a more tangible manner, for her, than explaining and preaching in abstract symbolic terms.

5. *Resutoran Rakuyô* (Restaurant Rakuyô)

a. Story Background

After the success of her first story, *From the Caramel Factory in Puroretaria Geijutsu* (*Proletarian Art*), Sata was asked to write a story for *Bungeishunjû*.²⁴⁶ In September 1929 (the same year Sata published *Ikari*), *Bungeishunjû* published *Resutoran Rakuyô*.²⁴⁷ It was Sata's first publication in a commercial magazine, a big arena for a writer, and with the success of the previous year, she knew more than ever the importance of possessing a powerful means of writing a story. In her own explanation, she underscored her indiscriminate attitude toward the various perspectives of magazines, and based her choice of topic on the urgent issues of the time.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁶ Ôkusa Minoru, the editor of *Bungeishunjû*, came directly to her residence in the terraced homes of Jûjô by rickshaw. Sata Ineko, "Meguriawase to kikkake," in *Sata Ineko Zenshû*, vol. 17, 202.

²⁴⁷ This project uses the edition "Resutoran Rakuyô," from *Sata Ineko Zenshû*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1978), 95-119.

²⁴⁸ Sata Ineko, "Toki to hito to watashi no koto (15): Waga tojô no omoi," in *Sata Ineko Zenshû*, vol. 16, 438-39.

b. Text Analysis

Restaurant Rakuyô is one of many cafés built during the reconstruction of Tokyo following the Great Kantô Earthquake of 1923. Located near the entertainment district of Asakusa, the building is shabby and surrounded by all sorts of temporary stores. Its façade and interior are plain, and the owner, Yasuda, does not much care for decoration except in displaying his hardworking *jokyû*. Competition with Café Orion, one of the top three cafés in Tokyo and located nearby, is out of the question, with its financial power, decorative quality, and popularity beyond comparison.

Jokyû at Rakuyô are poor and generally unhappy. In the *jokyû* room, they share their complaints, miseries, and small pleasures while preparing to compete against one another over customers in the dining room. Behind their *jokyû* “game faces,” the various masks each must don for such work, they are colored by different previous job experiences, family situations, and reasons for becoming *jokyû*. But they share one thing at the downscale Rakuyô: to financially support their families, they must perform however needed to attract and keep customers.

Unlike *Ikari*, *Restaurant Rakuyô* focuses on four *jokyû* and presents them as more complicated, emphasizing individuality. Ironically, the more individual differences among *jokyû* are exposed, the more their similarities stand out. Perception of their job is one of these similarities; *jokyû* as no more than a job gives them each a small hope as they perform.

Ochie supports a small child by herself, is indifferent and arrogant to customers, and sometimes sarcastic and offensive to co-workers. Oyoshi, supporting a husband who is a poorly paid salary man, has many regular customers, and pretends to be a wicked woman by being bossy and blunt to her co-workers.²⁴⁹ Natsue supports her family—an unemployed husband with tuberculosis and young daughter—and with her gaudy *kimono* is always cheerful and flamboyant toward customers, and frivolous but good-natured toward her co-workers. Oyô took the job a year earlier to support her unemployed husband, treats customers in a refined and polite manner, and is kind to her co-workers.

The story's dialogue begins with a main character, Ochie, finishing with a customer.

“Thank you very much,” Ochie returns the small silver cash tray carrying some change to the customer, bows formally without expression, curtly turns her back, and the deep night echoes with the mixed sounds of Ochie dragging her sandals and the customer picking up his change.

Ochie stops at a square pillar covered by mirrors and turns on a light. A blue flash of electric light crosses through the mirror with a sharp crackling sound, and in the mirror, Ochie sees Oyô talking to a customer in a friendly manner in a corner on the opposite side of the room. Ochie looks on with her nose in the air.

Ochie's customer moves his chair with a clatter as he stands up. Standing in front of her own customer, Oyô briefly addresses Ochie's customer: “Thank you so much.”

²⁴⁹ Sata portrays Oyoshi as a *dokufu* (literally, a wicked “poison woman”). Throughout Japanese history, women who transgressed sexually or behaved beyond existing norms and expectations were often marginalized and demonized as wicked women. But Oyoshi's performance as a wicked woman allows her to dominate customers and suck the money out of them; utilizing her given passive roles as a woman and *jokyû*, Oyoshi skillfully maneuvers through the existing power hierarchy. Koike Mariko examines such women of the Meiji, Taishô, and Shôwa periods. See *Akujo to yobareta Onna tachi: Abe Sada kara Nagata Yôko, Itô Motoko made* (Tokyo: Shufu to seikatsu sha, 1982). Christine L. Marran also examines the “poison woman” and investigates the process of creating this icon, its meanings, and its influence on defining women's sexuality in modern Japanese culture. See *Poison Woman: Figuring Female Transgression in Modern Japanese Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

Dragging her felt sandals on the concrete floor, Ochie cleans a table. Carelessly tossing an empty cash tray toward the cashier, she looks at the clock. It is almost five. A white tablecloth floats coldly in the dark dining room beyond, and there are no customers.²⁵⁰

Fatigued and unconcerned, the heavy sound of Ochie dragging her sandals, and her manner, reveal an indifferent attitude toward her job as well as her customers. The mirror, the pillar, and the blue light are like a stage setting, and the reflection of images in the mirror conveys a strong sense of performance. The cold metallic sound of change against the silver tray exchanged between Ochie and her customer signifies their roles.

Jokyû is the performance of their job, not who they are. They do not think of themselves as hired property or disposable sexual slaves, even though they might feel this way. They perform their work by wearing masks: one for the customer, one for their co-workers, and one for themselves. The masks guarantee their incomes and establish separation of themselves and their families and dreams from the world of the café. The masks also permit them to gain agency over their actual suffering through narcissism: their theatre-like performances allow them to feel an inversion of the power hierarchy wherein men are in a sense captive.

The *jokyû* room is a liminal space where *jokyû* assume their identity masks as they apply actual powdered makeup. Once transformed, they are ready to perform within the café stage. Sata describes in particular detail the various masks of Ochie, Oyoshi, Natsue, and Oyô, and the reasons each wears them. Ochie wears “a plain-featured face like a pale

²⁵⁰ Sata Ineko, “Resutoran Rakuyô,” 95.

Noh mask,²⁵¹ and with this mask, she is emotionless, curt, and indifferent to her customers. Her malicious manners toward co-workers and indifferent attitude toward customers block any close relationships and protect her private dream of a life with her lover. Ochie's wears a second mask to feature a stronger performance. Putting on airs, she behaves like "a movie actress" and coquettishly "speaks like someone's quiet daughter appearing in a *Shimpa* drama."²⁵² With this mask, Ochie changes her spiteful speech style into that of a refined and graceful woman and feels elevated. Ochie wears another mask that provides a fictional identity and family life.²⁵³ When Ochie wears this mask, she enters a self-elevated world. Only upon returning home after work does she remove her masks and become Ochie.²⁵⁴

Oyoshi is tough and bossy to everyone in the café and performs as a wicked woman to her customers. Meanwhile, she pretends to be someone else, a wealthy woman whose pastime is horseback riding, and she asks one of her regular customers to have a riding dress made for her. With this self-indulgent, self-elevating wishful mask, Oyoshi

²⁵¹ Ibid., 115.

²⁵² Ibid., 106. *Shimpa*, literally "new school," began in rivalry with *kyūgeki* (old drama, which performed *kabuki* plays), performing new popular drama, often love drama, from the middle of the Meiji period.

²⁵³ Sata describes as follows, "Her name is Teruko (literally *shining child*); her child's father is a young son of a wealthy family. She goes to his mansion to get a monthly allowance for living, and his main wife treats her nicely." Sata Ineko, "Resutoran Rakuyō," 115.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 106-7. When taking off her masks at home, she reflects on various matters in the café and her relationship with her lover, and expresses her emotions of envy, frustration, anger, and vexation. Usually hidden behind a calm and self-possessed *Noh* mask, her boiling emotions pour out, and she acts violently by repeatedly stabbing a chest of drawers with metal chopsticks.

conceals her inner world from her customers and fools them into supplying money and gifts.

Natsue's masks exist for different reasons than Ochie and Oyoshi: Natsue uses hers to isolate herself from her dark family life, especially her sick husband. Her overly vivacious manner helps her feel happy, at least inside the café where she wears gaudy *kimonos* “like a gladiolus” and displays fashionably coiffed hair. Her flamboyant and cheerful performance at work relies on the use of alcohol, and at times, she cannot hide her inner torment. Natsue has a patron, Yasukawa Tokunori, the son of a wealthy aristocrat,²⁵⁵ whom she intertwines within her Edo-period fantasy of being someone else.²⁵⁶ She appeases her appetite for self-elevation by showing off his Tokugawa shogunate crest,²⁵⁷ and projects herself as his young wife.²⁵⁸

Oyô is an ambivalent figure, a still inexperienced *jokyû* who has been at the café for only a year.²⁵⁹ She has already acquired many masks to both attract customers and protect herself from the harsh environment. She shows empathy and sympathy for everyone, speaks gently, and is always hospitable. She is actually a wife, and uses the

²⁵⁵ Sata's description of his pale expressionless features and unhealthy condition embodies the decline of his sociopolitical power as an aristocrat.

²⁵⁶ Natsue shows off a new *kimono* set made by Mitsukoshi Department Store and wrapped in paper with the name Yasukawa printed on it.

²⁵⁷ Natsue, saying that the kimono she received from Yasukawa is the same as one given to the daughter of a retired military officer, elevates herself to a status equal to the daughter even though the daughter is also a mistress of Yasukawa.

²⁵⁸ Furthermore, she is pleased when Oyô calls her “oheya sama,” an honorific word for the mistress of a person of high rank.

²⁵⁹ She used to work in the same company as her husband.

symbolic quality of a faithful wife to avoid a courtship after business hours, and yet, far from losing customers, Oyô's good behavior and hint of being an unobtainable object has special appeal. Customers such as Whiskey Tanaka talk to her in an especially nice manner and enjoy the attempt to "conquer" her with repeated invitations. With her fashionably waved hair covering one ear (*mimikakushi*), she acts as a shy, chaste, and coquettish wife. As reward for playing this role so well, one of her patrons has even given her the nickname of "air force officer's wife" (*hikôshôkô fujin*).

All four *jokyû* reveal how these masks allow them to enjoy moments of self-indulgence in the midst of hardship, deal with their families on the outside, and tolerate and use to their advantage the existing hierarchies both in the café and in society.

The four have different dreams: Ochie wants to start a new life with her lover, an imperial soldier; Oyoshi has a dream of establishing her own *machiai*, a Japanese-style restaurant; Natsue secretly wants to leave her sick husband and enjoy a happy life with her daughter, supported by a patron; and Oyô desperately wants to leave café life as quickly as possible to enjoy her marriage.²⁶⁰

Their dreams for a better family life are not beyond the societal norm and considered within the ideal image of womanhood—Good Wives and Wise Mothers—but in the end all of their dreams are ruined by the direction society has taken. Ochie's

²⁶⁰ Ôbayashi surveyed *jokyû* in Tokyo about their future dreams. Popular answers were to marry, to have an ideal husband, to make a happy life, and to have a steady marriage, all conventional desires. The dream of opening a restaurant business was also popular. Ôbayashi, 125.

attentiveness and sincere love would make her a good wife and with her lover, an imperial soldier. Finding this impossible, Ochie holds her subjectivity and commits suicide²⁶¹ rather than permitting total erasure by society. Ochie's act of committing a "love suicide," a double suicide so popular in Japanese literature when a marriage based on true love cannot be pursued, should be considered an exceptional signifier of her own pride. However, after the double suicide, she ends up harshly condemned by the Imperial Guards for being a *jokyū* and a single mother: Ochie's love relationship with the soldier humiliates their power, and she leaves her child orphaned. Oyoshi's dream of a lovely life with a husband and a financially stable business is out of reach when she falls terminally ill with syphilis. Natsue's dream of being a wealthy lady and a "wise mother" is derailed by her husband's attempted suicide and eventual death to tuberculosis. After losing him, her family life does not improve as she had imagined it would, and to make matters worse, the café affects her daughter: she inherits a drunken mother.

Natsue moves into a rented room close to Café Rakuyō with her daughter. She recently drinks more and more.

After closing time, the waitresses are busy getting ready to leave. Their upright bodies block the light and make the room darker. In that shadow, Natsue, again tonight, is dead drunk and falls to the floor. Natsue's sweet child comes and waits for her, goggling her eyes in a sad manner. Then, raising her gaze to the women around her, she tugs her mother's hand.

"Mom! Let's go home now."

²⁶¹ Double suicide was a common practice in the late Edo period and was often portrayed in the stories of Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653-1724). A couple that could not pursue a prohibited love relationship in this world believed a happy married life awaited them in their next incarnation, and would take their own lives together. In her case, it was a double suicide by strangulation at a memorable place for them. This is another case in which Ochie tries to keep her façade and hides everything behind her mask.

“Okay. I will go now. Oh, Mommy got drunk. Hana-chan, please kiss me!”

Natsue, with her eyes shut, rubs her cheek against the *tatami* mat, and randomly tries to coil her hands around the neck of her child. The child, unsmiling, tries to escape her mother’s hands.²⁶²

And, continuing to work, Oyô’s dream remains a perpetually elusive illusion.

But Sata goes further, illustrating the cruelty of capitalism through the complexity of the café industry. Café Rakuyô is always on the verge of bankruptcy. Managed by Yasuda, the director of a new beer company, Café Rakuyô is a joint venture project of segments of the men’s entertainment industry. Meanwhile, Café Orion, the nearby “competition,” is owned by a bank president—a prominent capitalist in the business world. The stark reality is that the very survival of *jokyû* depends on the success of capitalism, the generation of capital by temptation and frugality. As with the two cafés, the two classes, rich and poor, represented by the great difference in power between the bank president and Yasuda’s struggling joint venture, exist through inequality, and the future of *jokyû* and society itself appear equally bleak.

Both Yasuda the owner of Café Rakuyô, and Ito the supervisor of *jokyû* in Café Rakuyô, share the view that *jokyû* are objects for profit and symbolize entrepreneurship. Treated as ornamental displays to attract customers, the value of *jokyû* is no more than that of the *kimono* they wear for decoration. The customers therefore also conveniently view *jokyû* as commodities and treat them accordingly. Adachi, one of the regular

²⁶² Ibid., 119.

customers coming with the wealthy Yasukawa, gives his firm but groundless opinion that all *jokyû* are prostitutes. Whiskey Tanaka treats every *jokyû* as a disposable or conquerable item, and pursues as many as possible to satisfy his ego. Yasukawa, the more publicly known patron of Natsue, possesses at least two mistresses and marks both of them as his property by giving each a *kimono* imprinted with his family crest.

Overall, Sata's presents a complicated picture wherein her workers are also women, workingwomen, and *jokyû*, portraying them at the bottom of society, consumed by all four roles—but the pervasive environmental depiction throughout both *Ikari* and *Restaurant Rakuyô* strongly conveys Sata's underlying message as the oppression of a short-sighted society, indeed, how the deep patriarchal order and shallow capitalist goals penetrate and prostitute society as two complimentary self-serving systems. In this way, Sata's works possess an enduring relevance, certainly not timeless, but still widely applicable in today's world.

c. Writing Style

In October 1929, Kawabata Yasunari expressed respect for Sata's self-possessed manner in a critique giving *Restaurant Rakuyô* high marks, saying, "When I comment on this work, I would like to bring to it a fresh and different pen."²⁶³ Comparing it with the more superficial and bizarre portrayals of *jokyû* in contemporary literary works,

²⁶³ Kawabata Yasunari, "Kubokawa shi no 'Resutoran Rakuyô'" in *Bungei jihyô* of Kawabata Yasunari *Zenshû*, vol. 17 (Tokyo: Shinchôsha, 1973), 129. Originally published in *Bungeishunjyû* in October 1929.

Kawabata admired *Restaurant Rakuyô*'s authenticity and actuality of the life of *jokyû*, and pointed out the importance of their perspective. He called Sata's writing style a rare product of "smooth fusion between penetrating objectivity and feminine quality,"²⁶⁴ and remarked that "the literary circles have just had a true new addition with the appearance of this author."²⁶⁵ Even though he based his remarks on gender differences in writing,²⁶⁶ Kawabata's criticism pleased Sata.

Kobayashi Takiji, on the other hand, expressed a very negative reaction, denouncing *Restaurant Rakuyô* as "a useless piece in the struggle for workers."²⁶⁷ Kobayashi based his criticism on his observation of Sata's level of involvement in the proletarian literary movement, and asserted that she showed an indifference to its principles. Perhaps instinctively believing that actual wholesale change was needed far beyond the scope of the proletarian literary movement, Sata admitted her passivity toward the movement but strongly protested Kobayashi's comments on principles.

Similar to Kobayashi, Sata's literary mentor Nakano Shigeharu flatly criticized *Restaurant Rakuyô* as complete trash (*dasaku*), pointing to a failure to express the workers' viewpoint.²⁶⁸ Meanwhile, Sata's contemporary Miyamoto Yuriko enjoyed

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 129-30.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 130.

²⁶⁶ Kawabata did not specify the "feminine qualities." Sata expressed her pleasure in "Meguriawase to kikkake" ("Fortune and Opportunity"), in *Sata Ineko Zenshû*, vol. 17, 202.

²⁶⁷ Sata Ineko, "Aruhi no dôshî Kobayashi Takiji," in *Sata Ineko Zenshû*, vol. 16, 63.

²⁶⁸ Nakano Shigeharu, "Bungeijihyô: Jûgatsu no geppyô," in *Shinchô* 11 (1929): 105.

Restaurant Rakuyō's honesty and conscientiousness. She criticized the motivation of earlier women writers' for writing about *jokyū*, and suggested that these writers had cared only about the interests of editors of famous magazines, specifically the editors' marginal interests in such circumstances of women.²⁶⁹ Miyamoto made the following comment:

(Sata's) work shows the real lives of individual *jokyū* who are considered as goldfish or flowers—ornamental captives who wear lustrous wavy hair down upon their purple sleeves and swim among the orchestra—and exposes the details of human life after stripping off their white-powdered face and silk crepe *kimono*.²⁷⁰

Miyamoto concluded that, while different from the works of Kobayashi Takiji, Sata's stories reached the hearts of readers because of her sensitivity and realistic temperament, flexible literary style, and earnest embrace of enthusiasm to elevate motivation. Contrary to Kobayashi Takiji's critique relative to the proletarian movement, Miyamoto observed and analyzed Sata's work more broadly, paying attention to Sata's portrayal of the delicate emotional psychology and situational conflict of workingwomen, women activists in the midst of class conflict, and societal bleakness under two mutually oppressive systems.

²⁶⁹ Referring to Uno Chiyo and her work *Shifun no kao* (*Painted Face*, 1922), Miyamoto compared Sata with women writers who had previously written about *jokyū*.

²⁷⁰ Miyamoto Yuriko, 165. *Fujin to bungaku* is an extensive literary history centering on women writers in modern Japan. This work appeared serially in such magazines as *Bungei* (Literary Arts) from May 1939 to October 1940, and was to be published by Chūōkōronsha as a book, but with Miyamoto's arrest on December 9, 1941 at the beginning of war against the US, Chūōkōronsha cancelled publication.

Compared with male literary activists such as Nakano and Kobayashi, who devoted their entire lives to painting the principles of the proletarian movement directly into their works, Sata's works overcame the many household and societal expectations of daily life to express a wider and deeper struggle. Thus, her works are equally powerful in terms of social critique and abolishing class distinctions.

For *Ikari*, Sata condensed all of the story's crucial information in the first paragraph, and at the very beginning of *Restaurant Rakuyô* she writes a condensed introduction. Composed of eleven separate sections, the first section immediately presents her standpoint by depicting everyday life at the café.²⁷¹ Without any static moments, Sata uses multiple filmic techniques to make our eyes traverse various spaces and objects. A tracking shot moves us from the dining room through the kitchen and into the *jokyû* room, an establishing shot shows us the main space where the story will unfold, and a zoom reveals the close-up features of her characters. Once inside the *jokyû* room, we pick up the many conversations among *jokyû* and catch the ambience of the environment and their behavior. Ultimately, in this way, Sata avoids the interpretation and rhetoric of political direction by presenting *jokyû* as daily operators of the café, and the café as the cold full-time center of their world.

²⁷¹ Compared with Tokuda Shûsei, who realistically depicts life from a bystander's viewpoint and keeps a certain distance from the populace, Hasegawa mentions that Sata's deep understanding and rich knowledge of the populace come from her membership in a proletarian group, and refers to her sincere devotion to the subjects of her writing. Hasegawa Kei, "Sata Ineko nôto," in *Kindai joryûbungaku: Okamoto Kanoko, Hayashi Fumiko, Hirabayashi Taiko, Sata Ineko*, 288.

d. Conclusion

In her early writing career, Sata wrote at least two other stories about cafés and *jokyû*. The first is a short story, *Futatsu no okurimono* (*Two Gifts*) published September 1928 in *Sôsaku gekkan* (*Monthly Creation*), which shows how a *jokyû* and her partner suffer from strong anxiety and negative influences as the café gradually invades and ruins their private lives. Another is the previously mentioned text, *Jokyû no seikatsu* (*The Life of Jokyû*) published May 1930 in *Kaizô* (*Reconstruction*). This documentary-like work delineates the complicated existence of *jokyû* and describes the harshness of café life.

Her first hand experience as a *jokyû* at Café Kôryoku in Dôzaka and Café Juraku in Asakusa in 1926 allowed Sata to write the life of *jokyû* realistically, and in the end, because of its multiple functionality, the café proved to be the best stage for Sata's social criticism. The first issue Sata exposed was the superficiality of Japanese modernity.

Sata's works did not draw the café as an embodiment of modernity,²⁷² but presented them as an epitome of the paradox of Japanese modernity. As Sata's café stories unfold, the reality beneath their modern façade emerges: architecturally (the discrepancy between the façade and the inner and side views of the building), spatially (the disparity between its flashy dining room made for entertainment and the rest of café,

²⁷² In her article, *Tokyo and Taipei: The Proletarian Cultural Movement and the Café*, Tarumi Chie emphasizes the crucial role of cafés in examining the relationship between modernism and the proletarian literary movement in both Taiwanese and Japanese literature. In Japanese literature, the café in the 1920s and 30s was considered "the essence of modernism." In her analysis of Sata Ineko, Tarumi points out that in both *Ikari* and *Restaurant Rakuyô* the café is not depicted as emblematic of modernity, and explains that Sata depicts the café waitress as a proletarian facing the everyday hardship of women in the service industry and unfair judgment by men.

stained with signs of heavy labor), and temporally (the distinction between business hours and non-business hours in the café). Behind the bluff of modern decoration, every aspect of café life exposes the preservation of conventional social and cultural configurations of oppression.²⁷³

The café is an intersection of multiple discourses where men meet at a crossroad of Western inscriptions of illusions and temptations, including the mental image of young female *jokyû* as modern, mysterious, and decadent. Meanwhile, patriarchal expectations of submissiveness, devotion, and purity, muddy the past and future, creating a dizzy, uncertain sense of masculinity. And conveniently aroused by the glamour and eroticism imagined in the cafés mysterious fog of modern dreams, some customers fulfill their desires through sexual conquest and the debasement and defilement of *jokyû*, finding the reduction of an equal to a solely sexual being exciting and gratifying.

The café was also a convenient site for customers to address this temporally troubled masculinity of modern Japan, where financial power erases any social deficits,

²⁷³ Nihonbashi Maruzen Bookstore was the premier foreign bookstore, also providing international goods, clothes, and cosmetics. Through her working experience as a saleswoman there for three years, Sata recognized a clear paradox of modernization and the disparities between the ambience of modernity and reality. In a brief account, *Maruzen no omoide (My Memories of Maruzen)*, Sata described the “unique” atmosphere (*yoso ni nai fun'iki*) of being a saleswoman surrounded by newly imported fashionable decorative items, listed celebrities who were regular customers, and mentioned that the avant-guard artists of Mavo designed the advertisement for the store. In other works, Sata revealed the veiled reality of Maruzen’s conservatism and double standard policies toward its own saleswomen, reflecting the nearly universal contempt they faced. Maruzen restricted their behavior through a pledge to “value the honor of the store” and by banning private conversation between male and female salespersons both during and after work. This disparity between the outer façade decorated with foreign goods and used by “modern” celebrities, and the inner conservatism of strict confinement and suppression, epitomized gender discrimination under patriarchy; Maruzen Bookstore was a locus of the paradox of modernization. Sata Ineko, “Maruzen no omoide,” in *Sata Ineko Zenshû*, vol. 17, 303-7. Originally published in *Gakutô* in August 1962.

such as racial mixture, middle-class, fallen family, physical unattractiveness. Becoming patrons—paying to “protect” or “possess” the body of a *jokyū*—identify them as legitimate bearers of their authority. *Jokyū* are conveniently both available and disposable.

On the other hand, the café is also a site of challenge for *jokyū*, and they employ many strategies to their own advantage. Sata’s detailed depictions of various masks demonstrate adaptive methods for dealing with society’s configuration of power. Some *jokyū* find a positive value in passivity and use such roles to their advantage; intentionally choosing to be identified as objects of cultural performance, they get what they need to meet each day’s harsh demands. Other *jokyū* reverse the “gender coding of the hierarchical power roles”²⁷⁴ to feel power over men. In Sata’s story, such reversals exist in moments under intimate circumstances in the exclusive spaces of the café, and the social order always prevails.

Sata portrays many challenges to the existing paradigms and questions the validity of the defining characteristics of power. As no strategy escapes the paradigms, Sata successfully illustrates the futile complexity *jokyū* face in their everyday lives by projecting how quickly their choices and dreams are appropriated, twisted, and finally crushed by the powers of society.

²⁷⁴ Sharalyn Orbaugh, “The Body in Contemporary Japanese Women’s Fiction,” in *The Woman’s Hand: Gender and Theory in Japanese Women’s Writing* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1996), 123. Orbaugh lists and analyzes the various ways Japanese women writers challenged existing norms.

Sata also portrays both white- and blue-collar workers as equally damaged. The husbands of *jokyū*, for example, depend on their wives working at the café, reversing the “normal” hierarchy based on financial power in the household, and representing an impotent, emasculated white-collar class. Oyoshi dies of syphilis, broken by the exploitation of men’s sexual desire, while Natsue’s husband contracts tuberculosis, is fired for his illness, and also dies.²⁷⁵ Thus the reality among classes is not much different: all are limited, whether they know it or not, by a crippled society that is not a sum of its parts but a separator of them.

Using café settings, Sata gave voice to women under the two merging systems of patriarchy and capitalism. But in writing against the backdrop of both controls as her personal act of protest,²⁷⁶ she accomplished even more, illustrating the prostitution of society as the marriage of patriarchy and capitalism create a formidable market for the “more fortunate” to exploit and peddle gray margins, to tease men into expecting women to be available commodities, and to then expect women to both prevent their own physical prostitution and survive working in a café without prejudgment. By exploiting sexuality for sustenance, the marriage of the systems psychologically prostitutes *jokyū* by dismissing their true character, and then, after hours, they must face both the social condemnation of *jokyū* and the physical pressures of patrons offering

²⁷⁵ Besides Natsue’s husband, the husband of Oyō is an unemployed salary man, and Oyoshi’s husband works for an insurance company, but does not earn a sufficient income to support a wife.

²⁷⁶ The act of writing for Sata became a form of expression and finally a form of resistance.

money for sex.

The act of revealing the structures of power in her stories, and concluding them by describing the deterioration of human life against the backdrop of the decline of society, made writing Sata's form of social rebellion. Sata uncovered bleak realities and expressed her conclusion that the structures of patriarchy and capitalism impeded society as a whole. Criticized for avoiding ideological conclusions and failing to make political statements, we now see that, to the contrary, Sata was an acute critic of sociopolitical issues as well as an astute observer of them.

CHAPTER IV

HIRABAYASHI TAIKO

1. The Life of Hirabayashi Taiko

In her early autobiographical account *Himawari: Waga donzoko hanseiki* (*Sunflower: Half My Life in the Throes of Adversity*), Hirabayashi Taiko explains her perspective on life as follows:

In times past, I observed life without reserve and did not presume to preach right from wrong, and I do not plan to do so in this writing. I do not discuss the rights and wrongs of my memories. I also have no intention to hide my past or pretend I was born a Marxist. Though I am changed, I am no stranger to what I was. The past was my path to this moment in a process of change.²⁷⁷

While Hirabayashi's chronological record reveals she underwent many drastic changes and interruptions, she underscores continuity from past to present and accepts all parts of herself. As Sata Ineko compares her life to a series of woodblock prints comprising a life-size map, Hirabayashi, too, implies that life is a sum of experiences, good or bad.

²⁷⁷ Hirabayashi Taiko, "Himawari: Waga donzoko hanseiki," in *Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshū*, vol. 12, 16. Hirabayashi wrote her autobiographical account in *Fujin Saron* (*Women's Salon*, 1931 and 1932), and retrospectively disclosed her life from 1923 through 1926, a time when she associated with various anarchists and went through many transformations and political stances. At the time of writing, Hirabayashi was influenced by Marxism and already an established writer in the proletarian literary movement. However, after leaving Rônô geijutsuka renmei (Worker Peasant Artists League) in 1930, Hirabayashi grew more independent from political literary associations to stand on her own.

Hirabayashi also describes her affinity with sunflowers, tenaciously self-willed bodies twisting toward the sun to greedily absorb its light.²⁷⁸ Indeed, she rose like a sunflower, starved for stimulus, to bask in the energy of the era. From childhood to death, her pursuit of self-development never waned. This project investigates Hirabayashi's early works, *Rôdôsha no tsuma* (*The Worker's Wife*, 1929) and *Haru* (*Spring*, 1934).

Therefore, this analysis of the contours of Hirabayashi's life focuses primarily on the period from her birth to the close of the prewar period. During this period, five key external forces shaped her life: influential people, access to literary and critical works, the topic of anarchism, the Japanese proletarian literary movement, and lastly her physical deterioration in the late 1930s and 40s.

a. In Suwa

Born Hirabayashi Tai in Suwa County of Nagano Prefecture in 1905, Hirabayashi Taiko grew up in the political²⁷⁹ and social²⁸⁰ turmoil surrounding World War I. As Japan experienced swings—from a prewar explosion in manufacturing and service

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 21.

²⁷⁹ The riot at Hibiya Park in Tokyo protesting the government's acceptance of the Portsmouth Treaty after the victory of the Russo-Japanese War (1905), the beginnings of the universal suffrage movement (1906), and the formation of the Japan Socialist Party by Sakai Toshihiko and others (1906), the government's crackdown on Japan Socialist Party members in 1907, the arrest of socialists including four women activists such as Kanno Sugako in the Red Flag incident of 1908, and execution of their leader, Kôtoku Shūsui in 1911.

²⁸⁰ In the early 1910s, labor strikes, especially among women factory workers in the silk-reeling industry, were ubiquitous. A sharp rise in the price of rice due to crop failure, along with a chronic recession and a tax increase after the Russo-Japanese war, resulted in strikes and riots, which continued until the start of World War I in 1914.

industries to postwar economic collapse—the population of both urban and rural areas experienced adverse financial circumstances. In 1916 when Hirabayashi was 11, her family entered a period of particular suffering after the failure of her grandfather’s business venture.²⁸¹ In addition to having to surrender most of their property to clear off their debt,²⁸² her father Saburô went off to work in the colonial land of Korea for several years while her mother Katsumi opened a general store.²⁸³ Hirabayashi’s two elder sisters abandoned education to work in a silk-reeling factory. In her autobiographical account, *Bungakuteki jijoden (Literary Autobiography, 1935)*, Hirabayashi recalls the hardships they faced and the memory of “her mother bowing like a crab, apologizing to a moneylender at the door.”²⁸⁴

Bit by bit, Hirabayashi took over the entire family business while still in elementary school, and in later confessing her disillusion with life, it was through these early business experiences that she had reached conclusions about the structure of society,

²⁸¹ Her grandfather, Hirabayashi Masuemon was a successful businessman in the silk-reeling industry and the owner of a silk mill in the late 1870s and early 1880s. He was also a progressive man and an officer of a branch office of Itagaki Taisuke’s Liberty Party. After severe fluctuations in the silver market and a steep fall in the silk market caused by recession following Matsukata Masayoshi’s deflationary policies, Hirabayashi’s grandmother and her father Saburô, an adopted son-in-law of the Hirabayashi family, inherited the affairs of Hirabayashi Masuemon’s failing business.

²⁸² In another autobiographical account *Watashi no rirekisho (My Personal History, 1966)*, she declares that she is a daughter of a farmer at Suwa in Shinshû. Hirabayashi Taiko, “Watashi no rirekisho,” in *Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshû*, vol. 12, 44.

²⁸³ Hirabayashi’s mother had studied English at Kami Suwa Juku thanks to her father’s progressive view of women’s education.

²⁸⁴ Hirabayashi Taiko, “Bungakuteki jijoden,” in *Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshû*, vol. 12, 27. Originally published in *Shinchô*, December 1935.

a society composed of people's endless need for money beneath an ostentatious façade of obligation, honor, and dignity.²⁸⁵

Her writing career too began early: at the age of ten, her stories were accepted by the children's magazines *Shôjo (Girl)*, *Shôjo no tomo (Girl's Friend)*, and *Shôjo sekai (Girl's World)*. A general growth of literacy and the publication and presence of magazines fueled her obvious talent for writing, and she gained great confidence with the successful performance of her script for a play at a local festival in 1916.

As a gifted child in the fifth grade, Hirabayashi encountered the radical ideas of her progressive special education teacher, Kawakami Shigeru (later Kamiyô Shigeru).²⁸⁶ By her early teens, she had already formed a fundamental view of life that people should give back more than they receive, thereby advancing society.²⁸⁷ Recommended works of Japanese naturalism and stories from the magazine *Shirakaba* stimulated and cultivated Hirabayashi's intellectual faculties.²⁸⁸ With household chores and the steady requirements of managing a general store a previous distraction, as she escaped financially troubled times, she became absorbed by books. By the age of 13, Hirabayashi

²⁸⁵ Hirabayashi, "Watashi no rirekisho," 45.

²⁸⁶ His teaching philosophy was a result of the combination of the principles of the Shirakaba group (humanism, respect for individualism, and affirmation of self) and a new education philosophy, unrestricted education respecting and developing one's personality.

²⁸⁷ Hirabayashi Taiko, "Shisô to danseï o henrekishita seishun," in *Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshû*, vol. 12, 35. Originally published in *Fujin kôron*, December 1965.

²⁸⁸ Naturalist works such as *Tsuchi (Dirt)* by Nagatsuka Takashi, *Inaka kyôshi (Country School Teacher)* by Tayama Katai, *Kabi (Mold)* by Tokuda Shûsei, and *Shizen to jinsei (Nature and Human Life)* by Tokutomi Sohô, and stories from the magazine *Shirakaba*.

was reading works by Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Turgenev, Chekhov, Goncharov, and Gorkii, as well as Maupassant and Daudet.

Acquainted with the reality of factory worker's lives through the toil of her elder sisters in the silk mill, she developed an intense interest in darker stories of strife. Exchanging opinions with another gifted student, Itô Chiyoko,²⁸⁹ Hirabayashi also developed a rebellious spirit from Kawakami's teachings, particularly that life should be full of defiance toward established conventions—the culture, ethics, and mores routinely accepted by society should be challenged—and that literature was a shortcut to actualizing such defiance.²⁹⁰

Over her mother's objection that it was almost financially impossible, Hirabayashi went to Suwa kôtô jogakkô (Suwa Girls High School), harboring a desire to be a writer. Though a prominent poet of the *Araragi* school of *tanka* poetry (short poetry), Tsuchiya Fumiaki, was vice-principal of Suwa kôtô jogakkô, and despite his literary principle of “sketching from life,” he prohibited literary discussions at Hirabayashi's new school, and emphasized orthodox women's education under the slogan “Good Wives and Wise Mothers.” Unsatisfied by school, Hirabayashi indulged in

²⁸⁹ She became a proletarian activist and died in prison after the March 15th government crackdown on leftists.

²⁹⁰ Hirabayashi, “Bungakuteki jijoden,” 27.

reading naturalist literature at libraries²⁹¹ and, by the age of 14, she was convinced that social issues were the cause of perpetual misery and sorrow in human life.

At the age of 15, Zola's *Geminal*, a portrayal of the harsh life of French miners and their tumultuous labor dispute, was one of the most influential works in awakening Hirabayashi to socialism.²⁹² Inspired by the book and leaning increasingly toward socialism, Hirabayashi read Marx's *Das Kapital (Capital)* and Kagawa Toyohiko's (1888-1960) autobiographical novel *Shisen o koete (Surviving a Life-or-Death Crisis)*. When she attended local lectures by the prominent social activists Hasegawa Nyozeikan (1875-1969), Suzuki Bunji (1885-1946), and Kamijô Aiichi, Hirabayashi was particularly moved by Suzuki Bunji's descriptions of the wretched plight of women silk-mill workers in the political climate of the late 1910s.²⁹³ Since she had observed and experienced injustice and inequality in her own immediate environment and identified the origin of those problems in capitalism from such an early age, Hirabayashi believed—well before leaving her hometown for Tokyo in 1922—that the socialist movement was the only way

²⁹¹ Shiga Naoya (1883-1971), Kunikida Doppo (1871-1908), Shimazaki Tôson (1872-1943), and Tayama Katai (1871-1930) were her most influential writers.

²⁹² *Geminal* was translated by Sakai Toshihiko (1870-1933). Hirabayashi's personal letter to Sakai Toshihiko established her correspondence with Sakai's daughter, Magara.

²⁹³ Suzuki was a founder of Yûaikai, the first nationwide labor organization. The success of the Russian revolutions in February and October of 1917 energized the socialist and leftist movements throughout the world, and Japan was no exception. The universal suffrage movement had the support of the public. With the start of the rice riots, brought on by a group of housewives in Toyama prefecture due to an outrageous shortage of rice, the movements of workers, farmers, socialists, and women gained power. In 1920, the first May Day march was organized at Ueno Park in Tokyo, and Nihon shakaishugi dōmei (Japan Socialist League) was inaugurated by Sakai Toshihiko, Ôsugi Sakae, and others.

to resolve the issues and free the oppressed masses. Anything that stood in the way of progressive strides was subject to her unwavering concern for justice.

Upon its release, therefore, the red-banded inaugural issue of the coterie magazine, *Tanemaku hito* (*The Sower*) in 1921 was a “sensational and miraculous event” that directly connected Hirabayashi with the socialist movement. She felt immediately captivated by a statement in the magazine: a poor environment prevents gifted writers from developing and succeeding. Though talented people are continuously born, she clearly recognized society’s unequal access to opportunity. Hirabayashi had concluded from early lectures that an actual social movement was far more effective than writing literature. However, she was moved to write upon reading this statement in *Tanemaku hito*, and just before leaving Suwa for Tokyo, her story *Aru yoru* (*One Evening*) was selected for publication in a magazine created for young literates by the Shinchō Company, *Bunshō Kurabu* (*Writing Club*).

b. Early Life in Tokyo

Hirabayashi moved to Tokyo on the day of her graduation in 1922.²⁹⁴ Her life there began with a job as an apprentice switchboard operator at the Tokyo Central Telephone Exchange. In Tokyo, she met her long time literary hero Sakai Toshihiko²⁹⁵

²⁹⁴ At Suwa train station, her father, who had recently come back from Korea, encouraged her to “become the best woman rebel.” Though unaware of her activities in Tokyo, he sensed she had strong and dangerous aspirations.

²⁹⁵ She failed in her first attempt to meet Sakai in Tokyo in June 1921, and missed an opportunity to hear his lecture on socialism in Suwa because of its cancellation by police interference.

and developed a friendship with his daughter, Magara. Magara brought Hirabayashi into *Sekirankai*, a feminist organization she had founded in 1921 with two distinguished advisors, Itô Noe and Yamakawa Kikue. Attending regular meetings of *Sekirankai*, Hirabayashi came to know many prominent activists.²⁹⁶

After the telephone company fired Hirabayashi for making private calls to Sakai while on duty, she became a store clerk at *Nichidoku shôkai*, a German bookstore.²⁹⁷

There, Hirabayashi met and established a close relationship with Yamamoto Torazô. A self-proclaimed anarchist,²⁹⁸ Yamamoto strongly associated with Ôsugi,²⁹⁹ who sought

²⁹⁶ She also attended meetings of *Gyôminkai*, a student group at Waseda University.

²⁹⁷ Sakai's socialist comrade Morita Ariaki was a company director and gave her the job. To make fair copies of his manuscripts, Morita had an assistant, Yamamoto Torazô.

²⁹⁸ Modern Japanese anarchism was an imported philosophy that first appeared in Japan around the 1880s. Stephen Filler, *Chaos From Order: Anarchy and Anarchism in Modern Japan Fiction, 1900-1930*. (Ph.d. diss., The Ohio State University, 2004), 15. Filler introduces Andô Shôeki (1703-1762) as the anarchistic thinker in pre-modern Japan who "called for a form of radically egalitarian, agrarian communism." In Europe, anarchism began as one of the socialist philosophies seeking the elimination of economic inequality caused by capitalism. Designed to reject all forms of authority and coercive acts and thereby create a society guaranteeing individual freedom, European anarchism was further developed in the late 19th century by the French anarchist and socialist Proudhon (1809-1865) and the Russian anarchists Bakunin (1814-1876) and Kropotkin (1842-1921). Translations of their books became available in Japan in the early 20th century. [Wada Hirobumi, *Nihon no abangyarudo* (Kyoto: Sekai shisôsha, 2005), 4.]

As with anarchism and socialism in Europe, the relationship between anarchism and socialism in Japan shared aims and values such as socialized distribution of income. Although anarchism is not the same as socialism and rejects the idea of a centralized state, many anarchists considered themselves to be socialists or to be part of a larger socialist movement. [Stephen Filler, 3. The term socialism in Japan was used from the early Meiji period and involved pursuit of a wide variety of radical economic reforms such as parliamentary change or revolution. The socialist movement was led by labor activists such as Katayama Sen (1859-1933) after the Japanese victory in the Sino-Japanese war.] Japanese intellectuals actively took up the philosophy of anarchism. In 1906, strongly influenced by Kropotkin, Kôtoku Shûsui (1871-1911) founded the Social Revolution Party (*Shakai kakumei tō*), which advocated "direct action" (*chokusetsu kôdō*), such as unionization for radical change, and pushed the idea of achieving a socialist revolution. [Gennifer Weisenfeld, *Mavo: Japanese Artists and the Avant-garde 1905-1931* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, Calif: University of California Press, 2002), 148.] A proponent of the principle of direct aggressive actions such as general strikes, Kôtoku Shûsui was executed in 1911 for alleged involvement in a plan to assassinate the emperor. A "winter period" in the Japanese anarchist movement followed the Great Treason Incident (*Taigyaku jiken*) of 1912, and the government, which considered anarchism a political threat, suppressed anarchist movements and the study of anarchism. [Stephen Filler, 80.]

massive social upheaval. Contempt for the infamous actions of anarchists was common in the early 1920s, but Hirabayashi was attracted to just such a man.³⁰⁰ In her autobiography, she explains how she felt a strong defiance toward the established marriage system and the conventional destiny of women in general, and that her choice against the existing marriage form was itself a rebellion against the conventional relationship between a man and woman. It was also a way of denying the affirmatives of society and aligning with the disavowals of it.³⁰¹

With the success of the Russian revolution, Marxism-Leninism had established a strong presence in the world and become the most prominent socialist ideology in Japan. Soon the dispute between anarchists and Bolsheviks (*ana-boru ronsō*) became intensely antagonistic and this had a dramatic impact on Hirabayashi's association with Yamamoto. Her mentor Sakai and friends, whose orientations were Bolshevik, criticized her close

²⁹⁹ Inspired by Kropotkin, as well as the German philosopher Max Stirner (1806-1856), Shūsui's successor, Ōsugi Sakae (1885-1923), began advocating individual freedom, free association, and decentralized government. Ōsugi, the most famous Japanese anarchist activist, considered anarchism as a part of or an improvement upon socialism, and published *Kindai shisō (Modern Thought)* from 1912 to 1914, explaining his anarchist political philosophy, emphasizing individual freedom and rebellion, and providing leadership for the anarchist movement. Pointing out the systematic oppression of capitalist society and exploitation by the bourgeoisie, he presented his anti-authoritarian views and called for a clear rejection of any oppressive structures. With Japan's rapid industrialization and massive migration from the countryside to urban areas, new issues such as labor problems surged in popularity. Strongly influenced by the success of the Russian Revolution in 1917, the necessity for organizing labor and for rebellion against oppressive social conditions was appealing. Conversely, Ōsugi considered the union and its general strike as an important tool for the anarchist revolution and strongly advocated social change through labor union organization or "the syndicated organ" (anarcho-syndicalism). In 1920, the first May Day demonstration in Japan was held, and in December, the Japan Socialist League (*Nihon shakai shugi dōmei*) was launched by activists including Ōsugi, Sakai Toshihiko, Ogawa Mimei (1882-1961), and Akita Ujaku (1883-1962).

³⁰⁰ Hirabayashi, "Shisō to dansei o henrekishita seishun," 37.

³⁰¹ Hirabayashi, "Watashio no rirekisho," 55.

relationship with the anarchist Yamamoto, and she eventually resigned her job at the German bookstore and found work completing fair copies of manuscripts.

For Hirabayashi, 1923 and 1924 were memorable years wrought with changes, moves, and destruction. 1923 began with a change of jobs for both herself and Yamamoto, the arrest of both for distributing leftist leaflets on May Day, an unsuccessful move to Seoul, and ultimate return to Tokyo upon the news of Japanese writer Arishima Takeo's (1878-1923) double suicide with his mistress.³⁰² After her return, Hirabayashi grew acquainted with Yamamoto's anarchist friends, Hirose Kuratarô, Pak Yeol (a.k.a. J. Boku Retsu, 1902-1974), and Kaneko Fumiko (1903-1926). Hirabayashi also learned an anarchic way of life.³⁰³ Some anarchists justified actions like "*ryaku*," the gathering of money from private banks or unpaid house rent, by declaring that such properties were originally produced from the plunder of the masses, and that they would return the money to the robbed—an idea introduced by Kaneko Fumiko³⁰⁴—and Yamamoto and Hirabayashi joined these actions.

On September 1, 1923, Hirabayashi and Yamamoto experienced the Great Kantô Earthquake. Refusing to evacuate from the danger and destruction, Hirabayashi used the

³⁰² They had received financial support for their trip to Seoul from Arishima.

³⁰³ Upon learning of the edict from the French socialist and founder of anarchism, Pierre Joseph Proudhon—that material possessions were the fruit of plunder—many Japanese anarchists reversed (some would say advanced) Proudhon's argument and concluded that material possessions, originally taken from the people, should be given back to the people. Hirabayashi, "Shisô to dansei o henrekishita seishun," 37.

³⁰⁴ Hirabayashi Taiko, "Kane ga hoshisa ni," *Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshû*, vol. 12, 95-97. Originally published in *Fujin kôron* in December 1928. Hirabayashi explains later that anarchists found pretexts for their immoral behavior and self-justified all of their actions.

aftermath of the quake as the best opportunity to observe the fiery destruction of Tokyo.³⁰⁵ At the same time, Hirabayashi and Yamamoto witnessed the brutal slaughter of Koreans and leftists alike under martial law, and a few days later learned of the murder of Ôsugi Sakae with whom they had talked only a few days earlier.³⁰⁶ It was not long before the military crackdown directly affected Hirabayashi and Yamamoto through expulsion from Tokyo after brief imprisonment.

Hirabayashi and Yamamoto ended up in Dalian, China, where Yamamoto's elder brother and wife lived. Hirabayashi was by now pregnant, and took a job cooking for Chinese railway construction workers. But, suspected of involvement in a secret plot against the Japanese colonial government, military police arrested and imprisoned Hirabayashi and Yamamoto in Dalian. By June 1924, Hirabayashi's advanced pregnancy and poor health resulted in her release to a charity hospital, where she gave birth to a baby girl, and due to malnutrition, the baby lived only a few weeks. After this great loss and her separation from Yamamoto, Hirabayashi pondered the original goal of her life, becoming a writer and social activist, and decided to return to Japan, leaving Yamamoto sentenced to two years in prison.

³⁰⁵ In her autobiography *Watashi no rirekisho*, she explains how excited she was to see the Metropolitan Police Department burn down, and pleased to think that everybody became equally poor with the loss of everything. Hirabayashi, "Watashi no rirekisho," 47.

³⁰⁶ In the panic and confusion of the Great Kantô Earthquake of September 1923, martial law was declared, and because of rumors of well poisonings—a result of water discoloration—a massive murder of Korean residents by vigilante mobs occurred. When the military police moved in to protect Koreans by removing them from the area entirely, the government took advantage of the turmoil to abduct and murder many socialists. The murder of anarchist leader Ôsugi Sakae (and his partner Itô Noe, 1895-1923) by military police during this purge triggered a decline in the anarcho-syndicalist movement.

Hirabayashi also recognized that their lifestyle had been perpetually chaotic without a stable income and residence; dependence on the sacrifice of other proletarians for their livelihood was parasitic. She felt a fresh ambivalence toward the anarchist life. Their indulgence in sex, the day-to-day survival, and the double standard and exploitation of women³⁰⁷ seemed far removed from the mission of saving the oppressed and lifting restraints on individual freedom.

c. A Return to Writing

After nearly two years of absence from writing, underscoring the priority of the social movement over writing, Hirabayashi began writing upon her return to Tokyo.³⁰⁸ Having lived in a colonized country without any creative stimulus, she was hungry for contact with new art and literature, and for her own revival and escape from various conventions, meeting an avant-garde artist was of great help in catching up with and absorbing current trends.³⁰⁹ The leading avant-garde artist Yanase Masamu, a coterie of

³⁰⁷ Yamamoto also expected Hirabayashi to be a good wife and work at home, an expectation no different from the convention.

³⁰⁸ She wrote a depiction of the working-class district in 1924, but it was rejected by *Bungei Sensen*. *Bungei Sensen* was published as an alternative journal after the cessation of *Tanemaku hito* (*The Sower*) caused by the persecution of leftists in the wake of the Great Kantô Earthquake.

³⁰⁹ The rapid urbanization and modernization of city areas in the 1910s and 20s, and the massive wave of new avant-garde art movements in Europe, brought anarchism and art into a closer relationship in Japan. [Wada, 5-6.] Art in Japan surged, desperately expressing the accelerated pace of life through stereoscopic depictions, such as skylines of monolithic structures and a mechanized civilization. All kinds of artists, from painters, photographers, sculptors, and architects, to film and theatrical directors, performers, musicians, writers and poets, tried to build their own expressions by connecting with the currents of European avant-garde arts, such as cubism, futurism, expressionism, Dadaism, and constructivism. [Wada, 5.] Engaged in such a great diversity of expressions, the Japanese avant-garde art movement as a whole shared a fundamental principle: to shake up the established conventions of each art category and thereby attack prevailing social mores. [Wada, 15. Wada points out that Japanese avant-guard art started with

Mavo, introduced Hirabayashi to the artist Takamizawa Chûtarô (later Tagawa Suihō).³¹⁰

Her encounter with other artists with anarchistic tendencies³¹¹ who would become leaders of the new art and literary movement also served to stimulate her.³¹²

Takamura Kôtarô's work *The Green Sun* (*Midori iro no taiyô*, 1910) just after his return from Paris. [Takamura was a poet as well as a sculptor.] Sharing the philosophy presented by anarchists such as Ôsugi, poets in particular considered anarchism as a driving force to revolutionize the field of Japanese poetry, advocating the complete destruction of all previous poetry, rebellion against oppressive social powers and conditions, and absolute individual autonomy. In 1920, the same year of the first May Day gathering, and amid repeated labor strikes and disputes, *Yorozuchôhō* introduced Dadaism to Japan. Begun in Zurich during World War I, Dadaism was a widespread art movement that proclaimed anything as a work of art, often using collage and montage techniques in combination with mismatched and unrelated items and juxtaposed elements. In Japan, Takahashi Shinkichi (1901-1987) and Tsuji Jun (1884-1944) were the most prominent Dadaist poets. They “discredited words and logic” and emphasized anti conventionalism. [Weisenfeld, 158.]

³¹⁰ In January 1923, *Aka to kuro* (*Red and Black*) was published by avant-garde anarchist poets who believed in the necessity of the destruction of the poetry establishment and social conventions and norms that had been constructed by the bourgeoisie. [Wada, 11.] In their manifesto, they called for “a poetic terrorism” as follows:

What is poetry? What is [a] poet? We abandon all ideas of the past and boldly proclaim that poetry is a bomb! The poet is a black criminal who throws his bombs against the prison's hard walls and doors. [Weisenfeld, 155.]

Though the publication of *Aka to kuro* was short-lived, its ideas were kept alive by a group of artists and writers who, in June 1923, established a group called Mavo, advocating the complete denial of existing orders and conventions. Five artists including Murayama Tomoyoshi (1901-1977) and Yanase Masamu (1900-1945) launched a rebellion against the art establishment (*gadan*), conventional tastes, and social mores, and questioned issues of aesthetics and the definition of “fine art” based on Western models. [Weisenfeld, 1-2.] In their manifesto, they declared themselves radicals and emphasized the idea of revolution as follows:

We are at the head of everything. We will be at the front of everything forever. We are not bound. We are radical. We make revolution. We advance. We create. We eternally affirm and negate. [Nakayama Kazuko, *Hirabayashi Taiko* (Tokyo: Shintensha, 1999), 53.]

Group members held that destructive acts were a form of constructive criticism, and strongly believed that rejection of the establishment was social as well as art reform. The Mavo group engaged in a great diversity of artistic activity, including art criticism, book illustration, poster design, dance and theatrical performance, and architectural projects.

³¹¹ Okada Tatsuo, Iida Tokutarô (1903-1933), Tsuboi Shigeji (1897-1975), self-proclaimed avant-garde poets, and the coterie of *Damdām*.

³¹² The Great Kantô Earthquake had been a catalyst for Mavo's artists and writers. They had witnessed innumerable violent deaths and the complete collapse of the urban landscape in a moment—a sudden tragedy that brought to bear an atmosphere akin to World War I Europe—and had emerged feeling a certain emptiness and an urgent need to invert the old value system, and sought out the birth of a new art. [Wada Hirobumi, 20.] As it turned out, the year 1924 was the most productive year for avant-garde artists, who produced such magazines as *GE*, *GJMGJGAM*, *PRRR*, *GJMGEM* in June, *Mavo* in July, and *Damdām* in December. (*Damdām* was published mainly by the members of the journal *Aka to kuro*, which was

After a brief relationship with Okada Tatsuo, Hirabayashi began a close relationship with Iida Tokutarô. During this time, Hirabayashi worked at several cafés and met Hayashi Fumiko (1904-1951) at a coffee-shop gathering for anarchist poets and the coterie of *Damdám*. Despite Hayashi's irresponsible and anarchic reputation, Hirabayashi realized that Hayashi's indescribable despair came from deep rage against social restraints.³¹³ In Hirabayashi's eyes, Hayashi, like herself, appeared to be following an inevitable path while yearning for true liberty; they shared the same goal and struggle of rebellion against existing value systems.³¹⁴ As time passed, their relationship grew closer, and they sometimes lived together and comforted each other psychologically as well as physically.³¹⁵

discontinued in June 1924.) The Mavo group was inclusive and fluid, and by 1925, many other avant-garde artists, such as the poets Hagiwara Kyôjirô (1899-1938) and Okada Tatsuo, participated in its magazine project. In visual art, *Mavo* magazine contributors often used collage technique to show extreme chaos and randomness, and thereby capture and depict the break between past and present. In poetry, *Mavo* coterie challenged the existing structure of poetry as well as content. Their poems used unconventional grammar, meaningless sounds, and offensive terminology, and were written to appear visually jarring, with upside-down and backwards text and the insertion of various symbols between characters. Mavo artists such as Yanase and Okada—sharing Ôsugi's original vision of the necessity for rebellion against the oppressive social conditions in modern Japan and the pursuit of individual liberty—considered their roles as social critics, pushed their coterie toward a more socially and politically charged stance, and advocated social revolution in the midst of capitalist society. For more on the relationship between the development of Japanese modernist and avant-garde literature in the 1920s and 30s, see *Advertising Tower: Japanese Modernism and Modernity in the 1920s*, by William Gardner (Cambridge and London, The Harvard University Asia Center, 2006).

³¹³ Hirabayashi, "Himawari," 12.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

³¹⁵ Both Hayashi's famous *Hôrôki* (*Vagabond Diary*) and Hirabayashi's award-winning *Azakeru* (*Self Mockery*), describes life in Taishidô of Setagaya ward in Tokyô, with three anarchist couples living close together (Hirabayashi and Iida Tokutarô, Hayashi and Nomura Yoshiya, and Tsuboi Sakae and Shigeji).

Hirabayashi began writing children's stories to help earn a living as Hayashi did. Hirabayashi's life among anarchist artists and writers, however, was not as she wished. In her book, she describes ambivalent feelings, agreeing with the anarchist spirit against societal conventions, but questioning their utopian ideals. While acknowledging their radical spirit against oppression and admiring their new artistic philosophies and articulations, she had witnessed too many drawbacks in their behavior. Citing unproductiveness and a complete failure to contribute to social justice and change, Hirabayashi ultimately viewed anarchists as unqualified, and particularly condemned anarchist men as fundamentally unchanged since olden times.

Hirabayashi also evaluated her own achievements during her time with anarchists, and came to the conclusion that her life had not contributed to social change, and that she was personally in a hopeless situation. She described her emptiness and desperation "as if cast out to a far-off place by centrifugal force,"³¹⁶ and declared that love had been a false answer for her life, which now had no meaning.³¹⁷ She therefore sought a new type of relationship based on individual liberty as well as psychological and financial stability in her career as a writer. Her autobiographical account *Himawari (Sunflower)* recounts how at this time she sought a love-based marriage that would provide a more secure environment and everything she needed.³¹⁸

³¹⁶ Hirabayashi, "Himawari," 18.

³¹⁷ Ibid., 13.

³¹⁸ Ibid., 11.

As Hirabayashi's concerns grew about the unproductiveness of the anarchist movement and the impossibility of social revolution, she became acquainted with JPLAL members Maedakô Kôichirô (1888-1957), Aono, Nakano, and Hayama, and recognized the more affirmative and proactive vitality of Marxists. Enlightened by Plekhanov's theoretical works, she concluded that the social project under Marxist ideology, systematized with its laws of historical materialism, made revolution more likely.

Although it was not easy to present stories to publishing companies, she continued writing, and in 1925 finally managed to sell her first story, *Shôkichi to fue* (*Shôkichi and the Flute*) to the magazine *Fujin to Kodomo* (*Woman and Child*). Later that year, she succeeded in publishing her first essay, *Fujin sakka yo, shôfu yo* (*To Women Writers! To Prostitutes!*) in *Bungei Sensen*. Still, publication in journals was difficult, and in 1926, Hirabayashi decided to enter her story *Moshô o uru* (*Selling a Mourning Band*) in the Ôsaka Asahi Shimbun prize competition.³¹⁹ While publishing another story in *Bungei Sensen* in March 1926, *Tsumetai warai* (*A Cold Smile*), which described life in prison, she began writing detective stories to help support herself. Indeed, impressed by Hirabayashi's talent, Morishita Uson, editor of the monthly mystery magazine *Shin Seinen* (*New Youth*), suggested she settle in as a writer of detective stories. But she chose to pursue proletarian works, and compared to the previous few years, 1926

³¹⁹ The title, later changed to *Zanpin* (*The Remaining Stock*) by the newspaper company, was finally renamed *Azakeru* (*Self Mockery*) in 1928.

proved prolific for Hirabayashi, publishing in the magazines *Kaihô* (*Liberation*) and *Bungei Sensen*, and such newspapers as the *Yomiuri Shimbun*.

In September 1926, Hirabayashi received great inspiration from Aono Suekichi's critical work *Shizen seichô to mokuteki ishiki* (*Natural Development and Purposeful Consciousness*). In her *Bungakuteki jijoden* (*Literary Autobiography*), she recounts how Aono's work was quite a pleasure as well as a surprise.³²⁰ Inspired by Aono's essay, Hirabayashi wrote *Nagesute yo* (*Throw Away!*) and decided to establish a new direction in the proletarian literary movement by opening up the field for new women writers.³²¹ She began reading the translated works of Marx's *Das Kapital*, Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, and Bukharin's *Historical Materialism*.

Another important factor in her transformation in 1926 was meeting Kobori Jinji, introduced to her by Yamada Seizaburô, the editor of *Bungei Sensen*, and ultimately accepting his marriage proposal.³²² Active in discussions on social and literary issues at JPLAL meetings, Hirabayashi's thoughts on the proletarian literary movement cohered. She increased her contribution of essays and short stories to *Bungei Sensen* and became one of the representative writers of the magazine.

³²⁰ Hirabayashi, "Bungakuteki jijoden," 29.

³²¹ Ibid.

³²² A working-class writer, Kobori had already published short stories, plays, and essays in *Bungei Sensen* and *Kaihô*. He also worked as chief secretary of JPLAL.

At the end of 1926, Hirabayashi founded the Social Literary Arts League (*Shakai bungei renmei*) with other members and set up a study session.³²³ The manifesto of the League published in the *Yomiuri Shimbun* exhibited their enthusiasm and the historical consciousness of their new movement.

Seitō was mainly nothing but an emotional revolt and outcry for freedom. Our clamor is literary art with determination and action. What we will build is a new culture for the exploited female class. We should not be Nora who left home; we must be Nora who drives Helmer out.³²⁴

This declaration reflected the goal of surpassing previous women's liberation movements.

As the previous section explains, the infiltration of Fukumoto's radical interpretation of Lenin resulted in the first split of the proletarian literary movement. Writers who stressed the unrestricted individuality of the art movement (such as Aono Suekichi and Hayashi Fusao), and writers who were experienced laborers (such as Hayama Yoshiki and Kuroshima Denji), were opposed to the radical "desk theory" of the intelligentsia. They eventually left JPLAL and in June 1927 founded WPAL.

Though supporting communist ideology, Hirabayashi doubted Fukumoto's slogan that politics comes before art and ideology alone enlightens the masses. Both Hirabayashi and Kobori therefore left JPLAL to contribute to the establishment of WPAL.

³²³ The members were Yagi Akiko (1895-1983), Wakasugi Toriko (1892-1937), Yamamoto Kazuko, Karube Kiyoko, and Hayashi Fumiko.

³²⁴ Nakayama Kazuko, *Hirabayashi Taiko*, 71. The manifesto was published on December 30, 1926.

In WPAL's journal *Bungei Sensen* in September 1927, Hirabayashi published *Seryôshitsunite* (*At the Charity Clinic*), the work by which at last she made her name.³²⁵

In March 1928, she wrote *Yokaze* (*Evening Breeze*), her first literary work portraying the lives of farmers. Hirabayashi explained that this work proved her long-time theory: only simple people from the lower class can truly and purely understand and appreciate nature.³²⁶ In June, a mainstream literary magazine, *Shinchô* (*New Tide*), for the first time asked her to submit a story, and Hirabayashi wrote *Niguruma* (*Cart*). Furthermore, Hasegawa Shigure, chief editor of the new magazine *Nyōnin Geijutsu* (*Women's Arts*), visited her with Ikuta Hanayo, requesting and receiving her collaboration. In October, Hirabayashi published her short story *Naguru* (*Wife Beating*) in *Kaizō*, portraying the brutal mistreatment of women in addition to the harsh circumstances of the poor in the countryside and subordination of the proletariat in the city.

Amid the turmoil within WPAL, involving Fukumoto's radicalism and subsequent departure of communist supporters Kurahara, Fujimori, and Yamada, Hirabayashi and Kobori stayed on with other members, including Aono, Hayama, and Kuroshima.³²⁷ As the previous section explains, JPAL and the Vanguard Artists League

³²⁵ In this work, she utilized her own experiences with Yamamoto Torazō at Dalian: police detention due to Yamamoto's involvement in a political demonstration, the birth of a baby girl at a charity clinic, and the loss of the baby due to malnutrition.

³²⁶ Hirabayashi, "Bungakuteki jijoden," 30.

³²⁷ At the same time, a new group whose members opposed the policies of the second Communist Party was established outside WPAL. Activists such as Sakai, Yamakawa, and Arahata, as well as Aono and

merged into the mainstream Marxist movement.³²⁸ Kurahara became the leader among its theorists, and his critical essay *The Road to Proletarian Realism* set out new principles of the proletarian movement. Strongly disagreeing with Kurahara's principles and Fukumoto's slogan, Hirabayashi challenged them in her critical story *Hikanbu-ha no Nikki* (*Diary of a Non-Leading Member*, 1929) published in *Shinchô*. Now pursuing her mission to portray the everyday life of the proletariat, she produced many essays, critiques, articles, and short stories in a brief space of time, including the first work examined in this project, *Rôdôsha no tsuma* (*The Worker's Wife*).

Amid the splits among various literary groups, a dispute over the ghostwriting of Iwafuji Yukio escalated within WPAL, and in July 1930, Hirabayashi finally chose to leave and abandon all affiliations with political art groups. In her autobiography, she remarks that, "it seemed I had become a gregarious animal and strayed from the herd,"³²⁹ and expresses the tremendous hardship of challenging the new principle of the literary movement as well as the necessity of acute criticism with appropriate words.³³⁰ Hirabayashi declined an invitation from Miyamoto Yuriko to join the Women's Division of the Japan Proletarian Writers' League (*Nihon puroretarian sakka dômei fujinbu*).

Kobori from *Bungei Sensen*, gathered around a group of workers and peasants (*Rônô-ha*). In December, Sakai and Yamakawa founded a new periodical, *Rônô* (*Worker and Peasant*), and Hirabayashi worked with Yamakawa Kikue and Sakai Magara to publish *Rônô fujin ban* (*Women's Worker and Peasant*).

³²⁸ They established the All Japan Federation of Proletarian Arts (NAPF).

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, 32.

³³⁰ Hirabayashi Taiko, "Watashi no tachiba," *Shinchô* 27 (1932), 73.

Persisting in her revolt against NAPF, she strongly felt that she needed to take up the subject of proletarian daily life³³¹ and by way of literary advocacy help enlist women workers for the women's rights movement. She contributed several works to magazines such as *Shinchô*, *Fujin Kôron (Women's Review)*, *Fujin no tomo (Women's Friend)*, *Nyonin geijutsu*, and in 1934, *Kaizô* published the second work examined in this dissertation, *Haru (Spring)*.

d. Through the Pain

The early 1930s were challenging for intellectuals, artists, writers, and activists, as dictatorial government laws kept them under strict surveillance, severely restricting their lives. While the invasion by Japanese forces in China was moving north, closer to Manchuria, in Japan terrorism escalated as young right wing recruits made repeated attempts to take over the government. Ultimately, military dictatorship gained full political power and controlled the cabinet for the rest of the war.³³²

While this fascism rose, major government crackdowns on “those considered left wing in any field” increased in severity and the proletarian movement suffered a tremendous shock with the brutal torture and murder of Kobayashi Takiji by military

³³¹ Hirabayashi, “Bungakuteki jijoden,” 32.

³³² In November 1930, a young right wing fanatic gunned down Prime Minister Hamaguchi Osachi (1870-1931). In early 1932, a group of naval officers from right wing group Blood Pledge Corps (*Ketsumeidan*) led by civilian Inoue Nisshô (1886-1967) assassinated former finance minister Inoue Junnosuke (1869-1932) and director of the *Mitsui zaibatsu* Dan Takuma (1858-1932), hoping that direct action would lead to military takeover of the government. A major attack against the government occurred on May 15, 1932, when young assassins killed Prime Minister Inukai Tsuyoshi (1855-1932).

police in February 1933.³³³ As the previous section explained, in June 1933, *tenkô* by the two top leaders of the Japanese Communist Party from prison, Sano Manabu and Nabeyama Sadachika rippled out to the activists of the proletarian literary movement, causing many to declare their conversion.

Furthermore, many members in art and literary groups belonging to the Japan Proletarian Culture League (KOPF) felt threatened by a reform of the Peace Preservation Law presented to the Diet in 1934.³³⁴ As the government also exercised power over publications and lectures to control their contents, bureaucratic censorship grew and intellectuals and activists suffered.³³⁵

Hirabayashi, however, maintained her radical position, neither conforming to nor participating in government literary projects. She continued writing works exploring proletarian themes and openly opposing Japanese fascism and militarism, as exhibited by *Sakura (Cherry Blossom)* published in *Shinchô* in 1935. Amid the escalation of war against China following the Marco Polo Bridge Incident in July 1937, the government severely suppressed anti-government groups and individuals. Defiantly in September

³³³ After enactment of the Peace Preservation Law (*Chian iji hô*) in 1925, the government expanded the limits of punishment to “members” of any association advocating change of the national system, and added capital punishment in 1928. The first major crackdown on left wing activists was carried out on March 15, 1928, followed by another major arrest on April 16, 1929. Top-level executives of the Japanese Communist Party were arrested, and each year a crackdown also targeted leaders of the proletarian literary movements. Many were arrested and some, such as Kobayashi Takiji and Miyamoto Kenji, went underground.

³³⁴ For more details, see the previous section on the history of proletarian literature.

³³⁵ The Takigawa Incident of April 1933 evidenced this suppression. Minister of Education Hatoyama Ichirô (1883-1959) ordered the discharge of Law Professor Takigawa Yukitoki (1891-1962) from Kyoto University, claiming that his books and lectures exhibited communist tendencies. In May 1933, Takigawa was suspended from his job, and the incident stripped universities of autonomy and freedom of speech.

1937, Hirabayashi published the antiwar essay *Tada shinjitsu o* (*Simply the Truth*), in *Shinchô*,³³⁶ again openly protesting Japan's invasion of China. With this work, her arrest by military police became a matter of time.

Police forces targeted the entire Japan Proletarian Party (*Nihon musan tō*), the All Japan Labor Union Council (*Nihon rôdôkumiai zenkoku hyôgikai*), and the Rônô group, and in the Popular Front Incident (*Jinmin sensen jiken*) on December 15, 1937, several hundred activists were arrested. Although Hirabayashi was not originally targeted for arrest, her husband Kobori, chief editor for the Japan Proletarian Party, was a primary target.

Hirabayashi's imprisonment lasted eight months. A consequence of her extended imprisonment was severe illness. After release from jail due to poor health, her struggle with disease grew and she faced near-death conditions many times. Repeated hospitalizations and necessary recovery times at home prevented her from producing substantial works for the next eight years. As a substitute, she composed short poems.³³⁷ Evacuated to Suwa after the massive Tokyo fire bombings by American forces in March 1945, she heard the emperor's speech of unconditional surrender along with villagers of her hometown.

³³⁶ Hirabayashi Taiko, "Tada shinjitsu o," *Shinchô* 34 (1937), 160.

³³⁷ Watanabe Sumiko, "Hirabayashi Taiko ron," in *Hirabayashi Taiko Kenkyû*, ed. Miyasaka Eiichi (Nagoya: Shinshû Shirakaba, 1985), 141. Watanabe explains that Hirabayashi was able to write but had no intention to cooperate with the military government.

Japanese surrender was not problematic for Hirabayashi. She had been collecting so many thoughts during her eight-year absence from creative work (with the exception of poems) that in early October 1945, in the wake of the war, Hirabayashi returned to Tokyo filled with excitement at the prospect of producing work without restrictions imposed by the old establishment and military government. In the literary world, a new movement was rising, with the New Japan Literary Association (*Shin nihon bungaku kai*) ready to launch.

Hirabayashi, who had not written any works supporting the Japanese war effort, seemed destined to be a central committee member of the New Japan Literary Association. At the founding meeting, she asserted that the association should be organized by writers who had not supported the war, and advocated that members should start afresh after reflecting on a writer's past conduct without passing judgment on the inner processes of the writer.³³⁸ In the end, however, former proletarian writers of NAPF, including some who had supported the war, remained in the New Japan Literary Association. Sensing an evasive attitude toward war responsibility, Hirabayashi decided to take her own path. Her passion for writing prevailed and her postwar career was a success.

³³⁸ As the previous section explained, Sata was one of the writers rejected as a founding member.

2. Critiques of the Works of Hirabayashi Taiko

a. Within the Scope of Proletarian Literature

As a representative of the Worker Peasant Artists League, such male contemporary writers and critics as Katsumoto Seiichirô (1899-1967), Yokomitsu Riichi (1898-1947), and Kurahara Korehito evaluated Hirabayashi's works within the scope of the proletarian literary movement whether or not they were proletarian activists themselves. At the same time, her contemporary women writers such as Nakamoto Takako (1903-1991), Kamichika Ichiko (1888-1981), and Miyamoto Yuriko (1899-1951), also judged her works relative to proletarian literature, thereby limiting their viewpoints.

Katsumoto Seiichirô, for example, praised Hirabayashi's portrayal of miserable and cruel conditions in her work *Yokaze* (*Evening Breeze*, 1928) and underscored her careful linkage between these conditions and unseen socio-economic-political motives. Katsumoto gave high marks for Hirabayashi's employment of farmers challenging their landowner.³³⁹ However, this kind of comment—emphasizing the effectiveness of a “required” theme between oppressors and oppressed—is ubiquitous in critiques of proletarian literature. At the same time, Katsumoto also criticized Hirabayashi's depiction of the misery of women's lives as the “triviality and domesticity of women's issues,” concluding that her work did not expose the full picture of the bourgeois power structure.³⁴⁰ Katsumoto's phallogentric perspective focuses on concerns within the

³³⁹ Katsumoto Seiichirô, “Hirabayashi Taiko shi no ‘Yokaze’ o osu,” *Shinchô* 25 (1928), 31.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 31.

proletarian movement and misses the important aspect of Hirabayashi's criticism: her exposure of fundamental systems of oppression of women under capitalism and patriarchy and her implicit challenge to destroy these social cancers.

Her contemporary writer, Yokomitsu Riichi makes a similarly restricted comment on her work. Yokomitsu highly praises Hirabayashi's writing style in *Naguru (Wife Beating)*, 1928) as similar to his newly proposed neo-perceptionist style. However, Yokomitsu comments that her theme follows the typical outlook on proletarian life.³⁴¹ Yokomitsu's own premises to themes in proletarian literature blind him and he misses Hirabayashi's significant critique on the violent oppression of women by men that exists obscured within the social system and hierarchy under capitalism.

Critique by the leading figure of the proletarian literary movement, Kurahara Korehito, reveals the same confines.³⁴² While admiring Hirabayashi's "new style and new territory," Kurahara remarks that her themes do not go beyond the scope of individual life and that her attitude toward reality "is too personal, humanistic, and anarchistic."³⁴³ Kurahara overlooks deeply rooted social inequality and oppression as Hirabayashi reveals undeserved treatment and the unfair relationship between women and men based on her experiences even in the proletarian movement.

³⁴¹ Yokomitsu Riichi, "Bungeijihyô 'Naguru,'" *Bungeishunju* 6 (1928), 23-24.

³⁴² *Saikin no puroretaria bungaku to shinsakka (Recent Proletarian Literature and New Writers)*, published in *Kaizô (Reconstruction)*, January 1929. Nakayama, *Hirabayashi Taiko*, 103-5.

³⁴³ Japanese literature critic Nakayama Kazuko points out that this comment exposes the blindness of Kurahara—who highly valued the Marxist worldview—to women's situations as doubly oppressed, exploited by both capitalist and patriarchal men.

Her contemporary women writers offered similar critiques. In 1929, Nakamoto Takako wrote of Hirabayashi's recent works, stating that the content remained within the limits of direct experience, carried on the tradition of naturalist writing, and showed neither new ideology nor form.³⁴⁴ In 1934, Kamichika Ichiko also analyzed Hirabayashi's works as nothing more than the expression of her observations of life, failing to exhibit overall reality as a social conflict. Kamichika concluded by asserting that Hirabayashi's works were a personal denial of society and removed from the urgency of portraying class conflict.³⁴⁵

The view from the perspective of the proletarian vanguard emphasized direct consciousness (*mokuteki ishiki*), ideologically revolutionary resolution, and a comprehensive grasp on life. Therefore, using these as job duties of the writer rather than allowing and looking for creative depictions of greater scope, Hirabayashi's work failed to meet the rigid interpretation of the guidelines by Nakamoto and Kamichika.

In her critical literary history *Fujin to bungaku (Women and Literature)*, another leading figure of proletarian literature, Miyamoto Yuriko, analyzed Hirabayashi's *Puroretariya no onna (Proletarian Woman, 1932)*. While her analysis was meant to be a criticism of Hirabayashi's particular work as insufficient for proletarian literature, Miyamoto's essay ironically exposed the deep contradiction within the proletarian

³⁴⁴ Nakamoto Takako, "Hirabayashi Taiko ron," in *Bungakujidai* 1 (1929), 133.

³⁴⁵ Kamichika Ichiko, "Joryû bundan no gendai," in *Shûkan Fujoshimbun* vol. 53, ed. Fukushima Shirô, (Tokyo: Fujishuppan, 1934).

literary movement. The most important aspect of proletarian literature for Miyamoto was how truthfully and artistically each literary work portrayed reality. But while Miyamoto pointed out that the portrayal of over-enthusiastic and unrealistically active attitudes toward proletarian life was a problematic tendency of the literary movement, Miyamoto analyzed Hirabayashi's depiction of the everyday life of a worker as negative and passive, and not necessarily representing a worker's life. Miyamoto strongly criticized Hirabayashi's work as nothing more than a challenge against simplistic idealization of the proletarian activist's life and—perhaps unknowingly broaching the controversial argument of how to define reality—Miyamoto asserted that Hirabayashi's theme slipped into another extreme—negative, passive—and was in danger of exaggerating and twisting reality.³⁴⁶ From the perspective of a leader of the proletarian literary movement, Hirabayashi's work was a distortion and a failure within the movement.

As all of the above show, the examination of literary works within the movement strongly suggests narrow prerequisites for their approach to expression of social problems; set metrics that enhanced the danger of neglecting reality by coercing writers to meet “requirements” of the literary movement. Anything beyond these premises was irrelevant, considered worthless, even self-indulgent and bourgeois. Hirabayashi's works clearly presented social issues with wider and deeper scope than “acceptable” proletarian literature, but then suffered from a limited scope of literary criticism. While Hirabayashi challenged or subverted the conventional phallogocentric discourses that permeated the

³⁴⁶ Miyamoto, 157.

literary movement and Marxist orthodox ideology, the constant dismissal of Hirabayashi's acute depictions of women's oppression in both society and the household revealed the fundamental contradiction in the proletarian literary movement.

Hirabayashi's transformation in the late 1920s has been viewed as a change of political stance from an anarchic to a Marxist tendency. According to critical examinations, as Hirabayashi separated herself from anarchist artists and thinkers and married the strong Marxist advocate Kobori Jinji, so did her literary works change from nihilistic portrayals of an anarchistic world to depictions of a proletarian world with directed purposes and positive actions and resolutions.

Contemporary poet and literary critic, Tsuboi Shigeji (1897-1975) analyzed her works in terms of a metamorphosis between the two political and literary tendencies of anarchistic socialism and proletarian Marxist ideology. Tsuboi remarked that Hirabayashi pursued portrayal of the darkness and misery in the life of the poor and oppressed, and objectively expressed reality in her writings, and points to Hirabayashi's political stance as clearly proletarian activist.³⁴⁷ Unfortunately, his criticism then explodes unsparingly when his expectations of proletarian writing are "betrayed." He concludes that Hirabayashi has not yet reached the point of seeing the issues from the perspective of a proletarian activist. In her works, especially those with "a strong autobiographical tendency," Tsuboi points out evidence, in her nihilistic view of despair

³⁴⁷ Tsuboi Shigeji, "Hirabayashi Taiko ron," in *Puroretaria Bungaku*, ed. Nihonbungaku kenkyū shiryōkankōkai (Tokyo: Yūseidō, 1971), 22.

and lack of resolution, of “individualism that exposes her bourgeoisie and socialist tendency.”³⁴⁸

Literary critic Ishikawa Minako points out, however, that Tsuboi understood Hirabayashi’s change only as an ideological shift and neglected to analyze the path of and reasons for her metamorphosis—as a result, Tsuboi missed the complexity of Hirabayashi’s transformation.³⁴⁹

Understanding Hirabayashi as an “important ‘proletarian’ writer with heavily anarchistic sympathies,” a similar conclusion is reached in the analysis by Japanese literature scholar Stephen Filler.³⁵⁰ Filler aligns the shift in her political tendency between anarchist and Marxist groups with the rise of Marxist literary theory. Filler sees Hirabayashi’s clear transformation in the content and style of her *Sekken Kôjô no dôshi* (*Comrades in the Soap Factory*, 1929) as a product derived from “objective” proletarian literature presented by such figures as Aono Suekichi. Marking a distinct contrast with Hirabayashi’s early “anarchistic pieces,” such as *Azakeru* (*Self Mockery*, 1927) and *Seryôshitsu nite* (*At the Charity Hospital*, 1927), Filler underscores the change in her

³⁴⁸ Ibid, 22.

³⁴⁹ Ishikawa Minako, “Puroretaria bungaku ni okeru <shintai> sei: Hirabayashi Taiko ‘Seryôshitsu nite’ ni arawareta <watashi> no mondai,” in *Hirabayashi Taiko Kenkyû*, ed. Shinshû Shirakaba, (Nagoya: Shinshû Shirakaba 1985), 100.

³⁵⁰ Filler, *Chaos From Order*. Filler examines the fictional works written by anarchists in the first decade of the 20th century and traces the development and characteristics of literary anarchism. Pointing out the elements of literary anarchism, “journalistic-style realistic reporting on the lives of the poor; the reification of concepts like “nature” and “life” in a vitalistic philosophy celebrating the growth and evolution of individuals and society; the championing of violent, nihilistic rebellion; and radical individualism,” Filler discusses changes in the anarchist literary movement through the late 1920s.

writings—a new emphasis on objective portrayal of the class struggle and awakening of fellow workers’ class consciousness as proletarian and seeking revolutionary resolution—and evaluates it as “a major departure from the anarchist influenced individualism.”³⁵¹ Filler also notes as missing “the darker human forces of sexuality, envy, hatred, and so on as force in the social revolution (for good or ill)” that were present in Hirabayashi’s earlier works.³⁵²

It is evident that some of Hirabayashi’s works overtly portray the awakening of workers, such as through reading flyers and conducting various discussions on resolution of oppression through unionization.³⁵³ Hirabayashi’s transformation, however, should not be dismissed as a simple ideological shift. Ideologically, she retains the principle that everyone should be free from authoritarian power, and individualism granted to all no matter where. She pursues destruction of injustice, and rebels against the conventional forces binding her body. Moreover, she gains stimulating new knowledge and a methodology of social criticism: the consciousness of historical change and a more organized strategic expression of social issues, and indeed pursues a more goal-oriented (and more likely) revolution derived from Marxist ideology. This is why the transition is not a big leap of political difference for Hirabayashi, and why she openly challenges

³⁵¹ Ibid., 182.

³⁵² Ibid.

³⁵³ Ibid. Filler, however, considers this work an exception in Hirabayashi’s career since her other works, particularly used in his analysis, notably retain “anarchistic ideas to critique the socialist movement.”

principles presented by proletarian ideologies, such as ideology should take precedence over sentiment.

b. Within the Scope of Existing Literature

Another ubiquitous critique of Hirabayashi's works is her use of life experience. Critics Aono Suekichi and Saeki Shōichi point out that her writing does not exist without references to her own experiences,³⁵⁴ and Komatsu Shinroku emphasizes her use of familiar corporeal or bodily sensations (*taikan shugi*).³⁵⁵ Aono explains that her personal experiences enhance and support reality in her work and says that Hirabayashi can recognize issues and deepen her thoughts only through tangible experiences. However, these critiques neither break down the reasons behind her implementation of personal experiences (gaining her own control over experiences and issues through writing) nor explain the relationship between her "distinctive" realism and proletarian realism.

Other critics compare Hirabayashi's works with naturalist works since both utilize personal experiences, pointing out discrepancies between them by emphasizing her "positive" attitude toward life, having hope. Aono describes her work as a challenge to literature as compared with I-novels (*shi shōsetsu*). According to Aono, while characters in I-novels escape society to isolate themselves from others and self-affirm,

³⁵⁴ Aono Suekichi, "Hirabayashi Taiko ron," in *Kindaijoryūbungaku*, 172. Saeki Shōichi, "Sakka to sakuhin: Hirabayashi Taiko," in *Hirabayashi Taiko shū*, vol. 46 of *Nihonbugaku Zenshū* (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 1974), 426.

³⁵⁵ Komatsu Shinroku, "Hito to bungaku, Hirabayashi Taiko," in *Hirabayashi Taiko, Enchi Fumiko shū*, vol. 41 of *Chikuma gendaibungaku taikai* (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1978), 491-94.

Hirabayashi's work is "resistant" literature (*kôgi no bungaku* or *teikô no bungaku*), wherein her characters dauntlessly challenge social barriers for the purpose of self-growth and opening up.³⁵⁶

Literary critic Yamamoto Kenkichi also refers to her will to retain hope for the future, even though her experiences are portrayed as a variance between ideology and life.³⁵⁷ Hirabayashi's contemporary, woman writer and critic Ôhara Tomie, gives a similar attribute to her work.³⁵⁸ However, these comparisons between her works and naturalist writing focus only on an easy binary or dualist analysis: I-novel as a passive and negative fiction and a "resistant" literature as an active and positive fiction. The analysis never refers to Hirabayashi's own critiques of naturalist writing and never explains why and how Hirabayashi employs her experiences in writing. These literary critiques examine only the surface of her works, not Hirabayashi's motivations and reasons for challenging social norms and conventions through portrayal of her experiences.

Literary critics Sugimori Hisahide and Senuma Shigeki and writer and critic Kôno Taeko go beyond a simple superficial analysis to examine and dissect Hirabayashi's

³⁵⁶ Aono, "Hirabayashi Taiko ron," 172-74.

³⁵⁷ Yamamoto Kenkichi, *Shôwa no joryûbungaku* (Tokyo: Jitsugyôno Nihonsha, 1959), 64-65.

³⁵⁸ Ôhara Tomie, "Kaisetsu," in *Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshû*, vol. 4 (Tokyo: Ushio shuppan, 1979), 465-67.

process of employing her experiences.³⁵⁹ Both Sugimori and Senuma underscore her implementation of personal experiences supported by her theory that life is experimental, emphasizing the act of immersing one's body in the realities of life and taking everything from the experiences as real. Hirabayashi's process, beginning with experience, moves into a phase of extracting significance from actual experiences, and proceeds to the next step of clarifying her criticisms (including self-critique) and concretizing her challenges and protests, reaching the final step of writing a social novel (*shakai shôsetsu*). Their analysis, however, dissects the process of digesting her experience to create the final product, but never delves deeper into her specific reasons for implementing personal experiences and employing corporeal sensations.

Saeki Shôichi gives a brief comparative analysis of three kinds of realisms: socialist realism, naturalist realism, and Hirabayashi's realism. Saeki explains that socialist realism depicts a stereotypical human being centering on descriptions of social circumstances, while naturalist realism leans to a depiction of everyday life and exposes the author's passivity. On the other hand, Saeki argues that Hirabayashi "instinctively" rejects these two realisms, and explains that Hirabayashi's realism breaks through the outer factors, such as social logic and ideology, and reaches down to "an instinct of life" (*seimei honnô*). Saeki emphasizes Hirabayashi's philosophy of centering on living

³⁵⁹ Sugimori Hisahide, "Kaisetsu," in *Hirabayashi Taiko, Ôhara Tomie*, vol. 48 of *Nihon no bungaku* (Tokyo: Chûôkôronsha, 1969), 514. Senuma Shigeki, "Kaisetsu," in *Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshû*, vol. 1, 191. Kôno Taeko, "Hirabayashi Taiko shi to warai," in *Kindaijoryûbungaku*, 177-80.

creatures (“*ikimono*” *shugi*), and explains that due to this philosophy she uses many images of animals in her writings.³⁶⁰

His argument, based on dichotomously opposed characteristics—mind and body, logic and instinct, reason and passion—exposes a critical issue, presentation based on ahistorical, precultural, and biological explanations, such as contemporary theorist Elizabeth Grosz argues in her book, *Volatile Bodies*.³⁶¹ An argument created by biological essentialism (an argument based on the universal attribution to women of a fixed essence not necessarily associated with the biology of women) leads to another distinction between mechanism and vitalism, human and animal, and finally male and female, ultimately stratifying rank between the two: man in the superior position of humanistic logic bearer and woman in the subordinate position of instinctive, animalistic nature bearer. Saeki’s argument, emphasizing Hirabayashi’s “instinctive” and “vital” nature, ultimately exposes a dualist perspective.

Critic Nakano Yoshio presents a similar analysis, asserting that Hirabayashi writes with a reactionary inclination rather than an ideological and social purpose. His argument is based on Hirabayashi’s own account of why she started writing, wherein she expresses her preference for powerful writing directly referring to daily life over writing that focuses on class and social matters. Nakano’s leap of linking her preference for the

³⁶⁰ Saeki Shōichi, “Kaisetsu,” in *Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshū*, vol. 10, 208.

³⁶¹ Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994).

faithful depiction of daily life to “reactionary inclination” (*shôdôteki shikô*) rather than a logical approach to her writing again exposes the danger of using dualistic terms and biological essentialism that neglects historical and cultural influences.³⁶²

c. A New Critique

Throughout her career, Hirabayashi wrote essays critical of both women and women writers. Because of her constant enthusiastic advocacy of holistic socio-political change, an investigation of her contemporary essays as well as her literary texts is essential for a more intimate comprehension.

In a position of constant oppression, exploitation, and suppression by men in the household and workplace, Hirabayashi gained insight into the social systems of Japan through personal experience. Even through her relationship with a self-proclaimed anarchist and the proletarian movement itself, she drew from her own conclusions to write essays on women’s issues, acutely criticizing the social detachment of capitalism that preserves inequality of men over women.³⁶³ She stressed that the objectification and commodification of women renders them unconscious and subservient, and clarified that the real enemies of women were the bourgeoisie ruling-class capitalists.³⁶⁴ Ultimately,

³⁶² Nakano Yoshio, “Hirabayashi Taiko ron,” in *Kindaijoryûbungaku*, 146.

³⁶³ Hirabayashi Taiko, “*Josei no dôshi yo!: Fujindômei*,” in *Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshû*, vol. 11 (Tokyo: Ushio shuppan, 1979), 12-14. Originally published in *Bungei Sensen* in July 1927.

³⁶⁴ Hirabayashi Taiko, “*Dansei batôroku*,” in *Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshû*, vol. 11, 40-41. Originally published in *Chûokôronshu* in 1930.

she advocated the abolition of capitalism and reconstruction of society under socialism while emphasizing the awakening of women.

In her discerning essay *Dôyôsuru fujin no mure* (*A Crowd of Disturbed Women*) in *Shisô* 1929, Hirabayashi gives a precise explanation of women's subjugation. At the core, she points to women's financial dependence on men, and explains the inevitable reasons for such dependence: the enduring notion that women are secondary, their lack of professional skills, and the unchanging conventions of love; despite the growing popularity of "true love"—based on the woman's choice of partner rather than the parent's choice—financial subordination persisted. Finally, she advises direct scrutiny on the parasitic social system.³⁶⁵

In *Musan fujin to ren'ai* (*Proletarian Women and their Love*) published in *Kaizô* in 1930, Hirabayashi highlights three forces hampering women's financial independence: the conservative and still feudalistic household system in which chores remained designated exclusively to women making it difficult to seek work outside; the absence of social facilities such as childcare to help them during working hours; and low wages compared to those of men, forcing women to work more for the same necessities of life. In short, multi-layered restrictions firmly bound them, coercing dependence on men.

While the advocated "true love" seemed to translate into a self-sacrificial spirit, it did nothing to resolve financial disparity. With extra working hours, no spare time, and

³⁶⁵ Hirabayashi Taiko, "Dôyôsuru fujin no mure," in *Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshû*, vol. 11, 27-28. Originally published in *Shisô* in December 1929.

the burden of household chores, Hirabayashi pointed out the unlikelihood of spirited love for the fatigued working woman, and concluded that there was no truly equal love among proletarians even though proletarian love is popularly portrayed.³⁶⁶

Hirabayashi suggests that the solution to the liberation of women from men is drastic change in the consciousness of women: women should recognize themselves as independent individuals, situate themselves as key elements of society, and find means of self-support. She emphasizes the satisfaction in “genuine and simple relationships between men and women” (*junsui tanjun na danjo kankei*) that occur without divisive financial constraints, and pushes destruction of the largely mythical notion of feminine virtue/chastity as a social product acquired throughout the ages.³⁶⁷

³⁶⁶ Hirabayashi Taiko, “*Mottomo atarashii ren'ai*,” in *Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshū*, vol. 11, 14-15. Originally published in *Bungei Sensen* in September 1927.

³⁶⁷ Hirabayashi Taiko, “*Furuki teisōkan no hōkai*,” in *Fujin Gahō* vol. 303 (1930), 214-16. In her essay *Furuki teisōkan no hōkai (Collapse of the Old View of Feminine Virtue)* published in *Fujin Gahō* in 1930, Hirabayashi conducts a historical analysis of feminine virtue (*teisō-kan*) and points out the problems of the ahistorical and biological explanations of feminine chastity that were widely circulated in society. Hirabayashi sees women’s chastity as a social product constructed throughout history. Applying her understanding of Marxist theory—historical materialism: the mode of production of material life conditions and the social, political, and intellectual life process in general—Hirabayashi examines “feminine virtue” and concludes as follows:

The old feminine virtue is tied to a certain circumstance of social economy, reflecting a part of the process of increasing production capacity. Forcibly constructed this way (that women should keep their chastity) by political, legal, societal habits, and the pattern of family life, it is not an absolute commandment from Heaven...and this kind of feminine virtue is collapsing.

Hirabayashi continues that the economic development of society—changes in the modes of production of material life from a small-scale handicraft industry to large-scale manufacturing with machinery—made women more financially and socially independent, and the old restrictions on them should collapse. Her historical and logical analysis of the restriction of women supports her theory that a body is always in a state of flux.

Hirabayashi believed in love born in the process of constructing a new society.³⁶⁸ In 1930, before *Dansei batôroku (A Record of Complaints about Men)*, Hirabayashi wrote the essay *Otto ron (An Essay on Husbands)* for *Fujin Gahô*. As a solution to social issues, she advised the abolition of the role of the wife (*tsuma to iu seido*) and role of the husband (*otto to iu seido*), as well as the concepts of monogamy under capitalism and marriage under patriarchy; natural freedom came with the demolition of such systems. She suggested a new path for men and women, recommending that the relationship advantageously nourish the creative forward-fighting spirit in each and solidify their determination to be equal comrades in a society wherein both were neither objectified and commodified nor subjugated and suppressed.

Hirabayashi's perspective exposes some weaknesses in that, when it comes to the emancipation of women, history thus far shows inequality and subordination persist beyond the destruction of capitalism. However, in examination of her works, it cannot be neglected that by the late 1920s, Hirabayashi had already recognized, studied, and written in detail about oppression in capitalist society, advocated destruction of oppressing powers, and greatly emphasized the emancipation of women.

Hirabayashi often directed keen critiques toward her contemporary women writers. It is noteworthy that Hirabayashi's first work appearing in a proletarian literature

³⁶⁸ Hirabayashi Taiko, "Otto ron," in *Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshû*, vol. 11, 37-40. Originally published in *Fujin Gahô*, February 1930.

magazine—*Fujin sakka yo, shôfu yo* (*To Women Writers! To Prostitutes!*) in *Bungei Sensen*, September 1925—juxtaposed a woman writer and a prostitute in terms of their service to and status in a male dominant world. This critical essay was her career debut. Pointing out that women were in general nonsocial and unaware of their exploited status relative to men, she relentlessly denounced the lack of a class-conscious ideology among women writers, whose works did not exceed “utopian sentimentalism.” Hirabayashi’s comments on their passive non-radical nature went so far as to accuse them of basking in self-glory as writers of middle standing in the literary circle; blind to the male centrality within that circle, the circle happily embraced them in the same way male society welcomes prostitution.

Hirabayashi’s scathing inquiry into the emergence of women writers and their hollow popularity noted similarities between these and proletarian tendencies overall and criticized the shallow qualities and weaknesses of both. Pointing out the general but superficial shift of literary circles toward proletarian literature and the consequent ineffectiveness of many so-called proletarian writers, Hirabayashi asserted that the “fashion” of proletarian literature had flourished to an over-popular extent that drew the involvement of the bourgeoisie, middle-class women who had the writing skills to depict defiance, but whose intentions and works held no relevance to the actual struggle. Whatever the content, their works reflexively appeared defiant and revolutionary due to the sensational advent of women to the craft of public writing itself, failed to portray

women as a particularly exploited and oppressed class, and did not address the issue of their own emancipation; criticism of sexual discrimination as a class-system symptom never surfaced in their work.³⁶⁹ Hirabayashi harshly rebuked such timid submission by women writers to the standard treatment of women, denouncing their tendency to accept and promote by omission the handicapped status of women,³⁷⁰ and concluded that their popularity came not from their quality of ideas and character, but simply from prostituting themselves to the trends of the journalism industry, as illustrated by the mutually exclusive benefits enjoyed by themselves and the industry. Finally, she urgently appealed to women writers to awaken from their illusionary state.

In her critiques, Hirabayashi also referred to the content of works by women writers, such as morals, love relationships, and patriarchy in the household, as “grumbling grievances expressed by satisfied people,” pointing out that their portrayals of life without a genuine grievance and fighting spirit toward such issues mirrored works by Japanese naturalist writers. Hirabayashi explained that what is needed in new literary art is informed intelligence, foresight, and an enthusiastic fighting spirit, and advocated abolition of all cultures founded on the oppression of women as well as a challenge to existing concepts of art. Intelligence, she suggested, should include comprehension of how women have historically fallen into enslavement by men, how male-centric morals

³⁶⁹ Hirabayashi Taiko, “*Bungei hōmen ni okeru fujin saikin no katsuyaku*,” in *Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshū*, vol. 10, 262-63. Originally published in *Tokyo Asahi Shimbun*, 1929.

³⁷⁰ Hirabayashi Taiko, “*Joryūbunshi ni tsuite, sonota*,” in *Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshū*, vol. 10, 253-54. Originally published in *Wakakusa*, 1927.

developed, and what is needed to “destroy this cursed rusty iron chain of a social system.”³⁷¹ Appealing for the abolition of the capitalist and patriarchal systems to women readers as well as women writers, to pursue the true revolution, Hirabayashi emphasized stepping out from the domain of their complaints and discontent to carefully observe and accurately portray the social system—the origin of their dissatisfaction.³⁷²

Hirabayashi’s progressive and insightful views of society by the late 1920s and early 1930s do not fall within the narrow scope of the principles expressed within the Japanese proletarian literary movement; as the previous two sections show, the scope of the proletarian movement was much more broadly portrayed by Hirabayashi than by intellectual leaders of the proletarian movement. Her careful and logical examination and expansive analysis of Japanese society drawn from Marxist theory, her holistic approach to social reality, and her understanding of true emancipation from any restraints and conventions—the importance of individualism—these, Hirabayashi’s principles for a true proletarian movement, obviously go far beyond the rigid constraints of the movement as expressed and promoted by its intellectual leaders. She had already realized that both the proletarian movement, and the proletarian literary movement in the narrower sense, neglected or worsened the conditions of certain social classes rather than resolved them, especially for women. Capitalism was not only a problem in the hierarchy between the

³⁷¹ Hirabayashi Taiko, “*Dôsei sakka eno keikoku*,” in *Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshû*, vol. 10, 306-7. Originally published in *Kaihô*, 1926.

³⁷² Hirabayashi Taiko, “*Joryû sakka gettan*,” in *Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshû*, vol. 10, 312-13. Originally published in *Wakakusa*, 1927.

bourgeoisie and proletariat, but in the hierarchy between men and women. Hirabayashi advocated that literature address both.

To fully appreciate Hirabayashi's work, it is crucial to understand the connection among three significant aspects of her works: her view and application of Marxist ideology, her pursuit of class-consciousness, and her theory of the body as a site for obtaining subjectivity.³⁷³

Hirabayashi's short essay titled *Jūdai musume no seitai* (*The Mode of Life for Teenage Girls*) helps in understanding her theory of the body.³⁷⁴ In it, Hirabayashi

³⁷³ The implementation of Hirabayashi's personal experiences particularly in proletarian literature is widely discussed by scholars in examination of her early works. Japanese literature scholar Laura Katherine Ondrake examines three of Hirabayashi's works written in 1927, *In the Charity Ward*, *Evening Wind*, and *Self Mockery*, and points out that Hirabayashi's early works constitute a new literary genre, the "proletarian personal novel." Ondrake defines the "proletarian personal novel" as a novel criticizing a social system such as capitalism while centering on an author's personal experiences. Ondrake's argument somewhat simplistically concludes that the aforementioned works, representing a process of reaching "a meaningful decision for socialist action" through Hirabayashi's experiences, provide their own literary category. The argument assumes that any sort of behavior related to socialist action not given a specific example is a proletarian act. Lack of a thorough investigation of proletarian literature and lack of an explanation of historical and cultural influences on the proletarian writer problematize Ondrake's argument that Hirabayashi's reference to socialist action in writing is emblematic of proletarian literature. Laura Katherine Ondrake, *Hirabayashi Taiko: Issues of Subjectivity in Japanese Women's Autobiography in Fiction* (M.A. thesis, The Ohio State University, 2009), 13.

In her analysis of Hirabayashi's early works, Japanese literature scholar Linda Flores also examines the integration of proletarian themes and autobiographical accounts in Hirabayashi's early works. Flores, referring to Kobayashi Hideo's critique on "the disembodied nature of Marxist literature" and the inability of Marxism to address feminist issues such as female labor and reproduction, analyzes how Hirabayashi's work overcomes Kobayashi's criticisms. Flores's main research is the function of the maternal body in Hirabayashi's early works. Her analysis concludes that Hirabayashi's narratives situate the body as central to issues of subjectivity, and in this site of the maternal body, Hirabayashi investigates and challenges socio-economic and political issues. Therefore, Flores explains that Hirabayashi's works centering on the maternal body holds potential to bridge the problematic divide between feminism and Marxism. Her analysis of the integration of the two, however, lacks careful investigation into principles of the proletarian literary movement, and examination of how Hirabayashi's embodied subjectivity relates to the principles and themes of the proletarian literary movement. Linda Flores, *Writing the Body: Maternal Subjectivity in the Works of Hirabayashi Taiko, Enchi Fumiko, and Ōba Minako* (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2005), 57.

³⁷⁴ Hirabayashi Taiko, "Jūdai musume no seitai," in *Taiko nikki shō* (*Selections from Taiko's Diary*, Tokyo: Itagaki shoten, 1949), 72.

analyzes the multiple effects of patriarchy on Japanese women since the Meiji period, noting that, “since Confucian ethics and morals were abandoned when the Meiji period started, there is nothing restricting the inner girl in Japan.”³⁷⁵ More importantly, she underscores that the patriarchal system, directly binding the body of a girl from the outside, has no dominion over the inner life of a girl. Hirabayashi examines how Japanese women had tried to make rapid progress in resisting many social restrictions and specifies their methods, expressing rebellion through their sexuality or expressing their dreams in terms of corporeality. She emphasizes close ties between subjectivity (deciding their own acts such as rebellion against restriction), sexuality (a mode of expressing frustration and challenge, as well as implicating power structures), and body (a site of inscription, but also of fighting for resolution of their desires).

Much as feminist theorists Julia Kristeva, Judith Butler, and Elizabeth Grosz cover issues related to the subordination of the body to mind in Western philosophy, Hirabayashi in the early 20th century examines the body in complex terms and considers it a threshold for possibility of gaining a subjective position, empowering one’s own body, and challenging social restrictions temporally inscribed on the outer surface.³⁷⁶

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

³⁷⁶ Kristeva analyzes the relationship between the conventional objects of both male and female sexual desire and defilement in her essay “*Powers of Horror*,” and explains that what are considered as filth, abjection, and defilement have been determined and passed down through culture. This social construction of symbolic order creates a dividing line and boundary between the desirable and the undesirable. Referring to Kristeva’s discussion of defilement and the abject, Butler considers any sort of abjection and marginality in a symbolic system as a potential site of power. She explains that the conventional body is static because it has been constructed and normalized in society over time, while the abject body is open, mobile, and changeable. The latter has not yet been determined and, free of social norms, has a more powerful potential to interrogate and destabilize conventions.

As the previous section observes, while patriarchy uses a fixed concept of body to contain women, Hirabayashi uses the body very differently, understanding the body as more flexible, resourceful, and unpredictable. As Grosz explains, for Hirabayashi the body is “a threshold or borderline”,³⁷⁷ rather than fixed and stable, Hirabayashi sees the body as interactive and productive, generating spontaneity rather than playing a passive, inert role—points of view that may have come from her early exposure to anarchism. Strongly influenced by her understanding of Marxist ideology, that everything is in a state of flux and gradual small changes lead to sudden leaps of qualitative transformation, Hirabayashi sees the body as a site of possibility, at once viral, unpredictable, and radical: things arise, transform, and disappear in daily life, and so the body continuously acts and reacts.

Through her essays, as Grosz explains, Hirabayashi grasps that the body is a site of social, political, economical, and cultural inscriptions; the physical and psychological

Elizabeth Grosz discusses the complex relationship between subjectivity and the body. Grosz designates a body as “a site of social, political, cultural, and geographical inscriptions, production, or constitution.” Grosz continues that since the bodies are produced through multiple cultural inscriptions, they are not finite and are in flux and changeable. Grosz concludes as follows:

If bodies are inscribed in particular ways, if these inscriptions have thus far served to constitute women’s bodies as a lack relative to men’s fullness, a mode of incapacity in terms of men’s skills and abilities, a mode of women’s naturalness and immanence compared with men’s transcendence, then these kinds of inscription are capable of reinscription, or transformation, are capable of being lived and represented in quite different terms, terms that may grant women the capacity for independence and autonomy, which thus far have been attributed only to men. (p. *xiii*)

According to Grosz’s analysis, the body is a privileging site of multiplicity for two kinds of inscription: social, political, economical, and cultural imprints, and creative self-inscription. This analysis is the same as Hirabayashi’s explanation of corporeality and reflects her belief in the potentialities and possibilities of her own body. Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 23.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 23.

body conditions of both women and men reflect reality. This is why Hirabayashi utilizes precise and careful depictions of bodily and corporeal sensations in her texts, and this is how Hirabayashi's realism follows the path of proletarian realism: the body is implemented as a site of actuality, a site of subjectivity and revolution, and finally a site of awakening to class-consciousness.

Hirabayashi also sees the body as a site of opportunity, and that the body not only provides a new basis to rethink, but can also invert its conventional position (subordinated or suppressed compared to the mind). Through their bodies, women gain subjectivity—attaining agency within a dominant male framework, resituating them in a new paradigm, and reclaiming power over events they have experienced. A woman who was previously just an object within common discourse as well as in fiction becomes alive to act or address, in charge of her own depiction. A woman viewed as a victim in many ways can win over a situation and seek new possibilities, challenging oppressing powers that affect her deeply. This is the implication of revolution that Hirabayashi strongly advocated and emphasized in the proletarian literary movement.

Finally, Hirabayashi believes strongly in the body as a site of awakening. The body is not asleep at all; on the contrary, the body constantly acts and reacts. The body is a site to acquire, rethink, and learn even while it endures a harsh reality. Through equal corporeal sensation and bodily experiences, a human pursues self-awakening in a direct relationship to society. Therefore, Hirabayashi challenges the idea of gaining class-

consciousness through ideology and political leaflets, and strongly advocates pursuing class-consciousness through the body; since corporeal sensations actually happen in the body, it is more real than anything else is.

This section explores the web of Hirabayashi's essential principles of life. In observing the threads of her woven philosophy, her theory of the body and its employment in her writing highlights the fundamental framework for her understanding of the human condition.

3. Writing Style

a. Early Influences and Literary Critiques

In her writing, Hirabayashi explains that she acquired the “steady description” technique from a well-known member of the *Araragi* school of *tanka* poetry, Tsuchiya Fumiaki, the vice principle of her high school.³⁷⁸ Through intensive reading of Japanese naturalist writers, she came to cherish the ability of the lower class to recognize nature and appreciate its beauty,³⁷⁹ but, while Hirabayashi's works have been compared with those of Japanese naturalist writers, she separated herself from naturalism by denouncing its rejection of ideological elements and passive tendency toward human enlightenment.³⁸⁰

³⁷⁸ Hirabayashi Taiko, “Bungakuteki jijo den,” in *Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshū*, vol. 12, 27.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 30.

³⁸⁰ Hirabayashi Taiko, “Shosetsu no naka no ronriteki yōso,” in *Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshū*, vol. 10, 332. Originally published in *Bungei Sensen* in 1929.

As the previous section on the life of Hirabayashi Taiko explains, her appetites for new ideologies and art movements were satisfied through avant-garde artists who rejected the establishment and advocated social as well as art reform. While cherishing the inclusive and mutually enriching nature of the art movement, Hirabayashi felt she understood something from the movement, especially through repeated intensive discussions among avant-garde poetry groups such as Mavo and Damdam,³⁸¹ and explains that the dances, drawings, and poems of the avant-garde were abstract, far from existing representations, and “formed acutely juxtaposed expressions.”³⁸² As a writer, Hirabayashi began grasping the concept and testing a new style.

Literary critics point out the similarity of Hirabayashi’s works to those of neo-perceptionists, and highlight her rhetoric and intensive usage of vocabulary and expressions associated with human senses. These may have contributed to winning favorable reception by Yokomitsu Riichi of her early work, *Naguru (Wife Beating)*. Hirabayashi, however, differentiates herself from neo-perceptionist writers while criticizing as inadequate the comparisons between her style and theirs. Hirabayashi underscores bourgeois traits and rejection of ideological process in the works of neo-perceptionist writers. Yokomitsu’s 1929 literary critique refers to the complexity of expressions, phrases, and words, and gives writers warning regarding usage of adjectives

³⁸¹ Hirabayashi Taiko, “Shisô to danseï o henrekishita seishun,” in *Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshû*, vol. 12, 40.

³⁸² Ibid.

and figurative speech.³⁸³ Responding to his critique, Hirabayashi points out that such rhetoric generated from works acts as atmospheres that expose the social stratum of a writer. Examining a phrase used by one “self-described” proletarian writer Hayashi Fusao, “as beautiful as a silver ball,” Hirabayashi questions whether a laborer or farmer would consider a silver ball a beautiful thing, and concludes that such phrases and words reveal bourgeois traits even though a writer declares himself to be proletarian.³⁸⁴

Hirabayashi also criticizes the “decadence” of works by Yokomitsu Riichi, explaining that while ignoring and rejecting any ideological or contemplating process, Yokomitsu uses human senses only to lead readers to sensual pleasure.³⁸⁵ In Hirabayashi’s mind, there is a fundamental revolutionary purpose in writing beyond style and technique: to analyze issues of daily life and challenge oppressing norms by exposing the visceral harsh realities of society and depicting the awakening of human consciousness.

b. Hirabayashi’s Theory of Proletarian Literature

While judging Marxism as the most comprehensive outlook on the world, Hirabayashi points out a weakness in proletarian literature—the patterned theme. In her essay *Puroretaria sakuhin no ruikeika ni tsuite* (*On Patterned Tendencies of Proletarian*

³⁸³ Hirabayashi Taiko, “Sakka no oboegaki (2) Hyôgen ni tsuite,” in *Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshû*, vol. 10, 325-26. Originally published in *Bungei Sensen*, 1929.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 326.

³⁸⁵ Hirabayashi Taiko, “Shosetsu no naka no ronriteki yôso,” in *Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshû*, vol. 10, 332-33.

Literary Works),³⁸⁶ Hirabayashi acknowledges that materialism helps in recognizing and understanding the rich variety of actuality without any distortion and exaggeration, and dialectic teaches recognition of everything as being in a state of flux with small gradual changes or qualitative leaps. Hirabayashi then gives her interpretation of materialism and concludes that Marxism requires grasping in detail the gradual movements and overall transformations of actuality as well as extracting laws from the richness of actuality. She argues that the recent problematic phenomenon of proletarian literature is not writing based on the intensive observation and uncovering of issues of daily life, but writing with fixed themes and straying far from realism.³⁸⁷ She strongly advises that proletarian literature cover the trivialities of daily life, beyond the thematic “strike,” “unionization,” and “party politics.”³⁸⁸ For this purpose, she underscores the necessity of a writer’s sensitivity to perceive and sensibly capture the unimaginably overwhelming array and complexity of actuality in a moment-to-moment portrayal of proletarian psychology, and concludes that an adept broadness of insight into daily occurrences is required to do so.

For Hirabayashi, one of the most significant principles of proletarian literature is realism, and as a result of writing on the basis of an idealized reality, a storyline is

³⁸⁶ Hirabayashi Taiko, “Puroretaria sakuhin no ruikeika ni tsuite,” in *Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshū*, vol. 10, 356-63. Originally published in *Shinchō* in November 1930.

³⁸⁷ Hirabayashi Taiko, “Yuibutsu benshōhō teki hōhō to iu kotoba (The Term *Method of Materialistic Dialectic*),” in *Tokyo Asahi Shimbun*, April 1932. She points out a writer’s anxiety of committing serious mistakes in producing proletarian literature and explains that this forces writers to take the easier course of using socialist themes.

³⁸⁸ Hirabayashi Taiko, “Handōki no sakuhin,” in *Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshū*, vol. 10, 374-75. Originally published in *Bungaku hyōron*, 1934.

formulated, simplified,³⁸⁹ and ultimately lacks urgent turmoil and fails to portray real life.³⁹⁰ She argues that because literature should substantiate real life and even cherish a lofty ideal and move in the direction of its improvement, a story's plot should have tumultuous dynamics between ideal and struggle.³⁹¹ She also raises the issue of writers formulating a structure that places too much emphasis on the conclusion of class struggle through strikes while making excessive efforts to paint individuality as part of the collective mass. Again, Hirabayashi emphasizes the need for the careful presentation of fresh occurrences without distortion by ready-made existing concepts, and the appropriate grasp of significance from within diverse and complex actuality.³⁹²

Hirabayashi also criticizes the fabrication of reality based on a convenient ideology in the writer's mind. Regarding the directed consciousness (*mokuteki ishiki*) presented by Aono in 1926, Hirabayashi advocates the "necessity of implementing a militant, directed purpose that shows growth of the subject,"³⁹³ but warns against the blind implementation of political purpose. She criticizes writers who forcibly squeeze

³⁸⁹ Hirabayashi Taiko, "Puroretaria riarizumu to kanren shite," in *Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshū*, vol. 10, 314-16. Originally published in *Nyonin geijutsu*, 1928.

³⁹⁰ Hirabayashi Taiko, "Sakka no oboegaki (1) Puroretaria bungaku ni okeru suji no henka," in *Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshū*, vol. 10, 323-24. Originally published in *Bungei Sensen* in 1929.

³⁹¹ Ibid.

³⁹² Hirabayashi Taiko, "Tsune ni yōi seyo," in *Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshū*, vol. 10, 317-20. Originally published in *Bungei Sensen*, 1929.

³⁹³ Ibid.

ideology into works as tending toward too much consideration of directed purpose, and strongly rejects works wherein a writer's ideology exceeds reality.³⁹⁴

c. Characteristics of Hirabayashi's Writing

Hirabayashi's lifelong belief was "life is an experiment." Indeed, hers was a canvas of trials. In the story *Jinsei jikken* (*Life Experiments*), most of it based on her early experiences, she explains how she looks at life and tries to live.³⁹⁵ Suppressed and limited by social conventions, she wanted to open up and capture more. Never having easily accepted existing ideology, she challenged and broke barriers of society through her own will power, throwing herself into life to add depth to her experiences. Some experiences came from love relationships, others from resistance and rebellion. The result was not always what she expected and she often felt sorrow and disillusionment after much difficulty and pain, but she successfully approached each new level through contemplation, determination, and self-critique. She describes this process in *Jinsei jikken*: "As black letters inscribed on a white canvas, all these experiences formed Matsuko's character."³⁹⁶

³⁹⁴ Nine months later (October 1929), in the same year as the above essay, she published another critical work, *Shōsetsu no naka no ronriteki yōso*, in *Bungei Sensen. Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshū*, vol. 10, 331-33.

³⁹⁵ Hirabayashi Taiko, "Jinsei jikken," in *Hirabayashi Taiko, Sata Ineko, Amino, Kikue, Tsuboi Sakae shū*, vol. 39 of *Gendai Nihonbungaku Zenshū* (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1955), 60-74. Originally published in 1948.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 60. Matsuko is the main female character in the story. Matsuko's experiences in the story closely resemble Hirabayashi's real life experiences.

Hirabayashi makes available to her work as much of her genuine and concrete experiences as possible to support her goal of proletarian realism and avoid the pitfalls of fabrication. To write works that draw any reader into them, her stories usually depict actual occurrences from everyday life; believing that the story should merge with the mentality of the proletarian, she derives from her own experiences the means to manifest their state of mind as close to reality as possible. Following her understanding of Marxist ideology, she avoids monolithic and superficial representations, and depicts multilayered characteristics of protagonists, diverse ways of life, complicated relationships, and complex social issues as they really are. Such multifarious presentations invite a wide range of readers to relate to and ponder themes and issues more intensely. Hirabayashi also creates vigorous storylines to show that life has turns and detours and undulations as well as long waits and sudden transformations. Ôhara Tomie points out Hirabayashi's superb skill in balancing "a dynamic and holistic sense with detailed observation."³⁹⁷ As a natural result of this process, she materializes her principle of proletarian writing.

Many literary critics point out the "uniqueness" of Hirabayashi's writing style and its sensuous quality.³⁹⁸ Hirabayashi chooses familiar onomatopoeic and mimetic words

³⁹⁷ Ôhara Tomie, "Kaisetsu," in *Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshû*, vol. 4 (Tokyo: Ushio shuppan, 1977), 467.

³⁹⁸ Her contemporary writer Kuroshima Denji mentions Hirabayashi's acute descriptions and notes a literary style with feelings of reality (*jikkan teki*) while contemporary writer and critic Aono Suekichi refers to her style as being "persistently clinging, sensuously and psychologically" (*kankakuteki shinritekina shitsuyôna karamitsuki*). Kuroshima Denji, "'Seryôshitsu nite': Hirabayashi Taiko tanpenshû," in *Kindaijoryûbungaku*, 137-39. Aono Suekichi, "Hirabayashi Taiko ron," in *Kindaijoryûbungaku*, 171.

Situating Hirabayashi in literary history as a post-naturalist as well as post-Shirakaba-group writer, critic Saeki Shôichi also underscores her expressions as filled with "feelings of reality" (*jikkan teki*), "ingenious imagination," and "positive energy." Saeki Shôichi, "Sakka to sakuhin: Hirabayashi Taiko" in *Hirabayashi Taiko shû*, vol. 46 of *Nihonbungaku Zenshû* (Tokyo: Shûeisha, 1974), 433.

to punctuate atmospheres. For example, when depicting the sound of a needle on a phonograph record, she uses the onomatopoeic “*jaa jaa*” to convey a disturbing noise. When she writes onomatopoeic and mimetic words in *katakana*, the pointy and square looking characters transport feelings and circumstances to the reader particularly well: the collar of an artificial silk *kimono* described with the *katakana* onomatopoeia “*kirakira*” gives a sense of excessive sparkling, emphasizing the artificiality of the cloth as well as the pretentious manner of the *jokyū* toward her customer.

Hirabayashi also uses colloquial language to make the story familiar to the reader, and exploits rough vocabulary and compound verbs to transmit turbulent conditions as well as “unveil a fine surface and expose naked reality,” as Saeki points out. *Yatsu* (a chap; a guy) instead of *hito* (a man), *aitsu* (that chap) instead of *ano hito* (that man), *oboete iyagaru* (to remember with contempt) instead of *oboeteiru* (to remember with neutrality): these are examples from her works. Both the verb *osaeru* and *osaetsukeru* in English mean, “to put or press down,” but in Japanese, the compound verb *osaetsukeru* conveys a more overt power over and pressure upon an object.

Hirabayashi frequently uses simile rather than metaphor to substantiate conditions and feelings. Sometimes very different in terms of combination or pairing, Saeki describes her use of simile as “directly arranging in line two objects of a different nature without any premises and specificities, forcibly combining two heterogeneous objects

Furthermore, writer and literary critic, Kōno Taeko, while pointing out Hirabayashi’s imaginative power and expression, praises Hirabayashi’s deep insight and “sharp flashes of a sixth sense” in capturing reality. Kōno Taeko, “Hirabayashi Taiko shi to warai,” in *Kindaijoryūbungaku*, 179.

that seemingly have no connection and commonality.³⁹⁹ Encountering these unexpected and at times shocking arrangements, the reader is at first made uncomfortable, then vigorously engaged by the sense of reality (*jikkan*) that the character experiences.

Aono sees this technique as expressionistic.⁴⁰⁰ Theatrical performances (both plays and films) influenced by German expressionism in early 1920s Japan use extreme contrasts between light and shadow and artificially distorted sets to manifest the anxiety and psychological crises of individuals in modern cities. Aono might argue that Hirabayashi applies the principle of this new avant-garde artistic expression to her writing to emphasize the discomfort and ugliness of social conditions as well as the feelings of her characters. Such artists used fragmented and violent imagery in their poetic experiments to challenge established forms and topics. As the previous section explains, Hirabayashi describes in her autobiography her intensive personal involvement with avant-garde poets, followers of magazines such as *Aka to kuro*, *Mavo*, and *Damdandam*, so it is quite possible that Hirabayashi acquired elements and principles from the new movement. Since the Japanese avant-garde movement began almost simultaneously to or soon after the importation of philosophies of the avant-garde arts from Europe, including German expressionism, Aono's comment is relevant.

³⁹⁹ Saeki, 427.

⁴⁰⁰ Aono Suekichi, "Hirabayashi Taiko ron," in *Kindaijoryūbungaku*, 171.

Another characteristic of her writing is the exquisite combination of art and nature. Sukegawa Noriyoshi characterizes Hirabayashi's writing as "description through the workings of nature" (*shizen no itonami ni yoru byosha*) and explains that she describes human work like the transitions in nature.⁴⁰¹ Saeki supports Sukegawa's point, explaining that Hirabayashi breaks through the barrier separating humans, animals, and plants, and sees all living creatures as sources of power and energy sharing this universe, with natural phenomena projecting what happens to humans and their society.⁴⁰² Indeed, Hirabayashi often situates a scene of nature at the beginning of her stories to foreshadow an event as well as create an atmospheric mood, and then often uses natural descriptions to close the story, punctuating with poignant ambience to remind the reader of what happened from a natural perspective.

4. *Rôdôsha no tsuma (The Worker's Wife)*

a. Story Background

As covered in the previous section, Hirabayashi experienced constant change within the proletarian literary movement. She had left JPLAL due to radicalization of its ideology, and in 1927 founded WPAL with other working class writers. Facing a split within WPAL later that same year, Hirabayashi stayed on while radical leftists such as Kurahara made their departure.

⁴⁰¹ Sukegawa Noriyoshi, "Chôkan sareta jikan—Hirabayashi Taiko no shokisaku ni tsuite," in *Hirabayashi Taiko kenkyû*, ed. Shinshû shirakaba (Nagano: Shinshû shirakaba, 1985), 6.

⁴⁰² Saeki, 431.

Although agreeing to write a work with a theme describing exploitation by capitalists and landowners, she rejected the idea that art and literature were subordinate to politics and created her story as art with a strong message, overtly challenging the radical intellectualism of Fukumoto and Kurahara.

Rôdôsha no tsuma portrays the individual transformations of two wives after the imprisonment of their husbands. The main character, Yoshikawa Masayo chooses to work at a café to financially support her husband's union. Hirabayashi had originally named this work *Jokyû (Café Waitress)*. The decision to change the title to *Rôdôsha no tsuma* indicates Hirabayashi's emphasis on Masayo's metamorphosis from an ordinary housewife to a supporter of the union on behalf of her imprisoned partner. The story also displays Hirabayashi's intention to incorporate a direct consciousness into her work as proposed by Aono Suekichi in 1926. Masayo recognizes the importance of the labor movement her husband leads and awakens to adopt a mission to actively support the union.

In a work written by another proletarian writer, Masayo could be a proletarian hero, but Hirabayashi does not present her this way. Indeed, careful presentation of the transformations of the two wives, particularly Masayo's partial realization of class-consciousness and limited metamorphosis, reflect Hirabayashi's loyal implementation of the principle of class-consciousness in the proletarian literary movement, but she adds a strong emphasis on realism. In portraying the transformations of both wives, she acutely

delineates their limited perspective on society, and Masayo's decisions are not glorified, judged, or validated.

While the proletarian literary movement underwent major turbulence, society in the late 1920s also experienced much strife. As the story shows, workers faced wage cuts and dismissal, and people in general encountered severe economic conditions. With the first year of the Shōwa period quickly gone, 1927 began with financial panic.

Economically and internationally, Japan was taking its darkest step, and in July, feeling an “unexplainable anxiety” about the new era, Akutagawa Ryūnosuke committed suicide.⁴⁰³ By May 1928, amid deterioration of the Japanese economy, Japan dispatched its army to China's Shangdon province. This first dispatch of the Japanese army led to the Jinan Incident of May 1928 and the Zhang Zuolin Incident of June 1928, and became the springboard for invasion and colonization of China. Meanwhile, the government carried out major domestic crackdowns on communists and leftists, with wholesale arrests on March 15, 1928 and April 16, 1929. Aptly representing these economic and social upheavals through incorporation of Hirabayashi's own experiences working at Kafé Toraya in Shinjuku in 1925, *Rôdôsha no tsuma* appeared in *Shūkan Asahi* in June 1929.

⁴⁰³ For a detailed discussion of this matter, see the chapter on the life of Sata Ineko.

b. Text Analysis

Hirabayashi's story *Rôdôsha no tsuma*⁴⁰⁴ traverses four periods: a union strike in spring, a blast incident at the M Jewelry Shop in June, the imprisonment of Yoshikawa Masayo's husband in September, and later following the transfer of her husband to a second prison in October. In emphasizing the process of self-awakening through gradual exposure to the outer forces of reality, Hirabayashi juxtaposes three types of changes surrounding Masayo, in the circumstances of her husband, her physical condition, and her own circumstances overall, ultimately leading her to take an increasing stand against society.

Finally, in October, when Masayo receives a postcard from her husband, recently transported to a new prison, she decides to visit Umeda Haruko, whose husband is also in the new prison. Both husbands were metal workers for the M Jewelry Shop and leaders of the labor union movement—jailed for their possible involvement in an explosion at the Ginza shop after organizing a factory strike. After much discussion, the wives decide to become *jokyû* to make a living during the absence of their husbands. Since *jokyû* is to her a despicable and dangerous job, Masayo does so slowly, reluctantly, with the justification of helping the union for which her husband worked so hard. Whereas Haruko adapts quickly like an experienced *jokyû*, Masayo rejects everything about café culture: the environment is unacceptable and the customers are detestable.

⁴⁰⁴ This project uses the edition “*Rôdôsha no tsuma*” in *Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshû*, vol. 1, 241-47.

The more nights Masayo works at café, the more she is able to endure the customers. However, when she is at last offered money in return for a customer's sexual satisfaction, she can no longer tolerate her situation. She throws his money on the floor, leaves the café without permission, and—already forced from her house—goes straight to the office of the union, the only place left to go. But, after hearing how much struggle the union members have endured and how poor they have become, she sees her own matters as insignificant in comparison. For better or worse, she decides to return to the café to continue to help the union's cause.

At the start, when Masayo's husband leads a union strike against his company, the M Jewelry Shop, and begins spending many of his nights with the strikers at the union office, Masayo remains oblivious to his mission. Meanwhile, her body reacts to his increasing absence from the household with several days of illness; she is bedridden by bowel trouble. This condition mirrors her psychological insecurity as well as her powerless dependence as the wife of a worker in hard times: she can do nothing but wait passively, anxious for her husband's safe return.

As Masayo eventually becomes aware of the strike, which explains her husband's frequent absence, she takes a side job sewing a *kimono* in an attempt to support the union financially. Hirabayashi's description of Masayo sweating through work with great concentration suggests her eagerness to contribute. More confident now that she is

aware of her husband's activity on behalf of other workers, Masayo shows her admiration and appreciation through physical work.

After the blast incident at the M Jewelry Shop, her circumstances change: her husband's absence becomes permanent. This marks Masayo's complete separation from him and the beginning of her identification with the union as his replacement. When she treats a union member to *adzuki* bean soup using her husband's wooden cup, it signifies that the union has become a family member whom she has chosen to help in any way possible. More importantly, the distinction between her private sphere of domestic comfort and the larger reality of hardship magnifies as she weaves her daily life more profoundly into the world of the union. Even as she cleans the main office of the union, she thinks she should give more, at least half as much as her husband did. Narration describes how the work of mopping the office floor leaves dirty stains on the soles of Masayo's feet. This physical change underscores her increasing involvement with the union, and foreshadows a much more personal sacrifice—working as a *jokyū*.

With separation inevitable after her husband's imprisonment, Masayo objectifies their relationship and considers him less a conjugal partner and more a guide to social reality. Masayo feels this separation even greater when the authorities transfer him to a new prison in October. And while she acquires the ability to understand the proletariat's struggles and see her own reflection in society, despite her awakened consciousness and

willing role as a supporter, strength and confidence do not follow quite so easily. Using natural means, Hirabayashi describes Masayo's emptiness:

Masayo strides through the stacks of lumber filling the streets of the new town and returns home. She tosses her husband's postcard onto the *tatami* mat. Outside, she takes down laundry that the wind has pushed to one end of the bamboo pole. The bed sheet, dried under the sun, has the coarse feel of cotton.

In October, shadows on the wooden wall grow longer and darker in the afternoon, reaching the front of the garden where the morning glory vine around the trunk of the persimmon tree withers and dries. Sitting by the shoji screen this evening, Masayo hears the vine make a rustling sound and feels keenly the distance of four months, when she last saw her husband.⁴⁰⁵

The shadows cast toward the garden implies Masayo's time spent longing for her husband's return and the growing shadows in her own life because of his absence. Isolated, she feels pressed to one corner of the world, just as the October wind has pushed her clothes to one end of the bamboo pole. The vine of the morning glory, a symbol of impermanence, wraps around the persimmon tree like the relationship between Masayo and her husband, its remains still clinging yet life no longer connecting them.

As if throwing herself against the prevailing wind, Masayo chooses to work as a *jokyū*. She sees what is not comfortable to see, and experiences what she does not want to experience. She feels commodified by the café owner and objectified for the desires of the customers.

Masayo's final awakening is that she works actively for a cause. Through pain and humiliation, her spirit persists as not just a wife, but as every worker's partner. The

⁴⁰⁵ Hirabayashi Taiko, "Rôdôsha no tsuma," in *Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshū*, vol. 1, 241.

wife of the imprisoned worker's ultimate decision is that no matter what she has to endure and however disgusting she feels at the café, she will help the cause through her own confinement within such conditions.

From such detailed and multi-layered descriptions of physical and psychological metamorphoses of her characters, Hirabayashi emphasizes exposing the process of seeking change and meaning even within extremely limited options. Only through personal suffering does Masayo grow to take a stand against society and recognize the power she has as an individual under the most limited circumstances. Hirabayashi's story not only faithfully recounts incidents without ideological distortion and fabrication, but also describes actual physical conditions and transformations that can befall anyone. Hirabayashi's passion for weaving physicality and *jikkan* (real feelings) into her stories works very well to convey not only the laborious process, but the value of awakening and transformation, even from the extremes of one's private sphere of comfort to no physical privacy whatsoever and only spiritual comfort.

While focusing on Masayo's self-awakening, Hirabayashi makes the reader acutely aware of the problematic limitation of Masayo's state of consciousness. By adding the narrator's voice to the story, Hirabayashi illustrates the depth of social issues and hints at the insufficiency of Masayo's comprehension of the system. Following her principle of conveying things as they are, Hirabayashi presents the two wives, Masayo and Haruko, as binary opposites and reveals their differences through Masayo's point of

view. Reality is diverse and complex, and a persistent binary opposite permits her portrayal of multifarious actuality in contrasting Masayo's awakening as a worker's wife with Haruko's submission to unconscious living.

Masayo receives word from her imprisoned husband in a postcard, so it is simple and dry, less private, and vulnerable to public exposure. Masayo's pride and self-confidence in receiving a report from her husband shrinks when she sees the lengthy letter Haruko has received from her husband. Haruko's letter and Masayo's postcard arrive following the transfer of both husbands to a new jail in October, and while Masayo has brought her postcard to share with Haruko, Haruko has put her husband's letter away in a box in the closet. Here Masayo has had her first awakening, a consciousness to support the union: beginning to consider and appreciate her husband Yoshikawa as an important leader as well as a provider, she views her postcard as a report to share rather than as a private communication to put away. Still, her reaction to Haruko's long letter exhibits the fledgling stage of Masayo's consciousness. And although narration describes the blurred red PERMISSION stamped on the postcard and enveloped letter—clear evidence of intrusion and penetration by the government into private lives—Masayo and Haruko do not grasp that despite the form of communication and no matter how long and “private” they appear, all are inspected and redacted by the authorities.

When both pass by the M Jewelry Shop one day, Masayo at least notices that it is where their husbands worked while Haruko appears oblivious.

Inadvertently, Masayo sees a building as they turn the corner, and realizes it is the M Jewelry Shop. The old temporary board is gone, and the pendulums of many clocks swing behind a new window strengthened with white marble.

“Oh, it’s the M Jewelry Shop.”

Objects in the window appear distant as if through a pool of clear water. The glass is obviously very thick.

Haruko does not seem to notice it is the M Jewelry Shop. She presses her forehead against the cold glass, looking at a platinum wristwatch with a red strap.

“That watch there looks very pretty, doesn’t it?”

“Mmm,” Masayo’s reply is non-committal as she gazes at the clocks and trophy cups for a while.⁴⁰⁶

Haruko’s eyes leap to the highly valuable platinum wristwatch; obviously, she does not recognize the shop. Masayo at least feels sadness in realizing changes and continuities: the replacement of the window destroyed by the explosion and the largely uninterrupted sale of clocks and watches. Yet, as with the unseen inner mechanisms of the many timepieces in the shop window, Masayo cannot connect the glamorous commodities on display to the harsh labor of their husbands at the factory. Ignorant of the capitalist system—workers measured in monetary terms, victimized for profit—she does not yet consider these products a result of exploitation by the shop owners.

Hirabayashi uses the image of the undaunted M Jewelry Shop and the long, drawn out and futile struggle of the workers against its policies as emblematic of capitalism. She chooses to portray the escalation of suffering by union members and the gradual decline of their families during the union strike in painting the broader picture of the Japanese economy in the late 1920s. Pretty timepieces behind the window, hard times beyond the façade, with wealth and poverty kept apart simultaneously in each second that

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid., 244.

ticks away. While the working class struggles for their daily bread, shop owners fare well, and the strikes ironically present for them the opportunity to profit from the destruction of the union through reduced wages and numbers of employees. Meanwhile, the unions suffer psychologically and physically: their members find other work rather than stay and fight the owners, and budgets dwindle to nothing.

Despite the sudden surge of high-spirited enthusiasm by the workers after the blast at the shop, a wave of financial hardship sweeps their families. Hirabayashi's observation and criticism not only point to the powerlessness of the oppressed, but also to the ineffective anarchistic act of damaging a structure.

Hirabayashi's slow tracking shots and many points of view through Masayo's eyes across the surface of the M Jewelry Shop reveal no damage to the building from the explosion. The momentary marring of its surface disturbed neither the foundation of the physical structure nor the source of its societal power. In fact, the shop's outer lure, the sleepless seller of capitalism—the window between commodity and consumer—further hardened with the application of white marble, just as power within strengthened through the cold removal of troublesome workers. The shop's display of expensive merchandise again peddles a serene normality, with the somehow-always-available foreign-made commodities, distant behind thick glass and intrigue, epitomizing capitalism's carrot-and-stick mechanism. Violent action to change the fundamentals of society only made deeper the silent desperation in its heartlessness.

Masayo's admiration for her husband is almost equivalent to hero worship. Her unquestioning desire to become like him and be useful to him shows her naivety. In admiring and helping her husband more confidently and actively, she even feels superior to Haruko. But they are wives, and the blast incident at the M Jewelry Shop exposes the information gap between wives and union workers. While observing Haruko's emotional reaction to a newspaper article citing their husbands' involvement in the incident, Masayo feels proud to be prepared for the worst because her husband works for the union. Kept strictly confidential, however, she is completely unaware of the incident's planning. Moreover, Masayo ironically does not know what her husband even does in the union.

Masayo is also ignorant of her husband Yoshikawa's insensitivity to her. Yoshikawa might be an enthusiastic union leader, but he focuses on the labor movement so much that he cannot see what is occurring in his domestic life, overlooking his increasing absence as the real cause of Masayo's anxiety and physical sufferings. Hirabayashi describes his frantic burning of documents in a portable cooking stove and the scattering of ashes and burnt paper onto a white *yukata* Masayo is making. While managing to avoid the attention of police, his focus on nothing but the movement is problematic.

Masayo's admiration is ironical because after the incident she worships her husband's own blind devotion, and this misconception leads to her reckless decision to do anything physically possible to mimic him and support the union. Her contribution

begins with sewing a *kimono* to help financially. Her contribution grows more physical as she happily cleans the *tatami* floor of the office. She is satisfied with the notion that she can help rather than just watch the movement.⁴⁰⁷

On the morning that Masayo and Haruko find their new café jobs in Shinjuku, Masayo observes a woman cleaning the floor of a shooting gallery. Masayo's subjective observation of the woman, juxtaposing the exact same cleaning duties she performs, indicates Hirabayashi's subtle criticism of Masayo. Both are cleaning, typically considered a woman's job. Masayo's self-satisfaction in physically helping the union overlooks the unequal reality of a proletarian movement led by men. Beyond location—a union office vs. a shooting gallery—how much difference actually exists between her work and the woman's? To the union office workers, Masayo's job is just as insignificant: a woman is lesser, more given to clean.

Hirabayashi's presentation of the café through the eyes of Masayo, its harshness, danger, and obscenity, provides a vivid and disturbing account of a woman's suffering, and enforces Hirabayashi's criticism of the exploitation and suppression of women by men in general as well as of women workers by capitalism. Hirabayashi gives detailed depictions of the café and subjective comments from Masayo's point of view, and employs her criticism of Haruko's casual and carefree approach to the café job as a

⁴⁰⁷ Hirabayashi does not give any information about Haruko regarding her thoughts on the union, and it is plausible that the reader assumes Haruko does not offer to help the union because she is oblivious to it, though clearly not to her own dwindling finances.

contrasting binary opposite. Haruko, with her previous experience as a *jokyû*, shows great interest in looking for a job at a café. On the other hand, Masayo, without any previous experience, feels no enthusiasm, and once inside the café environment, Masayo feels revulsion at Haruko's eagerness. While Haruko's appearance and behavior changes—heavily rouging her cheeks and lips, and carelessly and coquettishly wearing a *kimono* and *obi*, walking in a flirtatious fickle manner—all the behaviors of a professional, Masayo experiences becoming a *jokyû* as straying from a “right path” onto a “dangerous path.” Her eyes do not convey glamour or flamboyance in or around the café, instead seeing the environment—circumstances inside and outside—as obscene.

Both Masayo's Kafé Toraya, literally Caf  Tiger House, and Haruko's Kaf  Tsuruya, literally Caf  Crane House, are located next to a red-light district in Shinjuku, a noisy and crowded area intermixed with different kinds of shops.⁴⁰⁸ A licensed red-light quarter, caf s, a shooting gallery, and a *kimono* shop are among various businesses that are interdependent here.

Hirabayashi chooses a specific time to prominently expose the harsh actuality of this “entertainment” district, when all that was invisible under the thick cover of night lies naked in a pure morning light. With every sort of filth, the whole area is a dump for all kinds of tossed garbage and leftover people. The lives of live-in *jokyû* are disordered and their relationships creased like their mussed hair and wrinkled *yukata*. The exterior

⁴⁰⁸ Both were actual caf s in Shinjuku. Between 1925 and 1926, Hirabayashi worked at Toraya while Hayashi Fumiko worked at Tsuruya.

of the café is messy and wet with sticky newspapers scattered around it, and even Masayo's sweat-stained wooden-box pillow reminds the reader that it belonged to numerous *jokyû* before her. This is how Hirabayashi relentlessly recounts the misery and harshness of Masayo's transformation as a woman moving from the guarded domestic sphere to the outside reality of brutal male dominance.

Just as descriptions of the café are largely fixed, so are the portrayals of *jokyû*. Interestingly, the world through Masayo's eyes—the fundamental issues of women and the working class in society her experiences represent—eclipses the detailed personal backgrounds of individual *jokyû*. Masayo's gaze falls directly on the intersection of dark complexion and white-powdered neck and face. It is an irony that this powder, used to artificially whiten the body and face to emphasize beauty and attract men, also makes their skin stained and dirty. When Haruko visits Masayo at the café, Masayo is cleaning her collar with benzene, a volatile solvent. However, it is not difficult to imagine that her collar will become dirty and her body deeply stained.

The most intense depictions of a customer occur upon direct physical contact. Hirabayashi dissects Masayo's actual sensations of touch, temperature, moisture, and intensity, when Masayo's first customer grabs her hand:

Staring at Masayo's face, the man says, "Come here," ordering her to move closer to him. When she steps forward hesitantly, he tightly grabs Masayo's left hand. Flying into a rage, Masayo pries off his warm oily hand. It feels as if

she has grasped raw meat. The sweat from his hand soaks her skin, and his uncomfortably warm touch will remain on her for a long, long time.⁴⁰⁹

In the depiction of the second case in which Masayo has direct physical contact, moisture and temperature again convey her feelings of disgust to the reader. And in the second case, the customer's behavior escalates. He wears western clothes, is over 40 and bald, and the more he drinks the more the color of his baldhead matches the red of his bloodshot eyes as he presses Masayo for sex.

“Does this café have a second floor?”

“No, we are not using the second floor.”

“Hey, you don't mind, do you?” grins the customer, grasping Masayo's hand under the table.

Masayo responds by looking away, then at the ceiling. The customer presses something into her palm. She immediately feels the heaviness of silver coins—he is trying to buy her. Masayo opens her hand above the table, revealing the coins. Pretending not to understand the coin's significance, she scratches an edge with her nails. “What? What is this? Why are you giving this to me?” Masayo also hides her insult at receiving an offer of just two yen.

“I will give this to you...in return for tonight, okay?” replies the customer.

“Tonight? What for?”

Losing patience, the customer presses down on Masayo's foot with his own. “Be quiet, you fool!”

Masayo cries out as the man squeezes more coins into her hand. His hand is dry but warmed by alcohol. She shakes loose from his grip and casts the money onto the floor. The coins roll like wheels under another table as Masayo, breathing heavily, removes her apron and throws it away.

With no further words, and without permission, she quickly leaves the café and rides the train back to the union office. Wearing only a shirt, K, a regular worker at the office, answers the door and lets her inside.

Under the table, he clasps her hand and slips money into it while holding her foot to the floor with his own. Her body suppressed, her freedom restrained, she feels subjugated

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid., 245.

and violated, and again flees the café. Hirabayashi's intense and graphic description of physical touch successfully conveys Masayo's opinion of the customer's behavior as obscene, detestable, and intolerable.

Masayo rationalizes her work at the café through providing financial support to the union. She demonstrates her strong spirit to unite her efforts with those of the union, and she thinks that this raises her consciousness to the next level. She criticizes Haruko's carelessness and blindness in wasting her earnings on a parasitic anarchist in comparison to the "meaningful and wise" use of her own earnings. Masayo is not, however, conscious that no matter where their earnings go, both herself and Haruko are just sources of money, exploited women.

The greater irony is that, for the customers, *jokyû* are just *jokyû* no matter why they work there. *Jokyû* are disposable yet valuable commodities for café owners, so in the café, men treat both Masayo and Haruko as objects of desire whom they expect to buy easily.

c. Writing Style

Hirabayashi's writing style creates an exquisite combination of nature and art. It utilizes the transforming and ongoing quality of nature in reference to both social and individual conditions. As the previous section of this chapter analyzes, Hirabayashi uses natural descriptions in the beginning of *Rôdôsha no tsuma* to foreshadow or set the mood

of the story. Actual seasonal changes imply transformations in her characters, and in *Rôdôsha no tsuma*, enhance the separation and loneliness Masayo feels.

Hirabayashi employs tactile depictions so the reader closely empathizes with a character's experience; the touch of a hand to convey how a character feels. She uses a vast variety of sensations, including pressure, temperature, texture, and moisture, to give the reader an unspeakably unpleasant sense of how Masayo feels.

The stiffness of cloth to express a character's degree of comfort in a certain circumstance—where Hirabayashi uses the amount of starch in a piece of cloth, either too much or none, to indicate circumstances—is another example of a tactile depiction. Masayo's white apron is hardened like a whitewashed wall through excessive use of starch. Since the apron is emblematic of *jokyû* life, this depiction betrays Masayo's hatred of her job. When Masayo sees one of her colleagues under a quilt with the café owner, she sees a wrinkled and rumpled *yukata*. There is no starch at all in her colleague's *yukata*, and its crumpled condition along with the colleague's unkempt hair represent the messy and disordered environment for which Masayo feels such contempt.

When going to the union office to clean up, Masayo wears a *yukata* that is nicely starched. The appropriate amount of starch suggests how Masayo feels about helping the union members. Because starch was one of the most frequently used daily items at that time, Hirabayashi's choice of starch to convey the ease or roughness of daily circumstances is brilliant.

Hirabayashi also captures the reader's attention with colors. The white marble base of the repaired M Jewelry Shop signifies power. Degrees of whiteness convey metamorphosis: from natural to artificial, from pure to tainted. The natural white of Masayo's feet is spoiled when she cleans *tatami* mats at the union office "occupied by men." This description emphasizes Masayo's willing service to the union on behalf of her husband, and her sense that she is a step closer to being a regular worker. At the same time, her indifference to her tainted feet signals blindness to the danger of future sacrifices. Hirabayashi describes Haruko's pair of *tabi* as dirty when she visits Masayo's house to discuss seeking café jobs, suggesting that Haruko is already familiar with *jokyū* life.

The *jokyū* cover their natural white skin with artificial white face powder, and its regular heavy application makes their natural skin appear lusterless and worn. Constant reference to their wearied complexion, regardless of their make-up, highlights their long-term suffering and toil at this job. Masayo clearly feels the difference between her artificial, powdered self and her natural self without make-up, and despises using artificiality to attract men. The white powder covering the neck also taints the color of the *kimono* collar. Constantly cleaning the neck cloth, as Masayo diligently does, or leaving it dirty does not matter. The question Hirabayashi presents, however, is how long will Masayo sustain her natural sense and untainted condition?

The color red expresses an excessive, influenced nature. The strap of the platinum wristwatch in the shop window, and the *koshimaki*—the waistcloth worn underneath *kimonos* by *jokyû* and the woman cleaning at the shooting gallery—are red to suggest a flirtatious nature and attract customers. Redness also betrays the influence of a stimulant, whether face powder or alcohol, and gives a sense of something obscene and disgusting. The red baldness of one customer is as disgusting as the bloodshot eyes of another, and the eyes behind a white-powdered face grow red and animal-like. Masayo shows her repulsion to these, even despising Haruko's lipstick and excessively painted cheeks.

Hirabayashi employs similes to emphasize absurdity and evoke sickening feelings through the association of objects and people with particular animals. The visualization of the animal through vivid descriptions evokes negative feelings from the reader. Hirabayashi depicts Haruko's heavily rouged cheeks as ridiculous "like a monkey" and the eyes behind Masayo's powdered face are repulsive "like the red eyes of a rabbit." The most powerful simile comes after Masayo frees herself from the grasp of a man whose hand feels like raw meat, a strangely soft, flabby, and moist visualization that evokes how uncomfortable and unpleasant Masayo feels.

As in her other works, this story contains many onomatopoeic and mimetic words to accentuate certain conditions or behaviors. Since onomatopoeic words are such frequent features in Hirabayashi's work, a recitation of her work is almost necessary to

correctly comprehend the state of an object or circumstance. (The author of this project herself slowed down to read aloud this work many times.) Moreover, word repetition generally accompanies onomatopoeia in Japanese, for example, *kasakasa* and *meramera*.

It is not easy to translate onomatopoeic and mimetic words without losing much of their effect. In her story, the repeated word audibly and visually grabs the reader's attention and helps actualize the image: Hirabayashi describes how the vine of a morning glory withers and dries as “*kasakasa to naru*,” literally “to make a rustling sound.” The scattered scorched paper on a portable cooking stove is described as “*meramera maiagaru*,” literally “to flare up and fly high.”

Mimetic words frequently describe circumstances or conditions in more detail. When Haruko lets an edge of her *obi* hang down limply in back, Hirabayashi uses the word “*darari*,” strongly evoking a state of looseness or untidiness, and suggesting that Haruko intentionally arranges her *obi* this way to appear more coquettish and inviting. Hirabayashi also uses “*darari*” in depicting the cleaning woman at the shooting gallery, whose red wool undergarment hangs down in another implication of looseness or untidiness. One particular example exhibits Hirabayashi's emphatic use of mimetic words, three times in one short sentence: “mutto natte sutto karada o hirugaeshite sassato arukidashita.” In the scene, Haruko takes offense to Masayo's statement and (in English) “gets angry, quickly turns around, and begins walking fast.” While the original Japanese

gives the reader a direct sense of Haruko's physical and emotional state, the English translation does not quite convey the degree of Haruko's anger.

The last key characteristic of Hirabayashi's writing is her use of compound verbs and everyday language. Since a compound verb consists of two verbs, it generally describes an action more precisely and conveys a more direct feeling to the reader. A good example is how Hirabayashi depicts Masayo throwing "dirty" money at a customer, using the word *nagetsukeru* instead of *nageru*. *Nagetsukeru* adds a much greater sense of anger and disgust to the simple act of throwing. When Masayo shakes off the customer's hand, Hirabayashi uses *huriharau* instead of *huru* or *harau*, conveying Masayo's disgust more profoundly, as in freeing herself by force from something terribly unpleasant.

As for everyday dialogue, Hirabayashi often uses plain language. Masayo refers to a customer as *yatsu* (a chap or guy) instead of *hito* (a man). She also combines a regular verb with a suffix *yaru* (to do something for someone). For example, *yaru* and *naguru* combine to make *nagutteyaru* to depict Masayo's strong desire to strike a customer. *Kantokushiteyaru*, a combination of *kantokusuru* and *yaru*, describes Masayo's firm decision to supervise Haruko for Haruko's sake. These are examples where the choice of one word changes the degree of intensity and drastically transforms the circumstances and conditions, talented choices that resonate and give vitality to Hirabayashi's story.

d. Conclusion

Hirabayashi uses a certain parallelism between Masayo and herself in terms of awakening to more effective and productive means of protesting the social system and challenging normality. Both Masayo's and Hirabayashi's new consciousness began when each encountered compounded hardships of society. Actual physical and psychological traumas and experiences pushed them to the edge, and both chose to sacrifice themselves for a better future outcome, pursuing ideals of a vigorous and successful labor movement, and an evolving and enduring proletarian movement.

Hirabayashi does not present Masayo as a hero of the proletarian movement, a realism persistent throughout *Rôdôsha no tsuma*. Masayo's awakening and self-development are not yet accomplished and her understanding of social issues needs more progress. This sort of presentation is more plausible than projections of heroic characters and actions written according to the proletarian literature principles propagated by intellectuals.

Masayo learns the hard way how to develop her self-supporting power as a woman. After the imprisonment of her husband and the loss of his earnings, she comes to realize that both financial independence and self-reliance are required in society. Masayo must make key lifetime decisions on her own, and this new process awakens a strong will and emotional autonomy.

At home in her comfortable domestic sphere, Masayo was unaware of men's perceptions of women. Once outside the household and into the world they dominate,

she encounters crude common practices regarding how men view and treat women as commodities and objects of desire. When a customer slips money into Masayo's hand in exchange for satisfaction—like the clocks and trophies on display at the shop but for sexual pleasure—her reaction is to shake off the man and throw his money back at him.

As Masayo's interaction with society grows, her private life becomes more vulnerable, and she senses a certain degree of scrutiny. As the wife of a social activist, she comes to know that she must endure inspection by authorities. She tolerates the intrusions and sacrifices her privacy because she is a union leader's wife. From the start of the story, when she receives the postcard stamped PERMISSION, the censorship of private communication intrudes on her life. But the most unbearable realization comes with exposure to society as a worker; value commodified and the body objectified under capitalism. This is the reality Masayo encounters, and the lesson she learns.

There are tasks awaiting Masayo, since she has not yet fully comprehended society and achieved awakening to the crucial issue of why women have to live in such a miserable environment. She does not recognize the oppression of women by both capitalism and patriarchy, and still dwells within commonly held perceptions and practices based on conventional ideals and expectations. She at least, however, recognizes the subordinate consciousness of women, and the importance of financial independence and an independent mind.

Still, she makes an unconditional sacrifice for her man. Her husband quickly becomes her social hero, someone she looks up to, and she decides to help the union as the embodiment of him, whatever it takes. While almost violated by a customer at the café because of her decision to earn money for the union, she considers her personal struggle insignificant compared to the hardships of union members.

Another common perception for both men and women is that a woman is lesser and insignificant and should do only unsophisticated, unintelligent work. This notion actualizes both at the household level and in the proletarian movement, where the male leader receives admiration and respect. The woman's job in the union labor movement is housekeeping. Women also censor themselves and impose self-limitations on what they can do. Hirabayashi's voice is almost audible: a change of conventional perceptions from the inside is necessary.

Hirabayashi's mission is to provoke the following question: what is the essential next step after recognizing the sources of suffering? Hirabayashi's answer would be achieving class-consciousness. Class-consciousness should seize the problems existing under both capitalism and patriarchy, and lead the masses to establish a new society. In the new society, Masayo's relationship to her husband would not be wife of a worker, but comrade. The ideal relationship between men and women would encourage and inspire the fighting spirit in each one to work equally for social equality.

The title Hirabayashi uses for this story strongly indicates that Masayo is still in an early stage of self-awakening and self-development. Hirabayashi's own strong determination and enduring challenge is transmitted to the reader as Masayo attempts to progress from a wife to the wife of a worker and, finally, to a comrade/partner, reaching the goal for both women and workingwomen.

5. *Haru (Spring)*

a. Story Background

As the previous section discussed, the political turmoil of early 1930s Japan had a severe effect on its literary world. With the Manchurian Incident of September 1931, Japan embarked on a path of escalating aggression, and in 1932, took advantage of the Shanghai Incident to deploy its military forces more deeply into China. Simultaneous to the increase in external militarism, Japan itself became a police state, and severe government censorship limited literary creation. With the newly charged internal mandate giving special powers to the police, in October 1932, the government began its third wholesale arrest of communists. Coercion forced leading members of the Communist Party to declare in rapid succession their allegiance to Japan's martial law. As the conversion of proletarian writers increased, the collapse of proletarian literary movement became imminent.

Notably, amid this most repressive climate, Hirabayashi continued to wield her proletarian views. In a 1933 interview conducted by the magazine *Fujin no tomo*

(*Women's Friend*), on the topic “What do you want to eradicate from the world?”

Hirabayashi conveyed her conviction that only by abolishing the capitalist system could the world be free from poverty, disease, war, prostitution, ignorance, and oppression by men; doing so would stamp out the source of mankind's misfortune.⁴¹⁰ Her criticism of proletarian writers and literature continued in 1934 with a critical work on the problems of proletarian literature in *Handôki no sakuhin* (*Works of a Reactionary Time*), beginning:

The renunciation of one's own literary work, their “conversion,” this kind of news is occasionally heard. Such news sadly exposes a deadlock in proletarian literature, with little power to resist and the destruction of writers' careers.⁴¹¹

She also advocated changes in the movement at this difficult and reactionary time.⁴¹²

And it was in the midst of all this turmoil, in April 1934, that Hirabayashi wrote *Haru* (*Spring*) for *Kaizô*.⁴¹³ While *Rôdôsha no tsuma* (*The Worker's Wife*) focuses on the awakening of the wife of a worker through harsh experiences such as her husband's long-term imprisonment, her financial difficulties, and her undesirable job as a *jokyû*, *Haru* revolves around *jokyû* and the café. The story portrays the tough life of the exploited

⁴¹⁰ In her chronological record, Japanese literary critic Abe Namiko mentions that Hirabayashi produced less work during this time due to her agony over whether to focus on the literary movement or the political movement. Though the number of her works declined, she continued to write stories exploring proletarian themes, including the story for this project.

⁴¹¹ Hirabayashi, “Handôki no sakuhin,” 374.

⁴¹² See the previous section on Hirabayashi's proletarian realism.

⁴¹³ It was a special numbered issue of *Kaizô* for the fifteenth anniversary of its first publication.

class and exposes the ugly deceptions forced among them for survival's sake. Given the political atmosphere in the year of its writing, *Haru's* condemnation of Japanese fascism and its criticism on the blindness of the masses, while indirect and subtle, are remarkable.

In *Haru*,⁴¹⁴ spring has come to K Town, a new *haikara* (high collar) community within Tokyo's city limits. The coffee shop changes its serving style, the movie theater erects a new modern-style horizontally written marquee with timetable above its entrance, and *jokyū* walk to and from the bathhouse wearing gorgeous formal *kimonos*. Café Ishida becomes more colorful as well, with a new imitation-art façade out front and cheap modern interior decoration. Two *jokyū*, Nihongami and Danpatsu,⁴¹⁵ work under the tight control of Ishida, the boss and cook. Ishida was once only the cook of this café, but through brutal tactics, he took over the café and banished the previous woman owner to her upstairs living quarters. To save money, Ishida always cheats his café customers: he is so stingy that he serves beef the butcher stole, and uses filthy unwashed bed sheets to dry the dishes!

One day Café Ishida receives an unexpected guest, a big and tough contractor. He is obviously not a regular customer, and knows nothing of the new foreign-named dishes, such as the “consommé” and “onion salad” written in *katakana* on the menu. He chooses

⁴¹⁴ This project uses the edition “Haru” from *Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshū*, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Ushio shuppan, 1977), 178-88.

⁴¹⁵ Hirabayashi does not use proper nouns to introduce them, but calls the *jokyū* by nicknames derived from their hairstyles—Nihongami (a traditional Japanese hairstyle for women) and Danpatsu (a bobbed hairstyle for women)—the two most generic hairstyles among *jokyū* at that time. This strongly supports Hirabayashi's point that the *joykū* are a commodity marked by superficial traits such as hairstyle, and that their individuality is obliterated and unrecognizable.

a cheap dish, just as a poor person would. But, as the contractor gets drunk, he becomes carefree and begins ordering more items. Finally, he takes out all his money to order anything at all, as if abandoned to despair.

Not about to let this chance escape, both *jokyû* order luxurious cocktails and the most expensive dish: beef steak. The contractor becomes so intoxicated that he cannot differentiate *tabako* (cigarettes) from *tamago* (eggs); the two are phonetically so close that he repeatedly orders both. As eggs and packs of cigarettes pile up on his table, the two *jokyû* also begin hiding them in a nearby napkin drawer. While charging him for both items and stealing them back to sell again, they even place a phonograph in front of the napkin drawer and play a song to help cover their theft.

At closing time, they take large tips, cheat in making his change, and finally throw the inebriated contractor out into the street. After Danpatsu retreats to her upstairs room and Nihongami leaves the café for home with packs of cigarette and other items she stole from her customers, Ishida, who pays sharp attention to whatever his *jokyû* do, quietly opens the napkin drawer behind the phonograph and recovers his eggs.

The next day begins as usual. The two *jokyû* clean the café, have a little private time, and then lunch together in the café. But this day is different: they have a daytime visitor, the wife of the contractor and his small son. The wife, clearly pregnant, innocently inquires whether her husband entrusted them with his money and left it in their care. Nihongami furiously condemns this accusation and threatens to go to the

police station to settle the argument. The wife hesitates and, overcome with nervousness and fear, is unable to explain that the money was actually for her childbirth and borrowed from the husband's boss. Summoning her strength and courage, she asks about the many missing packs of cigarettes her husband purchased. Nihongami again mercilessly denies the allegation and leaves the room. Only slightly more merciful, Danpatsu gives a bag of fried beans to the young boy and strokes his hair. The wife and son then depart having failed to recover anything.

Later, still believing that they successfully cheated their boss in the war over eggs and cigarettes, Nihongami and Danpatsu merrily sing along to a popular song on the phonograph. The wind breathes a long sigh as it passes over the dusty town. Ironically, the season of spring makes everything too radiant in the fullness of the sun; reality is invisible.

b. Text Analysis

Hirabayashi opens *Haru* with the recent metamorphosis of a town within the city limits of Tokyo. The town has become visually "modern" but with brisk comments, Hirabayashi reveals the reality that these types of transformation are merely a façade, cheap fashion tricks unmasked from a more discerning viewpoint. "The front of the café randomly imitates a mountain cabin or a steamboat, though from the side it is just a

rented house. Walls papering the interior with geometric patterns look like bathroom tile.”⁴¹⁶ The reader feels an evil turn lies behind these surface changes.

After introducing her setting and characters, Hirabayashi begins the main story using natural signs of spring to condemn superficial change. Nature seems an exhausted witness to the continuous deterioration of human society here, unable to penetrate, merely passing through without nourishing. She describes the breeze in the beginning of *Haru* as a flirtatious tickle like a human breath behind an ear, and mentions the temporality of the sun. “And speaking of the sun, it is like a top spinning slowly, about to stop, casting a dull, ridiculous light over this town as if it tries harder here. Eventually, it will give up and hide behind a cloud.”⁴¹⁷

Hirabayashi paints a persistent socio-economic doom that dulls the whole universe. The more the story proceeds, the more we see the juxtaposition of temporal and superficial transformations as veiled continuities and deteriorations. This is Hirabayashi’s critical view toward capitalism: even though the surface has become “modern” and “new,” the fundamental measure of everything by monetary value coats and constricts life like a hardening varnish.

The café is the best place for Hirabayashi to expose the deep penetration of capitalism—acquiring as much money as possible by any means—into everyday life, and that the inner psyche of people in the town and working in the café have not changed.

⁴¹⁶ Hirabayashi Taiko, “Haru,” in *Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshû*, vol. 2, 178.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 179.

Ishida has certainly not changed his principles. The *jokyû* also reveal their daily lunatic monetary worship.

Even though a new season has come, the people still follow an insufferable routine. Hirabayashi depicts an endless line of tired stupefied workers getting on and off trains everyday evidencing a formulaic daily death. Time creeps like syrup, the pendulum slowing with diminishing purpose. Daily life in the café, too, has a weakening pulse and a sleepwalking spirit. Missing the fresh crisp morning air and sun, getting up late when the day is already full of dust and the sun is faded, cleaning the café and eating a late lunch, waiting for customers at dusk, and conducting unhappy work late into the night, life here ignores nature's intent.

Within the façade of the café, the mandate for acquisition reigns supreme, and the boss and his *jokyû* have mastered the art of swindling even one another.⁴¹⁸ While cheating customers, the *jokyû* cheat the boss, and the boss tricks the *jokyû* to recover his stolen objects; all without rancor, it is “business as usual.” And when the contractor visits the café—perhaps to satisfy his need for escape even at the expense of urgent family needs—the *jokyû* immediately evaluate him as prey.

The contractor appears to labor as hard as possible, and the reader soon discovers that he exists on a downward course. Can he afford another child? In this

⁴¹⁸ As far as strategies of deception are concerned, the minutest details derive from Hirabayashi's real experiences, and she takes the time to explain them. They are conventional: flirting with a customer to get a free drink and food, making a customer drunk and cheating on the change and tip, snatching objects on order (such as a pack of cigarettes), and making fake orders for drunken customers and keeping the money.

economy, what are life's choices? Can he commiserate with his wife, patriarchy carrying with it the mindset of masculine pride? Where does one such as he turn for a moment's escape? He chooses the café. Like a bull, he goes in strong, with "the air having a weird massive feel, like cotton poured into the café" (*wata no yôna kimi no warui sawari no kûki*).⁴¹⁹

The contractor is indeed "an unexpected kind of customer" (*igai na kyakushu*). Unfashionably suntanned, covered with a layer of dried mud, at first his imposing physique, unclean appearance, and crude manner make the *jokyû* nervous about pursuing their usual bad practices. He looks like an animal, a mad bull in a ring. But, layer-by-layer, alcohol peels away his will until circling predators—also caged—sense vulnerability and begin to feast.

Hirabayashi presents in her story an imploding almost cannibalistic society, by design rife with dull—literally, pointless and unintelligent—ruthless division. The boss uses stolen beef for cooking and then recycles it, stripping off the breaded coating from half-eaten deep-fried cutlets to use the old meat in curry. For him, the smelly leftover meat is still valuable enough to sell.

The stark reality of individual *jokyû* life then emerges as Hirabayashi follows Danpatsu after the elaborate war over eggs.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid., 179.

A three-mat room is her living space. The walls are old and the three mats stained with face powder. Danpatsu opens a pack of cigarettes, smokes two, and swings her legs over the edge of her permanently laid-out futon. She stands and undresses garment by garment down to her miserably worn-out underwear. Tied with a waist-cord all day, a gray line has branded her belly, which looks blackish and flabby like an old woman's. Without folding her underwear, she tosses a nightgown over her shoulder, collapses onto the futon, and feels a sharp pain in the center of her nipple.

There is no hope, but no sadness either. What others call peace, Danpatsu feels surrounded by darkness as well as hopelessly suppressed by nothingness.⁴²⁰

The sharp pain Danpatsu feels in the center of her nipple is caused by her fully filled breast, indicating that she has recently given birth and has not taken care of the baby—a physical pain superimposed on the psychological misery of her difficult life. Her man is like Don Juan, his relationship purely exploitative and materialistic, only for his desires. The juxtaposition of the frenzied excitement in the fight over eggs and the barrenness of Danpatsu's life after work emphasize the hollowness and temporal satisfaction that ultimately causes her physical and emotional harm.

The true devastation of society is represented in *Haru* by the condition of the contractor's wife and son, innocent, harmed for life by husband and community alike, all at heart sensible people whose spirits have been crushed by an unnatural normality. The contractor's weaknesses and consequent losses extend to his family as he uses up all of their money, moreover borrowed from his employer. It doesn't get much worse than a husband and father betraying those who rely on him the most by—in a fog of panic

⁴²⁰ Ibid., 183-84.

drowned in alcohol—forgetting them completely. The poor grow poorer and social justice is anathema to this normality; the innocent are victims even before birth.

When the contractor's pregnant wife visits the café, the reader encounters graphic physical descriptions of both the wife and child indicating something is not quite right. The fully pregnant wife has swollen hands and face, and her eyelids appear "as if pressed down by two fruits."⁴²¹ Obviously, the wife is not receiving appropriate care and has suffered a physical toll. Her voice reveals her intensity and strong mind, but her fear and reservation lead to her further victimization. The boy has a bad squint as well as a boil on his head, and unlike his mother, he acts and reacts frankly and without hesitation. He speaks briefly in a hoarse voice like an old man, and although he is still a boy and his future should be unknown, his future physical and mental state appears set or at least predictable.⁴²²

Treatment of the wife by Nihongami and Danpatsu leaves a doubly bitter taste in the reader's mouth. Danpatsu senses "a strange stale odor from the mother's *kimono*, which covers a protruding belly." The smell is that of a pregnant woman, and one that the experienced mother, Danpatsu, recognizes. Still, Danpatsu's predatory mindset prevails over her compassion. After all, the café is a veritable hell exposing scenes of carnage: who is the cleverest to survive? The weak seek the weaker, and this struggle

⁴²¹ Ibid., 186.

⁴²² Ibid., 187.

plays out without mercy. The result is that a pregnant woman and child—the most powerless and voiceless in society—suffer the most.

While Hirabayashi's *Haru* is a serious critical work, her comical touches and twists make grave situations approachable and engaging. She uses several techniques to sustain the reader's interest. The first is wordplay, such as punning and playing on phonetic similarities. Hirabayashi makes an interesting point regarding the dishes served at the café, especially when translated into foreign words. The contractor faces difficulties in understanding not only "consommé" but also another horizontally written dish on the menu, *a-ni-a-n sarada* (onion salad), though he understands the expensive item *bifuteki* (beef steak) when he hears the *jokyû* ordering it for him. As soon as he figures out what *a-ni-a-n sarada* is from the *jokyû*, he comments that since it is just an onion (*tamanegi* in Japanese), he can eat it at home. Because the ordinary item (onion) is in modern looking *katakana* and sounds modern with a new foreign word, both the optical and auditory illusions fool the contractor, again castings issues of outer appearance and inner reality into the story.

In further wordplay, the contractor asks, "*Konsome tta nan dee? Kon de someru wakedemo arumee.*"⁴²³ Literally, "What is consommé? You don't dye some food dark blue, do you?" He divides "clear soup" (consommé) into two parts, "con" and "somme," and uses "con," sounding the same as the Japanese "kon," meaning *dark blue*, and

⁴²³ Ibid., 180.

“somme,” phonetically the same as the Japanese “some,” meaning *to dye*—to make a sentence. When the dreadful looking unexpected giant of a guest makes this poor pun indicating his ignorance, the fears of the *jokyū* evaporate, the story shifts to a lighter tone, and the predatory business proceeds as usual.

Another comical twist is Nihongami’s comment on the decaying chunk of beef hanging in the kitchen. Her plain description connotes the reality of how things work at the café. Nihongami bluntly states: “Hey, Boss. Speaking of beef, every night the mice swarm over it and sway it like a swing.”⁴²⁴ This descriptive view is exactly what happens to customers: just as mice hang onto beef, so too do the *jokyū* swarm over a customer to sponge money from him. The word “*takaru*” in Japanese has both meanings, to swarm and to extort. Nihongami’s statement also resonates with Hirabayashi’s portrayal of the contractor as a huge reddish-black bull.

The tug-of-war over eggs between the boss and the *jokyū* resembles a comedic film. The phonetic similarity between *tamago* (eggs) and *tabako* (cigarettes) creates a problem for the drunken contractor, but presents a great opportunity for the *jokyū* to prey on him. The big stacks of items piling up on the customer’s table, together with his confused expression over phonetic similarities, contributes a ridiculous lightness to the story. Characters enter and exit the scene quickly, acting oddly and suspiciously. The reader witnesses everything happening on the stage, how skillfully the *jokyū* seize the eggs from the customer, how desperately and cautiously they hide them from the boss,

⁴²⁴ Ibid., 185.

and—after Nihongami awkwardly bypasses the hiding place with other stolen items—how the boss recovers the stolen eggs.

Personal shortsightedness is equivalent to social ignorance, and Hirabayashi depicts it in such a way. In the very last scene of the story, still believing they have stolen the eggs, the *jokyû* innocently and merrily sing along to the phonograph that they used to hide them, so overwhelmed by their miniscule victory that they cannot imagine the full picture. From the beginning of the scene, Hirabayashi sarcastically underscores the dysfunction of the phonograph, its sudden rasping sound implying that their plan to steal will not succeed. She describes the singing voice of the two *jokyû* accompanying the popular song on the phonograph as “a disgusting stripe-patterned textile” (*iyarashi shima*), a pattern woven from at least two different colored yarns, representing the despicable scheme of the *jokyû*.

Personal shortsightedness can be trouble, but social myopia has severe consequences. Once combined with optical illusion, it becomes more problematic. Hirabayashi shows how natural effects deceive the eye as she indirectly criticizes the myopia of Japanese society and Japan as a nation.

Outside the window is daylight, so filled with rays of the sun that its softness is fuzzy, like the hair of a cat. A tall poplar tree stands in the middle of tea trees out front. The poplar’s soft young leaves shine in the sun as it sways in a stirring wind.

But though this view is clear and bright, distant scenery beyond twenty yards is too dazzling, hazy as if through a white voile cloth, making eyes narrow

and unkind to its radiance. The wind breathes a long sigh over the rooftops of the dusty town, and passes through at a walking pace.⁴²⁵

Hirabayashi points out that people can see things clearly in front of them, but cannot grasp what is far away; while characters focus on their personal needs, they cannot see themselves as victims of a system whose fundamental goal is collecting as much money as possible at any cost. The *jokyū* also do not recognize their exploitation as women under another social system—patriarchy.

Since by 1934, Japanese fascism and militarism had risen to notoriety, Hirabayashi covertly injects her criticism into *Haru*. As citizens, none of the characters has even a slight clue as to what their nation is pursuing. The eggs that create such a fuss in the café are Shanghai eggs (*Shanghai tamago*).⁴²⁶ Hirabayashi does not explain Shanghai eggs at all in the story, but it is not a leap to assume that they come from the Japanese colony of Shanghai. Historically, the Shanghai Incident, triggered by the Manchurian Incident of 1931, began in January 1932 and continued through spring 1932 as Japan invaded and colonized more land in China. While Japanese citizens could enjoy everything within Japan's colonial sphere and were told their nation's wealth stemmed

⁴²⁵ Ibid., 188.

⁴²⁶ Industrialization following the Russo-Japanese War pulled more people into cities, increasing not only the number of factory workers but also the number of employees in the service industry. City dwellers ate both Japanese and Western food in their households, and the increasing appetite for omelets and croquettes created a high demand for eggs in Japan. With domestic egg production insufficient to meet this demand, egg imports from China began in the late 1920s. Called "*Shanghai tamago*" (Shanghai eggs), by the mid 1930s, domestic production of eggs had increased and import of these eggs was no longer necessary. Academia Aoki, "Natsukashi deta de miru showa no life No. 30: Keiran wa "bukka no yûtôsei"?" [http://www.maboroshi-ch.com/old/ata/lif_30.htm], March 2007.

from an innate honor and strength, they could not see the national mission in East Asia and that the Shanghai eggs were a direct consequence of imperialist aggression.

The wind breathes a long moist sigh. It grazes the rooftop, but does not scatter the thick dust over the town. Hirabayashi's natural description reflects conditions in 1930s Japan, thickened beneath layers of patriarchy, capitalism, militarism, fascism, and imperialism, all tightly compressed to bind and suffocate the people of Japan. Although a new spring wind blows into town, it is not strong enough to scatter these layers, clear the air, and change things for the better. Since this description comes at the very end of the story, the uneasy tone of desertion remains for the reader to interpret. Severely suppressed by the government in 1933 and 1934, the spring wind could represent the proletarian movement.

c. Writing Style

Author and literary critic Kôno Taeko highlights the economy of Hirabayashi's writing style in opening her works.⁴²⁷ Indeed, before the story unfolds, Hirabayashi insinuates that people need to broaden their perspectives to observe carefully and deeply. The first sentences of *Haru* give the reader approximate contours, describing recent transformations in a Tokyo town. But immediately after presenting these changes, with a single sentence, Hirabayashi offers conflicting perspectives using the façade and side of the café: "The front of the café randomly imitates a mountain cabin or a steamboat,

⁴²⁷ Kôno, "Kaisetsu," in *Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshû*, vol. 8 (Tokyo: Ushio shuppan, 1979), 418.

though from the side it is just a rented house.”⁴²⁸ Nearly the entire story exhibits a parallel continuity of a harsh and ugly system deeply embedded in daily life, and the danger of accepting a view decorated by superficial means.

Critic Sukegawa Noriyoshi describes Hirabayashi’s perspective as a bird’s-eye view.⁴²⁹ Both the beginning and ending of *Haru* use a similar depiction of wind, as if it witnesses everyday life. Early in the story, Hirabayashi writes, “The time has come and a moist wind blows like human breath, touching an ear and tickling it sleepily and warmly.”⁴³⁰ At the end of the story, she writes, “The wind breathes a long sigh over the rooftops of the dusty town, and passes through at a walking pace.”⁴³¹

Humanizing the wind as if someone were breathing over the whole town, the story feels watched. As the previous section concludes, this wind might be the proletarian movement; even though it comes, it is not strong enough to blow away the dust settled over society. Indeed, the depiction of a powerless or weakened nature—the rapid deterioration of the wind, the worn-out sun—does not just set the condition of nature or the environment of the story, but also echoes the condition of characters, the circumstance of the café, and the socio-political condition of Japan, as if nature wants to

⁴²⁸ Hirabayashi, “Haru,” 178.

⁴²⁹ Sukegawa, 5-6. Sukegawa refers to the magnificent depiction of nature in works written early in her career.

⁴³⁰ Hirabayashi, “Haru,” 179.

⁴³¹ *Ibid.*, 188.

embrace humans but cannot penetrate their detritus: it can only observe and reflect a certain doom as it safely recycles itself.

Hirabayashi's highly sensual expressions evoke feelings of reality that quickly register in the reader's mind. In *Haru*, she makes full use of the human senses: even the sighing wind feels seen, heard, and tasted. The filthy, sticky sweat and oil from the hands of Danpatsu's man suggests a parasite, and makes the reader uncomfortable. Both the odor of stale beef and scent of a pregnant woman implicate consumed objects of desire: food and sex. Color gives proximity to madness, as with the red and black savagery in Ishida's expression, employing the *katakana* onomatopoeic, "akai shita ga chirachira mieru."⁴³² "Chirachira" evocatively describes a repeated flickering action revealed for a very short time, roughly: "Whenever he talks, his red tongue dances behind the black space of a missing tooth."

Mimetic words and frequent adjectives and adverbs add strength and visual precision, and the onomatopoeia written in *katakana* particularly catches the reader's attention, their characters visibly sharper and more pointed. Along with the image of a vicious and mad Ishida, the *katakana* onomatopoeia evokes a wickedly awaiting evil. And in the next sentence, Hirabayashi uses another *katakana* onomatopoeia to depict how Ishida sharpens his butcher knife. The phrase "sassa to togu"⁴³³ prompts the reader to

⁴³² Ibid., 182.

⁴³³ Ibid.

visualize not just the sound of the knife against a whetstone, but how sharp the knife becomes. This description of Ishida also kindles an image of Enma, the King of Hell, who waits with an evil smile for prey to fall into Hell, where he will cut them into little pieces with his sharpened tool.⁴³⁴

Her similes in particular reveal Hirabayashi's heterogeneity and that she is rich in originality. While calling for a sensibility to comprehend their pairing and juxtaposition, they are ingenious and not present for empty or ostentatious artistic expression,⁴³⁵ but come from real experience and feelings. The pause or hesitation in grasping the sense that Hirabayashi tries to convey increases the chances for the reader to feel more closely and fully what really happened. When describing the sun, Hirabayashi uses a toy top to illustrate how the sun is dull. This pairing requires the reader imagine how the slow spin of a top might shimmer like the weakness of the sun. Another unusual juxtaposition occurs when the contractor makes his entrance: "the air having a weird massive feel, like cotton poured into the café." Capturing the exact circumstance from her juxtaposition of air, weirdness, and cotton is not an easy task, but the result conveys power. The juxtaposition of dried yellow pus and sulfur to depict the boil on the child's head is also

⁴³⁴ Ishida also has a sharp ear for whatever the *jokyū* do at his café to avoid their deception of him, and his expression and nimble movements are emblematic of a fierce and merciless nature. Indeed, this café is his hellhole.

⁴³⁵ In her writing, *Naimen no urauchi* (*The Well-substantiated Inside*), she expresses disappointment and disgust when she realizes the superficiality and frivolity of surrealist art at an exhibition. She insists that both art and literature should have solid substance filled with true spirit before the avant-garde artist can claim to be a true artist. Hirabayashi Taiko, "Naimen no urauchi," in *Taiko nikki shō* (Tokyo: Itagaki Shuppan, 1949), 104-5.

an extraordinarily effective combination. These examples show how Hirabayashi makes the reader slow down to ponder each item and process the links among them.

Hirabayashi uses various textiles and fabrics in *Haru*, and associates the nature of fabric and the characteristics of textiles with the condition of characters and circumstances. Her frequent reference to these might stem from her origins in Suwa, Nagano prefecture, known for its silk-reeling industry.⁴³⁶ In any event, she capably uses her familiarity with textiles to make the story rich,⁴³⁷ and her implementation of these materials reflects social phenomena surrounding 1930. Japan's own economic crisis closely followed the 1929 Great Depression, and women workers in both the silk-reeling and cotton-spinning industries faced severe wage cuts. With the support of women's social organizations, the women mill workers went on strike to protest this and other issues such as poor working and living conditions, and personnel reductions. Strikes occurred consecutively in 1930 at four major factories of Kanegasaki Bôseki as well as the Tôyô Mosurin Factory of Kameido. Meanwhile, overseas investments in the Japanese cotton industry caused a severe conflict and ultimately triggered war between Japan and China. Taking into consideration Hirabayashi's constant support of the labor

⁴³⁶ Her two elder sisters worked at a silk mill to help their household finances. Since the silk-reeling industry required manual dexterity, Hirabayashi decided to choose another career (such as teaching or writing) because of her unskillful hands. As the previous chapter on Hirabayashi's life explains, she acquired her knowledge of the pain and misery of women workers in the textile industries from a special talk by Yoshino Sakuzo, and her later knowledge of the hardships of women factory workers at a local silk mill further motivated her class-consciousness and led her to social activism.

⁴³⁷ The fabrics and textiles appearing in this story are commonly used in daily life, more easily drawing the reader into the story. "Bungaku," the Japanese word for "literature," literally means the craftsmanship of weaving characters into words. The first *kanji* (for "bun") also means a pattern of silk woven using two kinds of thread.

union movement and women's associations, and her constant criticism of Japanese capitalism, her use of textiles in *Haru* are timely and reasonable.

Ironically, there is no appearance of silk in the story. Since she comes from a city well known for its silk reeling, the total exclusion of such a product is significant. Certainly, none of the characters could afford to buy silk clothing. Indeed, the textiles mentioned are exclusively cotton-based, reflecting the significance of Japan's imperialistic cotton trade in China. The Japanese cotton industry had invested capital in China and—under the protection of the Japanese imperial army—established cotton factories in Shanghai and Qingdao,⁴³⁸ where Chinese laborers fashioned the raw cotton into various textiles for export exclusively to Asian countries. Following the May 30 Incident of 1925, the anti-Japanese movement targeted Japanese capitalization of the industry and its cotton mills directly, ultimately leading to full-scale war.

Hirabayashi also associates the nature of fabrics with certain conditions. At the end of *Haru*, white voile cloth is a simile that describes the dazzling hazy view of the outside as seen from inside the café. Since voile is a plain, thin fabric, it does not cut off vision completely, but makes everything appear vague. Hirabayashi emphasizes this particular circumstance—vagueness and a blindfold—using this cloth. As the previous section analyzes, this statement refers to the ignorance and absent-mindedness of Japanese citizens to their nation's relentless pursuit of capitalism through imperialism.

⁴³⁸ Ôshima Eiko, "Ryôtaisenkan no joshirôdô: Bôseki seishi jokô chûshin ni," ed. Joseishi sôgô kenkyûkai, vol. 6 *Nihon joseishi* (Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 1982), 4-5.

Citizens see the life of their immediate surroundings and certainly not, to dire consequences, beyond national boundaries; while a nation of consumers gather at shop windows fascinated by new products, a veil hangs between them and lucrative and brutal overseas industrial exploitation.

Another example of simile using a textile appears at the end of the story, when Hirabayashi depicts the two *jokyū* playing a popular song on the phonograph, singing “*iyarashii shima no yōni*” (like a disgusting stripe-patterned textile).⁴³⁹ She uses *shima* (stripe) to portray the sound of their voices accompanied by the record. Since *shima* is a pattern of more than two colors of woven thread, it is a masterful use of textile to depict two disgusting characters meeting, conspiring, and merrily singing a popular song without knowing, meanwhile, that Ishida has already stolen his eggs back from them. Hirabayashi also depicts Ishida as a spider spinning a web, and emphasizes his excitement when he snares victims. Here, a blissful and oblivious woven stripe in a larger dirty pattern of thievery, the two *jokyū* fall prey to Ishida.

Hirabayashi uses different fabrics in association with social class to emphasize economic status and behavioral traits. The first example is the red muslin-woolen underwear that *jokyū* wear. Though it is already spring, they continue to wear the warm wool, unable to afford silk. Once they see the contractor is easy to handle, the two *jokyū* change their attitude. They become more blunt and bold, and in crossing their legs, do not mind showing their woolen underwear. This behavioral transformation foreshadows

⁴³⁹ Ibid., 188.

what is coming, preying on a customer. While the material betrays their financial status, the exposure of its color reflects their chameleon nature, overtly attractive but covertly cruel and dangerous like a demon.

Performing the morning chore of sweeping and mopping the dining hall, pink waistcloths revealed by rolled up *kimonos* are so faded that the color is almost white. Hirabayashi uses these flannel waistcloths, and the lack of makeup, to depict a different side of *jokyū* life. No longer showing any vestige of their nighttime appearance, these discolors reveal their status as unimportant worn-out figures of a daytime society.

The last group of textiles used emphasizes the artificial nature of characters. *Jokyū* wear a “buoyant and seductive *kimono*” in the café. Their *kimonos* glitter with *jinken*, an artificial silk. Unworthy of real silk, this again reveals their true status as investments. Moreover, the artificial shimmer of *jinken* reflects their entire predicament; their smooth-tongued and hospitable manner toward customers is not genuine but a manufactured decoy.

Niko niko kasuri also expose their artificiality. *Niko niko kasuri* (*kimonos* made from a splashy patterned cloth) is a cheap product popular in early to mid twentieth century Japan, originally produced for children’s *kimonos* without requiring the normal complicated dyeing process. When the wife of the contractor visits Café Ishida, she is wearing a dirty *niko niko kasuri*. Also worn by peddlers and the financially weak, the material fits her social status well. When Nihongami glimpses just the sleeve of this

patterned *kimono* as the wife enters the café, she jumps to the conclusion that it is a peddler. On the other hand, the very nature of this textile resonates with Nihongami's impressions of the wife. While the appearance and voice of the wife give an initial impression of timidity and nervousness, her voice grows somehow courageous and strong-minded, the *niko niko kasuri* superimposing childlike traits of innocence and powerlessness on her.

Overall, Hirabayashi's utilization of fabrics and textiles carries out multiple functions and compliments her usage of both simile and metaphor. Reference to particular fabrics and textiles with colors, conditions, and distinctive features familiarize and actualize circumstances, evoking tangible feelings in the reader.

d. Conclusion

In *Haru*, Hirabayashi objectively portrays the ugliness and mercilessness of exploited people trapped in the throes of capitalism, and points out how capitalism so easily merged with the persistent practice of patriarchy. In depicting relationships among the three types of people in the café—customer, *jokyû*, and boss—Hirabayashi exposes with dark humor the suffocation strangling their lives. The constant of preying on the weaker by squeezing life out of the weakest is pervasive throughout the story; the cook cheats the customer, the *jokyû* cheats the customer, and the boss cheats everyone. The result is a wholesale loss of compassion, and the ties of family and community (i.e. “society”) suffer most.

But Hirabayashi's point goes beyond portraying the harsh and dirty life of the exploited. Her most significant argument is that all of them are incapable of recognizing why society is fundamentally unsatisfying and how it warps and antagonizes their personalities. Everyone is a victim: amid the deafeningly cacophonous heartbeat of frantic imperialist national policy, even the innocent masses become driven wrongdoers. Hirabayashi describes how they can see bright and clear things like a tea tree or the young leaves of a poplar tree just in front of them, but how life beyond is a far horizon made hazy by a too-radiant sun. The seasons have become irrelevant: spring comes, but settling dust obscures and sterilizes as nature's own heartbeat fades to the background.

The palpable but dull sense of panic cultivated by nature's evaporating presence strongly reflects the severe myopia of the Japanese nation as a whole, becoming lighthearted by the momentary pleasure of gains and blind to the consequences of colonial aggression by its military government in neighboring countries. Hirabayashi criticizes not only the commodified and suppressed in Japanese society, but also the exploitation of all under imperialism, therein advocating true human liberation. Beneath the dust, for her, time will forever stand still for all victims of fascism in pursuit of capitalism. As if in defeat, the sun looks on powerless, the wind sighs, and life withers beneath, awaiting death.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Sata's experiences of polyrhythmic life with multiple transformations, coupled with her early engagement in literary creativity, nourished her talent and self-confidence as a writer. Hirabayashi's early keen observations of existing oppressing powers, her extensive readings and sense of urgency for social revolution, and her close relationship with the avant-garde art movement, empowered her as a writer.

Once established as writers, their mutual belief in the early principles of the proletarian literary movement—that working class people should write about their personal experiences and thus produce credible accounts of the conditions of the working class—led Sata and Hirabayashi to produce profound works centered on daily life. Writing became tremendously significant for both women in that they held agency over their materials and their ways of presenting them as authors, thus escaping objectification from the periphery.

Moreover, again arising from the early principles of the movement, their depictions of actual occurrences and genuine experiences offer comprehensive and visceral insights superior to those that could have been drawn from simply composing or adding to the ideological framework of the movement, e.g. the portrayal of a fictitious

superhero, heroic conducts, the stressing of class-consciousness, and/or an outright demand for revolutionary resolution.

By traversing these issues more extensively than an analysis centered on the dichotomized relations between capitalists and laborers under capitalism, the authors' examinations go beyond the conditions and exploitations of the working class to illuminate the unfair and unreasonable treatment of women even within the sociopolitical movement itself. Through their materializations they tangibly recount how both capitalism and ongoing patriarchy are the significant forces of oppression, and that both men and women are responsible for or complicit in prolonging these oppressive systems.

At the same time, the observations of Sata and Hirabayashi never overlook the resilient and active disposition of women as well as that of the working class. The oppressed seek various possible avenues to free themselves from existing systems and to re-inscribe their own choices and recover their agency. The works of both authors enumerate choices of action within the marginality of each *jokyû*—what kinds of exploration, experimentation, and resistance they undertook—and strongly indicate that conditions are not fixed and unchangeable, but flow with a potential for change.

All four stories this project analyzed portray the working life surrounding *jokyû*. Following the aforementioned principles of writing, Sata and Hirabayashi materialize the actual working experiences of *jokyû* at various cafés to provide multilayered, abundant,

and acute insights and observations, offering profound analyses of the various issues facing women and women workers.

The café and *jokyû* are carefully depicted with highly detailed observations from multiple perspectives, presenting both the café and its functional characters as one multidimensional entity. *Jokyû* are never portrayed as monolithic; indeed, as presented in this project's textual analyses, the stories unfold to reveal their multidimensional individuality within the naturally objective envelope of the physical sphere. Café waitress's relationships—between waitress and owner, waitress and waitress, waitress and non-waitress workers, waitress and customer, and waitress and family members, friends, and neighbors—are comprehensively covered, and so too the intimate influence of the café on these relationships. This palpably rich human web exposes the complexities of gender and sexual politics in the café, describes how sociopolitical and economic issues penetrate the café, and reveals how such complex issues affect the daily life of *jokyû*. Since the entire spectrum of the café constitutes the living space of *jokyû*, both writers expressively bring to life more than just an entertainment dining room and its customers and workers, as each succeeds in penetrating beyond façades into personal lives. The stories thereby unfold to reveal the inevitable and often unpleasant connectivity between the physical spaces of the café and the personal spaces of homes and feelings.

Sata and Hirabayashi depict the café as multidimensional and multifunctional, and as the best site to eyewitness the superficiality of Japanese modernity and the discrepancy between surface and actuality. The café is an intersection of discourses wherein the illusions and desires of the male customer and the living realities for *jokyû* collide. For the customer, the café is a physical space built to affirm his psychological desires for modernization and westernization. Affirmation of these desires in turn justifies the continued legitimacy of feudal and patriarchal authority, guaranteeing with that authority the financial power to “possess” the body of a waitress, objectified by the very existence of the café. For an owner, the café is a means to fulfill financial goals, and the body of the waitress is a necessary and expendable lure, an investment decoratively sexualized for profit. For *jokyû*, the café is a place of hope for realizing illusory dreams. Using given roles or roles they choose to create for their jobs, they perform to satisfy their illusory social status by becoming someone or something else. The consistent intrusion of aforementioned discourses in the café space—especially emphasizing a patriarch’s desires—supports the point of both Sata and Hirabayashi, that the café waitress is doubly oppressed under the capitalist and patriarchal systems of modern society.

Still, the café is also a site of exploration for *jokyû*. Amid their subordination and exploitation, they explore opportunities of overturning the dominant power hierarchy practiced in the café. While performing as expected, they also resist the constructed

gender expectations by talking back, acting too aggressively, even at times acting violently. Though such challenges ultimately fail and they fall back into conformation, at least the café provides the chance to entertain the notion of change.

Sata and Hirabayashi do not dismiss the function of the café on this point, delineating the café as a site of possibility, to meet new people, to gain new knowledge, and—as Sata found—to begin a new career. The café—as Hirabayashi discovered—also fosters friendly relationships with other women, new realizations and perspectives, and an awakening to a more suitable resolution.

Both Sata and Hirabayashi treat the café and *jokyū* as realistic and multifaceted as possible. To strengthen the realism, both authors also use actual verbal and non-verbal exchanges rather than superimpose their own interpretations. The specific language, expressions, metaphors, and gestures used in verbal and non-verbal exchanges to describe café conditions and circumstances in daily life often help Sata and Hirabayashi effectively delineate what the waitress senses and how they feel, i.e. how they act and react. Moreover, both writers rely extensively on their own corporeal experiences and sensations. This supports an honest illustration of power dynamics and the dual-system oppression of women at play within and beyond the café environment.

Sata and Hirabayashi acknowledge the body as a site of complication and possibility. One person may situate, control, and oppress a body through multiple inscriptions—social, cultural, sexual, and political—and for them the body is

unchangeable, passive, an inert site after its containment and domination. Another person may generate a difference, a new inscription that goes beyond restriction, and for them the body is a site of actualization and transformation. Through their acknowledgment beyond the surface inscriptions that restrict and limit who and what lies within, Sata and Hirabayashi contend that the body (“interiority” for Sata, and “the heart” for Hirabayashi) is effectively an interactive and potentially productive catalyst for change. For them, the corporeal experience is more effective for gaining consciousness, obtaining class-consciousness, and eventually achieving ideological resolution than through doctrinal readings and teachings. The body of *jokyū* is no exception, and in applying and highlighting their own corporeal experiences, both writers bring to life what really occurs.

This project challenged evaluations from within fixed literary categories. Such interpretations overlooked a significant dynamic within the works of Sata Ineko and Hirabayashi Taiko. Conducting further inquiry expanding the parameters, from the limits of their particular political affiliations to their specific stances on Marxist ideology as well as on the principles of the proletarian literary movement promises even greater insights. Automatic superficial interpretations based on dichotomously opposed characteristics—e.g. man and woman, logic and passion, sense and sensibility, mechanism and vitalism—obviously stratify one above another but also promptly devalue the interpretation itself in a secondary yet more harmful effect. An understanding of the

application of corporeal experiences is indispensable to a definitive historical and socio-cultural investigation.

While establishing a more holistic understanding of Sata Ineko and Hirabayashi Taiko, resulting in an unbiased advance appropriate for this significant field, this project investigated only sections of the lifelong careers of these two women writers. The nature of this investigation of four works will hopefully serve to produce an unrestricted new approach to, and a thrilling new appreciation for, their many other works.

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