

CHAOS FROM ORDER: ANARCHY AND ANARCHISM IN MODERN
JAPANESE FICTION, 1900-1930

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

Stephen Filler, M.A.

The Ohio State University

2004

Dissertation Committee:

Professor Richard Torrance, Adviser

Professor William Tyler

Professor Shelley Quinn

Approved by

Adviser

Department of East Asian
Languages and Literatures

ABSTRACT

Anarchism was an important social and political movement in prewar Japan, promoted by Kôtoku Shûsui in the first decade of the 20th century and developed into a rich political and artistic philosophy by Ôsugi Sakae in the 1910s. Japanese anarchists saw industrial capitalism as the cause of intolerable conditions suffered by the working class, and sought the destruction of the capitalist system and of all external government, championing individualistic rebellion as the vehicle of revolution. Literary anarchism flourished during this same period in the form of essays, fiction, and poetry written by self-styled anarchists to promote the political philosophy of anarchism and to attempt to capture contemporary realities and promote revolutionary action.

This dissertation explores selected works of fiction by anarchists in order to trace the development of an anarchistic style. Chapter One identifies the main elements of literary anarchism as consisting of: 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. Journalistic realism is shown to be derived from newspaper exposés of the living conditions of the underclass which were written from the 1880s onward, and the artistic portrayal of “vitalism” is shown to be

influenced by early Japanese naturalistic fiction. The fiction of Kunikida Doppo applied the journalistic style to his portrayals of the lives of the poor, while the fiction of Tayama Katai and Shimazaki Tôson extensively developed the themes of vitalism and nihilism.

Chapter Two discusses the creation of a truly anarchist literature through Ôsugi Sakae's formulation of an anarchistic artistic philosophy, which was put into practice by his colleagues such as Miyajima Sukeo. Miyajima and others welded the elements of journalism and Japanese naturalism to a firmly anarchist political stance, creating a dramatic new form of revolutionary literature.

Chapter Three discusses the development as well as the decline of anarchist literature through the late 1920s. Two important "proletarian" writers with heavily anarchist sympathies, Hirabayashi Taiko and Yamakawa Ryô, utilized realistic prose and anarchistic themes to deal with the conflicts which attended their lives as members of the anarchist and socialist movements. Hirabayashi, in particular, criticized the misogyny endemic to the allegedly egalitarian anarchist movement, while Yamakawa sought to retain individualism in the face of a Marxist dogmatism which demanded that the individual and art be subordinated to the purposes of the movement. Chapter Three also discusses the flourishing of anarchist avant-garde poetry by such writers as Hagiwara Kyôjirô and Ono Tôzaburô. Such poetry gave anarchist radicalism its most dramatic and original expression, but also revealed the fragmentation and decline of anarchism as a political movement due to internal conflicts and external persecution by the government.

Dedicated to my mother, Sheila Filler
And to the memory of my father, Louis Filler

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank my adviser, Richard Torrance, who initially suggested this topic and has provided support, guidance, and advice all along.

I thank William Tyler for helping me to learn to handle Japanese texts and for guiding my exploration of the relationship between politics and literature. I also thank Shelley Quinn for her insights on the performative nature of literature.

Much of the research for this dissertation was conducted under grants from the Japan Foundation for my research at Ryûkoku University, Kyoto, from June to September 2001, and from the Monbukagakushô for my research at Osaka University, from October 2001 to April 2003. I thank all the individuals involved in making this research possible.

I thank Mari Noda, Galal Walker, Charles Quinn, James Unger, and Mineharu Nakayama for their guidance. My appreciation goes to Philip Brown for his comments on the manuscript. I am grateful for the friendship of my fellow graduate students, especially Michael Tangeman. I also thank Scott Langton, Minae Savas, and Jeffrey Angles. I thank Debbie Knicely for all her assistance and advice over the years.

I thank Izuhara Toshitaka at Osaka University for his advice on Japanese naturalism and his valuable seminars. I thank Akihiko Kitano for introducing me to essential materials, and Tsuneo Kitagawa for his assistance in finding a university sponsor. I thank Horikiri Toshitaka, Ôwada Shigeru, Sofue Shôji,

Matsuzawa Shinsuke, Shimura Masashi, and everyone at the Research Center for Early Japanese Socialism. I thank Araki Den and Suzuki Sadami for advice and materials. I thank Saitô Masao for his advice and assistance. I thank Murata Michiyo, Araki Kôji, Takayama Hiroko, Matsudaira Yôko, Watanabe Aiko and family, the Kamitanis, Morita Seiichi, Muranaka Hirohiko, Nonkichi, Nakai Tarô, Tanaka Hikaru, Arimatsu Yukiharu, the Board of Education at Ando-chô (Nara Prefecture), Yamada Kazuko, Neil Garscadden, Lee Cohen, and Heather Jim. I thank Suzanne Gay, Ann Sherif, Amy Redden, and my other colleagues at Oberlin College. I thank Amy Christiansen for her mentorship and professional advice.

All-around thanks and love to my mother, Abby, Nell, Jonathan, Jude, and Jem.

Finally, I thank Helena for her love and support for the duration of this project.

VITA

- 1966.....Born – Holyoke, Massachusetts
- 1997.....M.A. Japanese Literature,
The Ohio State University
- 2001.....Dissertation Research Fellow,
The Japan Foundation,
Ryūkyoku University, Kyoto
- 2001-2003.....Research Fellow,
Monbukagakusho,
Osaka University
- 2003-2004.....Visiting Instructor of Japanese,
Oberlin College

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: East Asian Languages and Literatures

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	v
Vita.....	vii
Introduction: Political anarchism and literary anarchism.....	1
Chapters:	
1. The emergence of anarchist tendencies in socialist and naturalist fiction (1902-1911).....	25
2. The flowering of political anarchism and anarchist theory (1911- 1923).....	80
3. Proletarian literature, nihilism, and avant-garde poetry: the flourishing and fragmentation of anarchist literature.....	144
Conclusion.....	214
Bibliography.....	223

INTRODUCTION
POLITICAL ANARCHISM AND LITERARY ANARCHISM

Literary anarchism

This study aims to identify and describe the elements of literary anarchism in modern Japanese literature through a discussion of representative literary works of prose. The time period covered is from the turn of the 20th century to approximately 1930, a period of time which saw the rise of anarchism in Japan and its development into a variety of anarchist and anarchist-related movements. Anarchist movements have continued in Japan to the present day, but the governmental suppression of radical political movements in the mid-1930s put an effective end to prewar anarchism.

Anarchism came to Japan in the early 20th century as a radical political philosophy which, like communism, sought to overthrow the existing capitalist system, which was seen as the cause of intolerable suffering by the working masses. Rendered in Japanese as museifu shugi or anakizumu, anarchism, in the words of historian Peter Marshall, “rejects all forms of external government and the State and believes that society and individuals would function well without them.”¹

¹ Peter Marshall, Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism (London: HarperCollins, 1993) xiii.

Literary anarchism is described in standard literary sources like the Nihon Kindai bungaku daijiten² as consisting of definable groups, literary journals, schools, and manifestos, as well as a cluster of themes and imagery which reflect the values and agendas of self-described “anarchists.” More narrowly, “anarchist literature” (anakizumu bungaku) refers to the texts produced by these anarchists. Since anarchism was a significant political and social force in Japan, the focus of this study is to clarify the ideas, literary works and writers that have been identified as anarchistic and to demonstrate the influence that these writers had on the contemporary and present day social and political milieu in Japan.

Terminology

A discussion of literary anarchism requires the use of a number of terms relating to anarchism and socialism which often overlap with each other and which elude categorical definition. Most of these terms were directly derived from European words, usually in the form of Sino-Japanese compound “translations” (e.g., shakai shugi, “socialism”). In some cases, phonetic borrowings were used (e.g., borusheviki, “Bolshevik”). In this study I will use these terms primarily to make distinctions relevant to a discussion of literature. To this end, I will not attempt rigorous political-philosophical definitions, but will instead proceed from the usages given by Japanese literary writers themselves or by historians of Japanese anarchist literature.

² Nihon kindai bungaku daijiten, vol. 4 (Tokyo: Kôdansha, 1977) 6-7.

Socialism (shakai shugi) was a term used in Japan from the early Meiji period (1868-1912),³ but the socialist movement in Japan took hold following the Japanese victory in the 1894-5 Sino-Japanese war, in a movement led by such figures as Katayama Sen (1859-1933), who had studied at Yale University and went on to become a leading labor activist. One of the earliest organizations with the word socialist in its name was the Socialism Research Association (Shakai shugi kenkyûkai), formed by Katayama and others in 1898; originally including non-socialists for “research,” it became a pro-socialist, activist group in 1900.⁴ Kôtoku Shûsui, another early socialist activist who went on to become an anarchist, described the tenets of socialism in his Shakai shugi shinzui (The essence of socialism; 1903)⁵ as follows, drawing his definition from Richard Ely’s Socialism and Social Reform⁶: (1) the common ownership of land and capital; (2) the common management of production; (3) the socialized distribution of income; (4) the redistribution of the majority of social revenue to individuals (as opposed to the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few).

Socialism was, in essence, a program for radical social and economic reform based on the above principles and assuming a wide variety of forms. In Japan, as in Europe, socialist movements could involve parliamentary reform or violent revolution and could be religious or atheist in inspiration. Following closely on the heels of the socialist movement was socialist literature (shakai shugi bungaku), which consisted of essays, poems, lyrics, fiction, autobiography,

³ “Shakai shugi undô,” Nihonshi jiten (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1995) 454.

⁴ Katayama Sen, Shakai shugi undô shôshi (Tokyo: Shakai Shugi Kyôkai, 1979) 14.

⁵ Kôtoku Shûsui, Shakai shugi shinzui (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1953) 31-41.

⁶ Published in New York, 1894. Cited in F. G. Notehelfer, Kôtoku Shûsui: Portrait of a Japanese Radical (Cambridge, UK; Cambridge University Press, 1971) 214.

and other genres of literature written by people who identified themselves as “socialists” (shakai shugisha). Standard Japanese literary collections which devote volumes to socialist literature include works written between about 1899 and 1922.⁷ Some of the works discussed in this study have been classified broadly classified as “socialist literature,” while being recognized as “anarchist” by scholars more attuned to the subtleties and political distinctions of early socialist and radical literature.

Anarchism is a radical political philosophy which eludes simple definition; at its core is a denial of government and other external authority, as I have stated above. Anarchism is rendered in Japanese as museifu shugi, a Sino-Japanese compound whose meaning of “no government-ism” is quite transparent in Japanese. It is also rendered phonetically as anakizumu or, occasionally, anâkizumu. In practice, the former term is used more for explanatory purposes, while the latter term has more connotations of particular, historically situated movements, and is more productive as a modifier. “Anarchist literature” is rendered as anakizumu bungaku, “literature of anarchism,” while anakisuto (anarchist) refers to a person. Akiyama Kiyoshi, the anarchist poet and historian of anarchist literature, distinguishes between anakizumu bungaku (literature of anarchism) and anakisuto no bungaku (literature written by anarchists). The term anakisuchikku (anarchistic) is also found. The term anakizumu was increasingly used in the 1920s by groups who wished to distinguish their creed from communism or Marxism, a phenomenon captured in the term ana-boru ronsô, “anarchist-Bolshevik dispute.”

⁷ For example, Kindai shakai shugi bungakushû, Nihon kindai bungaku taikei Vol 51 (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1972).

Socialism and anarchism: While anarchism is not the same as socialism, in practice the two movements have historically been closely linked. This connection may not be immediately apparent to the contemporary reader, who is likely to associate socialism either with 20th century democratic socialism of the European variety, or with communism. Both of these incarnations of socialism rely on the power of a centralized state, something rejected by anarchists. However, since many anarchists accept socialist aims such as the common ownership of the tools of production (as elaborated by Kôtoku Shûsui above), anarchism can be quite compatible with socialism, provided that the hoped-for socialist society is seen as attainable through non-governmental, voluntary means. In such a case, anarchism then appears as a set of values which inform socialism, or even as a type of socialism. Many anarchists have considered themselves to be socialists: the French anarchist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1808-1965), for example, referred to himself as such in a letter to Karl Marx in 1846.⁸ Similarly, when Ôsugi Sakae (1885-1923), Japan's most famous anarchist, calls for the reform of "socialism" through a greater attention to individualism in the essay "Sei no sôzô" (The creativity of life, January 1914),⁹ he clearly considers his own work to be in the realm of that same "socialism." Elsewhere, Ôsugi treats anarchism as a kind of revision or reform of socialism, explaining that "Socialism arose from the harms of individualism. Anarchism, in turn, working from the flaws of socialism, synthesized the individualist spirit with the strengths of

⁸ George Woodcock, Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements, 2nd ed. (London: Penguin Books, 1986) 101.

⁹ Ôsugi Sakae, Ôsugi Sakae zenshû, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Gendai Shichôsha, 1964) 53-62.

anarchism.”¹⁰ This definition of anarchism is not one that would be universally accepted, and Ôsugi is writing rhetorically in response to an unsympathetic critic, but it expresses effectively the relationship between anarchism and socialism.

It is in this context that this study will frequently use the terms “socialism,” “socialist” and “socialist literature” to refer in general to political ideas and movements which are engaged in by anarchists. This is done in order to reflect the common use of the word “socialism” in the discourse of anarchist writers. Until the early 1920s, and in many cases beyond, anarchistic writers considered themselves to be part of a larger “socialist” movement, and in many of their writings the word “anarchism” cannot be found. This may have been partly to avoid attracting the attention of police censors, but it was also because anarchism had not yet established its stance of strong opposition to other elements in the socialist movement. For convenience, I use the term “anarchistic socialism” to refer to the “socialism” of writers who had strong anarchistic tendencies. The term “anarchistic” is also used to identify discourse containing a strong anarchistic element without necessarily being purely and unabashedly anarchist. For instance, in one story by Hirabayashi Taiko, discussed in Chapter Three, the protagonist fantasizes about giving birth to a “little Bolshevik girl,” but the story as a whole is arguably more anarchistic than “Bolshevik.” The term “anarchistic” is also used by present-day Japanese scholars and again follows the

¹⁰ Ôsugi Sakae, “Museifu shugi no shudan wa hatashite hikagakuteki ka,” Asukai Masao, ed., Ôsugi Sakae hyôronshû (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1996) 289.

precedent of Ôsugi Sakae himself, who describes his colleague Miyajima Sukeo's (1884-1951) philosophy and feelings using the English term (anakisuchikku).¹¹

Varieties of anarchism: Thomas Stanley, in his study of Ôsugi Sakae, describes anarchism as developing out of classical liberalism, and emphasizes the importance to most anarchists of the individual and his full development.¹² Stanley notes that the emphasis on the individual varies greatly, with individualist anarchists seeing "men living as hermits in nearly complete isolation" and anarcho-syndicalists "envision[ing] men living in voluntary, highly complex, and constantly changing social organizations."¹³ These two terms are not necessarily diametrically opposed, however, as Stanley himself shows in the case of Ôsugi, who was both an individualist anarchist and an anarcho-syndicalist. Individualist anarchism is more usefully defined as anarchism which celebrates individual freedom and the development of the ego. For Ôsugi and other anarchists, the development of the self or ego needed to occur through an individual's growth and conflict within society. In a Japanese context, individualist anarchism was influenced by the writers like Max Stirner. The essays and fiction of the sometime Dadaist Tsuji Jun (1884-1944) are heavily influenced by this current of individualistic anarchism.

Anarcho-syndicalism (anaruko-sanjikirizumu) is an anarchist version of syndicalism.¹⁴ While the term syndicalism refers broadly to labor activism which focuses on the (localized) labor union or trade syndicate as the organ for

¹¹ Ôsugi Sakae zenshû, vol. 5, 267.

¹² Thomas A. Stanley, Ôsugi Sakae: Anarchist in Taishô Japan (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982) 57-8.

¹³ Stanley, 57-8.

¹⁴ "Anaruko sanjikirizumu," "Sanjikirizumu," Nihonshi jiten (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1995) 27, 418.

improving the living conditions of workers, anarcho-syndicalism sees the union as a tool for anarchist revolution. As John Crump, a scholar of Japanese socialism and anarchism, puts it in his important study of “pure anarchism” theorist Hatta Shûzô (1886-1934), in anarcho-syndicalism

unions became the means of social revolution. In fact, even this formulation understates the importance attributed by anarchist syndicalists to the labour unions, since they believed that not only were the unions destined to carry out the revolution, but they would also provide the framework for administering the new society of the future. It was this set of linked propositions which lay behind the oft-repeated assertion made by anarchist syndicalists that, in organising labour unions, they were constructing the core of a new society within the shell of the society they sought to replace.¹⁵

Anarcho-syndicalism seeks to achieve its goals through “direct action.” “Direct action” refers to working outside the capitalist system to achieve anarchist goals. It can connote violence and terrorism, but it was seen by the first major Japanese anarchist, Kôtoku Shûsui (1871-1911), as best embodied in the tactic of the general strike.¹⁶

Anarchist communism is defined by John Crump as “a revolutionary theory and practice which seeks to establish, by means which from the outset transcend the state, a society where individual freedom is reinforced by communal solidarity and mutual aid.”¹⁷ Anarchist communism was the creed of the so-called pure anarchism movement in Japan. While not necessarily incompatible with syndicalism, in practice it tended to come into conflict with

¹⁵ John Crump, Hatta Shûzô and Pure Anarchism in Interwar Japan (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1993) 11.

¹⁶ F. G. Notehelfer, Kôtoku Shûsui: Portrait of a Japanese Radical (Cambridge, UK; Cambridge University Press, 1971) 135-6.

¹⁷ Crump, 1.

anarcho-syndicalism in late 19th century Europe and in Japan in the late 1920s and early 1930s. “Pure anarchists” like Hatta Shûzô rejected anarcho-syndicalism on the grounds that in accepting the basic structures of industrial capitalism such as division of labor and a reformist labor union movement, it was doomed to replicate capitalist power structures.

The proletarian literary arts movement: following the Russian Revolution of 1917, the movement to create a literary arts movement consciously intended to serve a revolution of the “proletarian” class, that is, the class of propertyless industrial workers, picked up speed and became a major literary movement in the 1920s. The term proletarian literature refers to literature created as part of this movement. Since the proletarian literary movement came to be dominated by Marxists, “proletarian literature” is often understood as being synonymous with “Marxist literature,” but many anarchist writers also considered themselves to be part of the proletarian movement and used its terms such as “class,” “class consciousness,” “proletariat,” “capitalist,” and “bourgeois” in their literary rhetoric. The proletarian writers discussed in this study are either anarchists or show strong anarchistic tendencies.

“The chain factory”: literary anarchism

Ôsugi Sakae provides a penetrating projection of the anarchist impulse in a short piece of fiction entitled “Kusari kôjô” (“The chain factory”; in Kindai shisô, 1913). The narrator dreams that he finds himself in a “strange place.”

A fellow right next to me took a long, extended chain, wrapped it once around his body, and passed the end to the person next to him. The person next to him extended the chain further, wrapped it around his body, and passed the end to yet the next

person. While this was happening, the first fellow received a chain from the person next to him, and as before stretched it out, wrapped it once around his body, and passed the end to the fellow on the other side of him. All repeated the same action over and over - and this took place at a dizzying speed.¹⁸

Some of the chain-makers try to revolt, but are quickly suppressed by club-wielding workers, also wrapped in chains. The narrator sees a man philosophizing that “Chains are sacred things which protect us and make us free,” and a cigar-smoking factory owner who reclines on a couch and blows cigar smoke on the workers. The narrator realizes that he, too, is wrapped in chains, and thinks of Hegel’s words, “Everything real accords with reason, and everything that accords with reason is real.” He notes that through such words German philosophers supported the authoritarian Prussian government. He begins breaking his chains, but realizes some cannot be broken without help from others. Looking at the workers around him, he sees that many are content with their slavery or believe themselves free. Others put trust in peaceful negotiation and in voting for a representative to talk with the owner. The narrator decries the fatalist “panlogistics” (he uses the English word), among whom he includes himself. Losing faith in the masses, he decides for the few who understand the nature of their oppression, the time to fight is now. “Struggle is training for one’s personal power (Sentô wa jiga no nôryoku no enshû de aru),” he says, and “This struggle leads to the birth of a new power within our common lives, and brings about the budding of the new factory

¹⁸ Ôsugi Sakae, “Kusari kôjô,” Ôsugi Sakae zenshû, vol. 2, 37.

which we are trying to build.”¹⁹ The narrator realizes that he has had enough of theorizing (rikutsu), break his chains, and stands.

This piece by Ôsugi is an excellent summary of his anarchistic political philosophy. He views modern capitalist society as founded upon systematic oppression and exploitation conducted by a ruling elite, and envisions a mass revolt against this oppressing class. He also rejects liberal ideologies, which he sees as deceptive and serving ultimately to preserve the existing power structures. Furthermore, he sees such a revolution not as inevitable but as proceeding from the will and imagination of individuals. With his deep anti-authoritarianism, he firmly rejects the idea of replacing oppressive structures with other systems of hierarchical power, demanding instead a radically democratic society in which all transactions are voluntary.

“Kusari kôjô” can certainly be described as a piece of anarchist literature, based on the explicit political philosophy it expresses and on the anarchistic lineage of its author. However, it is not the first piece of Japanese fiction to articulate these ideas. Literary anarchism drew from established literary and journalistic genres, reshaping them to articulate its particular worldview.

Structure of this study

As I will demonstrate in Chapter One, the impulse to expose the exploitation of the working class existed in a political and journalistic sense from the 1880s, in the works of writers like Matsubara Iwagorô, Yokoyama Gennosuke, Morita Bunzô, and Sugimura Sojinkan.

¹⁹ Ôsugi Sakae, “Kusari kôjô,” 45.

Japanese anarchist writers also showed a strong tendency to reify concepts like life, nature and conquest, linking images of nature and sexuality to political protest. Their works tended to feature sympathetic, even celebratory portrayals of nihilistic violence as a form of resistance to oppression. As I will also show in Chapter One, in these tendencies they were obviously influenced by early naturalist writers, which I will demonstrate by a discussion of short stories by Kunikida Doppo, Tayama Katai, and Shimazaki Tôson.

Chapter Two will deal with Ôsugi's anarchist ideas and their realization in literary works by members of his circle of activists and writers. Ôsugi's achievement was to articulate an anarchistic personal and political philosophy, drawing from his extensive readings of philosophers such as Nietzsche and Henri Bergson, and on anarchist writers such as Peter Kropotkin and Errico Malatesta. Ôsugi's individualistic egoism is expressed in "Kusari kôjô" in its reference to personal development – literally, development of the self or ego (jiga) – and to developing a new "power" (chikara) in one's life. Here, "power" refers not to political power as such but to the development and expansion of a transcendental, almost mystical life force, celebrated in what the scholar of anarchist literature, Moriyama Shigeo, called the "philosophy of life" (sei no tetsugaku).²⁰ In addition, I will describe fictional works by Arahata Kanson (1887-1981) and Miyajima Sukeo (1886-1951), Miyajima's colleagues in the anarchist movement, who articulated Ôsugi's anarchist philosophy in works of prose fiction. Miyajima Sukeo's novel Kôfu (The miner; 1916) emerges as the main work in which this anarcho-literary tradition is realized.

²⁰ Nihon kindai bungaku daijiten, vol. 4, 6.

In Chapter Three, I explore the early fiction of two writers of “proletarian fiction,” Hirabayashi Taiko (1905-1971), and Yamakawa Ryô (1887-1957), who “came of age” in the socialist movement as anarchists in the early 1920s. By this time, anarchism was established as a distinct political philosophy with a clear antagonism to Marxism. At a cultural level, anarchism was associated with a nihilistic, impoverished lifestyle. Anarchistic writers of the 1920s continued to develop the themes and motifs articulated by Ôsugi Sakae. They differed from earlier anarchistic writers in that by the mid 1920s, the proletarian literary movement was deeply involved in its attempts to unite with actual labor activism. These works thus show an increasing sophistication in their understanding of the problems of organizing labor, and of the contradictions involved in being, on the one hand, an intellectual or artist, and on the other, trying to achieve an authentic communion with the proletarian class. The imagery affirming the expansion of life and celebrating violence and chaos becomes more subdued, but remains an essential component of such literature.

Hirabayashi and Yamakawa did not affiliate exclusively with anarchism, and in the late 1920s were active in Marxist literary groups, but their fiction shows a clear continuation of the fictional idiom created by Ôsugi’s group. For Hirabayashi and Yamakawa, anarchism would be invoked in criticism of authoritarianism and uniformity within the socialist movement – calling for a return to emphasis on the individual and decrying dogmatism.

Chapter Three focuses primarily on the work of anarchistic essayists and novelists who accepted the basic role of the proletarian artist as one who analyzed society, raised class-consciousness, and promoted revolution through

prose writing. These writers may have been uncomfortable with organized political movements, but they did not reject them entirely, and they combined their writing with actual political activity concerning unionization and other attempts to revolutionize the labor movement. In other words, I deal with the more “assimilated” and constructive stream of literary anarchism, one with obvious connections to previous literary traditions and to the larger socialist and proletarian literary movements.

In Chapter Three I also discuss the more radical direction taken by anarchist literature in the mid and late 1920s. While writers like Hirabayashi Taiko used an established realistic literary style, one which drew from naturalism and reportage, to produce an anarchistic stream of “proletarian” fiction, other writers sought to realize the destructive, nihilistic mission of anarchism to the maximum possible extent in their literary works. Previously, anarchists had worked together in a “common front” (kyôdô sensen) with Marxists to bring about revolution. Now, rejecting the Marxist proletarian movement for its authoritarianism and reduction of literature to a political tool, anarchists devoted themselves to the project of destroying the old society in order to pave way for a new one. On a political level, this could mean the pursuit of violence – political assassination or simple brawling with rival factions. In the literary world, anarchists focused on the destruction of pre-existing literary forms through radical experiments with language and form, drawing inspiration from Dadaism and other modernist movements.

In Chapter Three I discuss several works representative of this direction taken by literary anarchism. In the poems of Hagiwara Kyôjirô and Ono

Tôzaburô, the themes of destruction, freedom, and rebirth are explored in poems which make use of visual experimentation, fragmented, disjointed imagery, and motifs of violence, destruction, and a complete break with the past. In a story by Katô Kazuo, an anarchist finds his final liberation in death in battle. Finally, a polemical piece by Nii Itaru in 1930 shows the persistence of a theoretical anarchist movement opposing Marxism.

Japanese anarchism and anarchist literature

A brief overview of Japanese anarchism and Japanese anarchist literature is needed to situate this study and to show what it covers and what it omits.

A tradition of anarchistic thought existed in premodern Japan; one example is found in the life and writing of Andô Shôeki (1703-1762), who called for a form of radically egalitarian, agrarian communism.²¹ However, modern Japanese anarchism was essentially an imported ideology, or as Moriyama Shigeo calls it, a “literal translation.” Anarchism first became known in Japanese political discourse during the 1880s, and was associated with the Russian narodnik movement, which utilized organized terrorism to foment a peasant revolution.²² This inspired the formation of Tarui Tôkichi’s Oriental Social Party (Tôyô shakai tô), which tried to mobilize farmers and which opposed the imperial institution; his movement was quickly suppressed. Tarui’s legacy to modern Japanese anarchism may have been in starting the practice of extorting money from the wealthy to finance political activities.

²¹ Ôsawa Masamichi, Anakizumu shisôshi (Tokyo: Gendai Shisôsha, 1963) 64-68.

²² The general outline of anarchist history presented here follows Ôsawa 199-240.

In 1902, Kemuyama Sentarô published a pamphlet entitled “Kinsei museifushugi” (“Contemporary anarchism”), which described the anarchistic movement inspired by Michael Bakunin, one which affirmed (for all practical purposes) the use of terrorism.

Kôtoku Shûsui was the first real popularizer of Japanese anarchism. Shûsui had originally written pamphlets summarizing the ideas of European socialists, most notably his Shakai shugi shunzui (The essence of socialism, 1903), and famously and with little support from other socialists opposed the Russo-Japanese war, leaving the newspaper Yorozu Chôhō in 1904 to form the socialist Heimin Shinbun (Commoner’s news) with Kinoshita Naoe. In 1906, Shûsui, having just returned from a stay in San Francisco where he met Russian anarchists in exile, gave a speech entitled “Sekai kakumei undô no chôryû” (“The trends in world revolutionary movements”), in which he first advocated the policy of “direct action” – referring primarily to the method of a general strike – to achieve a socialist revolution. Shûsui here repudiated the idea of achieving socialism through participation in electoral politics, which was seen by anarchists as a way of preserving the existing power structure by removing the genuine revolutionary threat posed by the laboring class. The following year, Shûsui published an article entitled “Waga shisô no henka” (“The change in my philosophy”) in which he further articulated his Kropotkinian anarchism.

During this period, anarchism was one of many streams of political thought which together constituted Japanese socialism, but it was the anarchist willingness to advocate violent acts to bring about revolution that most alarmed government authorities about socialism. Shûsui was executed along with 11

other anarchists in the Taigyaku jiken, or Great Treason Incident, of 1910-11. A mass trial of socialists and anarchists centered on a plot to assassinate the emperor in which Shûsui's lover, fellow anarchist and writer Kanno Suga, was involved; Shûsui seems not to have known about the plot.

Shûsui's successor in the anarchist movement was Ôsugi Sakae, who formed his own version of Kropotkin-style anarcho-syndicalism and who was the first original literary voice of Japanese anarchism, writing provocative essays in idiomatic Japanese with a dynamic, personal, and sometimes shocking style. This style can be contrasted clearly to Shûsui's pedantic prose, written in the traditional masculine kanbun essay style which made use of the vocabulary and structures from classical Chinese. Ôsugi's Kindai shisô (Modern thought) and later Heimin shinbun (which revived the name of Shûsui's publication) were the voices of the anarcho-syndicalist movement of the 1910s, and, partly due to censorship, had a strong literary and philosophical bent. The novels and essays written by anarchist and anarchistic writers during this period are one of the key subjects of this study.

Anarchism began its political decline after the Kanto earthquake of 1923 and Ôsugi's murder by police in what appears to have been an isolated act of military violence. Japanese socialism took a clear turn towards Marxism-Leninism following the Russian Revolution, and the proletarian literary movement, which had had a heavy anarchist component, began to be dominated by Marxist literary theory. Marxist literary theorists like Nakano Shigeharu, who demanded that fiction and poetry above all fulfill the function of instilling revolutionary "class-consciousness" in the proletarian class.

While losing its dominant position in socialist discourse, the anarchist movement continued to thrive during the 1920s in a fragmented, though widely dispersed, form. In terms of leftwing proletarian art and literature, writers with anarchist tendencies were active in the Worker Peasant Arts League (Rônô geijutsuka renmei), which took a less dogmatically Marxist, though not explicitly anarchist, position. The organ of this group was the journal Bungei sensen.

At the same time, many anarchist writers removed themselves from the proletarian movement entirely, abandoning affiliation with political groups or the labor movement and seeking their liberation in radical artistic creation. Such writers were inspired by art movements like Dadaism and while they retained the anarchist goal of completely destroying the old order to replace it with a new, utopian world, they sought to achieve this revolution through the destruction of old artistic categories. This manifestation of the anarchist literary movement found its expression primarily in poetry. Journals such as Aka to kuro (Red and black; 1923-4), Damudamu (Dum-dum; 1924), and Dandô (Line of fire; 1930) featured poets like Hagiwara Kyôjirô, Itô Shinkichi, and Okamoto Jun. In their manifestos which spoke of poetry as “a bomb” and called for revolution, and in the poetry itself, which used fragmented, violent imagery and sometimes visual sculpture in the Dadaist vein, these writers were even more profoundly anarchistic than the writers I discuss in this study.

Important anarchist and proletarian publications

Major publications dealing with anarchist literature which are referred to frequently in this study are referred to as follows.

Kindai shisô

Ôsugi Sakae's (1885-1923) and Arahata Kanson's (1887-1981) Kindai shisô, a literary and intellectual journal published from 1912 to 1914, was an important vehicle for anarchist literature and literary theory. In the aftermath of the crackdown on socialism which followed the Great Treason Trial of 1910 and the execution of Kôtoku Shûsui, Kanno Suga, and others in 1911, Kindai shisô was conceived of as a compromise, a journal which promoted anarcho-socialist thought while avoiding censorship by focusing on abstract discussions of social issues and literary works. Ôsugi provided guidance and inspiration for the anarchist literary movement with his writings on the literary arts, which consisted of summaries and reviews of works by writers from Japan and abroad. Most importantly, his pieces articulating an anarchistic philosophy which celebrated individual growth and rebellion as the prime value. Kindai shisô featured fiction and essays by Kanson and by Sakai Toshihiko (1870-1933), an older mentor from the days of the socialist newspaper Heimin Shinbun (published 1903-05 and 1907-8). Other members of the Kindai shisô group included Kamitsukasa Shôken, Yasunari Sadao, and the poet Toki Aiga. The journal was discontinued in 1914 when Ôsugi and Kanson decided to devote their energy once again to direct political action.

Ôsugi published other journals following the discontinuation of Kindai shisô, but was heavily hampered by censorship. In 1921 he published Rôdô undô (The labor movement) with Kondô Kenji, in which he promoted anarcho-syndicalism.

Tane maku hito, Bungei sensen

Tane maku hito (The sower) and its successor, Bungei sensen (Literary arts front), were the first major organs of proletarian literature. They had a strong Marxist element from the start, and Bungei sensen expelled its anarchist members in 1926, but prior to this they had many anarchist contributors. After 1926, Bungei sensen represented a stream of Marxist literature which remained reluctant to allow political ideology to dictate the form and content of literary work. Works published in Bungei sensen, as a result, continued to display anarchistic influences, even if anarchism as an ideology was denied.

Tane maku hito was a literary magazine published between 1922 and 1924 by a coterie led by Komaki Ômi which included Kaneko Yôbun, Imano Kenzô, and Yamakawa Ryô. Tane maku hito was originally published in Tsuchizaki town in Akita prefecture, the prefecture which most of the founding members hailed. After a three issue run publication of the journal was ceased due to the inability of its members to raise the 500-yen bond required by the “Newspaper Law” for publishing articles dealing with political issues.²³ Publication was soon resumed in the form of a Tokyo edition and continued until the Kanto Earthquake forced it to cease publication, save for a final “post-earthquake” number.

Tane maku hito reflected the influence of the growing Marxist-Leninist movement with its support of the Soviet Union and the Third International. The Third International, also known as Comintern, in 1920 had held its Second Congress in the Soviet Union, attended by revolutionaries all over the world who

²³ G. T. Shea, Leftwing Literature in Japan (Tokyo: Hôsei University Press, 1964), 73.

were prepared to break with moderate socialism and follow the revolutionary program of the Russian Bolsheviks.²⁴ Komaki himself had studied law in France, where he had taken part in the pro-Soviet Clarté movement organized by Henri Barbusse, Anatole France, and others. Barbusse contributed articles to Tane maku hito.

However, the ideological stance of the pieces published in the journal was diverse, and contributors included the liberal democratic journalist Hasegawa Nyozeikan as well as the humanist Arishima Takeo. One of the members of Tane maku hito, Yamakawa Ryô, whose fiction will be discussed in Chapter Three, expressed an uncompromisingly anarchist stance in his early pieces for the journal.

The literary journal Bungei Sensen was published between 1925 and 1930, and continued as Bunsen for two more years. It was the direct descendent of Tane maku hito, founded by the original members of the Tane maku group, minus a few members, including Yamakawa, who had been accused, almost certainly without basis, of being a spy.²⁵ In the same year as its formation, the members of Bungei sensen joined with members of other socialist literary groups to form the Japan Proletarian Literary Arts League (JPLAL; Nihon puroretaria bungei renmei). Bungei sensen thus became the organ of JPLAL. In 1926 JPLAL was renamed the Japan Proletarian Arts League (JPAL; Nippon puroretaria geijutsu renmei). In 1927, Nakano Shigeharu and other members influenced by the Marxism of Fukumoto Kazuo, took control of JPAL. “Fukumotoism”

²⁴ Richard Pipes, Communism (New York: The Modern Library, 2001) 94-5.

²⁵ Matsuzawa Shinsuke, “Tane maku hito no umoreta dônin: Yamakawa Ryô (Ryôzô) no kiseki,” Bunkyô Daigaku Kokubun, vol. 31 (March 2002): 33.

proclaimed the supreme role played by political theory in the proletarian movement and as a corollary saw literature as a tool which should be subordinate to politics. JPAL, which published the journal Puroretaria geijutsu (Proletarian art), was renamed NAPF (All Japan Federation of Proletarian Arts; Zen Nihon musansha geijutsu renmei) in 1928. The official publication of NAPF was Senki (Battle flag). Meanwhile, Aono Suekichi, Hayashi Hatsunosuke, Yamada Seizaburô, and others who opposed Nakano's program formed the Worker Peasant Artists League (WPAL; Rônô geijutsuka renmei), which now controlled Bungei sensen.

Bungei sensen was a Marxist, not an anarchist, publication, but its less dogmatic view of literature, which refused to turn it into a mere tool of propaganda, made it possible for writers with backgrounds in anarchism to continue to publish in it. Officially, anarchist and anti-Marxist writers were dropped from the Bungei sensen group in 1926, including Miyajima Sukeo, Ogawa Mimei, and Nii Itaru.

Kaihô

Kaihô (Emancipation) was a "general magazine with socialist tendencies"²⁶ founded in 1919 by a group including Yoshino Sakuzô, Asô Hisashi, and Sano Manabu. The Kaihô manifesto declared its purpose to be "the need to seek liberation from all outdated ideas (kyûshisô), whether traditional, coming from harmful customs, conservative, or reactionary."²⁷ Kaihô was particularly receptive to pieces on socialist theory, including anarcho-

²⁶ Shea, 39.

²⁷ Nihon kindai bungaku daijiten, vol. 4 (Tokyo: Kôdansha, 1977) 46.

syndicalism, and in addition to featuring pieces by Sakai Toshihiko, Yamakawa Hitoshi, and Arahata Kanson, also published works by Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, Nakai Kafū, Tokuda Shūsei, Shimazaki Tōson, and numerous others. The first incarnation of Kaihō ended publication in 1923. In 1925, it was revived by Yamazaki Kesaya to provide “a voice for the entire proletarian class.”²⁸ This time, it had a particularly strong anarchist presence, including as dōnin Ishikawa Sanshirō, Ogawa Mimei, and Nii Itaru. In 1927, Kaihō became the organ of the Japan Proletarian Literary Arts Federation (Nihon musan-ha bungei renmei) of Ogawa and Eguchi Kan, both anarchists. This anarchist affiliation ended in 1928, when the magazine was appropriated by the Marxist All Japan Council of Proletarian Art Groups (Zen Nihon musansha geijutsu dantai kyōgikai).

Aka to kuro

Aka to kuro (Red and black) was published between 1923 and 1924 by Hagiwara Kyōjirō, a young avant-garde poet. The magazine was initially funded by the novelist Arishima Takeo, and included as members Kawasaki Chōtarō, Okamoto Jun, and Tsuboi Shigeji. It was subsequently joined by Ono Tōzaburō. Four issues were published before the Kantō Earthquake of September 1923, and one subsequent issue of only four pages was published after the earthquake. This journal, though short-lived, was tremendously influential for Japanese anarchist literature. In particular, Hagiwara, Okamoto, and Ono would retain their anarchist stances for many years, while Tsuboi would become a prominent poet associated with Marxism.

²⁸ Nihon kindai bungaku daijiten, 46

Aka to kuro was conceived of as an avant-garde, Dadaist poetic journal rather than an explicitly anarchist one, but from the first issue its strongly anarchistic tendencies were evident. Furthermore, members of Aka to kuro went on to publish a line of poetic and literary journals throughout the 1920s and early 1930s which took a clear anarchist stance. These included Damudamu (Dum-dum, published in 1924 in only a single issue), Bungei kaihô (Literary liberation, 11 issues, 1927), and Dandô (Line of fire; 1930).

CHAPTER 1
THE EMERGENCE OF ANARCHIST TENDENCIES IN SOCIALIST AND
NATURALIST FICTION

Well, anarchism isn't a doctrine. It's at most a historical tendency, a tendency of thought and action, which has many different ways of developing and progressing and which, I would think, will continue as a permanent strand of human history. Take the most optimistic assumptions. What we can expect is that in some new and better form of society in which certain oppressive structures have been overcome, we will simply discover new problems that haven't been obvious before. And the anarchists will then be revolutionaries trying to overcome these new kinds of oppression and unfairness and constraint that we weren't aware of before.²⁹

Noam Chomsky

The emergence of socialism in Meiji literary and intellectual discourse

The first decades of the twentieth century saw a maturing and flourishing of socialist literature in Japan and its emergence as a widely written genre. The concerns of Japanese socialist literature were numerous, but as a starting point it is fair to say that all explicitly socialist literature was ultimately concerned with the plight of the members of the lower levels of society, or the laboring class.

The exploitation and suffering of the bottom economic strata of society was a prominent social issue of the Meiji era. Japanese farmers had suffered periodic famines and resulting social unrest during the Tokugawa period. During

²⁹ James Peck, ed., Noam Chomsky, The Chomsky Reader (New York: Random House, 1987) 29.

the rapid industrialization carried out by a collusion of government planning and capitalist enterprise in the 1870s and beyond, massive growth in capital and wealth was accompanied by the growth of new, unpropertied classes. The suffering of farmers was rivaled or surpassed by the poverty and the degraded, unhealthy living conditions of miners and factory workers.

Newspaper reports, fiction, and even poetry of the era show a broad awareness of the “humanitarian crisis” taking place in Japan. Government bodies investigated the effects of economic depression on life in undeveloped regions, and tanka poets composed poems depicting the ill health of miners.

European-American socialist ideologies emerged in Japanese political discourse as a response and challenge to the social upheaval and suffering which accompanied Japan’s industrialization. Socialism had a profound effect on Japan’s literary and artistic world. Even writers lacking an agenda of social activism showed a consciousness of socialist ideology in their writings. Natsume Sôseki (1867-1916), for instance, refers to social inequality in his first novel, I am a Cat (1906), a satirical work narrated by a nameless cat who comments on Meiji social and political life. When the feline narrator, who belongs to a professor of literature, encounters Kuro, the cat of a rickshaw driver, and praises him on his ability to catch rats, Kuro responds:

I hate to even think about it. No matter how many rats you catch to earn your keep – there’s no bastard in this world as shameless as a human. They take away the mouse you’ve caught and bring it to the police box. The police don’t know who caught it, so they give him five sen apiece. My master has already made one and a half yen from me, but he’s never given me anything decent to eat. Aw, humans are nothing but respectable-looking robbers.³⁰

³⁰ Natsume Sôseki, Natsume Sôseki zenshû, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1993) 16.

It would be excessive to claim that this passage makes a socialist statement. Kuro's master himself is a member of the underclass, and Sôseki has the cat voice a condemnation of economic exploitation that is characteristically moral rather than socio-economic. Still, if one substitutes capitalists for humans and workers for cats in this fable, the rhetoric of exploitation (which would reappear in Soseki's subsequent novels such as Nowaki and Kôfu) is similar to that of socialists of the time. The socialist novelist Kinoshita Naoe, for instance, frequently used the theme of "capitalist as thief" in his socialist fiction.

Socialist rhetoric, of course, went beyond merely deploring the suffering of the poor: socialism was a comprehensive ideology which in one form or another called for the unity and empowerment of the poor and working classes and aimed at worker control of the means of production. In 1897, several years before Sôseki's literary debut, Katayama Sen, who would later defect to Soviet Russia, wrote an article on "The Need for Organization of Labor."

The organization of labor is the basis for establishing a foundation for a civilized standard of living for labors under a system of factories and machinery. Once laborers succeed in organizing, they can demand from society a just working system, and obtain healthy conditions at the factories, the ending of female and child labor, and the education of working men which one feels is so utterly lacking today; and ordinary families will be able to enjoy the fruits of civilized production.³¹

Katayama here promotes socialism as a political and economic movement with concrete and ambitious goals. This consciousness was to shape the first works of explicitly "socialist" literature – as opposed to that which merely

³¹Katayama Sen, "Rôdô danketsu no hitsuyô," 1897.

championed “social justice” or deplored the suffering of the poor on humanitarian grounds – during the late Meiji period.

Materialism, socialism, and the literary arts

We see in the Katayama Sen passage quoted above a conception of the poverty suffered by the laboring class as being rooted in the economic structures of industrial capitalism. This focus on the class and economic infrastructure and on material conditions was characteristic of European and American materialistic philosophies of the 19th century; it is not difficult to understand why many Japanese socialists like Katayama went on to become adherents of Marxism-Leninism following the Russian Revolution of 1917. However, scientific materialism represented far more than an objective approach to analyzing the causes of poverty and oppression. In various forms, materialistic philosophies and social theories provided the moral and spiritual inspiration for social activism and revolution. Yet far from being scientific and objective, they were utopian and ideological in nature.

This study focuses on materialistic philosophies and ideologies as they were expressed in early Japanese socialist literary arts. Although they often worked in tandem with Christian thought and Christian charity movements in Japan, we will not pursue this connection in this study. There is no doubt that Christianity played a powerful role in defining the egalitarianism and altruistic concern for the underclass which drove socialistic thought. Many Japanese intellectuals who became socialists at the turn of the 20th century, such as Ôsugi Sakae, Kôtoku Shûsui, and Kinoshita Naoe, were introduced to socialism

through Christian social activists like Uchimura Kanzô and Ebina Danjô, and experienced Christian conversions, though these were usually short-lived. In this aspect of their intellectual and spiritual development they were similar to many commercial writers of the same period; Kunikida Doppo and Shimazaki Tôson, for example, whom I will discuss in this chapter, also went through Christian phases early in their careers. Nevertheless, with the notable exception of Kinoshita Naoe, socialist writers were on principle materialists and atheists, and I will focus on the materialistic nature of their political and artistic program, while leaving open the question of how much their evangelical zeal and sense of absolute moral certainty may owe to religious influences.

This study, then, will treat Japanese socialism as an array of materialistic, secular ideas which despite their professed scientific character had a fundamentally utopian, idealistic quality. Indeed, one of the very prominent distinguishing features of early Japanese socialist thought was its discovery and creation of transcendental, spiritual, inspirational values in material life itself. In this way, the political movement of socialism was intimately connected with the artistic movement of naturalism and with related literary and artistic trends. While writers and artists took inspiration from the vitality of nature, and sought to discover what was natural in human beings by exploring, for example, the “animal” urges of sexuality and the will to dominate and conquer, many socialists found in these same “natural,” “amoral” human drives the driving power for social revolution and social justice. Their view, in short, was that the underclass needed to rise up and overthrow their oppressors by drawing on the energy of their natural drives and feelings, which materialism validated and

celebrated. “Spirit” was found in nature rather than in God or the otherworldly; and life, nature, and material existence itself were seen as exhibiting spiritual qualities.

The anarchistic face of Japanese socialism

The socialist call for organization and ultimately for revolution would later be expressed in Marxist “proletarian” literature as a highly developed ideology calling for the seizure of the state by the proletarian class. Proletarian literature, however, was not the final, inevitable development of a process of evolution, but merely the most prominent and successful product of a wide range of artistic movements associated with socialism and other radical and progressive movements. This project aims to characterize a different trend in Japanese socialist literature, that which celebrated anarchistic rather than Marxist values.

Anarchism is an political and social philosophy of European origin which in the early 21st century informs a variety of worldwide political movements which oppose what they see as hegemony and oppression by the established power structures of global capitalism. Murray Bookchin and Noam Chomsky are two well-known thinkers who may be described as anarchistic. Anarchism in early 20th century Japan was influenced by “classical” 19th century thinkers such as Peter Kropotkin, Joseph-Pierre Proudhon, Max Stirner, and Leo Tolstoy. Writings by these authors found their way to Japan at the turn of the 20th century and inspired political activism and theoretical writings by such Japanese anarchists as Kôtoku Shûsui, Ôsugi Sakae, Ishikawa Sanshirô, and Hatta Shûzô.

If Marxism may be broadly characterized by its doctrine of dialectical materialism and the inevitability of revolution, and its political goal of the seizure of the state by the proletariat. In contrast to this, anarchism rejects the State and authority entirely and argues for the possibility of a society in which authority and the institutions which implement it are entirely abolished. Later, I will discuss the relationship between Japanese anarchist theory, particularly that of Ôsugi, and its expression in literature. At the same time, I will argue that in order to understand literary representations of anarchist ideas, it is necessary to consider not only anarchist political philosophy, but also artistic themes and motifs which were prominent in Japanese literature as a whole. This includes, of course, socialist writers, but it also includes mainstream writers unassociated with any political movement.

Themes and motifs, rather than political theory, will be the main focus of this study. However, the similarity between motifs prominent in Japanese literature in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and the themes of socialist and anarchist ideologies, are not accidental. While the word “anarchism” (museifu shugi) did not appear in print in a prominent source until 1902, in an article by Kemuyama Sentarô, nor become well-known until Kôtoku Shûsui’s “conversion” in 1906, 19th century European artistic themes and trends, among which anarchism developed, had been part of Japanese literary consciousness since at least two decades earlier. This study will link Japanese literary motifs with Euro-American and Japanese anarchist ideas. I will not require that every work selected be written with explicitly anarchist intent. Indeed, I will begin the study with a sampling of literary works written by commercial artists who were

unaffiliated with left-wing movements. I will follow this with discussions of prose works by left-wing writers who had explicitly anarchistic tendencies at at least some point in their careers. I thus attempt to describe a phenomenon in Japanese literature that may be called “literary anarchism.” It may well be possible to discern this “literary anarchism” in works utterly unrelated to any historical anarchist movement, but the assumption of this study is that the political anarchist movement has had an actual, lasting, often underappreciated influence on modern Japanese culture and hence on literature. By the same token, it is possible to argue, as Ôsawa Masamichi does, that indigenous Japanese values were amenable to anarchism, but that is beyond the scope of this study.

Values which I will identify as “anarchist” include the following:

(1) Rejection of the nation-state and government; in Japan this particularly means rejection of the emperor system.

(2) Belief in the existence of a natural order for human society, which human authority should not interfere with. Utopian movements such as syndicalism attempt to follow this natural order.

(3) Individualism and individual freedom as high values. Anarchism mistrusts all forms of group control.

(4) Nihilism - celebration of chaos, rebellion, and destruction of the existing political order and artistic, intellectual, and moral conventions.

(5) Vitalism – “life” (seimei) or a life force as a source of value. As it is the imperative of a biological organism to grow and reproduce, it is desirable for

individuals and societies to expand their life force and evolve into higher forms of behavior. Authoritarian controls which constrain this growth are to be resisted.

This study will focus in particular on literary anarchism, a literary movement related to other streams of socialist literature which emphasized the anarchist values listed above – in particular, the often nihilistic rebellion of individuals against social oppression, and the positive association of a healthy individualistic will and vitality with that rebellion, even if the rebellion results in destruction or failure. I will emphasize the influence of political ideology on literary production, but at the same time will argue that Japanese socialist writers, particularly those with anarchistic and individualistic tendencies, were more strongly influenced by certain streams of bundan (the mainstream, non-politically affiliated literary establishment) literature than is generally recognized – or, indeed, than they themselves normally acknowledged. In particular, Japanese naturalism had a profound influence on anarchist literature.

While the idea of “anarchism” provides a unifying concept for this literary study, in implied contrast with “Marxism” or “communism,” strictly speaking, it is impossible to classify works of fiction and poetry as genres according to the political ideology of their writers. Indeed, Marxism itself is a form of anarchism in the sense that its ultimate goal is the withering away of the state after the “dictatorship of the proletariat” has fulfilled its role in creating a classless society.³² Conversely, anarchism is a form of socialism in its rejection of the concept of private property, and anarcho-syndicalism is a form of communism. Furthermore, in Japan, the rift between anarchism and Marxism-Leninism which

³² Marshall, 28.

developed in the labor movement following the 1917 Russian Revolution did not reach the literary and artistic world until the early 1920s, while the dogmatic exclusion of anarchists from Marxist literary circles did not occur until the late 1920s. This phenomenon will be discussed further in Chapter Three. Early Japanese socialism was in fact an unbaked mixture of ideological ingredients, changing so rapidly that writing from five years earlier could seem utterly remote and out of date to those on the cutting edge of the movement. Although this situation may seem to render fine distinctions between socialist sub-movements, or even between anarchism and Marxism themselves, less relevant, it is precisely this nebulous quality of Japanese socialism which makes the idea of literary / artistic anarchism useful. While theories and subjects of debate change constantly, there is a persistent division in Japanese socialism between those whose who view social activism and revolutionary activity at the level of the struggle of individual men and women for existence – struggles and living realities which cannot be reduced to formulas and whose contradictions can never be resolved through the application of reason – and those whose interests lie in the larger power structures and in exploring the abstract questions of how to seize power and how to engineer a socialist society. It is the former type of writer and artist whose work tends to have an anarchistic quality.

Early developments in Japanese socialist literature

The Japanese socialist novel of the early 20th century developed from a tradition of socially critical literature extending back to the early Meiji period. During the 1870s and 1880s, the foundations of the modern Japanese political

system were established through the formation of political parties and the creation of a German-style constitution. The Western-inspired Freedom and People's Rights movement, which sought the creation of a national parliament of representatives elected by limited suffrage, arose amidst power struggles. Rivalry between the dominant Satsuma-Chôshû faction of the government and the Tosa-Bizen minority, and discontent from former members of the samurai class were important parts of the dynamic of this movement. At the same time, the very real suffering of the poorest strata of society – most notably farmers, and later the laborers for Japan's rapid industrialization – inspired a considerable amount of literary and journalistic activity.

Political literature in the early and mid-Meiji periods was concerned with modernization and Westernization, the abolishment of corruption in politics, and the uplifting of the lower classes. Major literary genres included the "political novel" (seiji shôsetsu) of the 1880s, exemplified by Tôkai Sanshi's Kajin no kigû, and the "social novel" (shakai shôsetsu) of the 1890s, exemplified by the works of Uchida Roan and Taoka Reiun. While the former celebrated political freedom by cataloguing independence movements around the world, the latter used a sharp and realistic portrayal of middle or upper class family and political life to comment on the social issues of the day, such as the changing position of women, imperialism, religion, and so forth.

The anarchistic socialist literature that this study deals with was certainly influenced by the "social literature" of the preceding decades. Kôtoku Shûsui's partner at the Heimin Shinbun, Kinoshita Naoe, wrote socialist novels which evoked an anti-authoritarian form of Christianity to criticize the evils of

emerging industrial capitalism and the evils, especially for women, of the feudalistic marriage system. Chia-ning Chang argues that Kinoshita's novel Hi no hashira of 1904 is generically closer to the earlier "social novels" than it is to 20th century socialist fiction.³³ Another early socialist, Sakai Toshihiko, a mentor to Ôsugi Sakae and other anarchists, wrote short stories in the shakai shôsetsu mode before committing himself to socialism.

An equally important precedent to anarchist fiction can be found in another written genre: journalistic reportage portraying the lives of the lower classes. This genre, generally published in newspapers, was produced copiously from the mid-1880s to the first decade of the 20th century. Unlike plot-driven fictional genres, the main goal of reportage was to document, accurately and fully, the living conditions of farmers, factory workers, miners, and prostitutes. The emphasis in reportage on "raw material" corresponded with the aims of literary naturalism, which I will argue to be another major precedent for socialist and particularly anarchist fiction.

Reportage on the plight of the lower class

Reportage was not associated exclusively with any single political philosophy or faction. Its authors had a wide range of political sympathies, and it was published by official government bodies and private newspapers alike. The accounts by "muckraking" journalists who observed and lived among the poor were intended primarily to interest and entertain readers, and in the early stages

³³ Chia-ning Chang, "Theoretical Speculations and Literary Representations: Writers and Critics of Social Literature in the Meiji Inter-War Years (1895-1904)," dissertation, Stanford University, 1985, vi.

this journalism was not necessarily part of a committed campaign to improve the lives of the people it depicted.

Tachibana Yûichi, in his book on Meiji reportage, discusses the paradoxical relationship between reportage and conventional literature. From the point of view of the Meiji literary establishment, dominated by such writers as Ozaki Kôyô, Kôda Rohan, Tsubouchi Shôyô, and Mori Ôgai (Kô-Ro-Shô-Ô) and their followers, reportage did not qualify as “literature.” Literature was supposed to be composed in a highly refined, aesthetic language. For their part, the writers of reportage consciously rejected the forms of established literature.³⁴ Nevertheless, while defining the relationship between reportage and “artistic” literature is difficult, writers of reportage certainly worked in other, more “serious” literary genres. For instance, Morita Bunzô, who wrote reports of poverty in the countryside for the Yûbin Hôchi Shinbun, went on to be a translator of Western fiction, while Hisamatsu Yoshinori of the same paper later wrote seiji shôsetsu.³⁵ Matsubara Iwagorô, author of Saiankoku no Tôkyô (In darkest Tokyo, 1893), began his career writing fiction with the help of Kôda Rohan, Tokutomi Sohô, and others.³⁶ Thus, there was never a distinct division between readers or authors of reportage, and those of “literature.”

The imperative for complete, faithful recording of the struggles of the poor and oppressed had, of course political and moral meaning; reportage expresses both a powerful humanitarian concern with the plight of poor laborers, and a deep fear of the consequences of the growth of an underclass. This fear could be

³⁴ Tachibana Yûichi, Meiji kasô kiroku bungaku (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobô, 2002) 9-10.

³⁵ Tachibana, 26.

³⁶ See Tachibana Yûichi’s commentary in Tachibana, ed. Matsubara Iwagorô, Saiankoku no Tôkyô (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1988) 187 ff.

detected in the words of those who espoused socialism; precisely the same fear led governmental agencies to report on the lives of the poor. In a prescient editorial in the Minyûsha group's Kokumin no tomo entitled "Rôdôsha no koe" (The voice of laborers, 1890), the writer proclaimed sympathy with the possibility of workers resorting to a general strike. "We are not necessarily advocating a general strike. But should the times unavoidably demand such an action, there is no way for the weak to resist the strong other than combining their strength." The writer argued that without the right to vote and serve in public office, the laboring classes might be left with no choice but to strike. (In the reportage tradition, the piece included a brief description of the barefoot and ragged appearance of rickshaw pullers and street laborers.)³⁷

Reflecting the government point of view, three years later Gustave Boisonade, professor of law and legal adviser to the Meiji government, published an article "Nihon ni okeru rôdô mondai" (The labor problem in Japan; 1892). Here Boisonade warned of the inevitability of a "labor problem" in Japan and suggested the regulation of working hours for men, women, and child laborers. "The reason that we have been studying this problem is not solely out of economic necessity, but also arises from our desire to correct this mistaken belief that the State is omnipotent in addressing these matters." "We are not able here to adequately consider this problem. We only desire to consider the present policies, or lack of them, for preventing labor problems, and consider, even though there is no policy now which can completely prevent labor problems from arising, whether or not it may be possible to reduce to some extent the

³⁷ Tachibana Yûichi, 51-52.

factors which might cause them.” Boisonade’s position suggests the danger of labor unrest which already concerned the Meiji government years before any serious labor movement would arise.

Documenting the material conditions of poverty; emergence of the writer-activist

The stylistic creed for reportage was to depict the realities of the subject fully and with complete accuracy – in other words, with photographic realism. Unlike the novelists of the mid-Meiji period, journalists disdained literary ornamentation. Some pieces of journalism derived their effect from the stark listing of facts, supported by numbers. Sugimura Sojinkan, a supporter of the Heimin Shinbun and an associate of Kôtoku Shûsui, was one writer who used a factual style. His “Yuki no kyôsakuchi” (Winter in the poor, blighted regions; 1906) described the effects of a crop blight on schoolchildren:

The total number of students enrolled in the school was 315. Since of these students, 240 or so actually attended, this leaves a total of 75 or so who were absent. By recent calculations, for 100 attendees there were 34 absentees, which amounts to a rate of 26 percent. The fact is that all of these were unable to attend because the crop failure had left them unable to bear the school expenses.

I asked Mr. Satô if I could see the students’ boxed lunches. He selected, at random, two lunches from the regular (jinjôka) class and three from the high class (kôtôka), brought them over and showed them to me. Opening one to take a look, I found nothing but unappetizing balls of fried rice with no garnishes. All five of the lunches were rice (kome no meshi). Hardly able to believe it, I asked Mr. Satô. According to him, these had only been brought in boxed lunches because they were steamed rice. For students whose daily fare was rice gruel or rice and barley mixed with other items, bringing anything that could be called a boxed lunch was out of the question. And in fact among the students that stayed at school until it closed at two

o'clock, 23 in the main school and 52 in the branch school had no lunch....³⁸

Such extensive cataloguing of the details of the lives of the poor and laborers is typical of the journalism of reportage. Scrupulous recording did not necessarily indicate a detached attitude on the part of the writer, however; Sojinkan includes his own emotional reaction in the text, telling how the children's ragged state brought tears to his eyes, describing them as karen (poor, pitiable), and otherwise marking his own subjectivity.

Many pieces of reportage expressed a deep feeling of outrage at the evils of poverty and unwholesome labor. While writers like Sakuraida Bungô may have taken a charitable perspective toward the underclass without criticizing the political system itself, others, like Matsubara Iwagorô, expressed a socialistic worldview in their writing. In his opening to Saiankoku no Tôkyô, Matsubara describes how he and his colleagues decided to leave their comfortable lives in order to try living and working among the poor. Particularly notable is his sense of being part of an international movement on behalf of the poor:

In a certain year, month, and day, I was at dinner with several journalist friends, when the discussion turned to the beggars of London. What a wondrous scene they made for the world: eating black bread held in their right hands while clenching their left hands in a fist, in the desire to overthrow the rich! When one looks for the causes of things like the general strike in England, the French communists, the socialists of Prussia and Russia, it is the terrible darkness in the people's lives....at the time there were bumper crops, with every grain grown in abundance, yet the price of rice rose constantly, leaving the poor to suffer from starvation. With the reports of death from starvation coming from all over, in the other [prosperous] world unconscionable banquets were held day and night, with the sounds of carousing raised in all quarters and the gates of

³⁸ Tachibana, 28-29.

the capital ringing with cheers...this was no time for absorbing oneself in solitary reading and study.

Matsubara's reporting on the lives of the poor in Tokyo describes his descent into the life of the underclass in episodic fashion, in sections devoted to such topics as: his work in a "soup kitchen" which collected uneaten food from institutions and redistributed it to the poor (zanpanya); his encounters with rickshaw drivers; and his stay in lodgings for the poor (kichin yado). Matsubara was not an innovator in prose style; his pieces are written in the anachronistic kanbun style, strongly influenced by the Chinese classics, which was standard for newspaper writing at the time. Even so, its profusion of visual description and its focus on human characters who it colors with colloquial dialogue give it, at times, a novelistic quality. Matsubara himself constitutes an important persona in the saga: the stories describe not only the poor themselves, but also the author's discovery of them.

Matsubara's emphasis on realistic, complete description leads to his inclusion of numerous passages which catalog, in seemingly exhaustive fashion, what he has observed. He lists types of people, types of food, and even the complete range of containers brought by the poor to collect leftover food. Like Sojinkan, his narrative places himself in the action, as in the passages describing his dialogues with purchasers of food and his measures for obtaining something for them when no ordinary food is to be found (he was able to obtain rotting "slop" normally used for feeding farm animals).

Indeed, Matsubara's inclusion of his own persona into the text plays a central role absent in Sojinkan's writing. Crucial to his story is his act of

relinquishing the comforts of his privileged life and immersing himself in the lives of the poor; this narrative tactic gives a sense of unity to the various episodes. He also takes the position of engaging in a discussion with his readers, who are obviously members of the same privileged society that he himself has come from. Matsubara thus exhibits both a socialistic concern for the “others” of the underclass and a desire to be personally involved in their struggle. In other words, there is an explicit individualism in his approach, and while his own involvement in social struggle was largely limited to recording the conditions in which the poor lived, later socialist writers would push the role of activist-writer much further, endeavoring to live among the working classes, educate them (and learn from them), and even, infamously, engage in assassination attempts against representatives of the Meiji state.

Kunikida Doppo’s naturalism: seeking a voice for the poor

Matsubara’s reporting on the lives of the poor in Tokyo was enormously influential among socialists, including those who became anarchists like Kôtoku Shûsui and Ishikawa Sanshirô, and the socialist poet Yamaguchi Koken; his influence also extended to novelists like Taoka Reiun and Kunikida Doppo.

Kunikida Doppo’s relation to reportage on the underclass is particularly worth noting, both for Doppo’s explicit admiration of writers like Matsubara and for the importance of realistic depiction of the underclass in Doppo’s naturalistic fiction. Several years before his debut as a novelist, Doppo praised the writings of Matsubara, in an essay titled “Waga heimin bungaku no tame ni” (For our

commoners' literature, 1893). In it Doppo admired Matsubara's powers of observation and the moral decency and integrity of his writing.

How did it [the problem of poverty] affect you? It goes without saying that this one word, poverty [hin], spurred you on, since you were able to create those valuable written works. What is the relationship between poverty and writing? We believe that we [writers] became able to answer this question starting with you.³⁹

Nevertheless, Doppo recognized limitations to Matsubara's approach, which he himself would try to overcome with a different style of writing. What is notable is Doppo's enthusiastic praise of the moral quality of Matsubara's writing. This conception of writing about underprivileged people as a moral activity gives some of Doppo's work a socialistic quality.

Prior to becoming a professional writer, Doppo studied English literature at Waseda University. Here he read the works of Wordsworth and Emerson, developing a conception of literature in which "nature" was conceived of not only as a force which resonates with the poetically feeling individual, but as something present in all humans. In English translation, Doppo read Tolstoy, Zola, Turgenev, and Maupassant. Like Maupassant, Doppo made a deliberate policy of writing about the underclass, starting with his first published short story, "Old Gen."

Doppo saw the artistic depiction of the poor and oppressed in society as a moral activity not merely because exposing their plight might assist in their liberation, but also because Doppo believed that the lives of the poor and

³⁹ Tachibana, 134 f.

oppressed had a pure and vital quality which was lacking in the privileged classes, however small and insignificant the expression of that quality might be.

Doppo's depiction of the underclass: "Take no kido"

Doppo's "Take no kido" (The bamboo gate, 1908) portrays an incident that occurs between a middle-class household headed by a salaried worker named Ôba Shinzô, and an impoverished couple living next door. Shinzô lives with his mother, his ailing wife and her sister, and a young daughter.

The neighbors, Ogen and her husband, Isokichi, a gardener and landscaper for hire, live hand-to-mouth in a tiny house "the size of a storage shed" (monooki dôzen). Since their home does not have a well, they get permission from Shinzô to draw water from his well. The couple then asks if they can cut an opening between the hedges and put a simple gate there to facilitate use of the well. Despite a fear of burglars, the kindhearted Shinzô once again agrees. Isokichi builds a shoddy bamboo gate (take no kido) which provides no security at all.

The Ôba family has a maid, Otoku, who wields considerable power within the family due to her strong personality. When Otoku complains to Ogen about the gate, Ogen silently berates Otoku as a "country girl" who has let her position go to her head. Shinzô, however, tells Otoku that Isokichi has done the best he can and that they will put up with the bamboo gate until they can have a proper one installed.

Ogen, whose perspective now becomes the focus of the story, has been suffering in her three years of marriage. Isokichi is capable of diligent work, but

also stays home for days on end, keeping the couple on the edge of starvation. The author comments that Isokichi is in fact a wakaran otoko, a man who “doesn’t get it” – a hopeless case.

As winter arrives, Ogen and Isokichi do not have enough money to buy charcoal to cook with. The price of charcoal has skyrocketed recently, and even the Ôba family is trying to conserve it. One day in December, Shinzô sees Ogen apparently stealing charcoal from his home, but gives the benefit of the doubt to Ogen and does not tell his family. Otoku, however, has noticed that charcoal has gone missing and makes marks on it to trap Ogen. She triumphantly announces to the family that she has caught Ogen, but Shinzô and his mother urge her not to say anything. They do, however, move the charcoal inside the house, and Ogen, who “is not used to stealing,” feels despair and humiliation.

When Isokichi returns one evening, Ogen, unable to suppress her feelings anymore, cries and berates him for his poor work habits. Isokichi leaves the house to ask a friend to lend him some money. When he cannot get the money, he steals a bag of high-quality charcoal from a nearby shop, telling Ogen that he borrowed money to pay for it.

The next morning Ogen meets Otoku and Shinzô’s sister at the well. Just then, the young man from the store Isokichi has just stolen from arrives and tells the women what happened. Otoku, looking knowingly at Ogen, tells him that they have been losing charcoal too.

Ogen returns to the house and is shocked to see that charcoal is the same type that was lost from the store. Using the case of charcoal as a platform, she

hangs herself. Within two months, the narrator tells us, Isokichi remarried, and continued to live in a shed-like dwelling.

Kunikida Doppo's understated romanticization of the underclass, realized artistically through techniques of journalistic realism, suggest a strong affinity for the socialism of his time, although Doppo did not associate with political socialism. Doppo's materialism may be categorized by his emphasis on material conditions as the primary determiner of the quality of life of the poor. Indeed, one critic sees in "Take no kido" an articulation of a sort of historical materialism: the idea that a poor woman like Ogen is doomed despite the charitable intentions of her bourgeois neighbor.⁴⁰ His romanticization of nature, so prominent in his early works such as Musashino, is greatly toned down in the works I have described, but remains in what I have called an "understated" form in its poignant exploration of the feelings and dreams of its unfortunate protagonists.

Nature liberates (?) the poor: Early fiction of Shimazaki Tôson, Tayama Katai

Doppo's fiction continued to be admired by socialist fiction writers of the Taishô era and beyond, with its masterful descriptive prose and lack of condescension towards his subject. Doppo was neither an anarchist nor a socialist, but his gritty, realistic style was one which could be utilized in service of these movements. Doppo's pieces show a deep anger at the suffering of the poor, but lack the sense of a guiding political philosophy. One could feel pity for his characters, but his rather fatalistic stories contained nothing to stir up youthful rage or inspire a revolutionary movement.

⁴⁰ Hiraoka Toshio, Kunikida Doppo: tanpen sakka (Tokyo: Shintensha, 1983) 255-6.

By contrast, other writers of so-called “naturalist” fiction between about 1900 and 1908 cultivated not only a realistic, gritty portrayal of the underclass, but sought to capture what they saw as the reality of the underlying “life” forces underlying human behavior – in particular, the “animal” impulses of sexual desire, competitiveness, and the will to dominate. The admiration for these forces has clear ideological implications, since it can provide a justification for social rebellion – although it can potentially be applied as easily to reactionary ideology as to progressive ideology.

In his work on what he calls “Taishô vitalism” (Taishô seimei shugi), Suzuki Sadami discusses the early “Zolaist” works of Nagai Kafû and Kosugi Tengai, as well as early works of Shimazaki Tôson, as representative of this trend.⁴¹ In his work, Suzuki argues convincingly that “vitalism,” or the idea of “life” in materialist ideology, was of central importance in Japanese artistic and political thought of the 20th century. While it is questionable whether seimei shugi can ever be pinned down as a specific shugi or ideology – the term itself normally refers to a narrower philosophical doctrine associated with Bergson - Suzuki’s general view on the importance the concept of seimei in Japanese intellectual history has important implications for this study. Careful attention to “vitalistic” themes and motifs in several works of early naturalism by Shimazaki Tôson and Tayama Katai reveals commonalities with later anarchistic and socialist writers. Put briefly, these themes involve the association of social rebellion, often of a nihilistic kind, with “nature,” “life,” and sexuality.

⁴¹ Suzuki Sadami, “Seimei” de yomu Nihon kindai (Tokyo: NHK Books/NHK Bukkusu) 1996. 65-70.

Shimazaki Tôson's "Kyûshujin" and "Warazôri"

Arahata Kanson, an early leading figure in the anarchist movement, recounts in his autobiography an antiwar lecture and rally sponsored by the Socialist Association (Shakai shugi kyôkai) in 1904 in which chairman Abe Isoo, in Christian fashion, urged new members to act prudently regarding relations with members of the opposite sex. In the meeting for new members Shiroyanagi Shûko recited (very poorly, Kanson says!) Shimazaki Tôson's (1872-1943) poem Oyô, a poem describing the life of a poor girl who spends her life as a servant to nobility.⁴² Miyajima Sukeo, too, cites an early interest in Tôson:

At fifteen I had already lost all interest in business, and made writing literature my ambition. To be a literary writer at that time was to be truly impoverished, so much so that one heard how someone like Tôson had to teach at an elementary school in Komoro in Shinshû and even then household finances were so constricted that his wife died of malnutrition. I had been resigned to poverty from the start.⁴³

While these anecdotes tell us nothing specific about the influence a writer like Tôson may have exercised on aspiring socialists, they do indicate that his work was widely read and admired by the same young men who were becoming interested in socialism at the beginning of the twentieth century. That these young admirers of Tôson's romantic poetry or naturalistic early fiction would be attracted to socialism prompts the question of what elements Tôson's literature may have had which resembled elements of socialist discourse.

Shimazaki Tôson is, of course, one of the major figures of modern Japanese literature, the author of representative works of Japanese naturalism,

⁴² Arahata Kanson, Arahata Kanson chosakushû, vol. 9 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1976) 83-4.

⁴³ Miyajima Sukeo, Miyajima Sukeo chosakushû, vol. 7 (Tokyo: Keiyûsha, 1983) 26.

romanticism, and the “I-novel.” Tôson came to fame at the age of twenty-five with his romantic poems, anthologized in Wakanashû (Young herbs; 1897), and later wrote major novels such as Hakai (The broken commandment; 1906) and Yoake mae (Before the dawn; 1932-35).

A major turning point in Tôson’s career came in 1902, with the publication of the short story “Kyûshujin” (My former master; published in Shinshôsetsu). This and other stories published in 1902 and 1903, anthologized – minus “Kyûshujin,” which had been banned – were anthologized as Ryokuyôshû (Collection of green leaves). It marks the end of Tôson’s career as a poet and the beginning of his career as a novelist. In these early works two thematic tendencies are present which show an obvious affinity with socialist discourse. One is an idealization of labor and laboring people; the other is the personification and valorization of “nature” and “life,” associated in particular with the primal forces of human sexuality. Nature, taking in particular the form of illicit sexual desire and jealousy, comes into conflict with the forces of social order, often resulting in violence, tragedy, and death. While his concern with the laboring class gives Tôson a certain potential political affinity with socialism (although in his case this concern with plight of the laboring class is never realized in any ambitious critique of society), his development of “nature” and “life” as aesthetic concepts are the locus of his most profound kinship to, and possible influence on, later socialist literature.

Tôson’s “Kyûshujin” was published in 1902 but was barred from sale following its publication. The story features a frank treatment of the topic of adultery, and ends with the irreverent juxtaposition of the hailing of the Japanese

emperor with the kiss of an adulterous couple caught in the act, but the immediate reason for the novel's censorship seems to have been that the story was modeled on an identifiable real-life couple in the Shinshû area.⁴⁴

"Kyûshujin" is narrated in the first person by Osada, a country woman from Kashiwagi village who worked as a maid for a couple named Arai in Komoro. Although born in poverty, she later found a comfortable life, as indicated in the first sentence: "Although I have become as fat as you see me now, at that time I was a tiny, thin girl." She describes the character of Kashiwagi women thus: "Women in the Kashiwagi area live their lives on top of the Saku hills, with harsh weather as their companion, so they have no choice but to spend their lives in hard labor helping the men. Well, it must be because they do that hard labor that my aunt and my mother both have strong, quick and clever natures." From age 13 she labored outdoors with her mother, and then was sent to be a maid at the Arai household. Her mother's advice was to pay attention to the wife: "How a husband will treat you depends entirely on the wife...the most important thing for a maid is to make the wife happy." Osada makes this her rule and finds the work easy compared to the farm labor she had done previously. Mr. Arai is much older than the beautiful, young Mrs. Arai (who is referred to deferentially as Okusama by the narrator), a native of Tokyo, for whom he left his previous wife. Their house, clothing, and speech are modeled on Tokyo and not Komoro, which is both a cause and symbol of their poor relations with Arai's brother's household. Mrs. Arai is beautiful and fashionable and walks with self-

⁴⁴ James Fujii, Complicit Fictions (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993) 65.

assurance about the town, sometimes hand in hand with her husband. She is unaware that the envious women of the town gossip viciously about her.

Arai, a banker, tries constantly to please his wife, but in her isolation and boredom, she becomes increasingly ill tempered. She suffers from toothaches and a young dentist, Sakurai, frequently comes to treat her. One evening, Mrs. Arai confesses to Osada that she is having an affair with Sakurai, whom she had met before meeting her current husband, and tells Osada not to tell anyone. She also gives Osada a silk collar designed to fit over a kimono.

The bank Arai works for celebrates its fifteenth anniversary, and Arai is honored throughout the town. Apparently his skilled financing has made the town prosperous. To celebrate, he gives rice and money to beggars, a practice he normally disdains. He shows his wife the gold plaque he was given, but she is completely indifferent. When he leaves the room, they are both crying. From then on the couple sleep apart.

Mrs. Arai's father arrives, apparently to borrow money; Arai leaves with him for Nagano. That night, Sakurai visits and they drink while Osada serves and observes them. Then Osada's drunk father arrives, causing Sakurai to hide in a closet. Mrs. Arai sympathizes with him wanting to see his daughter. Sakurai remembers the teacher who helped him start his practice, and feels guilty about not writing him. He says he feels ill and wants to go home.

Mrs. Arai becomes increasingly paranoid, fretting over a photograph and letters and having nightmares about being discovered. One day, Osada overhears her telling her husband that Osada steals things and should be fired. In shock, Osada walks back to her hometown, where she learns that Otsugi, a fellow

servicing girl who had made fun of Mrs. Arai, drowned herself in a river, possibly because her mistress abused her. Osada grieves for the fate of a fellow servant girl, and remarks that “there is no life sadder than a woman’s,” and she reflects on how it is the nature of human beings to change. Osada herself is becoming a woman, having begun paying attention to her clothes and hair. She thinks of the happiness of her childhood as well as the violence of her father’s treatment of her mother. She decides to take revenge on Mrs. Arai by telling Mr. Arai about his wife’s infidelity, saying “Here I showed what a woman’s real nature is.” Arai is shocked, but admits that the marriage was his own mistake. He asks Osada to help him to catch the two together.

The story culminates on the day of a festival sponsored by the Red Cross with speeches, a band, and large crowds. Arai pretends to go to the festival but instead waits at the next-door neighbor’s house. Osada lets Sakurai into the house and goes to inform Arai that Sakurai is with his wife. The normally kind, gentle Arai is trembling from head to toe with jealousy. Osada and Arai spy on them briefly until a guest arrives at the house. As Mrs. Arai and Sakurai turn around in shock, they see Arai and Osada. Utterly flustered, Sakurai reaches into Mrs. Arai’s mouth in an attempt to pretend that he is pulling her tooth. Just at this moment, the sound of a crowd saluting the emperor is heard: “Tennô heika banzai. Tennô heika banzai.”

James Fujii, in his Complicit Fictions (1993), devotes a chapter to “Kyûshujin” in which he discusses the political significance of the center/periphery chronotope, played out in the tension between the Arai’s association with Tokyo, the locus of central power, and Osada’s identification as

a “provincial” woman. Fujii also discusses the story as an attempt to “address the demands placed upon the Meiji writer of appealing to a mass unknown readership by creating an emotive first-person narrative”⁴⁵. In Fujii’s view, this use of a first-person narrator-character is a device harkening back to “pre-modern” gesaku narrative traditions which Tôson uses to “skirt the problems associated with forging a style of transparent reference [a style characteristic of 19th century European fiction].”⁴⁶ This narrative perspective of, according to Fujii, represents a kind of middle ground between the “obtrusive” first-person narrators of the gesaku tradition and the more modern “effaced narrator” of Hakai, Fujii deliberately avoids a discussion of Tôson’s early fiction which would serve to affirm its status as naturalistic or “I-novel” writing.

My own discussion of naturalistic aspects of Tôson’s early fiction will not be to “prove” that Tôson is a naturalistic writer, but rather to explore the political implications of this naturalistic approach. In this context, the choice to tell the story from the viewpoint of a young serving girl (jochû) represents at least an effort at a sympathetic portrayal of the underclass. Osada’s is shown to be strong, intelligent, and proud of her background. The misery of young country girls who are forced by economic circumstances to leave their homes at a young age to work as servants, often to be abused by their masters, is referred to several times in this story. Tôson thus shows a general affinity with the socialist concern with the position of women and the underclass, no doubt drawing material from the farmers and peasants he met while living in the Chikuma River area, whom he admired.

⁴⁵ Fujii, Complicit Fictions, 50.

⁴⁶ Fujii, Complicit Fictions, 49.

This affinity, in itself, should not be exaggerated. Osada's experience is not important in itself so much as it is an effective device for narrating the story of the breakup of the Arai's marriage from the point of view of an inside observer and for portraying the emotional breakdown of Mrs. Arai in a sympathetic and objective, though unsophisticated, feminine perspective. The central theme of "Kyûshujin" is not the living conditions of the underclass but rather the difficulty of finding happiness in a modern, bourgeois marriage. The ideal of marriage here is a European-Christian one of monogamy and romantic love, and the conflict of this ideal with the realities of improper sexual desire, covetousness, and irrational jealousy is also one which had been well-formulated by European naturalist writers such as Maupassant. The story, then, is romantic in its ideals while naturalistic in its incorporation of lower-class perspectives and "natural" human instincts and desires.

While Mrs. Arai commits the unconscionable cruelty of pretending to be Osada's friend while setting her up to be dismissed from her job, Osada views her with sympathy. "Okusama had no idea how old-fashioned the character of the people who live in the mountains [yamaga, "mountain homes/families"] is-how they will turn against any outsider who seems a little different to them."⁴⁷ In the eyes of the country women who pride themselves on working hard even if their husbands are idle, and who "abandon the glamorous fashions of today and even persuade their daughters to wear teorijima [rustic work garments]." Mrs. Arai, who spends much of her time having her hair dressed or new clothing ordered and adjusted, walks about town with an air of benevolent superiority,

⁴⁷ Shimazaki Tôson, Tôson zenshû, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobô 1966-1971) 483.

and holds hands with her husband western-style, is the subject of contempt and gossip. And yet Okusama is not really the victim of country women's society; much more, she is the victim of a marriage which was imposed, if not forced, on her by her family and Mr. Arai. Arai had been married to another woman for many years, and had divorced her, apparently, due to his entrancement with the future Okusama's great beauty. We later learn that he still keeps a photograph of his first wife. From Okusama's father's attitude, we may infer that her family supported the marriage to Arai, despite his age and divorced status, due to his high social standing and wealth. Okusama, apparently, comes from a well-bred but financially diminished family. When Osada reveals the affair with the dentist to Arai, he immediately comments:

Well, when it comes down to it, it was my fault. Before a year had passed since that woman came, I had already had it with her. And it's only natural – our ages are different, and so are our ideas. She's just like a baby. How could I get along with someone like that? At my age, I should have had more sense – what a mistake to think that a wife could be replaced any number of times! By the second or third time, it can't be called a real marriage. Someone who you've been with since your youth knows your history and your likes and dislikes....when you [Osada] first came to work here, I was trying everything to make her happy...now all I'm trying to do is forget her.⁴⁸

Arai goes on to remark that he had thought of divorcing his wife, but couldn't bear to disappoint her gentle father.

For her part, Okusama is equally unable to find solace in the relationship with Sakurai. At first, Osada is moved to pity for Okusama and perceives the adulterous couple in a romantic manner: a beautiful woman and a handsome man in a relationship possessing a dreamlike beauty. This beauty is conjured

⁴⁸ Tôson zenshû, vol. 2, 519.

again at the end of the story, when Osada and Arai watch the couple kissing with a folding screen of peonies in the background. As the couple press against each other and kiss, Okusama stands on her toes pressed against Sakurai, with their blood “flowing to their lips like the gushing up of a spring current.” And yet even without Osada’s betrayal, Okusama has no chance of happiness; while leaving Arai is impossible, Sakurai himself has begun to feel that the relationship is sapping him – that his love for Okusama has caused him to lose interest in advancing his career (risshin shusse). Okusama is thus quite alone in her predicament – something Osada realizes when an itinerant performing woman, a religious pilgrim, arrives at their doorstep and sings a tragic song about leaving her hometown and parents.

...[Okusama] realized that even a poor, pathetic woman like that was better off than herself. That was how miserable living under this roof together with her husband was to her. To that woman on the pilgrimage, she must have looked like a woman with a perfect life. But to Okusama, to be a wandering pilgrim noticed by no one was better than being dragged against one’s will by the chain called society, living each day as if in a dream.⁴⁹

In “Kyûshujin,” then, we find a critique of middle-class marriage and a strong sympathetic stance for an adulterous woman similar to that found in novels such as Anna Karenina and Madame Bovary (with which Tôson was familiar). As the above passage indicates, however, there is no overt criticism of the class system in this story; the narrator herself is content with her station in life, admiring Okusama’s glamour while not aspiring to it herself, and an itinerant, impoverished woman is seen as happier than Okusama.

⁴⁹ Tôson zenshû, vol. 2, 498.

Fujii has noted the anti-imperial tone of “Kyûshujin” and Hakai, but more significant to my discussion is the emergence of “nature,” particularly sexuality, as both a destructive and liberating force. Although not developed as a central image, a significant subtheme of “Kyûshujin” is that of sexual desire and jealousy, portrayed in physical, almost symbolic, terms. Osada’s potential as a sexual rival to Okusama is clear, though not stated specifically, in Osada’s mother’s instructions to her to make sure to please the wife. Osada follows this dictate as a matter of policy, but she is also quite taken by Okusama’s looks herself. “...when she had just gotten out of a bath, she was so beautiful that even a girl like me felt giddy to look at her.”⁵⁰ As if to placate Okusama, Osada offers to massage her shoulders, another skill she has learned from doing it to her mother. Okusama responds by praising the strength of Osada’s fingers and then praising Osada for her beauty, which Osada finds to be puzzling. “Whenever Okusama praised my looks, it was a puzzle to me, because she was so proud of her own looks. At those times, if I responded by praising her beauty, she would be as pleased as can be, and lift her shoulders like a bird pluming its feathers, and you could see her happiness clearly in [the color of] her nose and her lips.”⁵¹

The most striking portrayal of sexual jealousy is Arai’s appearance as he prepares to surprise Okusama and Sakurai, who are alone together.

...I felt like I had already had half of my revenge. I’ve had a lot of things happen to me, and I’ve seen men’s jealousy, but I’ll never see anything like Mr. Arai (dannasama) was at that time. It probably couldn’t be portrayed in a picture, either. What he didn’t say in words was all the more expressed in his appearance. His eyes blazed with a fierce jealousy; under his pale face an emotion was revealed underneath his naturally

⁵⁰ Tôson zenshû, vol. 2, 482.

⁵¹ Tôson zenshû, vol. 2, 489.

smiling face – an emotion that can't be adequately described as pain, anger, shame, or sadness. It was as if all the blood in his body had surged together straight to his head. Looking like he couldn't bear it for another moment, craving to catch his prey, he ruffled his hair with his fingers. It's wicked for me to say this, but even such a gentle man as dannasama was so filled with uncontrollable jealousy that, well, he showed the true nature of men – his body trembled like that of an animal. Like a fox stalking a chicken, he lowered his breath and stole towards the interior of the house...."⁵²

The prominence of the physical expression of sexual jealousy leads Sasabuchi Tomoichi to identify jealousy as the central theme of "Kyûshujin." This judgment is made in accordance with the prominence he assigns to the fact that Tôson at the time of writing these stories was struggling with his wife's continued correspondence with a former lover. Certainly, the sexual aggressiveness, rage, and jealousy exhibited briefly by the gentle, "civilized" Arai clearly constitute a key theme of Tôson's literature of this time. This will be seen clearly in a discussion of "Warazôri," a story written at approximately the same time as "Kyûshujin," in which the conflict between a husband and wife is portrayed as caused by the sexual aggression and jealousy, portrayed in its raw ugliness, of an animal-like character.

"Warazôri" (Straw sandal; published in Myôjô, 1902) is set in a small farming village in Nagano called Uminokuchi-mura. It is a famous site for horse breeding, and a certain nobleman is coming to inspect his horses and view a horserace. Genkichi, or Gen, a vigorous young man nicknamed "straw sandal" because his face is as ugly as the rough surface of a sandal, is favored to win the horse race. Impulsive and vain, desperate for glory, he starts out too quickly and

⁵² Tôson zenshû, vol. 2, 523.

loses to an experienced, competent horseman. Devastated, he beats his horse and then, arriving home, strikes his wife, Osumi, with a pole, badly injuring her leg.

Gen goes to a restaurant to drink. There, a clerk for the local village administration, not recognizing Gen, tells him that Osumi's leg is broken and the doctor doesn't know how to treat it. Broken legs can be fatal, the man adds, in response to Gen's questioning. He then tells a further story about Osumi. She used to be a housekeeper at a certain household, with an excellent reputation for her work. Then she was seduced by the man who minded the nearby railroad crossing. At first she wanted to marry him, then, coming to fear him, she ran away from home.

Gen runs out of the restaurant and meets his mother. She sadly rebukes him for his actions, and reminds him that he had insisted on marrying Osumi instead of a girl he was betrothed to. She says that as she ages she has only him to rely on.

Gen goes out with Osumi tied to the back of his horse the next morning to take her to a better doctor. He remains sullen and without remorse. Osumi asks to turn back and says she doesn't mind dying. Later, as they rest, Gen confronts her with the story he heard about her. When she asks if this is why he hit her, Gen lies, saying that it is.

The horse hears the whinny of a mare and becomes excited. He breaks away from Gen's grasp and runs off with the mare, Osumi still tied to his back. Much later, Gen catches up to find that Osumi is dead; a policeman asks the crowd about the cause of death, but does not assign blame to Gen. Gen's mother

tells him to give thanks to Osumi for saving his life, and the story ends with Gen staring blankly at Osumi's body.⁵³

"Warazôri" takes as a central motif the idea of "nature" as a dark, powerful, erotic force which works in opposition to the constraints of human civilization and its institutions such as marriage. In "Kyûshujin" this conception of "nature" plays an important role in a domestic tragedy, influencing Okusama's inevitable attraction to the similarly young, beautiful, sexually robust Sakurai; and Arai's normally-suppressed but ferocious possessiveness of his wife. In "Warazôri," the protagonist himself is little more than an embodiment of this force. Unconstrained and without discipline, such a character is, in the end, weak rather than strong, bringing about nothing but his own downfall.

"Warazôri" lacks any overt political perspective that could be described as socialist, and has no criticism of social institutions as such. Tôson admires, as in "Kyûshujin," honest, hard-working farming women and servants like Osumi, and pities them when they are mistreated by men, but there is no suggestion of any kind of economic or social analysis or call for reform. Interestingly, the imperial institution makes its way into the story in the horserace scene, which is held in honor of a certain member of the imperial family – a colonel in the army cavalry who was so impressed with the quality of horses in the village that he brought his prize Arabian horse to stud over thirty horses. Gen's horse is one of these.

⁵³⁵³ Sasabuchi Tomoichi explains that the meaning of this statement is apparently that according to Buddhist folk belief, the runaway horse was probably an agent of karmic retribution, and the innocent Osumi has sacrificed herself in place of Gen for his sins in a previous life. See Sasabuchi, Shôsetuka Shimazaki Tôson (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1990) 179.

The visit of the colonel with an entourage of prominent figures thrills the village; a festival with fireworks and other grand events is held, and they excitedly gather at the racetrack to watch the race. (The race scene is based on an event which Tôson actually witnessed, although part of the scene may have been inspired by a scene in Anna Karenina.) There is no indication that there is any disharmony between the nobleman and officials on one hand and the poor villagers on the other; all are united in loving horses and enjoying the thrill of the race. What is significant is that the apparent rustic charm of the horse race actually is produced under the auspices of the Meiji state and its increasing international prestige, since the horses were introduced from French and American sources following the French war with China, and, of course, bred to still greater perfection by the colonel's enlightened intervention.

The other representative of the Meiji state in this story is the local administrator who tells Gen the story of Osumi's past. This man is depicted as tiresomely talkative, absorbed in trying to impress his listener, but he also brings an enlightened, scientific view to the ignorant Gen, informing him that (1) yes, it is possible for someone to die from a broken bone, and (2) if a woman were thus to die from being injured by her husband, he would be legally liable. In the characters of both the colonel and the administrator, then, a generally enlightened administration of Japan is suggested.

Neither the values of this administration, nor Gen's mother's appeal to filial piety, however, can prevent Gen from causing the death of his wife and destroying his own life. Gen is introduced grinning smugly as a companion praises his fine horse. His appearance is described as follows:

All of the young men in Uminokuchi-mura have nicknames, and Gen's was "straw sandal." This referred to the unattractive, handmade daily footwear of people living in the mountains, and was used to refer to a ugly man. Certainly his face, burnt by the sun, reminded one of a straw sandal covered with dirt – the poorly shaped nose, the narrow, squinting eyes, and the shape of his mouth. Still, Gen was at the prime of his youth and the vigor which showed in his cheeks was by no means unattractive. And with his powerful build and great strength, sufficient for doing battle with a wild animal, he looked like a strong, vigorous young farmer, even if his face was unattractive.⁵⁴

Far from having an inferiority complex about his appearance, Gen is haughty and possessed with a deep desire for glory (kômeishin). He plies his horse with soybeans, potatoes, and other rich foods to prepare him for the race; rides his horse about the venue enjoying the attention; and dreams of getting to meet the colonel when he wins the race. Gen's horse, a wild-spirited, competitive animal, is an alter ego for Gen himself – and not entirely under Gen's control:

Gen's passionate craving for glory flared up in his breast as the crowd gathered. His horse was one of the mixed breeds descended from "Algeria." As the horse, his head raised high, watched the other horses coming to and fro, well, he revealed the fighting spirit which had stayed hidden for years. Time after time he would manfully flick his ears, crush the moist autumn grass under his hooves, and whinny – as if privately making a wish for victory. The blood of his father, who during the Chinese-French war had raced around through the smoke of cannons and the hail of shells, clearly flowed in the breast of this horse. Just for that day, even his master Gen could not discipline him. Women...ran from the horse screaming.⁵⁵

Yet Gen quickly falls apart during the race; full of tension and fear, he starts too quickly, and he and the horse, after an initial big lead, are overtaken by

⁵⁴ Tôson, Zenshû, vol. 2, 404.

⁵⁵ Tôson, Zenshû, vol. 2, 404.

an experienced horseman who is careful, calculating, and completely calm and relaxed. Gen, despite his youthful vigor, has never learned restraint or self-control. All that is left to him is to beat his horse and then hit his wife with a stick in anger, which he evasively attributes to her having gone home without him.

Gen's aging mother attributes Gen's cruel, stubborn behavior to both nature and nurture. Earlier in the story, Gen's father had jokingly denied resembling his son; now we learn why. Gen, his mother says, is just like his father: "your father was just like you when he was young – he didn't think of other people as human beings, until he was more or less expelled from the village. He was this close to dying out in the fields, when finally he woke up and had a change of heart, so that now everyone praises him and says he's changed completely." In addition, Gen was spoiled due to being an only child: "I feel so sorry for you – you suffer so much from that character of yours (konjô ga kawaiisô de naranee). This is just what I'm always telling you. You were an only child, and you did whatever you wanted when you were growing up, so nothing frightens you, and if it feels right to you, you don't care a thing about what it means to other people."⁵⁶ In sum, Gen is more selfish than actively sadistic.

What, in sum, is Tôson's conception of nature, life, and vitality in this story? Gen's aggressive sexuality is the vital driving force for the story's tragic plot. However, our sympathy for Gen comes not so much from admiring his vitality as from the suffering he incurs from his own terminally immature personality. Gen is never portrayed as robust and healthy after losing the horserace; what remains is only his uncontrollable anger and jealousy.

⁵⁶ Tôson, Zenshû, vol. 2, 419.

We should note that this story for the most part focuses on Gen construed as a masculine personification of sexuality. Osumi is portrayed more or less as a helpless victim, someone whose fear of Gen's violence has habituated her to giving in to him on all occasions. Osumi does, however, oppose Gen verbally, suggesting that on a certain level she may be a match for him. Indeed, it is after Osumi refuses to respond apologetically for leaving the race before Gen that he strikes her; nor does she accept Gen's claim that he has a right to resent her for her past love affair. The role of female sexuality appears to be primarily that of enticing and attracting the male. This is the case in Osumi's first relationship, with an older, ugly man who resembles Gen more than a little, although he is more cunning and malevolent. This man, a guard at the local railroad crossing, in turn harassed, threatened, and enticed Osumi until he had persuaded her to marry him. After Osumi grew frightened of him and tried to break the engagement, he raped her, then boasted about it; leading her to run away from her employer to escape the shame. In the end, Osumi was "saved" by meeting Gen, who cried and begged his parents to let him marry her instead of the girl he had been promised to since childhood.

The character of Gen embodies a powerful vitality and a rebellious, aggressive nature, but Gen's debacle is not placed in any larger historical or social context. He is not a victim of oppression, nor is there anything admirable about his anger, which he takes out on the defenseless Osumi. Furthermore, he cannot sustain his vigor and vitality after his initial defeat in the horserace. Still, we see in Gen a character type which could potentially be utilized to express the idea of an individual in conflict with his society. Writing at nearly the same time

as Tôson, Tayama Katai would create a similar character whose conflict with society was much more dramatic and had implications which would be drawn on by anarchist writers only a few years later.

Tayama Katai's *Jûemon no saigo* (The end of Jûemon, 1902)

The theme of a nihilistic hero is developed with stunning clarity in Tayama Katai's tale of a rebellious individual who continually attacks his surrounding society until he is destroyed by it. This story would form a paradigm for certain works of anarchist fiction which would interpret nihilistic, destructive rebellion as having political meaning and which would portray such rebels in a sympathetic light.

The story opens with a drinking party, at which the narrator, Tomiyama, tells his comrades that he once met a man just like the Russian peasants in Turgenev's fiction. When sixteen, he entered a shabby cram school to prepare for army cadet school. There he befriended a pair of boys from Nagano named Sugiyama and Yamagata Kôzaburô. Realizing they were bright, he urged them to study the Chinese classics for cadet school. The two boys had run away to make their fortunes in Tokyo, but felt sorry to their parents. Tomiyama started to yearn to see the village for poetic inspiration.

The public bath owner, once an outcast in his own village, now was helping people from his hometown, about which Yamagata would wax nostalgic. Another friend was Nemoto Kôsuke, whose father had once been disgraced for stealing from the collection box of the local shrine, but had later made a fortune in Tokyo.

After two years, Yamagata and Nemoto returned home, and Sugiyama became a good for nothing. Five years later, Tomiyama traveled to Nagano to see Nemoto. He learned that Nemoto was married, Yamagata was a teacher, and Sugiyama had been conscripted by the military. Tomiyama arrived at the village and was astonished to see the villagers practicing putting out fires with a hose and pump. Here he met Nemoto and Yamagata and learned that there had been a series of fires in the village. The culprit was a man in his early 40s, Fujita Jûemon, who would send his young "wife," a girl of about 17 raised completely in the wild, to commit the deeds. The police would not act without proof and the girl was too quick and wily to be caught. That night, Yamagata's home was burnt down.

Jûemon was the adopted grandson of a well-off man, but not by blood – his father was adopted and his mother had an uncle who was a murderer. While his adoptive parents treated him coldly, his grandparents spoiled him. Jûemon had a handicap: a hernia which caused his scrotum to appear enormous, leading to his being teased by other children.

As a teenager, Jûemon was introduced to prostitutes and became an enthusiastic customer. After his parents left and his grandfather died, Jûemon worked hard for a time, and was briefly married to a slightly disabled woman, but they soon parted violently and he returned to his life of dissipation. Jûemon went into debt and burnt down his own house out of spite, for which he was imprisoned. Released after six years, he started committing acts of arson.

The next evening, another fire was started, and successfully extinguished. As the local men drank after putting out the fire, Jûemon appeared in the next

room was thrown outside by the young men. By silent agreement, the men ventured outside. Soon after, Jûemon was found drowned in the small pool by Nemoto's house, supposedly an accident.

Tomiyama saw Jûemon as a "child of nature" who had "returned to nature." "Six thousand years" of human civilization – God, ideals, ideology, imagination – could not overcome nature. Tomiyama realized his mistake in imagining the mountains to be a peaceful place of nature: the burden of history and custom is heaviest in the villages.

The girl appeared to claim the body, promising revenge, and carried Jûemon's body away to cremate it. Tomiyama saw Jûemon is a sort of hero, separate from the "dirty world." That night, Tomiyama awoke to see the entire village burning – fanned on by nature's wind. The girl was found burned to death in one of the houses. Seven years later, the village has prospered, and they have reburied Jûemon and the girl in the temple. Tomiyama remarks that "Nature returned to nature in the end."

Jûemon as nihilistic hero

Moriyama Shigeo has noted the similarity between Jûemon and Ishii Kinji, the nihilistic miner of Miyajima Sukeo's Kôfu, which will be discussed in the following chapter, even suggesting that Miyajima's original title, Kôfu no shi (The death of a miner), was inspired by that of Katai's.⁵⁷ As a model for anarchistic fiction, Jûemon is most notable for its detailed construction of a nihilistic (anti-) hero, who despite his destructive and malicious behavior, is seen

⁵⁷ Moriyama, Bungaku anakizumu no senryû 144.

as a victim of society whose actions, from his point of view, are justified. This character type could be easily transformed from that of a poor farmer to that of a “proletarian” industrial worker.

A comparison with the stories by Tôson which we have just discussed is instructive regarding Katai’s approach. Tôson displays a certain rhetorical concern for the poor and oppressed, even if this does not lead to the advocacy of a socialistic program. By contrast, the only defense provided for Jûemon’s character is the idea that he acts according to his “nature,” which is thwarted and oppressed by the “civilization” of the village. Indeed, the narrator of the story repeatedly cites instances of down-and-out young men from the countryside coming to Tokyo to make their fortune, suggesting that the Meiji ideal of self-help and self-advancement is attainable. This very un-socialistic belief would be as unacceptable to be anarchists as to Marxists, but image of the lone individual trying to overcome challenges would still resonate for anarchists.

How did Katai construct his nihilistic hero? His paradigm includes several conceptions of human nature and society which are presented in the story as abstractions personified in the character of Jûemon:

1. “Civilization” or society is a collective order created over time by groups of people. “Civilization” serves to restrain the activity and growth of individuals.
2. “Nature” is opposed to “civilization,” and if “civilization” is exemplified by the group harmony and restraint of towns, cities, and nations, “nature” is displayed in the individual, in the form of unrestrained sexual desire and conquest, ambition for possession, and a hostile competitive drive.

3. While it appears at first that the metropolis of Tokyo is the ultimate example of “civilization,” the traditional rural community, with its heavy regulation of individual life and strict punishment of antisocial behavior, is a prime example of “civilization.”
4. A deeper exploration of the conflict between “civilization” and “nature” reveals that they are not diametrical opposites; rather, civilization is an organized form of nature. For example, the conflict regarding sexuality is that between regulated, acceptable sexual behavior (for instance, the sexual initiation of teenage boys with prostitutes) and unregulated behavior. The analysis of society and individual proffered in this story is thus basically a materialistic one, not a spiritual or religious one. The narrator reflects that the villagers are following “nature” in killing Jûemon just as Jûemon is following his. However, the narrator’s sympathies are generally with Jûemon.

Jûemon’s tragic and irreconcilable conflict with the village is explained by Katai not in socioeconomic terms but in sexual ones. Jûemon is described as having a sexual deformity which prevents him from having normal sexual relations with women and results in a lifelong sense of inferiority and anger. Interestingly, Gen in Tôson’s “Warazôri” is a similar type, although his sexual defect is merely his ugly appearance. Despite, or because, of his deformity, Jûemon also develops an excessive, uncontrollable sex drive. This appears to be manifested in his visits to prostitutes, but ultimately is sublimated into the frenzy of destruction carried out with his young female partner. This young woman is even more of an abstraction of nature than Jûemon: she is preternaturally quick and nimble, and, having grown up in nature like Romulus and Remus, takes

naturally to Jûemon (who initiates her into sex) and shares his desire for revenge on society. Their brazen attacks against the village constitute a kind of glorious revenge-suicide.

The narrative does contain a certain awareness of the power of the nation-state, represented by the police post in the mountains which is unwilling to arrest Jûemon without “proof” of his crime; the nation-state is basically an ineffective, distant power. The narrator Tomiyama, sympathetic to Jûemon, does not rail against the State but rather bewails the cruelty of the villagers for their treatment of Jûemon and finally for their murder of him. As Tomiyama muses on Jûemon’s fate, his friend walks away from him, suggesting Tomiyama’s isolation in his sympathy for Jûemon.

While focusing on Katai’s evident admiration for the unrestrained, amoral growth of “nature,” one must admit that the author’s explanation of Jûemon’s tragedy gives a sense of being appended to the story as an explanation. Various explanations are suggested for Jûemon’s character turning out as it did, including being spoiled as a child, inheriting “bad blood,” “not believing in himself,” and even failing to produce a child (which allegedly might have settled him down!). The narrator is also unable to sustain his condemnation of the villagers to the very end: he realizes that if Jûemon acted according to his nature, so, too, did the villagers, who could not tolerate their lives being destroyed by his destruction. A peaceful resolution is appended at the end, in which the narrator remarks that after the death of Jûemon and the girl, the villagers repented and buried both of the bodies in the village shrine, after which the town had a surge of prosperity.

The anarchistic implications of Naturalism

It is clear from an examination of the fiction of early naturalistic writers like Tôson and Doppo that the aesthetics of journalistic realism combined with a focus on the life of an oppressed underclass had political implications from the start. Recent scholarship has discussed the role played by literary discourse in the construction of the modern nation-state. James Fujii's Complicit Fictions is one such work, as is Michael Bourdaghs's study of Shimazaki Tôson, The Dawn That Never Comes, which explores the complex attitudes towards nationalism displayed in Tôson's major novels.

My own discussion of literary anarchism and its precedents in naturalistic fiction has, of course, political implications, since images of nature, vitality, and rebellion can be and were used to challenge the authority of the nation-state and the capitalistic system. However, it is difficult to link naturalistic themes and motifs as they appear in Tôson, for example, with specific political doctrines. There may be no inherent connection. I therefore do not attempt to link literature to the construction of specific ideologies in this study, although ideology is a constant and usually overt presence in the works I examine. Rather, in linking early naturalism with later anarchistic "proletarian" literature, I wish to demonstrate a continuity or tradition of motifs and imagery which tended to appeal to those with anarchistic political beliefs. This continuity becomes apparent from a broad survey of early socialist and proletarian literature, although it is difficult to "prove" direct links between works, unless a writer has specifically commented on an influence. On this count, there is no doubt that

early naturalistic fiction – both foreign and domestic – was a rich source of imagery and narrative paradigms for early Japanese socialists. This study attempts to clarify the nature of that influence

The selection of early naturalist writers and writers of reportage for this chapter, too, has been made, to some extent, retroactively. Progressive-minded fiction writers with a materialistic outlook could inspire readers to think about reforms needed in Japanese society. However, for socialists, materialistic philosophy was elevated to the role of an ideology, forming the base for an all-encompassing movement for social revolution. Jerome Bruner has hypothesized that human beings have two distinct modes of thought, the analytic and the narrative, and explores the nature of literature based on its function as a complex narrative which is remembered and reworked by its readers. Following Bruner's paradigm, we can look at early Japanese socialist ideology in terms of these same two components: the theoretical (analytical) and the narrative. In Japan at the turn of the century, one obvious source of narratives for the socialist imagination was western fiction by materialistic, socialistic writers. It is equally clear that socialist writers considered the production of fiction to be an important part of the intellectual war being waged in favor of socialism. The writers I will discuss in the remainder of this study all combined writing and social activism in their careers, and all wrote fiction, although they were, at times, ambivalent about the value of fiction in the revolutionary struggle. Arahata Kanson provides perhaps the most striking example, since he made a conscious and public decision to cease the writing fiction – published in the forward to his acclaimed collection of

fiction – on the grounds that fiction writing was a distraction from serious activism.⁵⁸

The narrative component of ideology may be more important than its theoretical component; in the case of Marxism, the failure of most of its allegedly scientific predictions to come true did not alter the appeal of its narrative of class oppression and struggle. The Russian historian Richard Pipes shows how central predictions by Marx failed to come true not only in the case of the Russian revolution but for every subsequent communist revolution: (1) the inevitable collapse of capitalism due to its structural contradictions failed to materialize, so the destruction of capitalism always required “direct action” – a violent revolution of which there was no inevitability; (2) revolution was achieved by the mobilization of a massive peasant class, in largely agrarian societies, and not by a class of industrial workers, who in practice were able to work within the system to obtain better working conditions; and (3) communist governments did not wither away but grew into oppressive totalitarian apparatuses run by massive, wasteful, elite bureaucracies. Nevertheless, the basic narratives of the historical progression of class struggle, and of the knowledge and consciousness as “epiphenomena” of material realities, were persuasive enough, and in their materialistic approach seemingly scientific enough, to dominate socialist narrative for much of the 20th century.

Anarchism, for its part, represented more of an approach to socialism than a scientific theory. As we shall see, anarchists in Japan, as elsewhere, did not necessarily reject the ideas of Marx and Engels. However, if Marxism treated

⁵⁸ See Horikiri Toshitaka, *Yume o kû* (Tokyo: Fuji Shuppan, 1993) 119-39.

human beings as material phenomena and aimed to reshape human nature through the transformation of material conditions, anarchism remained focused on the intractable individuality of human beings, and saw revolution as being achieved not only through the redistribution of material resources, but also through the revolutionizing of human consciousness – from the individual on up, as it were.

To this end, the images and motifs developed by early naturalist writers in Japan provided ripe material for use in anarchistic socialist art and propaganda. An appeal for the return to “nature” as a way of overcoming the evils of industrialized capitalism had great appeal for young progressives and revolutionaries. In particular, there was much appeal in vitalistic imagery which linked the primordial power and beauty of nature with a kind of Nietzschean “superman” who violently defied social conventions and morals and who, knowingly or not, contributed to the creation of a new and better society. Characteristically, such a hero or anti-hero would have a strongly erotic nature, and his (or sometimes her) sexual liberation would be linked with social transformation. In other words, Tayama Katai’s Jûemon would reappear, but as a victim of capitalist oppression, possessing a revolutionary cause.

The naturalist-socialist overlap

Some direct evidence exists for the profound influence on naturalistic and materialistic literature on early Japanese socialism; Japanese socialists refer, in retrospective pieces, to their youthful love of Tolstoy, Ibsen, Tôson, and other writers. We have seen, for instance, that Arahata Kanson joined the socialist

cause at a meeting at which Shimazaki Tôson's poetry was recited. However, a more comprehensive examination of this influence necessarily relies on indirect evidence from texts of fiction by socialist writers. One reason is that socialists themselves were consumed with the idea that they were at the forefront of the progressive movements of the world, and were quick to dismiss the value of older writers and of thinkers who did not full-heartedly endorse the most radical revolutionary ideas. New social and political movements emerged constantly, with associated new terminology, leaving older thinkers (whether mainstream, like Natsume Sôseki, or socialist, like Sakai Toshihiko) sensing a serious gap between themselves and their younger counterparts. This tendency to underplay the influence of naturalism on socialist literature has affected Japanese scholarship of the latter.⁵⁹ In a conversation with Sofue Shôji, a scholar of early proletarian literature,⁶⁰ when I suggested that many socialists made a progression from anarchism to communism (something indisputably true in terms of group affiliation), Sofue replied that for many this was not so much an intellectual progression (i.e., being won over by Marxist logic) but part of a much more chaotic, emotional response to ideological movements which appeared and then were superceded with breathtaking speed. Sofue saw the Japanese sympathy for anarchism as based more on a general attraction to rebellion against social oppression (of the sort that took place in peasant rebellions in the 19th century, for instance) than on being specifically persuaded by the writings of, say, Kropotkin. By the same token, the movement from anarchism to Marxism did not necessarily involve a contradiction in the minds of the individuals involved.

⁵⁹ See Horikiri, 27, for a discussion of Arahata Kanson's early exposure to naturalist literature.

⁶⁰ Tokyo, October, 2002.

Shiroyanagi Shûko

One literary figure whose work embodies a direct linkage of naturalism and anarchism is Shiroyanagi Shûko (1884-1950). Shûko was a literary critic and writer of fiction, who cited Shimazaki Tôson's Wakanashû as the inspiration for his decision to pursue a career in literature, which he studied at Waseda University. While studying literature, Shûko became involved in Kôtoku Shûsui's Heiminsha group. In 1906, he started the critical journal Kaben with Yamaguchi Shôken and Nakazato Kaizan, which is considered a forerunner of the proletarian literary movement. His novella Ekifu nikki (Diary of a train station worker; 1907), often anthologized in collections of early socialist literature, is a melodramatic yet skillfully realistic portrayal of a laborer at a train station. The young protagonist is disillusioned by the marriage of a girl he loves to the son of an executive of a ship building company, and the story ends with him leaving his job to pursue socialist activism. Shiroyanagi later became a supporter of Japanese imperialism in the Pacific war, becoming the chairman of the Japanese Literary Patriotic Association (Nihon bungaku hôkokukai) in 1942, for which he was included in the purge of war criminals from public office after the war.

What is of interest for our purposes is the way that Shûko linked naturalism with an explicitly anarchistic form of socialism in both his theoretical writings and in his fiction. In an essay published in 1908 in a collection entitled Tekka sekka (Iron flame, stone flame), referring to the scientific socialism and dialectic materialism of Marx and Engels, he wrote:

...as a result of trying too hard to interpret human life and society in terms of science and materialism, the bad habit emerged of exaggerating the importance of society, the State, and groups, or similarly systems and organizations, and sacrificing human individuality to these things. Perhaps as a result of this, in recent years, there has been a counter-reaction in the intellectual world: the idea that the unlimited development of each individual by no means need come into conflict with human social activity; that having no system or no organization does not necessarily mean having no society; that human beings are beings which can have a social existence without a system and a social existence without an organization. This type of thought has become very prominent, but this counter-reaction, just as in the case of philosophy that I have just discussed, is far from ignoring science, far from calling for a return to the thought of the beginning of the 19th century. No, [just as in philosophy, this political movement] seeks to build its thought on a scientific foundation. Figures like Peter Kropotkin, famous as both free-thinker and geologist, and the Italian sociologist Errico Malatesta, can be taken as representatives of this movement.⁶¹

Shûko thus explicitly promoted the keynote concept of anarchism – that the removal of structures of compulsion in society need not lead to chaos (“anarchy” in the popular use of the word). Instead, a world of order without hierarchy is imagined. This movement is praised by Shûko in opposition to the excessive emphasis on class struggle, which overlooks human individualism, and on scientific regimentation, which can lead to authoritarianism; and as sources of this preferred strain of socialist thought, he cites Kropotkin and Malatesta, characteristically anarchist thinkers. This same objection to Marxism would be found in the writings of Ôsugi Sakae and Arahata Kanson a few years later.

Shûko’s anarchistic approach was reflected in his fiction as well. While I will not quote from the full range of his works in this study, I will cite one

⁶¹ Shirayanagi Shûko, Tekka sekka (1908), reprint, (Tokyo: Meiji Bunken, 1965) 208-9.

particularly striking example, the short story “Chikushô koi” (Beast-love, 1905), which shows a clear similarity to vitalist nihilism as well as for later works of anarchistic fiction which will be discussed in Chapter Two. This story concerns a group of six workers in a small ironworks, described as the lowest class of worker, so exhausted by their labor in the inhumanly hot environment that they are robbed of all energy and sexual desire. The one bright spot in the workday is when they can meet Oryû, a pretty young female worker who, unlike the other workers, does not shun them for their low position. A much hated supervisor at the factory, who prides himself on his exploits with women, brags to them that he can seduce any woman he wants to. When the men challenge him to seduce Oryû the manager vows to seduce her within a few days. Shortly after, Oryû stops visiting their work area for several days, and they subsequently see her walking with the supervisor. Hurt and enraged, the six men ambush Oryû and gang-rape her. Following this event, the men’s’ friendship gradually dies as they descend once again into the “hell” of their underground workplace.

This very short and stark story contains no depiction of “class-consciousness,” that awakening to oppression which leads to the decision of the working proletariat to united as a group to overthrow capitalism. The reaction of the young men is not only completely ineffective, they actually victimize a woman of their own class in response to their rage against their inhuman treatment. The idea of socially oppressed and isolated men suffering a damaged sexuality which explodes in a frenzy of destructive behavior is depicted in a similar manner in Tayama Katai’s Jûemon (although Jûemon does not actually commit rape), as we have seen. It is even closer to the scenario in Miyajima

Sukeo's Kôfu. The rape is depicted as a tragedy rather than as a crime: there is nothing inherently bad about the men, but they are dehumanized and take out their anger – and suppressed lust – on a woman who has been a kind of supporter to them. They are, in short, incarnations of the nihilistic, rebellious laborer whose anger would later be directed towards constructive, class-conscious revolt in works like Kobayashi Takiji's The Factory Ship.

CHAPTER 2

THE FLOWERING OF POLITICAL ANARCHISM AND ANARCHIST THEORY (1911-1923)

Socialist literary activity and struggle with censorship during the “winter years”

The 1911 execution of Kôtoku Shûsui and eleven other socialists and anarchists in the Great Treason Trial (1910) was followed by an ordinance banning the sale and distribution of all socialist writings, ushering in the so-called “winter years” (fuyu no jidai) of Japanese socialism. While the lives of socialists were not usually directly threatened – although violence by right-wing gangs or police was a real threat - publication and public gatherings became so restricted that there was little leeway for any kind of activism. Descriptions of the lives of socialist activists during this period invariably describe the presence of plainclothes police trailing them and the possibility of being picked up for questioning at any time - not that this was a new practice. Ironically, though, the “winter years” turned out to be splendid ones for the production of socialist literature, and anarchist ideas were central to this flourishing. Ôsugi Sakae, who had escaped prosecution thanks to already being in jail when Shûsui and the others were arrested, was one of the most important figures in this movement.

Much of this study speaks, of necessity, of the “socialist” or “labor” movement rather than of the “anarchist” movement. This is because “anarchist” ideas in Japan were generally adapted and discussed within the context of the socialist movement – including the socialist literary movement. Until the early 1920s, there was no “nonpolitical” anarchist movement, nor had anarchism and communism emerged as mutually antagonistic ideologies. Even in the writings of Ôsugi – viewed by himself and others as Japan’s representative anarchist – the word “anarchism” appears surprisingly infrequently. However, in this chapter I will argue that the socialist literature following 1911 derived much of its character from anarchist and anarchistic ideas, because the concepts which were current at the time about the political purpose of literature were themselves anarchistic.

The effect of repression on social activism: Arahata Kanson’s “Tôhisha”

Ôsugi’s publishing partner, Arahata Kanson (1887-1981), was an important figure in the early anarchist movement and wrote a number of well-regarded short stories in which he tried to articulate his political concerns. Kanson became a socialist at the tender age of 17 in response to Kôtoku Shûsui’s and Sakai Toshihiko’s 1904 announcement that they were leaving the Yorozu Chôhō newspaper because they were unwilling to acquiesce in the position taken by its editor in support of the Russo-Japanese War.

Kanson’s first major work was a lengthy journalistic piece in the reportage tradition entitled Yanaka-mura no metsubôshi (The death of Yanaka Village, 1907), which documented the plight of a farming village whose livelihood had

been destroyed by environmental destruction caused by the Ashio Copper Mines. The poisoning of farmland and other devastating effects on the local residents became the rallying point for a nationwide effort by socialists, students, progressive politicians, and various citizens' groups to force the government to cease the operations. This movement was ultimately suppressed by authorities who viewed the mines as essential to Japan's industrialization, but it left its legacy in a generation of socialists and progressives who would continue to oppose various policies of the Meiji government.

Kanson had a close and unfortunate connection to the Great Treason Incident of 1910-11. In 1906 he had married the anarchist Kanno Suga, but during Kanson's imprisonment between 1908 and 1910 for his role in an anarchist and socialist demonstration (the so-called "Red Flag Incident" of 1908), Kanno left him for Kôtoku Shûsui. As a result of being in jail Kanson, along with Ôsugi Sakae, escaped implication in the plot to assassinate the Emperor which resulted in the executions of both Kanno and Shûsui. Kanson thus survived to become one of the leading figures in the next phase of the anarchist movement, and helped bring about the first truly anarchist literary movement in Japan through his production, with Ôsugi, of the magazine Kindai shisô (published from 1912 to 1914). Kanson later drifted away from anarchism and in 1922 formed the Japan Communist Party with Sakai Toshihiko and Yamakawa Hitoshi. However, Kanson opposed the dogmatic Marxism of Fukumoto Kazuo in the late 1920s, aligning himself with the Rônô-ha (labor-farmer faction) of activists which emphasized the mobilization of farmers in the labor movement. After World War II, Kanson became a respectable spokesman for democratic socialism, and wrote

about Soviet Russia. His autobiography Kanson jiden (Autobiography of Kanson, 1965) provides an engaging portrait of the Japanese socialist movement in the twentieth century.

Kanson was strongly influenced both by Meiji reportage and by Japanese naturalism. He explicitly noted the political implications of naturalism and its affinity with anarchism in an essay written in 1913:

During the period in which Naturalist literature flourished, when the theory of Naturalism was seen not merely as an isolated new movement in the literary arts but was broadened beyond this to a general view of human life, it was declared that, by virtue of its repudiation of all authority, naturalism would develop common ground with socialism and anarchism. And in a certain respect, the creators of art both labored in earnest and suffered in order to portray the “truth of life.” Unfortunately, however, the authors of literature, who should have been trying to determine what society really was by looking at real life, were equipped only with empty learning, shallow knowledge, and chilly sympathy. And above all they lacked the courage to face life and look at it directly.⁶²

Kanson wrote a substantial number of stories for Kindai shisô and other periodicals which described the “winter years” of Japanese socialism following the Great Treason Trial. Between 1911 and about 1920, anarchist, socialist, and other radical activity was severely constrained by police surveillance, censorship, and the prohibition of political meeting. In “Tôhisha” (Those in hiding, 1914),⁶³ a story depicting a meeting of socialists at the home of “S” (Sakai Toshihiko). The word tôhisha indicates a person who has fled or escaped something, but its nuance here is that of someone who has “sold out,” betraying the movement by

⁶² Kanson, Chosakushû, 7, 383.

⁶³ This story is discussed by Jay Rubin in his Injurious to Public Morals: Writers and the Meiji State (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1984), 184-6. Rubin notes that the story is a rare example of literature which comments on the Great Treason case, albeit indirectly.

leaving it although not going so far as to actively sabotage it. The story is written in a reporting style, lacking fictionalized characterization or plot, and there is little sense of distance between the author and the character A.

One of their comrades, M (Morita Ariaki), is a self-confessed “turncoat” who has left the movement entirely in order to protect his child and family. He speaks to them about his reasons. The story conveys what a massive blow the Treason Trial had been on the socialist movement.

From the year ___ onward, the persecution of socialists had grown increasingly severe, and one comrade after another was thrown in jail. Every kind of freedom was constrained: of expression, of assembly, and of publication. They lost their jobs, were driven from their homes, ostracized by their friends and acquaintances, and were constantly made the objects of ridicule by ignorant newspaper reporters. The comrade who died forlornly in the C [Chiba] Prison without exchanging a single word of conversation with the guard! The comrade who, leaving prison, ventured to a new land only to go mad and kill himself! When all of our comrades had reached the limits of exhaustion, K [Kinoshita Naoe] and N [Nishikawa Kôjirô] were the ones who abandoned the group....⁶⁴

O (Ôsugi) and A (Kanson) leave the meeting and remark that although many of their comrades deride M for leaving the movement, they are really no better, since they are theorizing and not really doing anything. The bundan (literary establishment) laments poverty without explaining its cause, but the activists use historical materialism to excuse lack of action, behaving as though a revolution will take place inevitably, with or without their individual efforts. O and A affirm their commitment to activism, and the story ends with A’s thoughts:

⁶⁴ Kanson, Chosakushû, vol. 7, 57-8.

When the young men of the ... middle class and the intellectual class become frightened by persecution and disappear from the scene, it will be the start of the true labor class movement....Their movement does not need to be led by bosses. Their ideology (shugi) does not need to be taught by scholars....⁶⁵

There's no need to say anything. All one needs to do is follow the path one has chosen, without talking about it.⁶⁶

These passages indicate two trends of the literary socialist movement of the time: an increasing conviction that laborers needed to conduct reform or revolution by themselves, and an emphasis on individual action and the development of individual class-consciousness. The story discusses the larger cause of the labor rights movement in intimate conjunction with the issue of the protagonist's personal quest for fulfillment in his life. This section will discuss the latter issue, in an anarchist context, at length.

If many radicals had accepted Shūsui's position that enacting social change through parliamentary reform was impossible, the "direct action" he advocated was all the less possible in the post-Treason Trial political climate. However, literary activity was still possible, and writers like Ôsugi, while not capable of commercial success, could make a living through writing for and publishing journals that were sold by subscription. What was essential was the ability to play the game of navigating the censorship system through careful control of the language and content of published works and, often, informal consultation with those officials who decided what could and could not be published.

⁶⁵ Kanson, Chosakushû, vol. 7, 63.

⁶⁶ Kanson, Chosakushû, vol. 7, 63.

While censorship and other restrictions undoubtedly hampered the spread of progressive and socialist ideas, the generation of socialist writing in the “winter years” displayed a diversity and sophistication not found in the didactic writing of Shûsui or the earlier social and socialist fiction. A profusion of social and political theory imported from Europe and America brought new complexity to the critique of industrial capitalism, focusing on issues such as women’s rights and imperialism and putting increasing emphasis on the need to liberate the laboring class from within through education and organization.

This diversity of ideas was unified by a single common factor: a powerful current of individualistic thought. A stubborn refusal to subordinate individual human beings to a collective cause is an essential component of the anarchistic approach to socialism, or, in some cases, the anarchistic critique of socialism. I will suggest later in this study that anarchistic individualism sometimes shows itself in literary discourse despite the author’s apparent emphasis on the collectivistic nature of the socialist movement. Akiyama Kiyoshi sees this as a defining characteristic of anarchist-influenced literature in the Taishô and Shôwa periods.

While the socialism of the Meiji period tried to follow the path of service and charity for a greater good [Shishi jinjin, statesmen and public benefactors in the Confucian tradition], the youth of the Taishô period were also driven by the “demands of life” of the individual ego [ware jishin].⁶⁷

The diversification of the intellectual foundations for socialism – often with strongly anarchist tendencies – was paralleled in socialist literary expression. Social activists recognized the importance of literature and the arts as

⁶⁷ Akiyama Kiyoshi, Anakizumu bungaku shi (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobô, 1975) 23.

vehicles for revolutionary thought, and numerous political thinkers tried their hands at writing fiction and poetry. Coming in the aftermath of Naturalism and later influenced by radical modernist movements such as Dadaism, the result was an extraordinary variety of literary output. Realist fiction, often autobiographical in nature, was perhaps the most common product, but poetry, children's stories, and essays making creative use of colloquial language proliferated as well. Educational "labor drama," too, was produced in abundance, with the participation and sometimes direction of laborers themselves.

The Life of Ôsugi Sakae

Ôsugi was born in 1885 to a prominent military family, and grew up in the town of Shibata in Niigata Prefecture. At the age of 14 he entered the army Cadet School in Nagoya, but was expelled at age 16 after being seriously injured in a duel with a fellow student. At age 18 he entered the French program at the Tokyo School of Foreign Languages (now Tokyo Foreign Languages University), and during this period he became interested in socialism. By 1904, at age 19, Ôsugi had become a writer for Sakai Toshihiko's Heimin Shinbun. He married Hori Yasuko in 1906. In the following years, Ôsugi was active as a writer, translator, and political agitator, and served several prison terms prior to the Great Treason Trial of 1911, notably in 1908 for his role in the "Red Flag Incident" (Akahata jiken), an anarchist demonstration. Following Kôtoku Shûsui's execution, he became the most prominent Japanese anarchist, and struggled to write and publish under heavy police restrictions.

In 1916 Ôsugi became involved with the journalist Kamichika Ichiko and the feminist writer Itô Noe, leading to his separation from Hori and to nearly being stabbed to death by Kamichika. Prior to his marriage, Ôsugi had pursued Hori fervently and receiving Sakai Toshihiko's support, but Hori was considerably older than Ôsugi and had little interest in socialism. It is not surprising that Ôsugi eventually became attracted to young women who were rising stars in the socialist movement. Ôsugi's theories about the value and desirability of "free love," no doubt inspired by the writings of Emma Goldman and other anarchists, assisted in the process. Ôsugi refused to acknowledge any wrongdoing on his part, and claimed that he was actually a shy person at heart, and had never in his life paid for a prostitute. In his view, he made mistakes, but was not nearly as immoral as those men who kept a façade of propriety while constantly deceiving their wives.

Many of Ôsugi's comrades condemned his treatment of Hori Yasuko, leading to a considerable loss of Ôsugi's prestige in socialist circles. However, a loyal circle of young male anarchists, many more radical in their behavior than Ôsugi, supported him enthusiastically. In 1922 he traveled to Europe to meet with Western anarchists who had invited him, and was arrested and deported from France after agitating a crowd at a May Day gathering near Paris. Following his return to Japan, in the chaos following the Great Kantô Earthquake of September 1923, he was murdered by military police along with Itô Noe and her six-year-old nephew. Japanese anarchism thus lost its most charismatic figure and one of its few potential leaders.

Ôsugi's publishing activity after the Great Treason Trial

Ôsugi Sakae's Kindai shisô (Modern thought) was published with Arahata Kanson between 1912 and 1914, and the title was revived from 1915-1916. Kindai shisô was originally conceived as a modest effort to revive the socialist movement through less confrontational writings on literature, social theory, and so forth. The tone and content of the publication were adjusted to conform to the idiosyncrasies of publishing laws. Periodicals dealing with political and social issues required a large security deposit, but there was no such requirement for "literary" publications and the latter were treated with greater laxity.⁶⁸ Since censorship was enforced by requiring publications to be submitted to authorities and then banning the sale of unacceptable ones after they had been printed, publishers were heavily constrained by the threat of financial loss. What emerged in practice was a system of self-censorship, sometimes in conjunction with unofficial consultations with the relevant officials.⁶⁹

Despite his brash and daring persona, Ôsugi was prudent to a fault in his dealings with government authorities. He took responsibility for rendering the contents acceptable and went through them with great care, sometimes to the point of angering Kanson. In order to emphasize the "literary" and purportedly nonpolitical nature of the publication, pieces were labeled by genre on the table of contents, viz. "fiction," "poem," "criticism," etc.⁷⁰ As a result, the first volume, twenty-three issues, of Kindai shisô were published without a single ban.

⁶⁸ Ôwada Shigeru, "Ôsugi Sakae, hangyaku seishin to media senryaku," Kokubungaku rinji zôkan (July 2002): 88.

⁶⁹ Jay Rubin discusses this phenomenon in detail Injurious to Public Morals. See his note on p. 180 on how Ôsugi and Kanson avoided censorship by careful choice of topics and pre-publication presentation of the magazine's contents to authorities.

⁷⁰ Ôwada Shigeru, "Ôsugi Sakae, hangyaku seishin to media senryaku," p. 88.

However, by the end of two years Ôsugi had tired of the constant compromises and the inability to express his true views. He and Kanson suspended publication of Kindai shisô with plans to publish a journal entitled Heimin shinbun, named after Kôtoku's publication as an open statement of their intentions. In characteristically dramatic and provocative language, Ôsugi wrote in the final issue that they had tired of the "intellectual masturbation" (Ôsugi's own English coinage) of literary activity. As Ôsugi explained later, he and Kanson expected to be prosecuted, but felt that the stimulation this would provide to the movement would be worth it. Hereafter Ôsugi would be far less successful in eluding the censors.

Ôwada Shigeru remarks that one must wonder how Ôsugi, lying beneath the earth, feels about the fact that his most commonly read works today are the essays from the censorship-dodging, "intellectual masturbation" of Kindai shisô. It is indeed necessary to read between the lines and to consider Ôsugi's actions as well as his words, to obtain a full picture of his revolutionary views. Ôsugi is no mere progressive social scientist. On the other hand, Ôsugi's self-dismissal of his literary pieces is itself a piece of rhetoric written for the occasion, not an earnest refutation of their content – and he was quite willing to reprint these essays in a single volume a few years later. As Akiyama indicates, these pieces indicate a distinct change of approach to social activism, and are as much a response and partial disavowal of earlier socialist thought as they are a reaction to censorship. Although they avoid reference to contemporary politics, the pieces are open in their celebration of social conflict and revolution.

The theme of personal growth, for young intellectuals, naturally involved study and “research.” However, just as critical to personal growth was a kind of spiritual growth which involved the development of one’s own “strength,” “life,” and “vitality.” These concepts, which we have seen in earlier naturalist fiction in the portrayal of “nature” and “life” as powerful forces which from time to time would burst out from beneath the oppressive veneer of civilization, came to be viewed by socialists as critical tools for revolution.

Vitalism, life, and evolution as key concepts

The late 19th century and early 20th century saw a proliferation of the philosophical concepts of “life” and “evolution” in the description of society and history. Darwin’s theory of evolution, in particular, inspired social thinkers to try to apply Darwinian concepts, such as the competitive struggle for survival and the evolution of increasingly complex modes of organization, to human society. Meanwhile, Nietzsche revolutionized the field of philosophy by calling into question absolute values of any sort. His aim was to smash the foundations of absolute morality by showing that God, teleology, and every other source of absolute value were human constructions. In place of these constructions, Nietzsche propounded the “will to power” as an expanding, evolving life force which created its own values, “beyond (conventional) good and evil.” Nietzsche was far from the only thinker to construct a worldview expressing concepts of life and evolution.

Anarchist thought, another product of 19th century Europe, is also replete with vitalist concepts and shows how vitalism can be construed as a justification

for radical political thought. Kropotkin's utilization of natural science to confirm his vision of the evolution of a society based on "mutual aid," and Bakunin's more violent dialectic vision of struggle and conflict bringing about social change, were both social evolutionary, vitalist views which affirmed to some degree the role of life-struggle and even violence in bringing about social change.⁷¹

These ideas were not lost on Japanese intellectuals, who translated European and American works of philosophy, social science, and history, and developed them in their own ways. Suzuki Sadami has even proclaimed "vitalism" (seimei shugi) to be a keyword for understanding Taishō Japanese intellectual and literary culture.⁷² Ôsugi Sakae, a student of such thinkers as Nietzsche, Kropotkin, Bergson, and Sorel, was heavily inspired and preoccupied with the concept of "life." Indeed, he specifically turned to biological works as inspiration for his political thinking, publishing a translation of Jean-Henri Fabre's Souvenirs Entomologiques (Insect Life) in 1922.⁷³

I will use the term "vitalist" to refer to the prominence of the concepts of "life" (understood as will, force, or power) and evolution (the process of the development of modes of life over time) in certain works of literature. While such concepts are of seminal importance in thought systems as disparate as the dialectical materialism of Marx and the orderly social evolution of Spencer, I will limit my exploration of vitalism to its use as a motif or image, and will not attempt a strict philosophical definition.

⁷¹ See Peter Marshall's discussion of "Natural Order" in Marshall, 14-17.

⁷² Suzuki Sadami, "Seimei" de yomu Nihon kindai.

⁷³ Translated as Konchûki (Tokyo: Sôbunkaku, 1922).

Ôsugi's vitalism: the "expansion of life"

In the first issues of Kindai shisô, Ôsugi wrote a trilogy of articles outlining a view of the current state of class conflict, its origin, and an anarcho-syndicalist view of what needed to be done. These articles, which have been reprinted in most Ôsugi anthologies, are (1) "Seifuku no jijitsu" (The reality of conquest, June 1913),⁷⁴ (2) "Sei no kakujû" (The development of life, July 1913),⁷⁵ and (3) "Sei no sôzô" (The creativity of life, January 1914).⁷⁶

The articles may be summarized, respectively, as follows.

"Seifuku no jujitsu": All modern civilizations are founded on the "reality" of the subjugation of one class by another. Originally there was a "golden age" of freedom, but eventually human communities diverged linguistically and culturally, and when they came into conflict with each other, the victorious group would subjugate the losing group, leading to a two-tiered society. Thus, tribal subjugation was the origin of class subjugation. (Ôsugi quotes sociological works propounding this view, and sees it as scientifically established fact.⁷⁷) This subjugation became systematized in law, religion, and other institutions which eventually allowed ruling-class privileges to a few selected members of the subjugated class, and thus fooled the subjected into believing that all people are equal before the law. Thinkers and artists who support democratic reform must

⁷⁴ Ôsugi Sakae zenshû, vol. 2, 21-28.

⁷⁵ Ôsugi Sakae zenshû, vol. 2, 29-38.

⁷⁶ Ôsugi Sakae zenshû, vol. 2, 53-62.

⁷⁷ Ôsugi states in a rebuttal to a review that some of the key material is taken from Frank Ward's Pure Sociology (The MacMillan Company, 1911). See "Igunoranto" (Ignorant), Ôsugi Sakae zenshû, vol. 2, 48.

deal with the reality of subjugation, or their work is worthless deception. The ideal of tranquil beauty is meaningless: artists must seek a beauty of hatred and resistance.

“Sei no kakujû”: Life (sei), taken at the level of an individual human being, is an expanding energy that follows the principle of “fulfillment” (literally, “fulfillment-expansion”). The individual is mandated by the principle of “life” to practice “activity,” which Ôsugi defines as “the development of existing things within space.” A society of subjugators and subjugated, as he has previously described, obstructs the expansion and fulfillment of life for both classes. Both lose their “selves,” the oppressed through lack of freedom to act, the oppressors through arrogance and participation in the active damaging of life.

History has been an endless repetition of revolutions, but the time has come to break the cycle by ending subjugation entirely. This is to be achieved starting with the actions of the few members of the subjugated class who have become conscious of the reality of subjugation. Ôsugi describes his own life as one in which he delights in the beauty of resistance.

“Sei no sôzô”: Ôsugi begins with a quote from Engels’s Socialism: Utopian and Scientific, which states that common ownership of the means of production will free people to control their own destinies rather than be subject to material needs and constraints. Socialism, says Ôsugi, has correctly emphasized that proper material conditions are a precondition for liberation of the individual human mind. Unfortunately, it has lost sight of the fact that liberation of individual volition must also be cultivated as a precondition to the desired common ownership of the means of production. Socialist education must foster

individual freedom and creation – so that laborers are able to destroy the old social system and run society themselves. Syndicalism aims at volitional organization and the development of the individual's will to power.

Ôsugi on vitalism, socialism, and the literary arts

The titles of these pieces alone indicate the central importance of the concept of "life" in Ôsugi's political and artistic views. But he is even more explicit than this.

Life, and the development (kakujû) of life are, it goes without saying, the keynotes of modern thought. They are its alpha and omega. Thus, I must begin by discussing what is meant by life and the development of life[emphasis added].⁷⁸

While it sounds at this point as if Ôsugi will conduct a theoretical discussion of his vitalist views, the articles do not really make any strong theoretical arguments. Rather, they expound on a view of history and society which Ôsugi takes to be obvious, at least to those familiar with socialist thought. The idea of the historical cycle of subjugation and revolution is a commonplace view derived from various sources, and there is no concrete support given to the axiomatic concepts defining life as energy, action, and "the development of existing things within space."

What is of more concern to Ôsugi is what should be done in response to this situation. The final section of "Seifuku no jijitsu," which Ôsugi quotes from at the beginning of the following article, makes clearer the purpose of the sociological speculations:

⁷⁸ Ôsugi Sakae zenshû, vol. 2, 30.

Government! Law! Religion! Education! Morality! The military!
Police! Trials! Parliaments! Science! Philosophy! Literature!

This is how the members of all those classes which exist between the subjugating class and the subjugated class have, whether consciously or unconsciously, become accomplices and aides to systematic violence and deception – just like those intellectuals in primitive times.

This reality of subjugation has been and is the fundamental reality of human society, from tens of thousands of years ago to the present and the immediate future. Until one is clearly conscious of this subjugation, one will never be able to correctly understand any social phenomenon.

To you litterateurs who proclaim the supremacy of individual rights (kojin no ken'i) while priding yourselves on your perspicacity and wisdom: as long as your perspicacity and wisdom fail to deal with this reality of subjugation, or the resistance to it, your works are nothing but games and jokes. They are resignation that seeks to make people forget the gravity of this reality. They are a potent part of systematic deception.

We no longer have anything to do with a beauty of stillness that sends us into useless raptures. We yearn for a beauty of motion that will send us into ecstasy and enthusiasm.⁷⁹ The literature we demand is a creative literature of hatred and resistance against that reality.⁸⁰

Ôsugi thus adds one level of abstraction to his call for revolutionary political activity, by rendering it as an exhortation to literary activity (which would pave the way for political activity). Is this merely camouflage for the censors? The highly abstract tone of the account of the origin of class conflict may be just that, since it difficult to demonstrate that the passage is directed at the present authorities. In the same way, the grouping of art, literature and science together with political institutions and then calling for revolution of the former

⁷⁹ Ôsugi uses the English, or (judging from the pronunciation) French, words here.

⁸⁰ Ôsugi Sakae zenshû, vol. 2, 27-8.

rather than the latter enables Ôsugi to avoid charges of political agitation. But the demand for literary (and other) arts which find beauty in chaos, conflict, anger, and rebellion, is straightforward and it remained a major theme of Ôsugi's career. In various forms, a "literature of action" was the ideal pursued by anarchist and anarchist-influenced writers from the Taishô period onward.

Ôsugi would write more on this topic in coming years in his pieces on popular art and proletarian art and literature, explaining at greater length what a true socialist literature or art should be like. In these writings it becomes clear that the force of Ôsugi's literary and artistic "theory" is rhetorical and impressionistic, not theoretical.

Ôsugi's individualism

The most striking aspect of Ôsugi's social criticism is his individualism. The fundamental unit of "life" is that of an individual person. Thus, the expansion and fulfillment of life are realized in individuals, and similarly, the development of consciousness must take place at the individual level. Ôsugi's purpose, in the context of the socialist discourse of the time, is to re-emphasize individual fulfillment and individual enlightenment, without in any way denying the materialist premises of Marx and Engels, which hold that material conditions shape consciousness rather than the other way around. (It is interesting to note the way Ôsugi, at this stage in history, was freely quoting Marx and Engels in his discussion of socialism, with no hostility. He clearly considers his syndicalism to be part of a socialist family of ideas which includes Marx and Engels's communism. Marx's writing had not yet been widely

translated into Japanese apart from the Communist Manifesto, and the polarization and animosity between anarchists and Marxists would not occur until after the Russian revolution of 1917.)

Ôsugi's individualism is expressed aesthetically rather than theoretically. This notion of the individual expanding and extending his life power is noticeably influenced by Nietzsche (whose Thus Spoke Zarathustra was widely read in Japan), extending to the use of the term "will to power." Ôsugi juxtaposes this aesthetic or spiritual ideal – a Stirnerian or Nietzschean celebration of the free individual – with the historical cycle of subjugation, class conflict, and revolution proposed by materialist philosophers such as Marx.

So strong is Ôsugi's admiration of free, individual action that it threatens to come in conflict with more orderly socialist visions of society. Indeed, in his often-anthologized "Boku wa seishin ga suki da" (I like spirit; 1918), this ambivalence is clearly expressed:

I like spirit. But when that spirit becomes theorized I usually come to dislike it. I dislike it because in the process of theorization, there usually occurs harmonization with social realities, and appeasing compromise. I dislike the deceit.

Ideas which come from pure spirit are rare. Action coming from pure spirit is even rarer.

In this sense, I like the happy-go-lucky democracy and humanitarianism of the literary men. At the very least, it has charm. But I detest it when the legal scholars and political scholars prattle about democracy (minpon)⁸¹ and humanitarianism. Just hearing it makes my skin crawl.

I detest socialism as well. Even anarchism can be a bit trying at times.

⁸¹ Minpon was the coinage of Yoshino Sakuzô (1878-1933), the leading theorist of "Taishô democracy."

What I love best is the blind action of men. The explosion of pure spirit.

Let there be freedom of thought. But let there also be freedom of action. Beyond that, let there be freedom of motive.⁸²

In an earlier essay, Honnô to seizô (Instinct and creativity, 1912), Ôsugi had written that “ideas” (aidea) should be formed derivatively to the process of blind, instinctive action.⁸³ In sum, the individual is for him the basic unit of life activity, and creation and expansion of life are activities of the individual. But the individual can only flourish in this way if he or she is free of external compulsion and brimming with enough “spirit” to take creative, instinctive, and passionate action, even if this action is mistaken.

Ôsugi’s theory of popular literature

Ôsugi’s view of art is presented most clearly in one of his first pieces published after the scandal surrounding his love affairs. In “Atarashiki sekai no tame no atarashiki geijutsu” (A new art for a new world, 1919), Ôsugi presents a theory of popular art using Romain Rolland’s The People’s Theater, which he had translated into Japanese, as a starting point. Ôsugi attacks the pedagogical view of art propounded by Honma Hisao, which sees art as a tool used by an educated elite to enlighten and improve the masses. To the contrary, Ôsugi asserts, a true popular art must be “art by the people, for the people, and of the people,” that is, originating in the masses themselves, who he defines specifically as “common laborers.” Recapitulating his view expressed in earlier works that

⁸² Ôsugi Sakae zenshû, vol. 14, 84.

⁸³ Ôsugi Sakae zenshû, vol. 5, 105-6.

violence and hatred are essential forces in the life struggle of the masses, he declares that good art must deal with the reality of subjugation and oppression, and that as a consequence beauty in art is to be found in hatred, resistance, and chaos.

Ôsugi here accepts the view of European progressives such as Ellen Key that art should serve to revitalize and refresh the masses, but he denies that an intellectual elite can decide what sort of art they need. Rather, the masses themselves must create this art. Such an art, he is sure, would reflect the vitality of the laboring class, being fun, optimistic, vital, and rooted in the present, and would be educational without being prescriptive. If intellectuals have any role at all to play in the creation of this art, it is to work to establish the political conditions which would make such creation possible, for “in order to have an art, a people must first have a country.”

Ôsugi's literary work: themes and rhetoric

For all his prominence in the literary arts debate, Ôsugi himself wrote little fiction or poetry. His “Kusari kôjô” (The chain factory, 1913), which I have discussed in the introduction, is one exception. It portrays an allegorical vision of capitalist society in which the narrator dreams that he is in a factory where the workers toil at making the chains that they themselves are wrapped in. In general, however, Ôsugi preferred writing essays, which always project the strong persona of the author; he does not seem to have had an interest in creating fictional characters. Even “Kusari” can be treated as a type of essay. He did, however, write a considerable amount of autobiographical work.

Ôsugi's Jijoden, or autobiography, was serialized in Kaizô between 1921 and 1922. The autobiography can be described as a work of popular literature in style and content. It is written in a colloquial, entertaining style, and clearly aimed at an audience familiar with Ôsugi's exploits, painting a portrait of a free-spirited anarchist who discovers his calling through struggling against society's various attempts to suppress him. Ôsugi held that intellectuals, rather than trying to educate the masses, should immerse themselves in the lives of laborers in order to learn from them, and his autobiography does not display overt pedagogical intent. Ôsugi aims first to entertain and second to portray himself in a positive light by emphasizing his sincerity, courage, and success in the face of oppression.

Ôsugi's autobiography is written in thoroughly colloquial language. While he makes little use of dialect, his rough, frank style serves to express his individualistic philosophy and to create his self-image of a free spirit who embodies his principles in his life. This is clear in the many passages showing his defiance of authority and his compulsion to take the lead of any group of people he was involved with. Ôsugi also does not fail to express his disdain for his enemies; Kamichika Ichiyo, for example, is referred to by her family name with no honorific. Certain motifs appear to express Ôsugi's contempt for capitalism. Twice he derogates someone by saying that "knowing him, he probably became a moneylender."

Ôsugi also relates a number of ghost stories from his childhood, which bring a sort of folk authenticity to his writing. The most interesting (and disturbing) story concerns a period of Ôsugi's childhood in which he killed

animals such as cats and dogs. One day, after killing a cat in a particularly odious manner, he was possessed by its vengeful spirit, and raised his hand and meowed like a cat. His mother immediately understood what had happened and slapped him until he snapped out of it. Ôsugi says that he was never cruel to animals after that incident.

Ôsugi is frank in his discussion of sexuality, which doubtless increased the popular appeal of his work, although censorship limited what he could say. He portrays himself as sexually precocious: by the age of 10, he had “done the sort of things adults do” with a girl named Ohana. In school, he was initiated into homosexual activity by older students, and this activity was evidently an important part of school life, since friendships and rivalries were predicated on it.

Ôsugi later returns to the theme of sexuality in his account of his stabbing by Kamichika Ichiko in “Obake o mita hanashi” (My encounter with a ghost, Kaizô, 1922). Here he emphasizes the innocence of his intentions, his fatigue through illness, and Kamichika’s irrationality. In an interesting link, he refers to his childhood experience of being possessed by the spirit of a cat, and declares that recently he has been visited by the living “vengeful spirit” of Kamichika, having nightmares about her which continued for three nights. Ôsugi’s account of the “Hayama incident” caters to public curiosity while defending its author.

Ôsugi typically does not try to portray himself as morally upright in his activities, and includes incidents in which he appears to be impulsive, cruel, and self-centered. However, the apparent honesty of his narrative attracts sympathy

from the reader, and even makes a case for his “alternative morality.” His persona is that of a radical who, through developing principles based on life and living according to those principles, finds his own freedom in an age of oppression.

Romantic love and social activism in Ôsugi Sakae’s *Shikai no naka kara* (Out of the ashes)

Ôsugi Sakae’s one and only “novel” was published in Shinshôsetsu in Sept. 1919. Ôsugi had written extensively on art and literature, outlining his view of what a “people’s” art should be, but he himself had not written fiction, unlike his colleagues Miyajima Sukeo and Arahata Kanson. Interestingly, and significantly, Shikai no naka kara has little in common with the sort of art he was advocating, which was supposed to portray the laboring class in a true yet uplifting way. It is, instead, an autobiographical account of the development of Ôsugi’s relationship with Itô Noe, who was then married to the writer and translator Tsuji Jun. This relationship had developed during Ôsugi’s attempts to practice his theory of “free love” by having relationships with Kamichika Ichiko and Noe while remaining married to Hori Yasuko. The affair culminated in Ôsugi’s stabbing by Kamichika in 1916, which resulted in Kamichika’s trial and imprisonment. Ôsugi’s behavior during these relationships not only embarrassed the socialist movement but also estranged him even from close friends such as Miyajima, who were angered by Ôsugi’s cruel and inconsiderate treatment of Hori and of Kamichika. After Ôsugi’s death, Hori Yasuko published her own account of the love affair, in which she portrayed him as too weak-willed to

choose which woman to be with and shameless in accepting Hori's financial assistance while continuing his other affairs.⁸⁴

How much Ôsugi may have fictionalized the material of the story cannot be known; editor Ôsawa Masamichi placed it together with Ôsugi's autobiography in the collected works, suggesting that there is no prominent departure from the facts. The work can be read and understood without detailed knowledge of Ôsugi's life, but it is difficult to imagine any reader at the time not knowing something about his reputation and the scandals associated with his name. At the same time, Shikai is novelistic in its construction around the single theme of how his relationship with Noe revitalized his commitment to social activism. The story takes place over a period of about one year starting in January 1915.

The narrative takes us through the development of Ôsugi and Noe's relationship, documented through long passages taken from Noe's letters to Ôsugi and articles published by both of them in their respective magazines. The two are brought together by Noe's fervent admiration of Ôsugi's work and Ôsugi's own excitement at discovering a young, talented feminist writer who becomes, as he describes it, "his only woman friend." One senses, however, that a sexual attraction was present from the start, with a willingness on both sides to act, despite Ôsugi's protestations to the contrary. Eliminating all other elements, the narrative tells us virtually nothing about Ôsugi's wife, Hori Yasuko, except in passages which depict her suspicion about his contact with Noe.

⁸⁴ Hori Yasuko, "Ôsugi to wakareru made," Ôsugi Sakae hiroku (Isezaki, Gunma Prefecture: Kokushyoku Sensensha, 1976) 1-24.

Ôsugi's tongue-in-cheek foreword to the story declares it to be a response to his former comrades who, as he saw it, had hypocritically condemned his relationships on moral grounds while keeping their own sexual affairs hidden. "There must be few men who have contributed as much to virtue in relations between the sexes as I have," he reports himself joking to a friend.

Indeed, we should all be thankful that quite a few husbands have begun behaving virtuously towards the wives whom they had been taking quite a bit of trouble to get rid of. After all this time they had begun to understand that lovers and fooling around should be kept secret so far as is possible. And now they are annoyed by how insolent their wives have become.⁸⁵

Regarding the artistic status of Shikai, Ôsugi writes:

I couldn't care less whether or not it is a novel. Originally, I had even labeled it "a non-artistic work" in quotation marks below the title. I did this from the kindness of my heart, to save the idiots of the world from the unnecessary labor of reading it as a work of art.

My only intention for it was to contribute a set of material for evaluating the relationship between the character I call "I" [i.e., Ôsugi] and the character called "N" [Itô Noe] who appear in it. To the fools who spout things off without knowing anything. In particular, to my so-called former comrades.⁸⁶

Ôsugi's disclaimer suggests that there is no need to read the work as containing a profound message or as saying something about society as a whole – or, put differently, to read it as a socialist novel. Given Ôsugi's lack of interest and experience in fiction writing, we might well take his claim at face value and read the story as straight, anecdotal autobiography. On the other hand, readers who do not wish to be included among the "fools" might suspect that Ôsugi's

⁸⁵ Ôsugi Sakae zenshû, vol. 12, 229.

⁸⁶ Ôsugi Sakae zenshû, vol. 12, 230.

tale does have something larger to say about society and social activism – something which would be apparent to those who read it without bias against Ôsugi.

Incidents in Shikai are related simply, for the most part in chronological order. Ôsugi refers to real people by their initials, making them instantly recognizable to readers familiar with his life and with the Japanese socialist movement of the time. This device may have been used by Ôsugi partly to protect himself from censorship or legal action, but the effect is to turn the story into a personal narrative centering on the thoughts and actions of the “I” of the novel.

Shikai opens with the narrator, referred to by the personal pronoun boku, receiving a lengthy letter from “N-ko san” (Noe).⁸⁷ N, a young writer and editor for the feminist journal S (Seitô), has been growing increasingly interested in socialism and anarchism through reading the journals put out by the narrator and A (Arahata Kanson). In the letter, she describes a talk she attended discussing the plight of the villagers of Y Village (Yanaka Village). Yanaka Village had been flooded by the government in order to suppress citizen protests against the activities of the Ashio copper mines, in which copper poisoning and destruction of farmland had led to riots and protests, and had been a rallying cause for Japanese socialists for many years.

The most recent development was that even after Y village had been flooded, some residents were refusing to leave their homes. The prefectural

⁸⁷ Ôsugi adds “ko” to the initials of Hori, Kamichika, and Itô’s given names, but I have eliminated it for readability. At the time, the “ko” ending could function as an optional suffix for a woman’s name, and was not necessarily a part of the “official” name.

government, in response, had threatened to release more water. The villagers and some supporters had declared that they would remain where they were even if they drowned. N was extremely moved by the spirit of the villagers, and felt that it was drawing her towards the narrator's cause and away from her husband, T (Tsuji Jun), who subscribed to an individualistic nihilism and was uninterested in social activism. In contrast, the narrator's response to the situation in Y Village was lacking in compassion. He told a colleague, S (Sakai Toshihiko) that the villagers' resolve to die was "interesting" and that it would be better for the cause for them to all drown.

The narrator then recollects the previous four months he has known N, during which she had praised in writing his determination to publish in the face of continual censorship by the authorities, and in which he had written about her as a rising young talent. N had also assisted the narrator in printing and distributing his publications.

The narrator realizes that he is falling in love with N, and he is sure that her marriage to T is doomed, but he hesitates to respond to her letter with his true feelings. He has not felt true love for over ten years, having spent much time in prison and the rest fully dedicated to social activism, and he is afraid of the burden of love and of losing his friendship with N. He continues to associate with N and T, and he is particularly thrilled when N confides in him by letter that she has a secret project of writing a major work based on her response to the Y Village problem. Meanwhile, the narrator's wife, Y (Hori Yasuko) has become suspicious about the narrator's relationship with N.

The narrator expresses his dissatisfaction with the philosophy of self-perfection which is popular among young progressives. This self-perfection is supposed to be attained in a Zen-like manner by removing oneself from the world. The narrator, however, believes that one can only develop by interacting with one's surroundings and by struggling with and prevailing over the oppression one encounters. In addition, he resents those socialists outside of his small group (and some within) who willingly compromise with the authorities, particularly over the matter of censorship, and who are secretly pleased when the narrator suffers a defeat in his efforts to publish his work. One reason he is attracted to N is that he feels she resists this cynicism.

The narrator recalls an essay he had written called "On Chastity," in the form of an open letter to N.⁸⁸ In it, he had commented on some of her progressive views on this matter, and had challenged her to think them through to their ultimate implications, which might affirm sexual activity for pleasure's sake or relationships with more than one person at once. This is the narrator's "free love theory," which he says he is bold in arguing for but is afraid to put into practice in his life.

The narrator's feelings for N peak in his realization that he himself has become cynical and detached, calling the situation of the villagers of Y Village "interesting" instead of feeling the sorrow and anger that he ought to feel. He wants to recapture N's naïve "sentimentality" for himself – and, clearly, he equates this with having a relationship with her. N, he says, had "emerged like a living flame from the dead ashes of Y Village" – thus the title of the story.

⁸⁸ Actual title, "Shojo to teisô to shûchi to – Noe san ni ataete katawara Kasan o nonoshiru," Shinkôron, 1915.

N publishes two articles defending T's character and declaring her love for him. The narrator thinks that this is a sign that T's and N's marriage is at the breaking point, since she has never discussed her feelings about him publicly before, despite the opinion of many of her colleagues that T is incompatible with her. The narrator becomes friendlier with T, sharing a common interest in the work of Max Stirner with him. N and T return to N's home in Kyushu for N to give birth to a child. O finds his interest in N abating in her absence, and by the time she returns to Tokyo, he has become involved with a journalist named I (Kamichika Ichiko).

The ending to the story is anticlimactic and, of course, ironic. Every reader of this work would have known that Ôsugi had quickly become involved with Noe, and attempted to persuade all three women of the practicability of a "free love" arrangement in which the love affairs could be carried on simultaneously, with all members having economic independence. Ôsugi was thus writing from the position of having become Noe's common-law husband. Kamichika's later attempted murder of Ôsugi was precipitated by her own emotional instability and realization that Ôsugi had never been in earnest about his feelings for her; Hori Yasuko would also become disgusted at the arrangement, particularly at Ôsugi's insistence on having Noe present during his recuperation from the stabbing while accepting Hori's care and financial support. Ôsugi's "free love theory" proved to be unworkable and hurtful to the parties involved, and friends found Ôsugi's behavior immature and hypocritical. What one does have to grant to Ôsugi was that his relationship with Noe proved a

lasting one, though still not a long one; they remained together until their tragic murders in 1923.

In the introduction, a “friend who loves paradoxes” laughs at Ôsugi’s claim to be a contributor to sexual morality; in the final sentence, Ôsugi gets involved in a “foolish” relationship with the wrong woman, Kamichika. We do, indeed, see much paradox in Ôsugi’s self-portrait. Even without hearing the story from the point of view of others involved, the author appears as a weak-willed, inconsiderate, and even devious character. However, in the end, the story affirms Ôsugi’s relationship with Noe, and suggests that his own moral failings are inconsequential in comparison with the conventional, hypocritical sexual behavior of men such as his “former colleagues.” Without claiming that sexual liberation would bring about a utopia, Ôsugi does affirm it in the context of his own life.

In Shikai, and his other autobiographical writings, Ôsugi followed a precedent of socialist autobiography in the tradition of Kropotkin abroad and Sakai Toshihiko in Japan. His distinctive contribution, though, was to establish a model for writers who wished political action, personal life, and literature to form a unity. This is what he advocated and what he put into effect – for better or worse.

Miyajima Sukeo

Moriyama Shigeo writes that Miyajima Sukeo (1886-1951) can be considered “the only literary man (bungakusha)” among the group of anarchist writers that included Ôsugi Sakae, Arahata Kanson, and Tsuji Jun. Among these

men he was the only one to produce extensive amounts of fiction. Miyajima's fiction was outstanding among the "labor literature" of the era. His best work, based on his personal experiences, portrays episodes in the lives of individual workers, which capture their exploitation and suffering as well as their vitality and awakening social consciousness. Miyajima continued his literary activity, which took a left-wing stance while diverging from principles of the Marxist proletarian literary movement, until his decision, in 1930, to leave his family and devote himself exclusively to the practice of Zen, and later True Pure Land, Buddhism. His work included children's stories and a fictional portrait of Tsuji Jun.

Miyajima was born Miyajima Nobuyasu to a large family in 1886 in Shibuya, Tokyo; his father came from a retainer family to the Ôgaki daimyô in Mino province and worked for the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce. His childhood was unhappy, primarily due to his father's violent abuse over many years starting at the age of three; his mother was terrified of his father and often spoke of suicide. Miyajima sees in Miyajima's tumultuous childhood the formation of two contrasting tendencies. One was the appeal of the blade, or violence; the other was a world-weariness and resignation. Certainly Miyajima developed in his childhood strong tendencies for both violent emotions and deep depression which remained with him throughout his life. In his fictional works he showed strong awareness of and insight into these emotions, which to him were the motivating forces for social rebellion, whether put to constructive or destructive use.

Miyajima was forced by his father to work as a boy helper (kozô) for a sugar wholesaler at the age of thirteen. From then on, he held a great variety of jobs, including training as a dentist, working at the Mitsukoshi department store, shepherding, and coloring postcards. At age 16, having decided to become a writer, he visited the home of Kôda Rohan and managed to meet the writer, who kindly advised him that becoming a writer required an education and experience in the world. At age 24 Miyajima worked at the Takatori tungsten mine in Ibaraki Prefecture for a year through the introduction of a relative of his mother. From 1915, already 29, he became an avid reader of Ôsugi and Kanson's Kindai shisô, and before long had joined their study group and commenced work on his first novel. In his autobiography, Miyajima described his encounter with this group as life changing.

[The late Meiji and the Taishô periods] were utterly dark and heavy times. People who worked did nothing but work so they could breathe easy at the end of the day.... [From the time I met Ôsugi] I felt as if I had suddenly been bathed in light...Revolution – what appeal the word has!⁸⁹

Throughout his involvement with the labor movement, Miyajima's chief interest was the writing of fiction. His collected works do contain some discussions of labor literature, such as Rôdô bungaku no shuchô (What labor literature asserts, 1922), which, reminiscent of Ôsugi (but with different class language), repudiates "bourgeois beauty" in favor of labor beauty. However, these pieces are unoriginal in comparison to his fiction.

This study will focus on Miyajima's first novel and most famous work, Kôfu (The Miner), and discuss several of his other fictional works. A full study of

⁸⁹ Miyajima Sukeo, Miyajima Sukeo chosakushû, vol. 7, 79.

his work would require a discussion of his later works of fiction as well as his religious career and writing, but this is beyond the scope of the present study.

Miyajima Sukeo's *Kôfu*

Kôfu was published in 1917 as a single volume and immediately banned from sale by government authorities who, without citing specific passages, found it subversive as a whole. Like a number of his fictional works, it draws from his experience working in a managerial position at a private mine between 1909 and 1910. Miyajima wrote his first and much shorter version of the story, entitled Kôfu no shi (Death of a Miner), between 1915 and 1916, and was encouraged by Kubota Akiho, editor of Kokumin bungaku, to expand it to novel length. Starting with Miyajima's onetime housemate Miyachi Karoku, the work was supported enthusiastically by his colleagues in literary socialist circles, including Ôsugi Sakae and Sakai Toshihiko, who both contributed prefaces.

Kôfu was the most successful piece of fiction written by an adherent to the anarchist movement, if judged by its reception at the time as well as the enduring attention given to it by critics. Despite the immediate ban imposed on it a large number of copies managed to be distributed, and it was reprinted, with deletions of some objectionable passages, several years later. In addition to Moriyama Shigeo's critical biography of Miyajima (1987) and other articles, a number of other scholars in Japan have continued to revisit his works.

Kôfu begins with a scene of a miner, Ishii Kinji, chiseling and dynamiting with his assistant. He goes down to the boiler (hanba, workers' barracks) for lunch and finds the boiler chief (hanbagashira), Hagita, striking a young miner

named Satô for physically attacking a manager who had deliberately underappraised Satô's output. Ishii persuades Hagita to stop, but Satô's dismissal is inevitable. Ishii invites Satô to drink with him. Outdoors and away from the unfriendly other miners, Satô is amazed to see the normally sullen and violent-tempered Ishii jovial and relaxed. Ishii had formerly wandered all over the country from mine to mine, but gained such a fearsome reputation that he now cannot find work anywhere else.

Back at the boiler, Ishii nearly comes to blows with a low-level manager, Noda, who is in the middle of stirring up discontent among the miners. Ishii believes that Noda acts as a spy by reporting their activities to the management. Ishii is consumed by loneliness at the departure of Satô and the other workers' indifference.

Born to mining parents, Ishii has worked since a child and knows no other world. His father died of a mining illness and his mother remarried, leaving him alone; as a teenager he was already a highly skilled miner and went freely from job to job. Ishii tried to follow his father's advice to get out of mining, but when he tried to find work in Tokyo he was treated as an outcast and could find no better work.

Promised a generous reward, Ishii spent one winter alone in the mountains surveying an abandoned gold mine, only to be betrayed by the owner, who got rich from his efforts. Later, Ishii was a leading figure in the Yashû (Ashio) riots. Although the rioting resulted in better treatment of the miners, Ishii was kept at a distance by his colleagues. He began to get in knife fights and to rape the wives of his fellow miners, until his reputation was so bad that he was

unable to find work anywhere. He keeps his present job only through Hagita, who sympathizes with him. .

Ishii makes nocturnal, and unwelcome, visits to Oyoshi, the wife of another miner, and becomes increasingly infatuated with her. He asks her to run away with him but she refuses. Having lost Oyoshi, Ishii becomes increasingly melancholy and violent.

One evening Ishii attacks a villager named Jirô, whom he despises for being a “kept man” for an older woman, and nearly stabs him to death. Hagita presents money to the mistress and prevents Ishii from being prosecuted.

One day, a young worker falls to his death after being hit by a falling rock. His body is gruesomely mutilated. At the wake, Ishii offers to marry the miner’s widow and berates the other miners for their unwillingness to confront their exploitation. He is treated as a pariah.

The mine is expanded and plans are made to set up a new boiler, with Noda vying to become the boiler chief. Noda’s “uncle” (in the mining “family”) Ôsawa comes to stay with him, apparently to act as Noda’s bodyguard and enforcer.

For the summer Bon festival, the management brings in a traveling theater troupe to keep the men out of trouble. Ishii meets a village woman at the play and takes her out in the woods.

The next day Ôsawa invites Ishii to drink and begins boasting of his fighting ability. When he proposes a drink pledging “brotherhood,” Ishii rebuffs Ôsawa and they fight with weapons until both collapse, seriously wounded.

Noda has Ôsawa taken away. The miners, full of hatred for Ishii, turn on him and batter him to death.

Anarchist motifs in Miyajima's *Kôfu*

We have seen from a discussion of Ôsugi's essays on art and society how anarchist thought in the period following the Great Treason Trial emphasized the development of the life force and consciousness of individuals, and celebrated rebellion as a tool for social revolution. Miyajima, as a member of Ôsugi's circle, was exposed to the same artistic and intellectual influences and was a member of Ôsugi's syndicalist study group at the time of *Kôfu's* publication. Since Miyajima's fiction lacks abstract social commentary, one does not find passages clearly evocative of Ôsugi's thought. However, we are helped somewhat by Miyajima's (rather awkward) description of his understanding of anarchism in his autobiography:

Anarchism denies all authority absolutely, so it does not engage in concrete theorizing about government. Many [anarchists] hate government by nature, and dislike both being ruled and ruling. This leads to the belief that government should always be rejected and destroyed. That is the reason [anarchism] is said to lack concreteness. While rejecting authority (this is supposed to be the ultimate aim of all socialists) on the grounds that an authority-free government cannot be achieved by using government to change government, one can hope for a time without government. We must start by bringing into existence a world without government, and conducting all social affairs through the unity of all people. That is the purpose of the revolution.⁹⁰

While this passage is not eloquent, it does indicate an adherence to a specifically anarchist philosophy, and not merely to a vaguely-defined

⁹⁰ Miyajima Sukeo, *Miyajima Sukeo chosakushû*, vol. 7, 80-81.

patchwork of idea referred to as “socialism.” The unwillingness to countenance authority even when postulated as a temporary part of a necessary process towards freedom, and the utopian belief that non-coercive forms of social organization will come into being when authority is removed, are fundamentally anarchist ideas. Miyajima also reveals that for him, a preference for anarchism is partly a matter of character. And we will see in his fiction that struggle against authority as a personal issue is a major theme of his fiction.

Critique of exploitation of laborers in society

In Kôfu, Miyajima does not attempt a bird’s-eye view of society, which would render objectively the usual socialist concerns of exploitation and class struggle. Its perspective is that of a single miner, Ishii Kinji, who has known nothing but life as a miner. Exploitation and class struggle are ever present – one might say that there is not a scene in the story where they are not determining entities – but they are seen only in their immediate, physical manifestations. Furthermore, Kôfu does not suggest a way in which the oppression which permeates the story could be overcome. Thus, as Ôsugi noted in 1921, Kôfu is not “labor literature” in the sense of portraying the laborer and the labor movement as inseparable entities. Its protagonist, says Ôsugi, knows the despair of the laborer but not the hope of the labor movement⁹¹

The most concrete symbol of class exploitation is the owner of the mine. However, in Kôfu the owner’s existence is suggested rather than portrayed directly. The only actual description of a mine owner is in the scene from Ishii’s

⁹¹ “Rôdô undô to rôdô bungaku,” Ôsugi Sakae zenshû, vol. 5, 59-80.

past when he was deceived by the owner of an abandoned mine who hired Ishii to spend a grueling winter in the mountains surveying it, promising a “generous reward” if Ishii’s surveying made the mine salable. The mine made the owner wealthy, but Ishii received a mere 100 yen – enough to support an average family for two or three months, but a pittance to a member of the relatively well-paid mining profession.⁹² Ishii had visited the owner’s inn, carrying a dagger. “The owner, smug from having received a mass of wealth all at once, had beautiful women at his side. In front of him was an array of drinks.”⁹³ The image of a mine owner as living in debauchery from his profits, with neither interest nor competence in running the mine, is repeated in Miyajima’s other mining stories.

The essential lack of good faith on the part of the owner is found throughout the entire mining community. Thus, Satô’s attack on a superior is provoked by that man’s deliberately underestimating the yield of the ore he has submitted. Satô is pummeled by Hagita, his boiler chief (mainly because company officials are present; Hagita actually sympathizes with him), and immediately dismissed from his job. With no power to appeal unfair treatment, the only response to authority, whether to an immediate superior or to a mine owner himself, is physical violence.

In the mining management hierarchy, there are decent individuals, such as Hagita, by whose offices Ishii keeps his job. There are also exploiters, such as Noda, a miner aspiring to become a boiler chief by manipulating both his fellow miners and his superiors. Noda, the constant target of Ishii’s anger, is indirectly

⁹² Satô Masaru, note, Kindai shakai shugi bungaku shû, Nihon kindai bungaku taikei Vol 51 (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1972), 88.

⁹³ Miyajima Sukeo, Miyajima Sukeo chosakushû, vol. 7, 32.

responsible for his death by bringing Ôsawa to the mine and by removing him and him alone from the scene after both he and Ishii have collapsed from their wounds.

One may note, however, that the criticism of the mining system is based on the immorality of the mine owner and others in the hierarchy, not on criticism of the system itself. Thus there might be some grounds to attribute to Miyajima the bourgeois humanism that Marxists would later reject wholesale. Countering this point is the sheer totality of the stark, cruel conditions of mining life, which only wholesale uprising would be likely to alter.

An understanding of the structure of mining society and culture in Japan at the time of *Kôfu*'s composition is essential to reading it correctly. Japanese miners in the Edo period had lived in communities with a gang-like system of bosses and underlings, known by such names as the tomoko kumiai system. Tomoko is a special term meaning friend, buddy, or "brother"; kumiai is, of course, the modern Japanese term for a labor union, but used here merely in the sense of organization or even "gang." Characters in *Kôfu* refer to each other as kyôdai (brother), aniki (elder brother), and so forth, indicating their hierarchical relationships.

The tomoko system is described by Ôta Sadayoshi in his Ashio dôzan no shakaishi (Social history of the Ashio copper mines). Miners joined the groups in solemn rituals and were bound by oath to the responsibilities of their positions. The primary function of the system was to provide for the welfare of its members, and these unions were connected in a network throughout Japan. Miners who became ill and unable to work – an inevitable occurrence – were able

to travel from mountain to mountain and receive food and shelter from other unions.

By the late Meiji period, the tomoko system had been officially replaced by “direct administration” by a mine owner through the management apparatus of a modern, capitalist company. A very pertinent fact about the text of Kôfu is that the word tomoko in the original manuscript was replaced in several places by the word tomodachi (friend) for printing, suggesting that the implications of the former word were no longer widely understood.⁹⁴

In reality, though, the tomoko system continued to yield a powerful influence on mining life. The hanba was a modern administrative work unit, but the hanbagashira or “boiler chief” was a powerful, boss-like figure with wide control over the lives of the miners. In Miyajima’s Kôfu and other mining works, the tension between the two opposing power systems – that of the traditional gangs and that of the company - show up in various incidents.

Moriyama explains at some length the meaning of Ishii Kinji’s conflicts with the other miners in the context of the tomoko system.⁹⁵ Miners were divided into resident miners (ji kôfu⁹⁶) and traveling miners (watari kôfu). Resident miners were associated with a single mine and often lived there with their spouses. Traveling miners tended to be unmarried, and could move from mine to mine in response to mining conditions. Ishii represents the latter type, and this is indicated in the way years of wandering have accustomed him to outdoor survival tactics such as eating snakes and his ability to hide from authorities

⁹⁴ Moriyama, Bungaku anakizumu no senryû 116.

⁹⁵ Moriyama, Bungaku anakizumu no senryû 112-123.

⁹⁶ The character for ji means “self,” but may originally have been “earth,” i.e., “local.” Moriyama, Bungaku anakizumu no senryû 119.

during the miners' riots. However, Ishii is on the verge of expulsion from mining society, and is thus unable to change workplaces as he did in his youth.

Noda, on the other hand, is a resident miner, and is thus working for his own promotion in that particular mine, including his acting as an informer on other miners. This is what draws Ishii's hatred. While Ishii, as a traveling miner, is less bound than the resident miners to the traditional obligations of the mining brotherhood, he has a traditionally powerful sense of duty and propriety. This is essentially the cause of Ishii's alienation from the other miners, which goes back to the time of the Ashio riots when the tomoko refused to take him in.

He could only hate and despise their low, greedy natures, talking about friendship and brotherhood (tomodachi⁹⁷ da no kyôdaibun da no) as long there was no trouble, making a show of faithfulness and duty and sticking together in life and death - then as soon as something happened, cunningly making use of another man's courage while single-mindedly pursuing profit and ease.⁹⁸

Miyajima's work does not, then, critique capitalist society merely in simple terms of oppressor and oppressed. While the mine owner is indeed a figure drawing contempt, in Kôfu human relationships which are essentially feudal in nature are shown to persist, and the associated values of loyalty and (on the other hand) submissiveness to authority inform the lives of the miners. The social structure and value systems portrayed in the work are complex, and Miyajima does not attach a specific social or political interpretation of Ishii's plight to the story.

⁹⁷ Originally tomoko.

⁹⁸ Miyajima Sukeo chosakushû, vol. 1, 33.

Vitalism in Ishii Kinji's relation to nature

Stylistically, *Kôfu* is heavily influenced by naturalism – Miyajima had been an avid reader of Tayama Katai and Shimazaki Tôson - and its harsh portrayal of violence and sexuality as ruling forces in human society. It is, indeed, the violent behavior of Ishii Kinji that gives the novel its coherence and interest. This violence is convincingly attributed to a character who came of age doing hard labor in a world of strict hierarchy sustained by brutal violence.

Ishii's characterization, though, is not strictly realistic, for within the ethos of the novel his emotions take on the quality of primeval, uncontrollable forces of nature, which determine his interactions with other people. Thus, in *Kôfu* we find, in addition a "scientific," Naturalistic portrayal of real human conditions, a more mysterious world comprised of natural forces with which human beings are sometimes in harmony and sometimes in conflict.

One of the most distinctive features of Miyajima's narration of *Kôfu* is the use of imagery personifying nature. The story opens with a description of the coming of spring in the mountains, with the new leaves "laughing" as they flutter in the wind and a sense of life and joy all around.

The spring sunshine flowing from the endless blue sky cast the same light and warmth onto the range of mountains deep in the Hitachi region. Awakened from the long, gloomy winter, the leaves on the trees, chubby like the hands of babies, stretched themselves vigorously toward the sky. From time to time the playful spring wind passed through, tickling their soft skin, and the budding leaves would glimmer, laughing soundlessly. The valleys echoed with the frenzied voices of warblers and cuckoos.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Miyajima Sukeo chosakushû, vol. 1, 4.

This imagery is in stark contrast to the scenes of violence and death in the cold darkness of the mine (or in other dark, deserted areas) that will dominate the story to follow. The new life of spring outside the mine contrasts with dark, damp, unhealthy, and dangerous conditions of the mine.

On that day, Ishii Kinji, a miner from the Number Two Barracks of the Ikei Mine, was working as usual in the black darkness of the mine. The shaft entrance, enclosed by pine trees stripped of their bark and dried like bones, sucked away all heat and light. As a result, the passages, which had been made by splitting the flesh of the mountain and digging out its bones, were filled with a cold, black darkness which was eternally still.¹⁰⁰

The mine is not only an inhospitable environment for human beings; the act of mining is portrayed as a violation or rape of nature. The passages are full of dynamite smoke as Ishii prepares another area for blasting:

In this territory of deathlike darkness and silence, in the pauses between the sharp echoes through the rocks of the steel hammer which Ishii wielded, the water which dripped from the skin of the mountain made a gentle weeping sound.¹⁰¹

Ishii, with his mining gear soaked in mud, works relentlessly, and there is a certain ominous quality to his appearance.

His long hair was fixed to his forehead with a headband, but his eyes, which flashed beneath the furrowed eyebrows of his pale face like those of a snake, and his slightly twisted, pursed mouth, seemed to reveal some part of his personality.¹⁰²

The grim, violent side of Ishii's character, shown in the manner in which he works as well as in his snakelike eyes, and his inability to express his life-

¹⁰⁰ Miyajima Sukeo chosakushû, vol. 1, 4.

¹⁰¹ Miyajima Sukeo chosakushû, vol. 1, 4-5.

¹⁰² Miyajima Sukeo chosakushû, vol. 1, 5.

energy except through destruction, are his tragic flaws. At the same time, the first scene of Ishii Kinji at work is not merely a negative one. Miyajima shows him completely absorbed in his labor, a personification of a ruthless, masculine strength.

Each time the mountain was blasted with dynamite, it writhed its large body and groaned as if in pain. But for Ishii, the blasting of the iron-hard rock to powder to the terrible booming sound was the unsurpassed pleasure of each day. The joy, too, of piercing the flesh of the mountain with each blow of his hammer to the chisel – the flesh which had been untouched for untold millennia past– he savored greedily.¹⁰³

The scene confers a powerful beauty to the activity of mining, which from the perspective of health and safety is virtually antithetical to human life. The violent eroticism in this image is clear, and indeed this scene is far more erotic than any of the passages depicting Ishii's sexual interactions with women. Ishii is a mythologized miner in this respect: the mountain is his true lover, in comparison to the other miners who complain about working conditions while living to drink, gamble, and buy women. Ishii is not above such activities, but he is in his element while working.

Moriyama Shigeo points out the special quality of Ishii's relationship to nature in his discussion of Arishima Takeo's "Kain no matsuei" (The descendents of Cain, 1917):

[Regarding the mutual relationship of the protagonist with nature, in] *Kôfu*, nature is portrayed as the flesh of the mountain which Ishii "pierces with each hammering of the blade of one's chisel," and the relationship is one of pleasure in struggling with nature while taking joy in labor. On the other hand, nature is a "gentle mother" which holds and comforts his spirit, and a womb that soothes Ishii's raging emotions

¹⁰³ Miyajima Sukeo chosakushû, vol. 1, 5.

when he “goes into nature out of sight of men and spends untold time absorbed in thought.”¹⁰⁴

Moriyama adds Nakayama Kazuko’s observation that Ishii “compensates for what he cannot find in human society by finding it in nature.”¹⁰⁵ Arishima’s Nin’eimon, a figure similar to Ishii Kinji in his strength as a laborer and his brutal, uncompromising rebellion, has, by contrast, no such bond to nature. To him, apart from comprising the object of agriculture, nature is felt as an impersonal, oppressive force – in rain, snow, and blazing sunshine that beat down upon him.

As shown in the character of his labor and in such scenes as his hunting for snakes, Ishii’s interaction with nature is not necessarily peaceful. In play as well as in work, his life involves struggle and confrontation. In his elemental activity, Ishii symbolizes the kind of life struggle and expansion which theorists like Ôsugi affirmed in their writings about society and morality.

Ishii Kinji as nihilistic rebel

From the point of view of Ishii, society has let him down in every way, in the early loss of his family, in his inability to find work in Tokyo, in his deception by the mine owner, and finally in his ostracism from mining society. With his insuppressible life energy and inability to dissimulate or compromise, Ishii’s acts within mining society are almost exclusively ones of resistance and dispute.

¹⁰⁴ Moriyama, Bungaku anakizumu no senryû 207-8.

¹⁰⁵ Moriyama, Bungaku anakizumu no senryû 208. The article referred to appeared in Nihon bungaku, January 1973.

Indeed, this is the essence of Ishii's character as conceived of by Miyajima. He described his intentions as follows.

I wanted to write about the life of someone who lived as himself in this life, honestly and utterly without compromise. Furthermore, even if he was led in this way to a tragic end, for him that would not be a tragedy, but a pleasurable, and honorable, conclusion.¹⁰⁶

Ôsugi, too, saw the primary value of Kôfu in its depiction of a figure of rebellion or resistance (hangyakusha), and expressed hope that Miyajima would, like Gorky, evolve as a writer to portray a greater variety of hangyakusha, ideally, ones who engaged in rebellion that was not blind, but conscious.¹⁰⁷

Having established considerable sympathy and admiration for Ishii, and having convinced the reader that his aggressive behavior is a justified response to injustice, Miyajima demolishes the possibility of Ishii's becoming a conventional hero by having him commit assaults which cannot be justified. The first one is his repeated nocturnal visits to Oyoshi, the wife of a miner who works a different shift from Ishii, to rape her at knifepoint. The second is his attack on the village barber Jirô, simply because Ishii despises his relationship with the older woman. By completely abandoning himself to predatory aggression, Ishii demonstrates that the hatred the other miners feel for him is not merely because he opposes their cowardly and self-serving hypocrisy. It is an essential feature of his character.

At the same time, while not justifying Ishii's actions, Miyajima goes to pains to show how Ishii views his own actions. After the attack on Jirô, Ishii

¹⁰⁶ Moriyama, Bungaku anakizumu no senryû 151.

¹⁰⁷ Ôsugi Sakae zenshû, vol. 5, 269.

apologizes to Hagita for the trouble he has caused, adding that he doesn't think that he can control his own violent behavior.

The affair with Oyoshi is a more involved matter. As terrible as his violation of Oyoshi is, Ishii's actions take on a pathetic aspect when he falls in love with her and is convinced that she returns his feelings. Oyoshi gives signs, although not clear ones, that she may not entirely dislike the relationship, filling Ishii with hope. For a brief time his torment and frustration subside, replaced by moments of happiness and tranquility. However, when Oyoshi rebuffs Ishii's urgings to run away together, he strikes her and storms out, berating her as a "slut" who is unfaithful to her husband and not willing to be with him either. From this point Ishii ceases his visits to her and becomes increasingly morose.

Ishii thus emerges as a character who is at once a terrible human being and a victim. Despite his superb abilities as a laborer, he is incapable of escaping his life of violence and suffering. Ishii's displays of rebellion are, if not admirable, at least indicative of a certain fighting spirit with which the reader sympathizes. Here Miyajima takes a position similar to that of, for example, Richard Wright in Native Son (1940), whose Bigger Thomas, sentenced to death for murder, shouts to his lawyer: "I didn't want to kill!....But what I killed for, I am!...I didn't know I was really alive in this world until I felt things hard enough to kill for 'em....!"¹⁰⁸ Like Bigger, Ishii is a figure who is certain to kill someone if he himself is not killed first.

Miyajima had been an admirer of Gorky since about the age of sixteen, and his "literature of wandering" among the dregs of society was an inspiration

¹⁰⁸ Richard Wright, Native Son (New York: Harper & Row, 1966) 391-2.

to Miyajima for his fiction writing. Moriyama Shigeo suggests that for Kôfu Miyajima was particularly inspired by the character of Ilya in Gorky's The Three (Troe, 1900) who, disgusted by the injustice and corruption of the world, takes up a life of violence and debauchery, commits a murder, and is killed by police in the final scene of the novel. More importantly, the concepts of the novel as a whole are highly reminiscent of those of Gorky.¹⁰⁹ Ôsugi also compares Miyajima's writing with Gorky's in his foreword to Kôfu, while cautioning that Miyajima as yet lacks Gorky's originality of thought and strength of prose.¹¹⁰

Ishii Kinji is as much the embodiment of an exceptionally powerful and rebellious life force as he is a human character. He expresses his contempt without reservation for those who practice deception and those who hide in the security of a group, whether it means confronting a mine owner face to face or picking a fight with a mob of miners. This uncompromising individualism is so extreme as to make Ishii something of an abstraction. Miyajima confirmed this intention: "There were people among the miners I encountered who resembled Ishii Kinji in personality, but for the most part he was my creation."¹¹¹ At the same time, Miyajima's realistic construction of Ishii's background and his evaluation of Ishii's psychology convince the reader that such characters exist, if generally in more diluted forms. We will see in Miyajima's more autobiographical works that the hatred and rebellion of Ishii had their source in the author's own personality.

¹⁰⁹ Moriyama, Bungaku anakizumu no senryû 108 ff.

¹¹⁰ Ôsugi Sakae zenshû, vol. 5, 266-9.

¹¹¹ Moriyama Shigeo, Bungaku anakizumu no senryû, 146.

Anarchism in *Kôfu*

Miyajima conspicuously employs themes central to anarchist thought, namely a vitalistic worldview which the proper human relation to nature not as one of passive “harmony” with nature but as comprised of a more complex set of relations. These include, to be sure, availing oneself of nature’s healing and nurturing forces, but also involve the struggle to dominate, control, and manipulate nature, making it part of one’s own expanding sphere of life. Ishii’s extreme individualism, which makes him incapable of compromising against abuses of authority in any way, and in the end leads to his own destruction, is reminiscent that of the turn-of-the-century anarchist, who knew his goals to be unachievable but was determined to make his life an example for the future. Just as Emma Goldman sympathized with President McKinley’s assassin, Miyajima sympathizes with Ishii.

Whether in Kôfu Miyajima intended to express more specific anarchist political views is less clear. A truly anarchistic philosophy not only repudiates governmental authority (and other authority backed up by it) but also contains some sort of vision of how alternative, consensual relationships between individuals could replace the enforced, established power structure. Here, Miyajima is not explicit. Certainly the mine owner is portrayed as a ruthless exploiter of the miners, concerned, in the classic socialist paradigm, with maximizing his profits and minimizing any expenses related to maintaining workers. The hypocrisy and conspicuous consumption of the mine owner appears as a major theme in Miyajima’s other mining stories.

What the miners ought to be doing, presumably, is organizing in some manner to protect themselves. This is suggested, in part, by the precedent of the Ashio riots and the statement that these riots did in fact result in better treatment of the miners. It is also suggested, I believe, in the affirmation of the traditional organization of the miners, which predates the modern, capitalist management system and is concerned with matters such as the care of sick miners and their families, funerals, festivals, and so on.

Another hint to Miyajima's views comes from his emphasis on the perspective of low-level managers and, in some cases, high-level miners (foremen such as some of the hanbagashira or boiler chiefs). This perspective is secondary in Kôfu, which centers around the character of Ishii, but it is more prominent in Miyajima's other mining stories. It reflects, of course, Miyajima's own experience as a manager in the mine, where he lived with the miners and knew their concerns firsthand, while at the same time communicating with and answering to the higher authorities. These managers are the only ones in a position to solve the miner's problems, as Ishida in Kôfu is essentially kept alive and working through the sympathetic intervention of Hagita and a few others. The miners are simply too uneducated – at present – to take control of their own destinies. The best of the miners instinctively understand the conditions of their oppression, but lack the tools to change anything, and simply struggle on the best they can. The more devious type of miners try to exploit the system of oppression for their own benefit, although what they can gain in this way is quite limited.

Other works by Miyajima

Miyajima wrote a number of other stories based on his mining experience, including “Urami naki satsujin” (Murder without hatred, 1916), Inu no shi made (How the dog died, 1920), and “Yuki no yoru” (A snowy evening, 1920). He also wrote many children’s stories for magazines such as Suzuki Miekichi’s Akai tori (The red bird) and a full-length novel, Kane (money, 1926), based on his experience playing the stock market in his youth. He later published an autobiography, Henreki (Pilgrimage, 1953). Following his decision to become a disciple of Zen, he wrote religious works such as Butsumon ni irite (Why I took the tonsure, 1930).

A full study of his work is beyond the scope of this project, but I will discuss several of his mining stories, which, considered together with *Kôfu*, give a better sense of Miyajima’s mining experience and his artistic intent in portraying it.

The protagonist of “Urami naki satsujin” is Ikeda, a young administrator (jimuin) at a tungsten mine who, like Miyajima, has his position through a family connection to the mine owner in Tokyo. Ikeda has held a series of jobs in which he always became bored and disgusted with the work, and yearns for a life of quiet and ease. He receives a letter of reprimand from the owner, who has been informed by someone in Ikeda’s office that Ikeda had feigned illness to drink and visit brothels. Ikeda fights with administrators and miners alike, and does visit the brothels, but the accusation is false. Ishida suspects a manager named Ishiyama of slandering him.

Looking for diversion, Ikeda takes Hagino, the hanbagashira, and Mita, a young miner to look at an abandoned mine, and a conflict ensues with some miners from another mine. As a result, Mita is attacked by that group of miners and villagers during a festival in the village, and a new miner, Matsuda, kills one of them in self-defense. Ikeda is obligated to turn Matsuda into the police. The story ends with Ikeda feeling guilt for his part in Matsuda's downfall, and drinking himself into a stupor.

Inu no shi made is a longer work, a novella. It contains situations identical to those in *Urami*: a melancholy, combatative protagonist in an administrative position (kônai kantoku, a direct manager of miners on the job); a colleague and superior who slander him to the mine owner over his excessive carousing and camaraderie with the miners. The title refers to the narrator's pet dog, "Kuro," which he picks up from a villager and is greatly attached to.

In comparison with "Urami naki satsujin," the narrative focuses on the mental state of the protagonist, Inoue Shinkichi (Miyajima's alter ego takes this name in several of his stories) and his efforts to find peace of mind in an environment not only physically harsh but full of human manipulateness and malice.

Shinkichi grapples with several problems throughout the narrative. When the mine goes through a period of low ore yield, the miners complain to Shinkichi, who promises to "take responsibility" for seeing that they are compensated later, while knowing that there is little he can do. In fact, Shinkichi sympathizes with their complaints, and despises the mine owner, Kanazawa, for trying to squeeze all he can out of the workers. Nevertheless, Shinkichi loses his

temper at an impudent miner and fights with him, and the two fall into the bellows fire. The miner, Suzuki Manjirô, is fired despite Shinkichi's protests that he, Shinkichi, had started the fight. Shinkichi lives in fear of Manjirô's revenge for a time, but eventually parts with him on good terms. (This situation is reminiscent of the dismissal of Satô in Kôfu).

An employee close to the owner, Abe, has been reporting to the owner on Shinkichi's recreational excesses. Shinkichi feels that as long as he does his job, it is no one's business what he does after work. Abe's hostility to Shinkichi comes partly from Shinkichi's good relationship with the miners.

In order to help the miners, Shinkichi undertakes a project of opening up a yôdo, a general store for the miners, at which goods will be reasonably priced. (At the hanba, they are grossly overpriced, partly to prevent miners from running away from the mine with large debts.) Shinkichi's supervisor approves the project, and he pursues it with enthusiasm, overseeing the building of a small house which will be his for the new job. But no sooner is the project finished than the mine owner sends two managers from Tokyo to take over Shinkichi's position (and presumably raise the prices). Shinkichi learns that Abe's slander has led to this, and drops a rock on Abe as he is coming up the ladder. Having berated Abe, Shinkichi is unable to retain his will for revenge.

Shinkichi befriends one of the new administrators, Numata, and they decided to share a house in the nearby village. Shinkichi enjoys the quiet and solitude, and stops indulging in drink and prostitutes. However, he develops a conflict with the new director (shochô), Ôzu, the brother-in-law of the mine owner. Ôzu is arrogant, drinks every night, and has no understanding of mining.

It becomes apparent that he, too, is reporting to the owner on Shinkichi, this time saying that Shinkichi is “stirring up the miners.” Shinkichi argues with Ôzu over the latter’s complaint that the miners are being overpaid; they are in fact being compensated for the previous slow period.

A letter arrives from the owner ordering an investigation into a claim, probably by Ôzu, that Shinkichi has been accepting bribes from miners. This is an absurd contention, since Shinkichi has no power to help them and they have no money to give him. Shinkichi writes a letter of defense to the owner and finally confronts him when he visits the mine, stopping just short of attacking him.

Throughout the story Shinkichi has taken care of his dog, Kuro, and feels that he loves Kuro more than the people around him. Some other managers have likewise adopted dogs. One day, a manager, Suzuki, is forced to kill his dog, which has been attacking villagers. Shinkichi worries that the villagers are out to exterminate the dogs. Kuro disappears and Shinkichi learns that he was killed and eaten by villagers. He vows revenge on the young men from the village who did it. The men come to apologize and say that Ôzu had told them it was all right to kill the dog and had offered them sake to drink with it. Shinkichi confronts Ôzu and pummels him to his heart’s content as the hapless Abe looks on. Shinkichi reflects on the meaninglessness of the time he has spent at the mine.

“Yuki no yoru” portrays the lives of several low-level managers in a mine for several days leading up to the suicide of one of them. The setting is the ore collection section (saikô gakari) of the tungsten mine which is the setting of

all of Miyajima's stories of mining life. Unusually, it is narrated in the first person.

The story opens in midwinter. The narrator, Ôta, is a young administrator in the mine, aged about 24. Recent weather has been dreary, with gray clouds and sporadic snowfall which neither clear up nor develop into a real storm. Ôta's colleagues include Noguchi, the section head, about 34, who was originally a miner and has a history of both striking and gambling (sympathetic traits in Miyajima's fiction). Matsui, 39, has a manner of laughing which seems like crying. Matsui has a wife and child in Tokyo but lives with an "ugly" village girl named Oshin. His position in the company has been precarious since he miscalculated the time it would take to drill to a certain mineral vein. One night, Matsui drank with Ôta and collapsed in the snow. His colleagues joke that his vital energy is being drained by too much sexual intercourse.

A blizzard finally arrives. The workers are sent home and Ôta, after having tea at the checkpoint (miharisho), leaves with Matsui. They stop by the office of the boiler to give a manager directions to formally release the miners' assistants (horiko). The manager, Konishi, has bought a pig and invites them to eat and drink with him.

Ôta asks Matsui why he has been so depressed. Matsui responds that his health is bad, but it turns out he has other troubles. It seems that Oshin is pregnant, and Matsui has not told her father that he has a family. He does not love Oshin, but he also cannot bear to live with his wife, so he is at a loss as to what to do. Meanwhile, he is on bad terms with the mine owner in Tokyo (who, it is pointed out, has seven or eight children and a kept woman, and buys

prostitutes) and wants to quit his job. Matsui says that he has lost the energy to do anything, and just wants to be quiet and still.

Konishi and Ôta try to give Matsui advice, but they are unable to comfort him. Ôta thinks of his own life and misses Tokyo. Matsui gets up suddenly to go home, saying that he feels ill. Ôta remains to spend the night in the office.

The next morning, an old man from the village comes to the office, saying that Matsui hanged himself that night. Konishi and Ôta go to his home and hear the story from a weeping Oshin. Ôta thinks to himself that for those who don't have money, death is the only way to get the peace and quiet that Matsui wanted. That day, the skies clear. As Ôta looks out at the beauty of the white mountains under the blue sky, he thinks that if Matsui had still been alive today, he would not have hanged himself.

Anarchistic and nihilistic motifs

The motif of rejection of authority is present in Miyajima's autobiographical mining stories just as in Kôfu. As I have suggested in my discussion of Kôfu, Miyajima treats struggle against authority as a personal issue in his works. Indeed, there would be some justification for calling his stories "nonpolitical," in the sense that there is no explicit call for oppressed individuals to seize power, or of uniting to reform the system in some way. And yet the deeply political nature of these stories, concerned exclusively with characters negotiating their lives in a society based on an exploitative relationship of capital to labor, is obvious. I would suggest that Miyajima's political stance is that of

struggling against oppression without attempting to seize political power for oneself. (“Not attempting to seize power” does not mean “rejecting all violence, however.) In this sense, his view is very anarchistic.

Miyajima’s fictional alter egos are high enough in the class system that they are not bound to their labor in sharecropper fashion as the miners are. And yet they are tormented by the meaninglessness and ugliness of the society and economic system which they participate in. Ikeda in “Urami naki satsujin” and Shinkichi in Inu no shi made are very similar characters in this way. Ikeda is more pessimistic and nihilistic, seeking only peace and quiet, whether through carousing or simply doing something like visiting a site in the mountains. Yet even in the most innocuous activities he becomes an agent in the human tragedy of the mining system.

Shinkichi is a similar personality, but he makes more active attempts to reform his own life and to reform the system. His attempt to respond to miner entreaties for help by starting the general store is well received by his immediate superior and by the miners. However, it is doomed to failure, primarily because it marginally reduces the owner’s profits, and secondarily because Shinkichi conducts no self-promotion in the mining system. When this project fails, Shinkichi attempts to at least improve his own life by sharing a space remote from the mining community with his friend. Even here, peace is denied to him, as slanders continue to be directed at him and finally as the malicious director, Ôzu, seeks to punish Shinkichi’s impudence by cruelly targeting his beloved dog.

Attempts to reform or make peace with mining society fail in all of these stories. Miyajima’s characters find no solution to their dilemmas, and in the end

Shinkichi expresses his rebellion in much the same way as Ishii Kinji: through physical violence. Although it will change nothing, Shinkichi's beating of Ôzu is the most satisfying scene of retribution against the company in any of these stories.

Critique of exploitation of laborers

The difference in narrative perspective of Miyajima's autobiographical stories from Kôfu is significant. While the former depicts mining life from the perspective of a miner (albeit an atypical one), the latter stories take the point of view of a mid-level manager who functions as a go-between or buffer between labor and ownership. As a result, the social critique of mining life focuses less on the brutal hardships experienced by the miners, since administrators, of course, work under better conditions. Yet this same difference in perspective brings greater focus to the larger issue at hand: the authority of the mining company (i.e., the mine owner) and the effect of its management practices on the lives of miners. Though larger economic structures are not discussed, the authoritarian nature of mining society and its effects on working life are explored in a subtle manner.

The mine owner himself is an easy target: he drinks, womanizes, and has no understanding of or interest in mining. His wealth and power are seen as completely fortuitous and unearned. In Kôfu, for instance, the owner learns from a foreign scientist that tungsten, which they had been throwing away, is a valuable mineral, and makes his fortune in this way.

Of course, criticism of the moral character of one particular owner does not in itself constitute a principled condemnation of the system. Miyajima's critique is deepened with the depiction of managers (Abe, Ôzu) whose careers are built by flattering the owner, betraying their colleagues, and enacting policies which exploit the miners as much as possible. In Inu, for instance, Abe tells Shinkichi that pay rates are too high, and Ôzu warns him that he must not be friendly with miners, to which Shinkichi responds that that miners are human too.

Vitalism and nature

Miyajima's protagonists are like Ishii Kinji, seeking peace in nature and in some cases by drinking and visiting prostitutes – which I would suggest is also a sort of attempt to find solace in “nature.” (In Ishii's case, “wife-stealing” is more satisfying than prostitutes because it enables him to simultaneously take revenge on his fellow miners. Thus, there is only one scene of Ishii's visiting the chaya, and he finds it so useless for alleviating his depression that he leaves.) The difference is that Miyajima's alter egos do not take the joy in struggling with nature and altering it as Ishii does. In “Urami naki satsujin,” Ikeda seeks refuge in the mountains and dreams of seeing the ocean and Hokkaido. The final sentence of “Yuki no yoru” suggests the revitalizing power of nature which is given such prominence in Kôfu in its suggestion that Matsui would not have killed himself had he experienced the beautiful day.

The most extended treatment of nature in the autobiographical stories is in Inu no shi made. The lengthy passages about Shinkichi's life in the woods with

Numata, taking pleasure in gathering mushrooms or sweet potatoes, show him temporarily recovering from his experiences at the mine. Even more notably, the dog Kuro, who reappears throughout the story, is an image of a creature of nature, following his master joyfully through the woods, chasing small animals, and playing. .

Shinkichi, who has trouble loving human beings, has always been comforted by the innocent love of dogs. Miyajima describes various dogs Shinkichi has had since his childhood, all of which he was forced to get rid of. In one case, Shinkichi had tied a dog to a post in a field for the dogcatcher (exterminator). The dog cried incessantly. When Shinkichi returned a few days later, the dog was gone, and the food he had left for it was untouched. Shinkichi knows that one always loses dogs eventually, but he cannot resist taking Kuro. The death of the dog is the last straw which leads to Shinkichi's final break with the mine. Miyajima's touching exposition of this theme, seemingly of little political relevance, is the most powerful condemnation of mining society.

Political implications

While Miyajima does not attempt a systematic criticism of capitalism or of the institution of mining, his protagonists have the insight to realize that most of the reactions to the exploitation of the mine are misdirected. Even Ishii sees this when he berates the miners: "If you sympathize with Satô, why don't you smash that office over there?" Ikeda has a similar insight after Matsuda commits the "murder without malevolence." Why should the miners of two different mines treat each other as rivals and enemies, when the real conflict is with the mine

owners? Within the mine, Shinkichi realizes that the battles that he fights (literally) at the mine are in vain. He wonders at the fact that he attacked Manjirô from the position of being a manager, when as a human being he knows that Manjirô's complaints are just. And after taking revenge on Abe by dropping a rock on him and making him fear for his life, he realizes with dejection that he can take revenge on Abe but not on the mine owner.

As I have stated before, what kind of action might be called for is not made clear. Miyajima's protagonists are uncompromisingly rebellious, but they do not hold any hope for the system ever changing. The only hint, perhaps compatible with Miyajima's interest in anarcho-syndicalism, is the sense that if the owner were out of the way, the sensible managers and miners would implement far more humane and indeed more efficient organizations. Thus there is a suggestion of local, self-management by workers as being a direction worth exploring. The closest equivalent to that in socialist theory is, of course, the syndicate.

The idea of the working place – factory, mine, or farm – being run collectively by its workers and functioning as a unit for political revolution and subsequently as the basic living unit for society, is essentially an anarchist one. It was later co-opted by communists, for instance in the Russian revolution, by being reconceived as a step on the way to state control of all industry. The anarcho-syndicalist idea of a syndicate is much different, however, since it sees the syndicate as autonomous and controlled by workers in an egalitarian manner. In practice, of course, an attempt to collectivize a workplace is likely to result in an authoritarian structure of some sort. How syndicates would be

created and run was not a subject which most anarchists cared to spend much time theorizing about, but the unstated assumption was that some entity of this sort could and would be created.

We will see in the next chapter that anarchism continued to influence socialist thinkers and writers even as Marxist terminology came to dominate the discourse in the 1920s. The fiction writers in the subsequent chapter can be describe as anarchistic not only because of their emphasis on personal liberation as an essential component of political revolution, but also because they envisioned the emergence of cooperative, non-coercive social units, of which the syndicate was the basic model.

Stylistically, anarchistic writers of the 1920s continued to make use of the elements of literary anarchism which were developed by Ôsugi's network of writers. Miyajima's Kôfu represents a peak of sorts in its pure, almost mythical portrayal of a natural, nihilistic hero. For anarchist writers of the 1920s, journalistic portrayals of the working class, emphasis on nature, sexuality, and rebellion, and the championing of the individual over the group and of spontaneous rebellion against social control would remain key elements of their works. However, as the socialist movement grew in numbers, socialist theory grew in sophistication, and socialist writers became increasingly concerned with making direct contacts with laborers through the labor movement, literary anarchism, too, became more complex and subtle. Anarchist writers focused self-consciously on their own role in the socialist movement, and increasingly wrote stories whose protagonists were intellectual activist figures like themselves. The concepts of nature, vitalism, and expansion of the ego were seen as operating in

the daily lives of anarchists, and not just in violent confrontations between laborers and capitalists. Furthermore, as the socialist movement grew, its own contradictions and failures became more evident. Anarchist writers often took on the role of critics of the socialist movement, rejecting the idea that socialists must sacrifice their individual needs and desires for the good of the revolution.

CHAPTER 3

PROLETARIAN LITERATURE, NIHIHISM, AND AVANT-GARDE POETRY: THE FLOURISHING AND FRAGMENTATION OF ANARCHIST LITERATURE

The great earthquake of September 1, 1923 devastated the Tokyo and Yokohama area, leaving over 140,000 dead or missing from quake damage and fires. In the aftermath of the earthquake, vigilante mobs murdered thousands of Korean residents, who were rumored, in stories publicized by police, to be looting and committing sabotage.¹¹² A number of socialists were also murdered by police, including the labor dramatist and activist Hirasawa Keishichi. Most significantly for Japanese socialism was the murder of Ôsugi Sakae and Itô Noe by military police. Ôsugi's death left the anarcho-syndicalist movement without a unifying figure, and his followers lacked a theoretically-based plan of action.¹¹³ How Ôsugi's survival might have changed the history of the anarchist movement in Japan cannot be known, but certainly his death was followed by a decline in the political influence of anarchism. One would scarcely infer this from a glance at the activities and works of radical literary men and women

¹¹² See Kang Tok-sang (Kan Tokusô), Tôkyo dai shinsai to chôsenjin (Tokyo, Misuzu Shobô, 1963) for an examination of the massacres of Korean nationals.

¹¹³ Ôsawa Masamichi, Anakizumu shisôshi (Tokyo: Gendai Shisôsha, 1963) 229.

throughout the 1920s, however, as the word “anarchism” became associated with a drop-out, nihilistic lifestyle which became a sort of counterculture holding wide appeal for many young people of leftwing tendencies. At the same time, socialists with anarchist tendencies produced works in a variety of genres, including poetry (Hagiwara Kyôjirô, Ono Tôzaburô), children’s literature (Ogawa Mimei, Eguchi Kan), and avant-garde fiction and essays (Tsuji Jun). In practical terms, the anarchist voice served as a kind of libertarian “conscience” for the left wing, by protesting against dogmatism in art and authoritarianism in politics.

The Guillotine Society and anarchist terrorism

The immensity of the shock felt by socialists over Ôsugi Sakae’s murder is suggestive of his continuing influence. Ôsawa Masamichi has written that “there must have been two or three thousand men in Japan who swore to take bloody revenge” for Ôsugi.¹¹⁴ A number of Ôsugi’s young followers, who had formed the terrorist “Guillotine Society” before his death, managed to spread some chaos and shed some blood before being caught. Tanaka Yûnoshin stabbed the younger brother of Amakasu Masahiko, the military police captain who had claimed, impossibly, full and sole responsibility for Ôsugi’s murder. Nakahama Tetsu, Furuta Daijirô, and others robbed an Osaka bank, killing an employee, and plotted to murder government officials and members of the imperial family. Wada Kyûtarô attempted to assassinate general Fukuda Masatarô, who had been the commander of the martial authority implemented to respond to the

¹¹⁴ Quoted in Takenaka Rô, Dan’ei Ôsugi Sakae (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobô, 2000) 287.

earthquake disaster, but his gun failed to fire. Ultimately, Nakahama and Furuta, and Nanba Daisuke (who had attempted another assassination) were executed, and Wada committed suicide. The anarchist movement was in tatters.¹¹⁵ And yet throughout the 1920s, numerous young men – and a fair number of women – involved in leftwing activities and “alternative lifestyles” of sexual freedom and rejection of conventional careers would continue define themselves, not as communists, but as “anarchists.”

The anarchist-Bolshevik dispute

If the earthquake marks a rupture between what we may call for convenience Taishô socialism and early Shôwa socialism (of course, the Shôwa era actually started in 1926), this combined natural disaster and human atrocity only accelerated trends that were already underway in Japanese society. The most prominent ideological influence on late Taishô and early Shôwa socialism was the Russian revolution of 1917, whose success galvanized socialist movements throughout the world, and thrust Marxism and then Marxism-Leninism into new prominence. This was, of course, bolstered by actual material and ideological support from the Soviet Union for communist movements throughout the world. Marx and Engels’ Communist Manifesto had been available in translation (by Sakai Toshihiko and Kôtoku Shûsui) since 1906,¹¹⁶ but

¹¹⁵ Takenaka, 287-295.

¹¹⁶ See Miriam Silverberg, Changing Song: the Marxist Manifestos of Nakano Shigeharu (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990) 46-7 for a discussion of the problems which faced the first translators of The Communist Manifesto (from an English language version).

Marx's political writings were not available in complete Japanese translations until the mid-1920s.¹¹⁷

With the Russian revolution and the introduction of the serious study of Marxism, Marxism-Leninism began to develop as the most prominent socialist ideology in Japan, and emerged as a competitor to anarchism, anarcho-syndicalism, and other socialist ideologies. In the Soviet Union, anarchist movements had at first been treated as allies by the communist authorities, while the elderly Peter Kropotkin, much loved by the Russian masses, had supported the revolution while holding great reservations about the authoritarian practices and ambitions of the Soviets. Kropotkin had written to Lenin repeatedly appealing to him to end the dictatorship of the Communist party, but Lenin grew tired of the "old fogey" and Kropotkin's funeral in 1921 would turn out to be the last large anarchist demonstration in Russia before the movement was brutally suppressed.¹¹⁸

In Japan, too, the anarchist movement experienced a general decline, but it was not yet apparent in the early 1920s whether Japanese socialism would take the anarchist or the "Bolshevik" path. The ana-boru ronsô (anarchist-bolshevist dispute) developed quickly following the Russian revolution, with the two sides becoming increasingly antagonistic to each other. (In the underworld of Japanese socialist activism, this would even lead to brawls between anarchist and communist gangs scarcely distinguishable from gangster behavior.¹¹⁹) In 1922 the

¹¹⁷ A partial translation of Capital had been completed in 1920 by Matsuura Yô and Ikuta Chôkô. A complete translation was made between 1919 and 1925 by Hatabatake Motoyuki. See Nihon hyakka jiten, vol. 14 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1985) 199-200.

¹¹⁸ Marshall, 333-334.

¹¹⁹ See William O. Gardner, "Avant-Garde Literature and the New City: Tokyo 1923-1931,"

dispute came to a head at the “meeting to establish a national general federation of labor unions” (Zenkoku rôdô sôrengô kessei taikai) which led to an organizational split between the anarcho-syndicalist and communist factions.

However, this split did not represent an absolute or clear-cut ideological divide between anarchists and communists. Japanese socialism remained an eclectic mixture of ideas and loyalties, and if liberal humanists like Hasegawa Nyozeikan joined Marxist study groups, hard-line Marxists continued to read Tolstoy and be inspired by his mystical utopianism. This point is particularly important to keep in mind when assessing the early proletarian literature of the 1920s. For the 1922 anarchist-communist split was largely an organizational one, predicated on disagreements over strategy for revolutionizing the labor unions across the country. By contrast, in the world of proletarian literature, socialist writers of both tendencies wrote for the groundbreaking Tane maku hito (the sower; 1921-23), and cooperated in the Japan Proletarian Literary Arts League (JPLAL, Nihon puroretaria bungei renmei) and its organ, Bungei sensen (later Bunsen: literary battlefield; 1924-32). The JPLAL adopted an explicitly Marxist position in 1926, when it expelled anti-Marxists, including anarchists like Nii Itaru and Katô Kazuo, from its ranks. This was followed by the split in November 1926 of JPLAL into the Marxist Japan Proletarian Arts League (Nihon puroretaria geijutsu renmei), led by Nakano Shigeharu; and the opposing Worker-Peasant Artists’ League (Rônô geijutsuka renmei), led by Aono Suekichi,

dissertation, Stanford University, 1999, 133, in which he recounts an episode in which the socialist writer Tsuboi Shigeji was attacked and wounded by a gang of “pure anarchists,” and carried away by Hagiwara Kyôjirô, the anarchist poet.

which retained control of Bungei sensen.¹²⁰ Anarchistic writing did not disappear entirely from the pages of the latter periodical, though, since the editors championed the primacy of artistic work over politics. The writers examined in this section are those who had strong affiliations with the anarchist and anti-Marxist factions.

Aono Suekichi's attack on anarchist literature

Approaching social revolution from a position which rejected government and external authority entirely, anarchists rejected the authoritarian politics of Marxist communists or "Bolsheviks," perceiving – correctly, as history has shown – that a movement aiming at a "dictatorship of the proletariat" would lead, not to liberation, but to the replacement of one authoritarian regime, and one ruling class, by another. In the field of literary arts, the anarchist rejection of Marxism focused on a Leninist theory of revolutionary art which subordinated art to the position of a political tool. The critical text which established the Marxist position on art was Aono Suekichi's (1890-1961) "Shizen seichô to mokuteki ishiki" (Natural development and directed consciousness), published in Bungei sensen in January 1926. Here Aono declared the need for a literary arts movement consciously led by the principle of proletarian class interests. According to Aono, proletarian literature - literature depicting the proletarian class - had long existed in Japan, in the form of works like those of Kunikida Doppo. On the other hand, a proletarian literary movement, he said, was only four or five years old. A proletarian literary movement only could exist after

¹²⁰ See Shea, 128 ff. for a summary of these organizational changes.

“...above and beyond the natural growth [of proletarian literature], goal-directed consciousness has come into being. Where there is no goal-directed consciousness, there is no movement.”¹²¹

Aono continued:

“For the proletariat to write about the lives of the proletariat, seeking a way to express themselves, is, itself, for personal satisfaction (kojinteki manzoku), and not a perfect class action based on an awareness of the goal of a proletarian class struggle. It is by reaching this awareness of the goal of a proletarian class struggle that art becomes art for the sake of class. In other words, it becomes art for the sake of class when it is directed by class consciousness [emphasis added]. And this is where a proletarian arts movement first arises, and has arisen.”¹²²

Aono’s essay is frequently cited as playing a crucial role in bringing to a head the anarchist-Bolshevik split and the expulsion of non-Marxists from the Japan Proletarian Literary Arts League in 1926. In fact, purging the JPLAL of anarchists appears to have been one of the main purposes of the piece. This essay set the tone for a response by anarchist writers, who would attack the Marxist attempts to subordinate literature to the role of a political tool, and even condemn them as counterrevolutionary.

Aono’s position was sharply attacked by anarchists, who had been taken aback and embittered by their sudden banishment from the main current of the proletarian literary movement. What had been seen as differences of opinion over tactics now marked writers as belonging to one or the other of two directly opposed sides. In opposition to Aono’s position, anarchist artists and writers

¹²¹ Aono Suekichi, “Shizen seichô to mokuteki ishiki,” Gendai nihon bungaku zenshû, vol. 78 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobô, 1957) 79.

¹²² Aono, 80.

accused Marxists of reducing art to a mere political tool and thus robbing it of its vitality and meaning. In 1927 the anarchist writer Asô Gi stated: "Above all, we are theoretically opposed to the specialization of art that has existed up until now. We are fighters for an artistic movement which would place art in the front lines of the war for the liberation of the proletariat."¹²³ Asô's meaning was that proletarian literature, unlike "bourgeois" literature of the past, was an integral part of the proletarian movement. His denial of art-for-art's-sake might seem to be in agreement with Aono's idea of class-conscious literature. However, for Asô, proletarian consciousness represented an attitude rather than a schema or formula to be followed by the artist. Anarchism, in being opposed to all government, was the truly "proletarian" movement.

...[Art] is an attitude of vigor in life. Until an anarchist society comes into being – until social life is composed of free, voluntary associations, as long as exploitation and oppression exist, there can be no purely anarchist art. As a result, we must qualify the meaning of what we call "anarchistic art" as being art which strives for an anarchist society, or art which embodies anarchistic thought.¹²⁴

Nii Itaru, a leading anarchist theorist, wrote a lengthy critique of "communist art" in 1930 which decried the Leninist creed that all art had to be in service of the proletarian revolution and that there could no longer be such thing as a "no-party writer." Arguing along similar lines to Asô, Nii claimed that there was something anarchistic about art itself. "There is something in all art that hates politics."¹²⁵ Art, said Nii, was something that of its nature was created by

¹²³ Asô Gi, "Ika ni anakizumu no geijutsu wa kakuritsu shiuru ka," Matsuda Michio, ed., Anâkisumu, Gendai Nihon shisô taikai, vol. 16 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobô, 1963), 387.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Nii Itaru, "Kyôsanshugi tô-ha no geijutsu o ronsu," in Matsuda Michio, 397.

individuals, not groups or political parties. While he conceded the correctness of much of what the Marxists aimed for, he insisted that art must have an independent status. Using Marxist terminology against the Marxists, he declared communist art to be nothing but another incarnation of “bourgeois idolatry.”¹²⁶

While anarchist theorists of art and literature were able to argue effectively and often very perceptively against the dogmatism of the orthodox Marxist approach to literature, their deep preoccupation with refuting Marxism and their use of nearly identical terminology to that of the Marxists suggests that by the end of the 1920s they were in retreat. The oppositional nature of their arguments left little room for positive, constructive theories which might foster the creation of original, and vital art and literature. Nevertheless, the anarchist critique exerted a positive influence on the proletarian literary arts movement by articulating a position which supported artistic freedom. Writers who pursued the creation of proletarian literature with a critical and independent spirit were able to create some of the most memorable literary works of the 1920s.

Anarchism in early Taishô proletarian fiction: Hirabayashi Taiko and Yamakawa Ryô

An examination of prose fiction written in the early 1920s by Hirabayashi Taiko and Yamakawa Ryo, both socialists who started their careers with a heavy interest in anarchism and consistently opposed hard-line Marxist dogmatism in literature, shows a strong continuity with the anarchism of writers like Miyajima Sukeo. The elements of literary elements which I discussed in Chapter Two –

¹²⁶ Matsuda, 399.

journalistic realism, vitalism and sexuality, nihilistic rebellion, and individualism – appear as key elements in their work. A close examination of some of their stories indicates the role played by anarchism in the larger context of a socialist movement increasingly dominated by Marxism.

Hirabayashi Taiko

Among the many suspected leftwing activists who were detained by authorities in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake was Hirabayashi Taiko (1905-1971), an eighteen-year-old woman from a farming village in Nagano prefecture. Taiko (a slightly altered pen name; her real name was Tai) was born to a prominent farming family; her grandfather had owned a silk mill and been an officer in Itagaki Taisuke's Liberty Party. Hirabayashi is best known for her post-World War II novels like Kô iu onna (this kind of woman; 1947), lengthy works of autobiographical fiction which express a distinctively individualistic feminist philosophy. Her artistic philosophy was formed in the 1920s when, as a young woman, she devoted her art to the articulation of socialist issues, drawing heavily on her own experiences with the labor movement and association with leftwing radicals. Hirabayashi, unusually for an intellectual shaped by Japanese socialism, became a staunch anticommunist after the war. Significantly, her early literary work draws distinctively from the anarchistic side of Taishô socialism.

In elementary school, Hirabayashi attracted the attention of a young, idealistic teacher who separated "gifted" students from the rest and imposed a challenging curriculum on them, including copious reading of literature. It was

from this early age that Hirabayashi formed her life goal of becoming a writer.¹²⁷ By the age of 12, Hirabayashi was reading works by Ibsen, Dostoevsky, Turgenev, Tolstoy, Pushkin, Zola, and Maupassant. Hirabayashi's favorite Japanese writer was Shiga Naoya, followed by Japanese naturalist writers like Kunikida Doppo, Shimazaki Tôson, and Tayama Katai (two of her favorite novels were Tôson's The Broken Commandment and Katai's The Country Teacher.¹²⁸) At age 15, Hirabayashi had a short story accepted in a contest by the magazine Bunshô kurabu.

Against the wishes of her parents, Hirabayashi went on to the Suo Girl's High School, whose head teacher was Tsuchiya Fumiaki of the Araraki tanka group which took shasei, "sketching from life," as one of its artistic creeds. Hirabayashi described the school as highly progressive and claimed that she and her friends would swim nude in the river without any concern at the impropriety.¹²⁹ All in all, this school atmosphere was a blessing for us: when we would otherwise have had our feelings imprisoned by boring, feminine things, we were able to develop an interest in *literature, socialism, and such things* [italics added].¹³⁰ Hirabayashi's ready association of literature and socialism suggests not only her own aims as a writer, but also the political tinge that the very activity of creating and reading literature had in Japan in the early 20th century.

One important event in Hirabayashi's awakening to socialism came when she read Zola's Germinale and was so moved by the plight of French miners that she wrote to the translator, Sakai Toshihiko (the co-founder, with Kôtoku Shûsui,

¹²⁷ Abe Namiko, Hirabayashi Taiko: Hana ni mi o (Tokyo: Musashino Shobô, 1986) 24-34.

¹²⁸ Abe Namiko, 31.

¹²⁹ Abe Namiko, 35.

¹³⁰ Abe Namiko, 35.

of the Heimin Shinbun), leading to a correspondence with Sakai's daughter, Magara. After one trip to Tokyo in which she tried and failed to meet Sakai, Hirabayashi moved there following her graduation, taking a job as a switchboard operator. That year, she met Yamamoto Torazô, an anarchist, and moved in with him. They soon ran out of money and lived hand-to-mouth doing various jobs. In the aftermath of the Kanto earthquake of 1923 – Hirabayashi was just short of 18 – they were both detained for approximately a month by police. The following year, they went to Manchuria, where Yamamoto was imprisoned for political agitation. Hirabayashi gave birth to a baby girl in a charity ward, but the baby died shortly after of malnutrition, an experience which would form the material of her story "Seryôshitsu nite" (At the charity hospital, 1927) a few years later. Hirabayashi resolved to leave Yamamoto, and returned to Japan, at first staying with Katô Kazuo, a socialist writer and poet also of anarchistic rather than communist sympathies.

In 1925, having returned to Japan the previous year, Hirabayashi began writing fiction in earnest. Motivated by her poverty, she initially focused on writing "potboilers" in genres such as mystery fiction or children's literature, that were most likely to sell. Her first published piece was "Supai jiken" (The spy incident; Shinseinen, 1925),¹³¹ a very short mystery story. While this story has a light, even frivolous tone, and save for its subtle mockery of the "bourgeois" lifestyle, could even have been written by someone opposed to socialism, its theme is strikingly in line with Hirabayashi's socialist ideology and participation

¹³¹ Hirabayashi Taiko, Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshû, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Ushio Shuppansha, 1979) 15-19.

in a lifestyle which placed her on the fringes of society: the betrayal of a group of socialist activists by a comrade who is actually a spy for the police.

Supai jiken begins with Honda, a “social activist” (shakai undōka, i.e. a socialist), reading in the evening newspaper about the arrest of two of his comrades, who had tried to stow aboard a ship to attend a communist labor union conference in Moscow. Newly-married, Honda is enjoying the comforts of the conventional bourgeois lifestyle. His wife hands him a letter from his fellow activist Koyama. In the letter, Koyama informs Honda that Honda has been expelled from the group, since it has been discovered that he is a spy for the police and had been the informant against the recently arrested stowaways. Koyama relates how he had stood up for Honda even though various members of the group had spotted him with men who appeared to be police. However, Koyama has now realized that the man he had once seen Honda with is a police chief involved in the current case. Koyama declares his contempt and hatred for Honda, who is living a comfortable life on the money he gained by selling his “brothers.”

Honda goes pale, and immediately walks to Koyama’s house, where just at that moment a socialist meeting is taking place. Honda tells his former comrades that their belief that he is a spy is a complete misunderstanding. Honda then tells a complex tale about how he discovered that someone who looks exactly like himself was working for the municipal police. Honda had taken advantage of this fact to impersonate that police official, and spy on the police for the sake of the socialist movement. He had been planning to tell his comrades about this, when he discovered that that man who looks exactly like

him had, at the same time, been impersonating him to infiltrate the socialist group! It was, therefore, the police officer, not Honda, who had betrayed the two comrades.

Having told his story, which the men (and the reader) have begun to find plausible, Honda leaves. The next day another letter arrives from Koyama. "What kind of idiots do you think we are? Not even a child would take a ridiculous story like that seriously. You'd better be careful, because when I get a chance I'm going to give you a thrashing." Reading the letter, Honda laughs. "I guess as stupid as those fellows are, not even they were going to believe that story," he says, and heads for his job at the police headquarters.

While the story is doubtless a concoction, the choice of material is highly suggestive of Hirabayashi's living situation at the time of composition. Socialists and suspected socialists were carefully monitored by police, and the possibility of spies infiltrating socialist networks was a real one. Also significant, of course, is the activists' attempted trip to Moscow, indicating the increasing association of socialism with the Soviet Union (although Russia had, of course, been one of the main sources of socialist thought in Japan since long before, and Japanese socialists had established contact with Russian socialists in opposition to the Russo-Japanese War). While this story does not portray the seedy, impoverished world inhabited by many Japanese socialists, Koyama's criticism of Honda's comfortable lifestyle echoes Hirabayashi's and her comrades' own views of bourgeois society and marriage:

With the money you got from selling your brothers, you married a beautiful bourgeois girl. Then, working as a spy among us, you indulged in your dreams of married life. What a fine, disgusting life you made for yourself! To be sure, I, too,

know what a temptation the bourgeois life and the peaceful newlywed life are. Even among those of us who make it our creed to live in resistance to this social system, there are many who are unable to overcome this temptation and fall into their ranks.¹³²

Conventional families and marriage were human inventions and instruments of oppression – so went the radical wisdom; yet Hirabayashi’s more personal literary treatments of her own experiences living under this creed show a deep ambivalence towards this belief, as we shall see later.

Living as a rebel: Hirabayashi Taiko’s early autobiographical fiction

At the end of 1925, the same year she wrote “Supai jiken,” Hirabayashi moved in with a new lover, Iida Tokutarô, an anarchist poet who was a contributing member of the journal Damudamu (Dum-dum). While this relationship would not last long, it gave her material for a story she would write two years later, by which time she would have met Kobori Jinji, a writer affiliated with the Bungei sensen group, who would become her husband and long-term companion. This story, “Azakeru”¹³³ (Self-mockery; 1927), won a fiction prize from the Osaka Asahi Shinbun.

The narrator, Yoshiko, is returning to the room she shares with her lover, sometimes referred to as “husband,” Koyama, an aspiring leftwing poet living in poverty. Yoshiko is aware that Koyama is with her in order to live off her earnings, but she makes it a point of honor to sacrifice herself for their relationship. She has just spent the night with another radical named Yada. As

¹³² Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshû, 16.

¹³³ Translated in Tanaka, Yukiko, ed., To Live and to Write: Selections by Japanese Women Writers, 1913-1938 (Seattle: Seal Press, 1987) 75-96.

she makes her way through the dusty city, she feels a sharp pain in her breast. Feeling helpless, ugly, and exhausted, she boards a streetcar and has an altercation with a well-dressed, bourgeois gentleman who she suspects despises her; she takes revenge by deliberately leaning into him as the streetcar sways. .

Questioned by Koyama on her return, Yoshiko answers that she was out trying to support them since he is incapable of doing so. Koyama suspects that the pain in her breast means that she slept with Yada. This is in fact the case, but the narrator reminds him that she visited Yada at his orders, to ask for money, and he seems to conclude that nothing happened.

In a playful scene, the two sneak into a bamboo grove to steal bamboo shoots from a neighbor, and are separated when Koyama is chased by a dog. While alone, Yoshiko tries composing a letter to Yada, saying that she had done what he wanted and demanding that he lend her 15 yen as promised. She calls herself a “proletarian woman” and Yada a “bourgeois” who receives 100 yen a month from his parents. The next morning, the couple is awakened by a delivery by registered mail: Koyama’s manuscript has been rejected. Koyama gets an extension on the rent from the landlord.

Yoshiko visits Yada, who is in his room with two university friends, Kigawa and Yamanaka. Kigawa despises Yoshiko as a loose woman. Yoshiko joins them in a visit to a certain company. The company has designated that day the day to pay off “anarchists, reactionaries, and the like” and has set up a table to receive them. Each person receives 5 yen, except Yoshiko, who succeeds in getting 10 yen. Yada invites her to go to an experimental leftwing play. The play is well done, but she laughs – and cries - uncontrollably at a scene in which the

heroine meets her former lover by chance and, telling him her present life is “hell,” faints. Outside the play, she meets Koyama, who is visibly disturbed to see her there.

It is summer and Yoshiko has realized that she is pregnant. Koyama receives a poetry journal produced by one of his friends. One of the poems reads: “[Your room] has a good view, and it’s close to the streetcar stop. Despite this, your poor wife goes into town heroically, with her tiny pride, to sell funeral armbands.” Koyama admires the piece repeatedly, saying it describes their lifestyle perfectly. Yoshiko, however, is horrified: she recognizes it as an allusion to herself and realizes that Yada must be telling people about them. She feels something wrong with her body and goes to the toilet, and discharges a dark fluid: apparently a miscarriage. That night, she cries in bed as Koyama sleeps, thinking, “I sold a funeral armband.”

Shame and pride of a “proletarian” woman

“Azakeru” is a powerful account of the “outlaw” life of anarchists in the middle 1920s, from a woman’s point of view. It is written in great detail in “I-novel” fashion, so that the reader experiences it as a detailed, faithful account of actual events; and while parts of it are probably invented,¹³⁴ Hirabayashi’s associates related that the pivotal incident in the story – her sleeping with a man in an effort to obtain money for herself and lover Iiyama – actually took place.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ Abe Namiko assumes that the miscarriage in the story is fictional: “Even if she were liberated from the ideal of chastity, she could not have easily escaped the reality of pregnancy.” Abe Namiko, 103.

¹³⁵ Abe Namiko, 105-6.

Despite the heavy use of actual events from the author's life, the story's fictional artistry is seen in the use of detailed scenes, whether experienced or witnessed by the narrator, which reinforce the central theme. "Azakeru" depicts a woman's struggle to live in desperate conditions, suffering from the degradation of selling sexual favors to men and the memories of a lost child, yet boosted by a strong spirit and fierce will to live.

The narrator, Yoshiko, feels profoundly isolated in her struggle and suffering. This is seen in her perception that people in the street look in disgust at her slovenly appearance. "The people looked at the strange woman's face with revulsion as they passed by," she writes, referring to herself in the third person. She wears clothes that are out of season, and one of her kimono is streaked with her white face powder. It may be that Hirabayashi at that time was shabby looking enough to attract attention: Yamamoto Kozô later described her as "unkempt, with an air of [sexual] experience," though Yamamoto's descriptions of Hirabayashi seem above all to reveal his own misogyny.¹³⁶ Yet what is crucial is Yoshiko's inner sense of shame - not at being sexually active per se, but at using her sexuality to pander to a man she doesn't care for. The scene in the streetcar in which Yoshiko harasses a well-dressed gentleman, whom she sees as just the sort of man who despises her, more fully develops this sense of humiliation, though here rebelliously and amusingly turned against the imagined offender.

¹³⁶ Abe Namiko, 67.

Anarchism in "Azakeru"

The "lifestyle" described in "Azakeru" is "anarchistic" insofar as it describes the actions of self-styled anarchists, and insofar as that lifestyle conforms to common associations with the word anarchy with chaos, lawless, unregulated sexuality, and so on. But can we describe this work as anarchist in a deeper political sense? Hirabayashi is not a political theorist, and she uses little of the language of anarchism, but the story embodies a theme of personal growth through political and personal struggle, with an emphasis on the centrality of sexual relationships, that is strongly akin to Ôsugi Sakae's Shikai no naka kara. And if Ôsugi was the "erotic anarchist," as Moriyama Shigeo dubbed him, how much more erotic than Shikai is this story. Images of the vitality of nature and particularly of male sexuality are on virtually every page. On the streetcar, Yoshiko smells the sweat of young men and tries to draw the face of Yada on the clouded window; the various men, from Koyama and Yada to the barber's son who pines over a girl whose parents will not let him marry her, seem to be moved by women like iron filings to a magnet. In the natural world, the howling of a tomcat clearly expresses "the painful torment of lust," although Koyama calls it "strange" as if to deny its obvious meaning. A less carnal, or at least less animal, metaphor for sexuality is the image of the new bamboo shoots. "On the ground, the bamboo shoots, covered with their brown skin, were growing rapidly. Their fresh, thick stems, which brought to mind the powerful arms of young men, grew so quickly that in the one day I had missed seeing them they had become unrecognizable" Descriptions of the bamboo grove across the street appear several times throughout the story, and are returned to in the final

section: "The shoots in the bamboo grove stretched out thinner every day – it was summer."

The sexual desires of the narrator Yoshiko are expressed in subtle, indirect allusions; for instance, several times she "likes the face" of a man she meets, like the conductor on the streetcar, or Yada's friend Kigawa – even when that man displays a noticeable contempt for her. At one point, Yoshiko seems to convince herself that selling herself to Yada is a trivial matter. "With the number of men I had known physically, I had lost the power to worry about such matters other than in an intellectual way." And yet she continues to feel a deeper dissatisfaction and yearning: "I wish I could meet a man for whom I could give my whole life to."

Unlike Ôsugi's account of his love affairs, with its implied linkage between finding a suitable lover, Itô Noe, and becoming a better activist and human being, Hirabayashi's story offers no such easy equation. Yoshiko is consumed with a feeling of shame and self-loathing for her act of prostitution, and the story ends with her sorrow over the loss of a certain innocence and the bleak image of a miscarriage. And yet the story has a certain positive tone to it, with the narrator's small, amusing triumphs over the men around her and the persistence of a kind of romantic optimism. The difference in Hirabayashi's perspective can be attributed in no small part to her being a woman. Despite the egalitarian ideals of anarchism and socialism, women involved in the movement generally found themselves playing secondary roles supporting their men, who considered their own activism as more important than such mundane, conventional activities as working and raising children. As Hirabayashi shows in

“Azakeru,” the worse characters in the anarchist movement behaved in an appalling manner, engaging in buying women as prostitutes under the banner of sexual liberation, and in theft and extortion in the name of taking back money which the capitalists had extorted from the masses.

In “Azakeru,” the men involved in the movement, personified by Koyama and Yada, completely fail to display serious ideals. Koyama is incapable of supporting himself and Yoshiko is aware that one reason he became involved with her was to “have the woman work.” While recognizing that her own past is nothing to be proud of, she thinks of him as a runpen, or “tramp.” At the same time, Koyama seems to know that she has the “weakness of needing to [take responsibility for both of their lives] to keep me happy.” The only apparent appeal of the insensitive, unsubtle (donkan) – and easily misled - Koyama is that he makes Yoshiko feel needed. This is in contrast with Yada, who pressures her for sex while giving as little as possible in return. Yada and his friends are no more appealing – Yada supported by his parents while living the radical lifestyle: reading Western books, seeing plays, extorting money from businesses, and womanizing; Kigawa as judgmental of Yoshiko as the well-dressed gentleman.

So negative is Hirabayashi’s portrayal of the men of the socialist/anarchist movement that a reader of this story might question whether she really supports the movement at all. And yet the fact is that Hirabayashi remained committed to leftwing causes throughout her prewar career. Perhaps the better question to ask is why the narrator, Yoshiko, chooses to live the anarchist lifestyle. Hirabayashi and her colleagues were absolutely in earnest about the idea of social revolution, and regarded whatever suffering they might experience as preferable to living a

conventional, and to them unconscionable, life of a bourgeois married woman. In her much later essay Nihon kyômutô tenmatsu (story of the Japan nihilists; published posthumously in 1972, the year of Hirabayashi's death), Hirabayashi explains the ethos behind the anarchist movement in this way:

The dream, of a revolution that would overturn this hateful society, colored the reality of lack and suffering in beautiful tones. Power was the evil that caused the loss of all humanistic feelings. Even the Bolsheviks, i.e., the communists, their comrades up until now, became hated for their acceptance of centralized power.

In fact, at the time the battle line split into anarchists and Bolsheviks, the anarchist faction was superior in terms of the number of young intellectuals, but in terms of actual organization, one could already see that the anarchists would eventually fall to the status of minorities. That was one of the reasons spurring the young anarchists to their tenacious adherence to anarchism.

But the real reason had to do with more than just that. It was linked to the fervent hope that by throwing caution to the winds and destroying society, that society might be reborn like shoots emerging from under fallen leaves, and that with it they, too, might be reborn. That was how unsettled and agitated they were. At the same time, they were tormented by the hopelessness of it all.¹³⁷

Here Hirabayashi, perhaps thinking more of male anarchists (the paragraph precedes a discussion of the anarchist terrorist plots following Ôsugi's murder), describes the reckless, romantic nihilism of the anarchist movement of the early 1920s. For women living the same movement, a similar attitude may have prevailed, but Hirabayashi's depiction of Yoshiko's experiences shows that the realities of pregnancy and childbirth, and the replication of the sexual

¹³⁷ Hirabayashi Taiko, "Nihon kyômutô tenmatsu," in Miyamoto Yuriko (Tokyo: Bungei Shunjû, 1972) 7-8.

oppression of the larger society within the socialist movement, presented overwhelming difficulties for female radicals.

As a piece of “proletarian” literature, “Azakeru” is notably lacking in elements which would serve to promote class consciousness. As a narrative, it revolves around the unconventional, yet in a sense drab, ordinary, and purposeless struggles of its protagonist, and these have little clear relation to the struggle to emancipate the proletariat. Abe Namiko reads the story, rather, as “challenge to battle” (chôsenjô) to men in the socialist movement. It is, in this view, much more a feminist piece of rhetoric than it is a “proletarian” document. Fundamental to Yoshiko’s predicament is that she cannot escape the sexual discrimination that pervades the socialist movement just as much as the oppressive bourgeois society which that movement endeavors to overthrow. The men around her all regard her as a sexual object, and despise a woman who does not look and act properly feminine.

When I passed a young man on the street, I would often see him give a look of disappointment as he saw my face up close.

This man, too, seemed like the type of man who naturally judged women by their looks, and liked golf and banquets at the Imperial Hotel.¹³⁸

This is the source of the humorous “revenge” which Yoshiko takes on the well-dressed gentleman on the streetcar, whom she imagines has given her a look of derision: she responds by deliberately leaning on him as the car sways, finally driving him away from his seat, which she takes with a “pleasant” feeling. Yet the socialist men she is involved with are also exploiters of women, with Yada openly treating them like prostitutes and Koyama trying to live off them. Yoshiko

¹³⁸ Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshû, vol. 1, 42.

writes a letter to Yada calling him a “bourgeois” who receives 100 yen a month from his parents and demanding that he “lend” her the 15 yen he had promised. Later, she realizes there is no point in sending the letter: “Even the bourgeois men, whom he blusteringly professed to hate as his arch-enemy, would pay five or ten yen without argument when they bought a woman.”¹³⁹

Admittedly, there is something “proletarian” about the impoverished, desperate lives of the protagonists, but they cannot convincingly be called true proletariat, coming for the most part from the educated class, and still possessing other options than selling their labor to industry.

How much social activism, for example, in support of labor unionization, is being performed by the characters in the story is unclear, but it does not seem to be extensive. In the only direct reference to the labor movement, the narrator describes a laborer couple she knows.

“People who let themselves get stirred up by the agitation and become pawns [for the labor movement] are the ones who lose out,” the wife told her husband, smiling scornfully. The husband, a laborer, was not the type of man to just go along with what his wife told him, but sometimes I could see a look of unbearable dejection on his face.

Without doubt, the unseen power of women had to this day caused the workers to lose many a strike, leaving the capitalists to gloat on their victory. It was, to be certain, an unconscious power coming from old customs which the women themselves could do nothing about, but nevertheless, I couldn’t restrain my feeling of cold contempt whenever I met that kind of woman.

I wondered if it were also true in my own case, with Koyama, but for us, in fact, the roles were reversed.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshû, vol. 1, 52.

¹⁴⁰ Hirabayashi Taiko Zenshû, vol. 1, 44-45.

This discussion indicates Yoshiko's association, to some degree, with labor activists, and genuine concern for their cause. Yet in the story, Yoshiko uses ideological concepts only as tools to extort money – as she thinks of doing with Yada by calling him “bourgeois,” and actually does to the company employee by telling him that the company's money is all squeezed from laborers. Ultimately, the story leaves the reader with the question of how much the anarchists' and other radicals' own rhetoric could be trusted. With their starving-artist lifestyle, borrowing and cajoling money from any source possible with no intention of repaying it, irresponsible love affairs and petty rivalries, what contribution were they actually making to social justice?

There is, at the same time, a peculiar stoic quality to the narrative. And key to the meaning of the story is the fact that Hirabayashi's alter ego is trying to become a proletarian. This means not merely living in the same conditions as the underclass, but living as a revolutionary member of the underclass. And in such a struggle, destroying the bourgeois institutions of marriage and the traditional family are equally important. One is reminded of Emma Goldman, who practiced “free love” throughout her life, but struggled with jealousy and hurt when one of her lovers slept with other women. Goldman, however, did not take her own suffering to be a repudiation of the idea of free love; the oppressive social institutions and millennia of learned practice were the causes of suffering, and ultimately what made real love impossible. This effort to destroy, or transcend, the limitations of bourgeois sexual institutions is highlighted even more clearly in Hirabayashi's second early masterpiece, “Seryôshitsu nite” (At the charity hospital,” 1927), which deals with events chronologically preceding

“Azakeru,” but expresses the personal struggle of an aspiring proletarian revolutionary woman even more clearly.

“Seryôshitsu nite”

“Seryôshitsu nite” (At the charity hospital, 1927) describes the period of Hirabayashi’s life prior to the events referred to in “Self-contempt.” The narrator, Kitamura Mitsuyo, is pregnant and malnourished, and staying at a ward for the poor in a Christian charity hospital in Manchuria. Her lover, whom she calls her husband, has been imprisoned for a leftwing “terrorist” plot with some Chinese labor foremen against the management of a horse-drawn streetcar company, apparently involving blowing up part of the railway. Mitsuyo has been found guilty as a co-conspirator, and awaits prison once she has given birth.

The story opens with Mitsuyo returning to the hospital from a summons to the military police headquarters. As she makes her way through a dark hallway to her semi-underground ward, her legs give out and she realizes she has beriberi. She hopes that with the illness, her confinement in prison will be delayed. She fears having a child in prison, but thinks defiantly that she will have a “pretty little Bolshevik girl.” Mitsuyo had opposed the uprising her husband had planned, knowing that it would end in failure. However, out of duty to her husband and the movement, she went along with it.

The elderly male receptionist happens by and helps her to her ward, in which the smell of the latrine pervades. Mitsuyo has been assigned a police guard. She thinks of her husband, who is not really her husband, but her “comrade” in revolution. The traditional family system is supposed to have

ended, but he went to jail tearfully apologizing for what he has put her through. She wishes that she and he both could shed their sentimental attachments, since the bourgeois family system is outmoded.

Mitsuyo gives birth to a baby girl. Her beriberi worsens; the hospital treats beriberi patients as a burden due to the need for long hospitalization. Various scenes indicate the heartless treatment of patients at the hospital: the tasteless food, the lack of help for the baby. Mitsuyo writes a letter to her husband describing the situation. The patients are terrified of the mortuary nearby in which autopsies are performed and to which, according to rumor, still-living patients are taken.

While having her temperature taken, Mitsuyo thinks about woman laborers with beriberi whose babies died after nursing. While Mitsuyo is thinking of how to ask the hospital director for cow's milk, he harangues a nurse who had given Mitsuyo a "needless" injection. Mitsuyo, realizing her life is valued less than the medicine, resolves to nurse the baby and let what will happen, happen.

Mitsuyo lets the baby drink generously, knowing this might kill the baby. A patient who has died is taken away, and the woman with paranoid delusions claims that the body was still moving.

Mitsuyo gets a letter from her husband, and is angry that he considers her and the baby the most important thing to him. At the same time she longs to be taken care of by him.

The baby develops diarrhea and vomiting and is taken away by a nurse. She dies that night. Mitsuyo is capable of little feeling but has the prostitute go to the morgue to burn incense. She reflects that the doctors will perform an autopsy

and write articles for journals discussing the risk of mothers who have beriberi nursing their infants beriberi-infected milk. These same doctors, however, will not discuss what women who are too poor to buy artificial supplements are supposed to do. Released from the hospital, Mitsuyo leaves for prison.¹⁴¹

Political perspective of “Seryôshitsu”: the rejection of bourgeois charity

Like its predecessor, “Azakeru,” “Seryôshitsu” is a first-person narrative entirely focused on the experiences of its protagonist, and is not marked by many explicit political references. Also like “Azakeru,” this story does not explicitly affirm an “anarchistic” philosophy. Nevertheless, it is very much in the tradition of anarchistic fiction that we have discussed so far, in its focus on the political connotations of individual personal experience, specifically, the experience of a woman committed to socialist revolution. Unlike in much socialist fiction, no political activity takes place in this story; the terrorist plot which forms the background to the protagonist’s travails is discussed only briefly, in outline form. However, this context transforms the story from an account of one poor woman’s suffering in pregnancy and childbirth to a general indictment of authority and established social institutions.

This indictment focuses not on the obvious target of the Japanese government (as did, say, Kinoshita Naoe’s Hi no hashira), but on a Christian charity hospital, an institution at first glance not obviously complicit in oppression. Hirabayashi’s portrayal of the hospital director and his wife, the

¹⁴¹ Beriberi is, of course, caused by a vitamin deficiency and not by an infection, so the baby presumably died of malnutrition. This would seem to reduce the narrator’s responsibility, but she clearly considers the mother’s milk to have been the cause of death.

head nurse, is searing: the hospital director enters the ward with bloodshot eyes, looking like he was drinking the previous night. "Oh Lord, we thank you for giving us today this time together with these sick, suffering ones...Amen," he intones, and then, learning that a nurse had given Mitsuyo an injection after she passed out, smashes it on the floor, shouting "Idiot!...Don't you know how much one gram of this medicine costs? Do you think a poor hospital like this can use this kind of medicine every time someone suffers from neural anemia?" Hearing this, Mitsuyo thinks, "the life of one woman patient...worth less than the price of one canister of medicine..."¹⁴² and, giving up on asking for milk, resolves to let the baby drink her diseased milk.

The starkest image of the story is that of the mortuary where autopsies are performed.

For those who, defeated at the end of the long battle of life, had the chain of their life dragged to this underground room, the most terrible thing to think of was not so much the long stay in the charity hospital, but the final moment of death in which one lay upon the autopsy table. Lying on the cold stone surface, having ones hands and feet sliced off in place of the admission fee one had paid while alive, how could anyone believe in a peaceful ascension to heaven like that portrayed in that dusty framed picture hanging above the table?¹⁴³

The hospital is not a place of healing, but a place to take the weak, old, and ill to die where they will not disturb the rest of society. So, too, Mitsuyo's baby dies of malnutrition, and while she also blames herself for not being assertive in demanding milk, she is quite aware that when the baby was taken away from her with diarrhea, no treatment was given.

¹⁴² Hirabayashi Taiko zenshû, vol. 1, 102.

¹⁴³ Hirabayashi Taiko zenshû, vol. 1, 100.

The autopsy would no doubt certify that, not having any artificial infant formula, she knowingly nursed the baby with milk tainted with beriberi, causing it to die from infant beriberi. And this would prove all the more to the medical world that “one must beware of beriberi-tainted milk. When the mother has beriberi, a surrogate nurse or infant formula must be used.” However, they would not be able to deduce from the corpse of this pitiable child of mine what the sort of human beings without the money for infant formula are supposed to do.¹⁴⁴

Hirabayashi’s moral condemnation of the charity hospital is so complete that it implies the common socialist rejection of private charity: since caring for those who need it is the responsibility of all of society, it should not be delegated to voluntary organizations limited in their resources and distorted by private (ultimately, capitalist) interests.

Living as a proletarian woman – pregnancy, childbirth, and revolution

That “Seryôshitsu” was intended as proletarian literature is made clear from the cover illustration for Hirabayashi’s first volume of collected short stories, published under the title “Seryôshitsu,” in 1928.¹⁴⁵ An abstractly rendered naked woman stands in a huddled position, dragging a chain behind her, seemingly in a tunnel below the earth leading up and down; to the side is a pickaxe. Mitsuyo, the narrator of the story, struggles to escape the chains of society, surrounded by darkness and uncertainty, possessing little but her own body. While “Azakeru” explored the narrator’s experience of being driven by oppression and sexual discrimination to the point of prostituting that body, “Seryôshitsu” explores that body in the travails of pregnancy and childbirth,

¹⁴⁴ Hirabayashi Taiko zenshû, vol. 1, 108.

¹⁴⁵ Shown in Hirabayashi Taiko, Hirabayashi Taiko, *Nihon bungaku zenshû* 46 (Tokyo: Shûeisha, 1974) 427.

malnutrition and disease, as the protagonist tries to live the life of a revolutionary woman.

Hirabayashi explores in this story the imagery of illness: the numbness of her legs, the way her skin caves in when pressed and does not return to its original state; pain; fainting; her inability to get out of bed or use the toilet herself. (She would return to such imagery in her later novella Kô iu onna [1946] in describing a later illness in a situation strongly paralleling that of “Seryôshitsu.”) She describes her pregnancy in ambivalent terms, telling of the pleasure of nursing but also describing her belly as resembling that of a mosquito engorged in blood, and describing her baby as resembling a monkey – to set up the motif of the resistance of a revolutionary woman to confinement to family life. This imagery sets up Mitsuyo’s decision to nurse her child in what can be read as a sort of infanticide (although the real killer is the hospital). Hirabayashi’s letters regarding the incident in real life, by contrast, showed a greater tenderness towards the child than that shown by Mitsuyo.

Mitsuyo’s illness and abject poverty place her right amidst other women in the dregs of society, and in this way she achieves a sort of community with them. In the women’s room are two old women, one of whom is paralytic and one who has a stiffened hand and is chanting Buddhist sutras, and a younger ex-prostitute who had attempted suicide and suffers from paranoid delusions. These women are more part of an impoverished “underclass” than they are “proletarian,” and their relation to Japanese colonial society is unclear, but Mitsuyo shares their suffering, though there is no evidence that the patients share any deep bonds.

As in “Azakeru,” Hirabayashi attacks the behavior of men in the socialist movement, particularly the foolish recklessness of her husband. However, she here tries to purge herself of sentimental attachments to him – thus showing a tendency opposite to that of the former story, in which she tries to preserve a quasi-married life with her lover, even while knowing that he is not a worthy partner. Mitsuyo’s desire to love and be loved shows through indirectly, in statements such as “I wouldn’t hold a grudge against him,” which show a struggle to control her emotions. In intention, at least, we see in Mitsuyo a strong determination to force herself to adhere to her anarchist or socialist ideals.

Hirabayashi’s female revolutionary characters face a dilemma reminiscent of that of Emma Goldman, who practiced free love and, as a result, suffered from jealousy and worry when her lover was with other women. Goldman wrote an essay on “Jealousy” in which she attributed the anguish over lost love described by Romantic poets as originating in an outmoded moral code promulgated by the Church and State.¹⁴⁶ So too does Mitsuyo in “Seryôshitsu” strive to purge herself of emotions which are incompatible with bringing about the new world of anarchism/ socialism. If Hirabayashi’s characters are admirable and sympathetic in their struggles, they never succeed in achieving a perfect revolutionary consciousness, and it is likely that the author herself is skeptical about the ultimate value of this goal.

¹⁴⁶ Marshall, 408.

“Seken kôjô no dôshi”

Hirabayashi Taiko did not write exclusively in the autobiographical, subjective mode. In the late 1920s her loyalties shifted uncertainly between anarchist and Marxist groups, and with the rise of Marxist literary theory, Hirabayashi responded to the call by figures such as Aono Suekichi to write “objective” proletarian literature which, rather than focusing on the characterization of individuals, aimed to portray laborers as a group or class. The most famous example of left-wing literature written with this approach is Kobayashi Takiji’s Kani Kôsen (The cannery ship, 1929). Hirabayashi’s “Seken kôjô no dôshi” (Comrades in the soap factory, 1929), written at about the same time, shows her masterful skills in writing according to generic requirements.

This story is a short, simple call for unionization and celebration of worker solidarity among female employees of a soap factory. The narrative begins in a factory district in early morning, with crowds of workers entering the various factories. The area contains several factories. Chiyoko, a young female employee of the Inoue Ôka Soap Factory, is stopped by two police officers and asked whether she has seen a woman or women handing out newspapers. She then happens upon one of the newspapers, a labor newspaper with an insert urging female workers, who work under conditions even worse than male laborers, to contact the union in order to join. The article in the newspaper declares that unionizing is better than running away, the choice of many workers. Inside, members of the management are scanning the women for newspapers. Chiyoko hides the paper in her sleeve. One man tells her to turn in any unusual newspaper she might be given.

The newspapers were distributed by four women workers, who were chased by police and forced to dispose of the newspapers in drainage channels. Late to work, they sneak into their work area, worried that a “spy” who attends union meetings has seen them.

A young trainee at the soap factory, Yoshiko, confides in her senior colleague, Okiyo, that she took one of the newspapers and hid it in her clothing, but someone had removed the newspaper while the clothes were hung up. She is afraid of being kicked and abused, as she has been previously for listening to a pro-labor speech. Meanwhile, the factory chief is worrying about the possibility of the “reddening” or communization of his factory. He is frightened by the seemingly superhuman power of the labor movement agitators, and is curious about the reaction of his own factory’s female workers to today’s pamphlets. He walks about the factory, observing men at work and thinks that the male workers are more reliable than the female ones. He comes upon some female workers neglecting their posts to look at a crumpled newspaper, and finds another copy hidden in a lounge.

Five women with reputations for insubordination are questioned, including Chiyoko and Yoshiko, but they admit to nothing. Yoshiko, who was caught with a paper, is threatened with having her parents notified. Afterwards, Chiyoko declares that she will join the union.

One month later, the factory is busy with end-of-year activity. The woman trainees have all become full employees except Yoshiko, who is too young and thus remains a trainee with a lower salary. In the cutting department, worn-out mesh surrounding pulley belts has been removed and not replaced a day later.

Okiyo speaks to the management, but they are unconcerned. As labor continues in very dangerous conditions, the management is tabulating the rate of production and pressuring workers to take part in a “productivity week.” A worker has his hand crushed in a machine; not even clean, adequate bandaging is available.

Chiyoko announces that she will join the union. Okiyo and Yoshiko agree and talk about who to recruit and who to avoid. Yoshiko excitedly anticipates the union’s support in being made a full employee.

Literature of class consciousness

This piece illustrates Hirabayashi’s production of literature supporting the Communist party of Japan, and provides a distinct contrast to her earlier, anarchistic pieces. As the title of the story indicates, the emphasis is on the awakening of the fellow workers’ consciousness of themselves as proletariat, and their resolve to unite against oppression, and ultimately to conduct a revolution, through the vehicle of the union.

There is little attempt to create personality in the characters. Chiyoko, the main character, is portrayed objectively, through her words and actions, which are kept to a minimum. The story primarily relates the sequence of events, minor in themselves, which lead to her decision to try to organize a union. Within this scheme Hirabayashi uses details imaginatively to suggest the workers’ lifestyles and recreate the atmosphere of tension within the factory in which revolt is fomenting. For instance:

“Hey, Miss!”

In her surprise at being called, Chiyoko imagined she had dropped the new diamond hairpin she had bought two days ago. She raised her hand to her hair as she turned around.

She was near what was, in form alone, an emergency exit belonging to Dai Nippon Rubber. However, it had never been opened, with fresh orange paint newly applied to both the iron door and the closed lock.

It was a police officer calling. Seeing that Chiyoko had stopped, he ran over to her with his left hand grasping the sword at his side.

“Was there a women here just now handing out some kind of newspaper?”¹⁴⁷

Here we are presented the main themes of the story, before Chiyoko has even discovered the newspaper herself. Workers are wary of the authorities, both management and police, who cooperate in suppressing trouble. The authorities, for their part, fear worker unrest and attempt to forestall it through spying and confiscating union propaganda. Chiyoko is not a converted revolutionary but a consumer, as the hairpin indicates. Yet she cannot fail to see how unsatisfactory the conditions are for workers, especially women, in the factory. The painted-over exit shows the lack of attention to safety. Workers are exposed to contaminants and are at a high risk of being maimed by machines, and will not be cared for by the company if they are disabled. Young girls such as Yoshiko are especially exploited as “trainees” with low pay.

This story shows clearly how the influence of Marxism was being felt in labor literature by 1929. Portrayal of the labor struggle in terms of the characters

¹⁴⁷ Hirabayashi Taiko zenshû, vol. 1, 301.

of individuals – a humanistic, individualistic approach – has been superseded by a more “scientific” approach. Workers are shown as ordinary people existing within a system of exploitation. They do not necessarily overtly protest their conditions, and may not be fully conscious of the nature of their oppression, but they can be awakened to the power of organization. The stylistic directive of the proletarian art movement, that art be objective, has been followed with some success by Hirabayashi. She is successful in that she persuasively illustrates class conflict as manifested in the sites of labor. The guardians of capitalism are portrayed not as evil villains but as, unconsciously perhaps, fearfully working to preserve the status quo. Hirabayashi’s description of the factory chief’s thoughts, and subsequent prowling around the factory, show the narrowness of his vision, with a touch of humor:

The labor movement [he thought] was just like the bacteria that caused lung disease. Germs exist inside everybody’s lungs, but if one’s physical health is good, the disease does not develop. The company president had used that metaphor to him once. The “physical health” referred to in his theory, in this case, certainly did not mean labor conditions or the living conditions of laborers. (Capitalists are always passionate spiritualists when they are dealing with laborers.) What he meant by physical health was the thoroughness of the factory chief’s supervision.

He wanted to know what the female workers’ reaction had been to pamphlets such as the ones from this morning. With the supervisors away at lunch, thinking to check on their work performance, he took out old khaki colored boot covers from a bamboo basket in the veranda and pulled them over his boots. Cautiously treading on the soles of his feet like a cat, he walked down the hall to the packaging room.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁸ Hirabayashi Taiko zenshû, vol. 1, 305.

Any such complex thoughts on the part of the workers are not shown either through conversation or internal monologue. Chiyoko's response to the labor newspaper is not even recorded, except in the fact that she hides the newspaper in order to keep it. Conversations among the women are short and abbreviated, involving fear of being caught and punished for reading subversive materials, and the dangerous conditions of the workplace which lead to the maiming of a male worker following repeated requests to the management to replace a protective screen to a machine.

Sighing softly, they all returned to their workplaces. But they did not get back to work immediately. Everyone gathered beneath the bent, sagging belt which had come off. They spoke excitedly.

"We just can't have this kind of thing happening. It's unbelievably dangerous."

"At times like this having a labor union would be a big help. Look, why don't just we in this room agree to join and send a letter to the place in the newspaper?"

Chiyoko boldly spoke her thoughts, which she had been debating saying for a while now.

"Yes, I've had just the same thought. But will just us in this room be enough?"¹⁴⁹

The correctness of the labor movement is taken for granted in this story, as the obvious antidote to the oppressive conditions of the factory. The revolutionary goals of the Communist party are neither explicated nor debated in the story. Such material would probably have been censored in any event, but the effect of immediacy created by the bare portrayal of working conditions is certainly persuasive in itself.

¹⁴⁹ Hirabayashi Taiko zenshû, vol. 1, 308.

This work shows the major departure from the anarchist influenced individualism typical of labor literature a decade or so before. The gain in objectivity has been bought possibly at the expense of exploring various and contradictory forces in the minds and lives of workers. In this sense anger at exploitation and mistreatment has been captured, but the darker human forces of sexuality, envy, hatred, and so on as force in social revolution (for good or ill) are not delved into in a story of this type. The nihilistic rage of Ishii Kinji has been replaced by enlightened organization. However, this style of fiction was an exception in Hirabayashi's career, and she would explore the autobiographical approach extensively in her post-World War II career.

Hirabayashi's fiction throughout the 1920 showed a strongly anarchistic quality. "Seken kôjô" differs from most of her other works in her emphasis on objective portrayal of class struggle and her attribution of a growing class consciousness to her characters. However, the other stories I have discussed are notable for their use of anarchistic ideas to critique the socialist movement as a whole and simultaneously to critique the anarchist movement itself. The protagonists in "Azakeru" and "Seryôshitsu" accept the anarchist imperative to sever ties with old customs and to live lives of struggle with society and struggle to liberate oneself. At the same time, they see in other activists, particularly males in the anarchist movement, egregious failures to live up to their utopian ideals, focusing on material self-interest and exploiting the women in their lives.

Yamakawa Ryô

The short stories of Yamakawa Ryô (1887-1957) are based on common left-wing scenarios of exploitation of the lower classes, class conflict, misconduct of the military and police, anti-socialist hysteria, and left-wing activism. His stories written between 1922 and 1927 reflect, as do Hirabayashi's, the growing organization of Japan's labor movement and the growing influence of Marxism in their explicit references to the economic structure behind the social conflicts which take place. At the same time, Yamakawa's interest in anarchism is reflected in his fictional themes. One such theme is the celebration of rebellious action, even if that action is misdirected. Another is the life-affirming presence of nature, which gives energy and inspiration to struggling individuals and in a larger sense implies a natural order of things to which human society must return. Finally, Yamakawa's stories often portray individuals who seek self-fulfillment, an endeavor which can come into conflict with the sacrifices which a social activist expects and is expected to make.

Yamakawa (real given name: Ryôzô) was born in Fukui Prefecture, the younger brother of Yamakawa Tomiko, the Myôjô artist/writer. His first published work, "Kakurenbô," was serialized in Hirozu Ryûrô's Kiseki in 1913, which was banned from sale by the authorities. Yamakawa became acquainted with Kaneko Yôbun, Imano Kenzô, and others and had published an essay entitled "From the notebook of an egoist: the anarchist position" in the third issue of the proto-proletarian literary and political journal Tane maku hito in 1921.

Matsuzawa Shinsuke, in his recent reappraisal of Yamakawa's career, reveals the strong influence of anarchism on Yamakawa's thought, as well as his continued anarchistic sympathies, even though Yamakawa would align himself in the postwar period with the Communist party, of which he remained a member up until his death in 1957.¹⁵⁰

Yamakawa's prewar career shows a strong anarchist alignment and consistent anarchistic affiliations. He first became interested in socialism following the Great Treason Trial, showed his writing to the anarchist Ogawa Mimei (famous for his children's literature), and was introduced to socialist circles by Miyachi Karoku, a friend of Miyajima Sukeo's. Matsuzawa sees the group of Ogawa, Miyachi, and others as typically writing "melancholy, nihilistic, rebellious I-novelistic literature," and that through their influence Yamakawa, too, made these elements a lasting part of his literature.

It is at first surprising that an anarchist like Yamakawa would become a member of the Tane maku hito group, with its sympathies for Soviet Russia. Matsuzawa sees this as the result of Tane maku leader Kaneko Yôbun's open-mindedness and belief in joining with as many allies as possible.¹⁵¹ Yamakawa's first piece in Tane maku hito is significant not so much for its intellectual content as for showing the continued and even growing prominence of anarchism in Japanese socialism in 1921 despite Ôsugi Sakae's supposed loss of influence following his scandalous love affairs. Indeed, Yamakawa's rhetoric of complete rejection of authority and of contrasting a master and a slave class reminds one of

¹⁵⁰ Matsuzawa Shinsuke, "Tane maku hito no umoreta dônin: Yamakawa Ryô (Ryôzô) no kiseki," Bunkyô Daigaku Kokubun, vol. 31 (March 2002): 32-47. Yamakawa claimed to have joined the Communist Party by 1930, but Matsuzawa finds this to be unlikely (ibid, 43).

¹⁵¹ Matsuzawa, "Tane maku hito no umoreta dônin," 39.

Ôsugi's essays. He starts by quoting Max Stirner's famous phrase "all things are nothing to me," and begins in Stirnerian fashion:

I am myself, others are others. I am nothing outside of myself. All things exist for my purposes; at the same time, all things are meaningless to me. We claim to unite to benefit ourselves and to fight for our class. But if this is so, what to do when our interests diverge? When one class has subjugated another class, what should its people do next?¹⁵²

According to Yamakawa, political revolution only leads to the replacement of one ruling class by another. The "mistaken thinking" leading to this phenomenon is the persistence of the "slave spirit," which transforms itself into the "capitalist spirit" when an oppressed group takes power. Yamakawa could hardly have been more explicit about his identification with anarchism and his rejection of Marxism. Marxism's "fundamental mistake" is to accept representational government and a money system. Marx, says Yamakawa, was a "typical leader" and not truly united with the workers. In order for true change to occur (the word "revolution" is avoided and left blank in one spot), the ultimate goal of laborers should be "free, pleasant" labor and each individual must "awaken to himself" and in this way be free of all authority. This includes the rejection of Marx, Kropotkin, Proudhon, Lenin, and Trotsky.

Despite Yamakawa's uncompromising adherence to anarchism in this essay, in 1930 he described himself as "unaffiliated" to any school of literature and a supporter of the moderate Nihon Taishû (Japan Popular) Party. In the postwar period, he was active in the Communist Party, by which time Japanese

¹⁵² Tane maku hito, vol. 1, no. 3, Facsimile edition (Tokyo: Nihon Kindai Bungaku Kenkyûjo, 1961) 9-12.

Communists were making some attempts to distance themselves from dogmatic Marxism and Stalinist totalitarianism.

Unlike Ôsugi, Yamakawa's talent lay in the creation of tightly-constructed works of fiction which combined insights into the experiences of a wide variety of people with an understanding of the deeper social and political forces which informed those experiences. His style is reminiscent of that of Miyajima Sukeo, but his stories are more plot-driven, with autobiographical material used more selectively than in those of Miyajima, in which the psychological journey of the author-narrator seems to drive the plot.

"Dorobôgame no hanashi" (The story of Dorobôgame the thief, *Kaihô*, 1923)

"Dorobôgame" portrays an adventure of an unemployed lumber worker who, starving in the streets, is persuaded by a friend to become a thief. The story is preceded by the unattributed epigram: "The proletariat are the creators of a superior power, even when working from the tatters of the present reality."¹⁵³ Yamakawa thus indicates his artistic purpose, at least in terms of the political function of literature: to portray the vitality of the underclass. By 1923, the term "proletarian" had become standard in socialist discourse to refer to the oppressed, laboring class which was to be the agent of revolution. However, apart from the use of this term, the tropes and paradigms used by Yamakawa show little sign of explicitly Marxist influence.

¹⁵³ Yamakawa Ryô, "Dorobôgame no hanashi," Sofue Shôji, ed., Shoki puroretaria bungaku shû, vol. 5, (Tokyo : Shin Nihon Shuppansha, 1985) 71.

The story opens with a scene of springtime and the revival of life reminiscent of the opening of Miyajima's Kôfu.¹⁵⁴

Even the dusty city streets were filled with the frenzy and lushness of the budding of spring. From the ends of the branches of trees, from the earth itself, the blazing green turned toward the clear May sky and danced, as if it were the vitality of the earth bursting out from the core.¹⁵⁵

To the protagonist, Kameda Kitarô – nicknamed “Kameki” - who has not eaten for three days, the budding life of spring only adds to his torment. Blinking in the sun, he wanders by shops selling food, knowing that no one is likely to give him any. He then walks down to a dock area, where he is spotted by a friend, Tazô, who works on a ship. Tazô takes him to a small ironworks factory which is hiring workers, and as Kameki looks around, he feels anger at the poor working environment. Kameki had come from the countryside and worked at a lumber factory for three years, then was fired for attending a socialist meeting.

The friends go to a miserable bar frequented by laborers, and encounter an accordion player and a one-armed man called Ganmo who was maimed working at a factory. Kameki becomes dizzy from the food and drink. A local thief known as Yamaneko (mountain cat) boasts that he has a “job” lined up, and Tazô demands to be included, prompting a brawl which leaves Kameki in the corner throwing up. Nevertheless, that night the three of them pull up in a small boat in order to break into a storehouse which holds goods unloaded from ships.

After several slightly comical scenes in which the less experienced men fall in the water and Yamaneko boasts that he has an unfailing intuition that the

¹⁵⁴ This story also contains several descriptions of the ocean as “laughing,” a conceit also used by Miyajima, though here without prominent connection to the theme of the protagonist’s “vitality.”

¹⁵⁵ Yamakawa, “Dorobôgame” 71.

night will be a success, the men proceed to clumsily load goods into a large sack. Just then, a guard appears and Tazô and Kameki run away tripping over themselves. Yamaneko stays behind to tackle the guard, but finds himself suffocating in a chokehold. At this point, Kameki saves Yamaneko by bashing the guard on the head with a rock. The story ends with a folktale-like conclusion:

Nowadays, people who travel in this region, no matter which home they visit, are told the story of a famous thief known as Dorobôgame. And when they are shown drawings by children, one type often seen is that of a young man holding a rock as big as a boulder with both hands high above his head, about to bring it down upon a fine gentleman wearing western clothes.¹⁵⁶

This simple Robin Hood tale is heavily laden with socialist imagery. The imagery is, however, basically anarchistic, with emphasis on individual rage and celebration of the individual, isolated act of rebellion rather than on class consciousness. Capitalists are seen in crude caricature in Kameki's eyes. As Kameki crushes lice from his body, taking pleasure in the action in a scene strikingly reminiscent of a scene in Natsume Sôseki's Kôfu (in which the protagonist crushes bedbugs), they remind him of "fat capitalists who squeeze the blood from laborers." Later, as he prepares to go out to burgle the storehouse, he thinks of his own hunger and anger at the exploitation of capitalist society:

He had cursed his life, cursed his existence, and hated the social structure by which the rich get ever richer and the poor get poorer and poorer. And at the height of despair, he had imagined killing himself, and even gone so far as to place his hope in suicide....Even when he saw well-fed human beings reluctantly giving away meat and vegetables, he knew no way to express his resistance. While despising them as a herd of "well-fed pigs," he could only watch them passively. Then

¹⁵⁶ Yamakawa, "Dorobôgame" 89.

Yamaneko had come to him, and breathed “strength” (chikara) into his heart.¹⁵⁷

Kameki justifies stealing on the grounds that “it’s a choice between starving to death because of them, or using this tactic to push aside those who get in the way of his life.” Indeed, objects don’t rightly belong to anyone, he tells himself: “That’s right, nothing really belongs to anyone. That’s right, I’m just taking something that’s been left with someone, and using it.” As he makes this decision, Kameki feels as if he has been reborn.

While having the protagonist Kameki adopt precisely the same philosophy with which anarchists justified their extortion – that they, as individuals, were merely taking back some of what had been stolen from the proletariat – Yamakawa devotes considerable length to the scenes in the bar, depicting the rough, gritty world of the underclass in journalistic fashion. Sofue Shôji notes that Yamakawa’s practice of referring to characters by nicknames anticipates the attempt by later Marxist writers such as Kobayashi Takiji in his The Cannery Ship (1929) to portray people as generic members of their class rather than as individuals,¹⁵⁸ but Kameki and his companions remain colorful characters in their own right. We may also note that the story is presented somewhat like a children’s story, as the final paragraph indicates. In another story, “Uma nusubito”¹⁵⁹ (the horse thief, Kaihô, 1927) Yamakawa tells the story of a horse theft from a mountain village in northern Japan. The twist in this story is that the stolen horse belongs to the local rich landowner, who turns out to have

¹⁵⁷Yamakawa, “Dorobôgame” 83.

¹⁵⁸ Sofue Shôji, in Shoki puroretaria bungaku shû, vol. 5, 486.

¹⁵⁹ Shoki puroretaria bungaku shû, vol. 5, 117-127.

engineered the theft himself so that one of his gambling friends could raise some money. The horse is finally sold to a poor farmer, at which point it promptly dies – the landowner knew the horse was ill. The events are viewed from the point of view of a small boy who has nightmares about a wolf coming to eat him. While this story includes an anti-capitalist element, it also owes much of its content to Yamakawa’s use of the theme of the Aesop’s fable “The boy who cried wolf,” by having the young boy protagonist wake up from a nightmare about a wolf after being told a story of a wolf by a neighbor. The image of the wolf is obviously linked with the idea of the predatory landowner, but the metaphor is not made explicit.

“Kettô” (The Fight, *Kaihô* 1922)¹⁶⁰

This story takes a strong anti-military and pacifistic stance with a surprisingly explicit condemnation of military culture. It is narrated in the first person by a nameless character. The narrator is sitting in the grounds of a military cadet school in February listening to an officer tell of his exploits in China when his friend Kawamura tells him that another student, Nakagi is waiting in a grassy area and wants to talk to him. Nakagi tells the narrator that he has been challenged to a duel by Suzuta, having received a letter through the third-year student Ôkawa, who seems to be Suzuta’s “companion” or lover. Nakagi had struck Ôkawa last week for insulting him. Nakagi says that he will accept the challenge, and the narrator agrees to be his second. In Nakagi’s face he alternately sees excitement and fear.

¹⁶⁰ Shoki puroretaria bungaku shû, vol. 5, 59-70.

The narrator is looking out the window of his dormitory room at night, full of fear, when Kawamura comes in. Kawamura agrees that the duel is foolish but says that their way of life depends on the code “blood for blood.” He says that the narrator learned “dueling methods” and “foolish philosophy” from thinkers like Pushkin. The narrator wants to stop the duel but Kawamura thinks that this is impossible.

The boys meet in the woods with their seconds and other friends – and the narrator is told that he will be the referee. He sets up the space and gives the starting signal and the two attack each other. Nakagi strikes Suzuta repeatedly in the face, then Suzuta knocks him down and pummels him ruthlessly. Towards the end of the fight Nakagi bites Suzuta’s foot severely. The fight lasts for ten minutes. Kawamura and the narrator take Nakagi, who is unable to walk, home, but the narrator becomes ill and throws up.

The story skips to one month later. The narrator asks Kawamura if he thinks that he is a coward. Kawamura says yes, but says that everyone is really a coward. The narrator confesses that he only was able to take his part in the duel only by acting automatically, not out of courage. Kawamura says that the narrator is more cowardly than other people, but thus is more courageous. He says that military society does not need people like the narrator – it wants people whose consciences are at the level of Nakagi and Suzuta. Human beings live for themselves and their own happiness, but these men are fools who do not know this. The narrator, Kawamura says, is at a crossroads in his own life.

“Kettô” relates the narrator’s anti-militarism to the reading of Russian authors, an action not approved of in the culture of the military school. However,

the main argument of the narrative is given not in intellectual terms but in the imagery of the story. The story is set in early spring with the last snow melting. The boy's physical vitality and, implicitly, sexuality are shown as growing in intensity with the coming of spring. These references to nature and vitality drive the story along. By contrast, the narrator's loneliness and isolation in his discomfort with the violent, anti-intellectual atmosphere is brought out in the lengthy descriptions of colorless, desolate moonlit scenery.

The character of Kawamura puts the narrator's dilemma into explicit, political and philosophical terms, and thus educates the narrator's consciousness. This consciousness, represents a growth in individual self-understanding, and not in issues of class warfare. Kawamura also makes mocking statements that suggest he is not entirely serious, particularly the final line of the story in which he laughs at the narrator for getting so upset about "a little fight." Sofue Shôji sees this side of Kawamura as a tactic by which the author attempts to evade censorship by adding statements which weaken the seriousness of Kawamura's statements.

"Chiisana machi no dekgoto"¹⁶¹

"Chiisana machi no dekgoto" (Incident in a small town, 1925; originally published in Fukuoka Nichinichi) This story takes as its theme attitudes towards socialism in rural Japan, by examining the impact of the 1923 Kanto earthquake on a small village in northern Japan. In September of 1923, the young director of a local company, a man holding some prestige in the town, "even if that prestige

¹⁶¹ Shoki puroretaria bungaku shû, vol. 5, 90-104.

was a forced prestige attached to property and power," returns from Tokyo, where the residents of the town had feared he had perished in the earthquake. Pressed to tell stories of his experience, the man begins inventing stories in order to save face. In obvious reference to the rumors about sabotage and murder committed by Koreans and socialists, he says he saw bombs hurled right before his eyes, and the body of a child who had perished from eating a poisoned bun. With these stories in the local newspaper, "the forces of imperialistic reactionism slowly awakened the long sleep of this tiny town."

At the same time, a young socialist named Yasuda Heikichi also returns to the town. He had left 10 years before as a teenager to get involved in socialist activism, and he, too, has returned after being released from custody by the police. Heikichi still believes in socialism, but is physically and mentally exhausted and wants only to relax and enjoy the calm natural surroundings of his family home, in which his mother and younger brother still live. Heikichi's turn to socialism was provoked by his impoverished childhood, in which his mother was dependent on the charity of the local landowner.

No sooner does Heikichi return to the village than rumors begin to fly about his reasons for returning. Certain villagers, namely, older homeowners, begin to suggest that he is planning some sort of sabotage in the town. After once rebuffing a request to report to the local government office, he is arrested and held in a cell. As he wonders what will happen to him, another man is thrown into the cell with him. This man claims to be a socialist and tries to get Heikichi to admit to being a socialist too. When Heikichi accuses him of being a "spy," the man beats him until he is restrained by the guard. The guard removes the man

from the cell and then proceeds to beat Heikichi himself: the whole thing was a set-up.

Yamakawa here looks back at the earthquake of two years before, showing how the events in the capitol and the hysteria regarding socialism reach a provincial town in which the local residents have very little conception of what socialism is at all. And yet, Yamakawa is careful to offer a quasi-economic explanation of the origin of Heikichi's turn to socialism. Heikichi had grown up poor, raised by his mother and three other siblings. His mother had at times been driven to steal food from the landowner's fields. One day, Heikichi had come home from school to find a copious pile of potatoes, onions, and other produce. When he asked his mother where they came from, she explained "with a gloomy expression" that they had come from the beneficence of the landowner. Heikichi was filled with hatred for the landowner and for his mother for accepting the charity.

Having returned to the village some ten years later, Heikichi wants only to rest. He is weary of being persecuted as a socialist, but also is tired of the fanatical nature of the movement, in which pursuing individual pleasure is seen as a betrayal of the movement. Heikichi asks himself:

Why is it wrong for me to think things like this? Is it a sin, in this kind of a world, to seek pleasure for oneself – a sin against those who, try as they might, cannot have this kind of world? The person who said that in an era in which the masses cannot get the bread they need, it is a sin to eat sweets, was no doubt correct. And one of the friends of the person who said that, accepting the truth of what he said, still insisted on keeping sweets in his pocket. There is something human and likeable about that. No matter what happens to human beings, they are

still human beings, not puppets or machines. Why do people not try harder to liberate their feelings, to become free?¹⁶²

Heikichi feels that the ability to enjoy nature, and to express one's feelings freely, must be an essential part of any revolution. If revolutionaries need to suppress all of their feelings and desires, then even as they overthrow their oppressors, they are replacing the old oppression with newly oppressive rules of their own making. This individualist critique of dogmatism and fanatical self-sacrifice in the socialist movement is again highly reminiscent of Ôsugi Sakae's Shikai no naka kara. Ironically, despite Heikichi's alienation from the socialist movement (though not from its goals or ideals), and his lack of any activity in his home town, he is regarded as a threat by the local authorities, who set him up for abuse and torture.

"Eizô" (A portrait)¹⁶³

While the title of "Eizô (Kaihô, 1926) literally means "image," I have translated it as "A portrait," because it is a literary depiction of a young man involved in the early socialist movements of about 1920 – a kind of self-portrait by Yamakawa of himself some five years earlier, as he made the crucial decision to devote himself to socialism.

The protagonist, Hamano, is a 20 year old socialist who lives in a small village helping with his family's rice farm, meets Okabe, an older activist of about 26, who arrives by ferry, and together they go to attend a secret meeting. Hamano is a member of the "Reijinsha," a Tolstoyan (Christian and spiritual)

¹⁶² Shoki puroretaria bungaku shû, vol. 5, 97-98.

¹⁶³ Shoki puroretaria bungaku shû, vol. 5, 105-116.

socialist group. Okabe urges Hamano to join the “Socialist” (materialist and “scientific”) movement, but Hamano is reluctant.

Hamano goes to stay with his sweetheart, Oguri Katsuko, an elementary school teacher he has known since they were children. The next morning, he discusses the results of the meeting with her. The Reijinsha group agreed to join forces with Okabe’s PR-Kai (Proletarian Revolution Society?), which means that Sakaguchi, the leader of the Reijinsha, is going to break away. Katsuko declares that she doesn’t like Okabe and that she disagrees with “Socialism’s” ignoring of spiritual values. Hamano, too, feels that he is being dragged along unwillingly by Okabe, but Katsuko’s attitude angers him and they argue unpleasantly. Hamano spends another night and then returns to his parents’ home.

The two groups are planning to distribute propaganda for May Day, an illegal activity. Hamano is hoeing in his field when he gets a telegram, possibly from Katsuko, saying that Sakaguchi and five others have been arrested. Hamano decides to flee to Tokyo and stay with a “novelist” friend. As he walks, he feels sure that he will not see Katsuko anymore.

“Eizô” does not distinguish between anarchism and communism, instead making the central conflict one between “humanism” and “socialism.” It is thus a retrospective piece, looking back on an earlier period (actually, only about five years earlier!) when the battle lines were not so clearly distinguished. However, it seems to echo the ana-boru ronsô which was going on at the time of the story’s composition in its contrast of individualism and group activism. In this story, Hamano’s ambivalence towards the socialist movement is made clear by his resistance to Okabe’s pressure to join the “socialist” group and conform to the

party line. Yamakawa gives great weight to Hamano's youthful sexuality, which draws him to Katsuko, and to his youthful vigor.

Hamano's choice, at the end of the story, to leave Katsuko represents his commitment to support the socialist movement at the sacrifice of his own personal desires. With respect to anarchism, this leaves the message of the story ambiguous. Turning away from bourgeois humanism was a creed of anarchism no less than of socialism and communism, and Hamano's flight is thus a heroic act from an anarchist point of view. At the same time, it is suggested that his struggles will continue within the socialist movement, as he comes into conflict with comrades like Okabe who place theory above personal judgment and interest.

The individualist anarchistic critique of the proletarian movement

In the works of Hirabayashi Taiko and Yamakawa Ryô, we see the individualism, nihilism, and naturalism of Ôsugi-era anarchism appropriated to express the realities and conflicts of the proletarian movement of the early and mid-1920s.

In Hirabayashi's early works, a strong nihilism underlies the decisions made by her protagonists to support the men in her life regardless of the destructiveness or futility of their actions. A strong sense of the futility of revolutionary activity, and deep doubts about the motivations of leaders of the anarchist movement, cause her protagonists great suffering. However, these protagonists ultimately have no regrets about throwing themselves into the movement, believing that in doing so they are helping to build a new world

order. Hirabayashi's affirmation of sexual liberation and her heavy use of nature imagery serve a more complex function than these elements did in the novels of, say, Miyajima Sukeo. They still represent the force of revolution, but they are also turned against the movement in the form of small rebellions against oppression and conformity which occur within the movement.

Hirabayashi takes a position which must be described as anarchistic rather than as entirely anarchist. The character of Koyama in "Azakeru" represents a different type of anarchist, the radical poet, who holds high ideals but whose work is highly marginalized and who in a sense is a mere exploiter of women.

Yamakawa uses the anarchist themes I have identified in previous chapters as key elements of his fiction. "Dorobôgame" is a fable drawing on journalistic reportage, which Yamakawa said was derived from stories heard during his wandering (hôrô) from job to job, while "Uma nusubito" was derived partly from childhood memories.¹⁶⁴ Yamakawa constantly emphasizes the vigor and sexuality of his young male characters, tying it to their propensity for revolutionary activity.

Yamakawa's work shows a tendency similar to that of Hirabayashi Taiko in its use of anarchism to critique the socialist movement as a whole. Portrayals of the conflict between personal life and political activity had been portrayed in Arahata Kanson's "Tôhisha" in 1914, but by the time Yamakawa was writing, the issues and choices involved with left-wing activity had become more complex. It was no longer a matter of choosing either to be an activist or not; numerous, often antagonistic factions had developed, and no matter which faction one

¹⁶⁴ Matsuzawa, "Tane maku hito no umoreta dônin" 37.

joined, one would be accused by others of betraying the cause. Such is the dilemma of Heikichi in “Chiisana machi no dekgoto,” who is brutalized by police even after dropping out of the socialist movement. (Heikichi is not described as being an anarchist, but his individualism and yearning for communion with nature color him as one.) In contrast with Yamakawa’s first, brashly anarchistic essay published in Tane maku hito, his fiction depicts the difficulty of taking a consistent stance in any socialist movement and committing oneself fully to it.

Yamakawa’s and Hirabayashi’s works of fiction, ironically, suggest in their complexities and ambivalences the decline of the political influence of anarchism, even while providing examples of a highly developed anarchistic literature, relevant to socialist movements and to general social issues. The ambivalence they show towards the proletarian movement and their distrust of political metanarrative place them neither in the forefront of the communist movement nor in the position to create a flourishing alternative. In 1947, a left-wing literary critic, Ohara Gen, would write, in what was intended as a highly critical statement, that it was difficult to see the difference between Hirabayashi’s proletarian approach to literature and the way a regular naturalist writer would have handled the same material. Ohara went on to criticize Hirabayashi’s “egotism” and “petit-bourgeois ideology”¹⁶⁵ Such assessments of Hirabayashi’s work by the orthodox Left suggest how powerful the imperative was to write literature which was a tool of revolution. Ohara’s point is precisely that Hirabayashi fails to move beyond bourgeois egoism to commit herself fully to

¹⁶⁵ Ohara Gen, “Hirabayashi Taiko ron,” Puroretaria bungaku (Tokyo: Yūseidō, 1971), 15-32.

the grand narrative of liberation of the proletariat. Indeed, in the postwar years Hirabayashi would come to be thought of as neither anarchist nor communist, but as a liberal democratic and feminist writer, whose primary theme was the struggle and growth of the individual woman's ego or spirit. Her individualistic egoism owed much to anarchism, but for Hirabayashi, this egoistic philosophy eventually distanced her from socialist politics.

Modernism and nihilism: anarchism in avant-garde poetry

We have seen in the preceding discussion of Yamakawa Ryô and Hirabayashi Taiko how literary anarchism could be effectively employed in the production of proletarian fiction. Such fiction was characteristically anarchistic in its journalistic realism; in its vitalistic focus on nature, the "expansion of life" and sexuality; and in its conception of revolution as originating from individual, spontaneous acts of resistance. Bringing these elements together, Hirabayashi and Yamakawa produced constructive, socially astute works of proletarian literature. It must be noted, however, that the affiliation of these artists with Marxist publications in the late 1920s marks them as something other than "pure" anarchists; they are better described as proletarian writers with anarchistic sympathies and sensibilities.

In contrast to anarchistic proletarian fiction, the anarchist avant-garde literary movement represented what was in many ways a more radical attempt to transform literature according to anarchist principles. Particularly worthy of attention is avant-garde poetry written by poets who considered themselves anarchists. These poets can be described as uncompromisingly anarchist in their

radical approach to literature, although the preoccupation of avant-garde writers with bringing about an aesthetic revolution also placed them at a greater distance from committed anarchist political activity, whether this meant the political and labor union agitation conducted by organizations like Kokushoku seinen renmei (Black Youth League), active from 1926-1931, or the political theorizing by figures such as Nii Itaru (188-1951).

At the same time, problems remain in defining a poet as “anarchist.” Akiyama Kiyoshi, an anarchist poet himself, published a collection of poems which he entitled Anakisuto shishû, literally “collection of poems by anarchists.” In explaining how he selected the poets, who include Ono Tôzaburo, Hagiwara Kyôjirô, and himself, he notes: “...if one looks for poets who were active in the various sites of the anarchist movement, and who as a result were at a certain distance from the poetry establishment; and also were fairly accomplished poets, there are surprisingly few.”¹⁶⁶ Akiyama adds that there is, strictly speaking, no such thing as “anarchist poetry” (anakizumu shi, literally poetry of anarchism), and that writing about anarchist topics alone does not make a poet an anarchist. “It is a problem of what relationship they held with the State and other forms of authority, and how they lived this.”¹⁶⁷ However, an exploration of poems identified by Akiyama as anarchist finds a continuity with themes and motifs of anarchist fiction which have been explored in this study.

¹⁶⁶ Akiyama Kiyoshi, Anakisuto shishû (Tokyo: Kaien Shobô, 1974) 303.

¹⁶⁷ Akiyama, Anakisuto shishû 303.

Hagiwara Kyôjirô

The most prominent anarchist in the avant-garde poetic movement was the poet Hagiwara Kyôjirô (1899-1938). Born the second son of a farming family near what is now Maebashi, Gunma Prefecture, Hagiwara showed a talent for composing traditional tanka poetry from an early age, contributing poems to magazines produced by the famous Hagiwara Sakutarô (unrelated), who was based in Maebashi and became one of his mentors. Significantly, Hagiwara Kyôjirô's early influences included Ishikawa Takuboku and Toki Aiga (or Zenmaro), both of whom had anarchist sympathies (Aiga was an associate of Ôsugi Sakae). In 1920 Hagiwara met the futurist poet Hirato Renkichi, and from that period became increasingly involved with the avant-garde movement, moving to Tokyo in 1922. Here he met Miyajima Sukeo and Komaki Ômi, the founder of the leftwing literary journal Tane maku hito.

In January 1923, Hagiwara published a small coterie journal of poetry together with Kawasaki Chôtarô, Okamoto Jun, and Tsuboi Shigeji. This journal, called Aka to kuro (Red and black), was initially funded by Arishima Takeo, and took an unabashedly anarchistic stance.¹⁶⁸ In 1925, Hagiwara published his best-known collection of poems, Shikei senkoku (Death sentence, 1925). Hagiwara's violent, nihilistic imagery and defiance of poetic conventions, and his use of fragmented lines, visual collage, creative use of marks like X and ● which were normally used to censor unacceptable language, created a literary sensation, establishing him as one of the top avant-garde poets in Japan. Hagiwara continued his anarchist affiliation throughout the 1920s, contributing to anarchist

¹⁶⁸ Okamoto Jun, "Aka to kuro to Damudamu," Hon no techô, no. 76 ("Tokushû anakizumu to bungaku," Aug-Sept. 1968): 21.

journals such as Bunkei Kaihō, Dandō, Genshi, and Kokushoku sensen. In 1928, Hagiwara returned to Gunma Prefecture, continuing to write poetry and to promote anarchism, producing a private magazine entitled Kuropotokin o chūshin ni shita geijutsu no kenkyū (Art studies centering on Kropotkin) in 1932. From about 1935, Hagiwara turned away from anarchism and towards Japanese nationalism, and shortly before dying in 1938 from the effects of a stomach ulcer, he composed a poem entitled “Ajia ni kyojin ari” (There is a giant in Asia) which celebrated Japanese imperialism.

William O. Gardner has done the first major study of Hagiwara’s poetry in English,¹⁶⁹ which includes ambitious translations of Hagiwara’s poems which reproduce Hagiwara’s experimental visual techniques. Gardner’s primary aim is to explore Hagiwara’s work as avant-garde art, which he characterizes as “transfer[ring] a temporal relationship into a spatial one” and tending to “assault the ‘organic’ integrity of the picture-surface, and ultimately [rupture] the frame of the work of art.”¹⁷⁰ However, he also repeatedly notes the importance of anarchism in Hagiwara’s poetics. Gardner sees Hagiwara’s artistic vision as drawing heavily from Ôsugi Sakae’s anarchist egoist philosophy, and notes Hagiwara’s use of poetry as unadulterated anarchist propaganda in 1927. At the same time, he sees in Hagiwara’s work a progressive “movement towards a diffuse, anonymous, or shifting subjectivity,”¹⁷¹ and suggests that Hagiwara’s conversion to agrarian nationalism was a desperate attempt to reach “the

¹⁶⁹ William O. Gardner, “Avant-Garde Literature and the New City: Tokyo 1923-1931,” dissertation, Stanford University, 1999.

¹⁷⁰ Gardner 20-21.

¹⁷¹ Gardner 161.

people” made in the context of the fragmentation and infighting of the anarchist movement and its external oppression by police.¹⁷²

Anarchism in *Aka to kuro*

Aka to kuro (Red and black) was a poetry journal printed in simple pamphlet format. The name of the magazine suggests political radicalism in the form of communism (red) and anarchism (black), and possibly the combination of anarcho-communism, but the title was used in an impressionistic manner to indicate nihilism and defiance as well as to cryptically allude to political radicalism.¹⁷³

Aka to kuro was short lived, consisting of a mere four issues published in 1923, and a final four-page special issue which was published in June of 1924, following the Kanto Earthquake. An examination of the thematic concerns of these poems shows a strong anarchistic influence. Aka to kuro was intended as a radical poetic statement, but interestingly, as Okamoto Jun noted, the form of the poems in its first issues were not nearly as revolutionary as what Hagiwara would shortly thereafter produce in Shikei senkoku. Many of Hagiwara’s poems remained close in form to poems of the “Peoples’ Poetry” (minshūshi) school of Fukuda Masao. Indeed, the most radical part of the journal was not its poetry but

¹⁷² Gardner 148-151.

¹⁷³ The title, of course, also echoes that of Stendhal’s 1830 novel, although no clear reference is made to this in the magazine. Poems in the journal often include the words “red” or “black” to indicate blood or other dramatic imagery. As Okamoto Jun put it, “The name ‘Red and Black’ represented the rejection of bland intermediary colors and the selection of fierce primary colors.” In Japanese, the aka/kuro pairing has the sense of “bright” versus “dark.” Okamoto Jun, “Aka to kuro to Damudamu” 22.

rather its manifesto, written by Tsuboi Shigeji and included in the fourth issue.¹⁷⁴

The much shorter “manifesto” on the cover of the first issue stated: “What is poetry? What is a poet? We discard all of the concepts of the past, and boldly proclaim: “Poetry is a bomb! A poet is a black criminal who hurls a bomb at the hard walls and doors of a prison!”¹⁷⁵

In volume 4, the six-page “First Manifesto” proclaims the nihilistic and anarchistic intentions of the poets. Beginning with a call to “kill” (nôtsatsu suru) the “anemic” poets and artists of Japan who have “forgotten about madness” and want only money, the author uses obscenity to show his disdain for romantic poetry, declaring that “a male and female dog ----ing at the entrance of the Mitsukoshi kimono store” are “far more modern” (kindaiteki) than bourgeois ladies and gentlemen in love. He continues by stating that poetry is “MASTURBATION” (he uses the English in upper-case letters) and that “a man who isn’t able to shoot his ---- on a letter from his lover is a man who truly doesn’t understand his lover.¹⁷⁶ The writer continues with a denial of traditional morality (“Know that all of what they call good is evil to us! Know that all of what they call evil is good to us!”), ideals (kannen)¹⁷⁷ philosophy (shisô), all “isms,” art (geijutsu), and finally language (kotoba)¹⁷⁸ itself. What is the reason for this purported denial of all moral and artistic values?

In the past, we tried to purchase life’s ideals and happiness with the beating of our hearts. But cruel, cold reality pierced our hearts with sharp needles until they were in shreds. Our

¹⁷⁴ Okamoto, “Aka to kuro to Damudamu” 22, 24.

¹⁷⁵ Aka to kuro (Facsimile ed., Tokyo: Tôji Shobô, 1923-1924), vol. 1.

¹⁷⁶ Aka to kuro, vol. 4, 2. The text uses the marks ○○ where I have used dashes.

¹⁷⁷ Aka to kuro, vol. 4, 3.

¹⁷⁸ Aka to kuro, vol. 4, 4.

hearts were filled with holes. Gradually, our blood dried out and our hearts became paralyzed. In trying to purchase life's ideals and happiness, we lost our hearts. Now there is nothing left for these dried-out hearts to buy. How can there be ideals and happiness? If you think that sucking on the sweet lips of love is happiness, think what you like [katte ni omoe; the tone is more along the lines of "---- you"]! If you think that gnawing on stones and cutlets and concepts is happiness, think what you like! As for us, we have to dispose of our own corpses. To dispose of our still-living corpses, what we need most of all is fire.

Fire, fire, fire, fire, fire, set fire!¹⁷⁹

The narrative of disillusionment and despair is striking. Akiyama Kiyoshi links the nihilism of Aka to kuro directly with the political oppression of the time. He sees the Kanto Earthquake and the ensuing massacres and persecution conducted by the authorities as revealing their true nature:

It was perfectly natural for a revolutionary trend to arise in the world of art [as well as in society in general]. For we, the people (warera minshû), the experience which taught us that both "morality" and "law" were our betrayers knocked to the ground the strength and righteousness of which the ruling class was so proud. Yet there was nothing to replace them. It was natural for a nihilistic mood and activity to come into being.¹⁸⁰

At the same time, Akiyama sees Aka to kuro as still lacking a clear political consciousness.

This [the statement on the cover of the first issue] is just like the crying of a child having a temper tantrum. It doesn't have any meaning at all. The fierce resistance and the harsh, strident language served to push their antagonism further and further ahead.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹ Aka to kuro, vol. 4, 5.

¹⁸⁰ Akiyama, Anakizumu bungaku shi 50-51.

¹⁸¹ Akiyama, Anakizumu bungaku shi 51.

Aka to kuro was, as Akiyama notes, published before the earthquake, so no easy link can be made between its nihilism and that which emerged in Japanese society following the earthquake. But Aka to kuro's rhetoric of betrayal, despair, rebellion, and destruction is in a sense even more significant in having emerged prior to the earthquake and the atrocities which followed it, because it shows how a strong sense of marginalization was already entrenched in the poets' sense of identity. Certainly the biographies of these young poets reveals men with a predisposition to clash with authority – Tsuboi Shigeji, for example, had been expelled from the army for having “dangerous thoughts” – but the rhetoric of the Manifesto suggests that they were also the heirs to a particular nihilistic worldview encountered in leftwing politics and avant-garde art.

One obvious source of this nihilism is the Japanese anarchist movement, which since the execution of Kôtoku Shûsui had regarded itself as being in a struggle to the death against the Japanese State. Struggles with censorship had nurtured the antagonism towards the authorities, who became a constant presence in the world of leftwing literary production. This presence was ironically acknowledge in the “editor's notes” of the first issue, which stated, somewhat cryptically:

Because in the first place we are – based on the name Red and Black - threatening and unwholesome (fuon de fukenzen), the authorities are watching us suspiciously...[W]e are, each and every one of us, poor men, but we have not the smallest part of any such outlandish desire as to make the whole world red or black. Still, it remains true that we are red and we are black. This is the reason for the magazine's name.¹⁸²

¹⁸² Aka to kuro, vol. 1, 21 (back cover).

In the artistic world, the destruction and subversion of traditional artistic forms espoused by Dadaism, futurism, expressionism, and other avant-garde movements was quite compatible with anarchism, giving Aka to kuro a particularly political sense. As Akiyama Kiyoshi put it:

Aka to kuro was Dadaist, and even though Dadaism is a thing of paradox and contradiction, with a voice which, as [the Dadaist Poet] Takahashi Shinkichi said in his manifesto, both ‘categorically denies everything’ and ‘sees the Self in everything,’ [in the case of] the Aka to kuro poets’ denial, the object of denial was a real, existing thing. It followed that denial would develop into resistance. Resisting those in authority went part and parcel with their destruction of the concepts and forms of previous poetry. The Bakuninist idea that destruction means creation, whether or not they were familiar with it, was the position of the artists who made up the Aka to kuro group, and it led to anarchism.¹⁸³

Aka to kuro was, indeed, the starting point of a direct line of anarchist literary production. For as Tsuboi Shigeji noted, the group composed of himself, Hagiwara, Okamoto, and Ono Tôzaburô (who joined Aka to kuro starting with the second issue) would all participate in the later, more explicitly anarchist magazines Damudamu (Dum-dum, published in 1924 in only a single issue) and Bungei kaihô (Literary liberation, 11 issues, 1927). And even if the writers of Aka to kuro claimed to disdain all ideology, the emerging anarchist orientation is clear enough. First, the Manifesto denounces a “Bolshevik” writer, an exploiter of the working class who says to himself that “I struck the ground with my pen for

¹⁸³ Akiyama Kiyoshi, “Anakisuto no bungaku to anakizumu to bungaku,” Hon no techô, no. 76 (“Tokushû anakizumu to bungaku,” Aug-Sept. 1968): 16-17. This article is listed under the name “Takayama Keitarô,” one of Akiyama’s pseudonyms. It is an earlier version of material which would appear in Akiyama’s Anakizumu bungakushi several years later. I use it here rather than the later work because it focuses more clearly on the relation between modernistic experimentation and anarchism.

the laborers and got paid wages for it!"¹⁸⁴ After this, the speaker of the Manifesto goes on to deny that he is a "proletariat," since he is not involved in social activism and sees "proletariat" as a term used by "Bolsheviks" to indicate a class which will merely replace the old ruling class in the event of a revolution. He goes on – somewhat confusingly – to say:

If in spite of it all I wished to use the language of class which treats the bourgeoisie as the enemy, speaking from my heart which hates the world, I would say that I am an anarchistic proletariat, that I reject the world (tenka) of the Bolsheviks...yet neither am I able to believe in the anarchist world [emphasis added].¹⁸⁵

As the anarchist literary movement became more committed to the rhetoric of a proletarian revolution, such reluctance on the part of anarchists to identify with political ideologies or "isms" would wane as writers such as Nii Itaru declared categorically both that anarchists were proletariat and that anarchist literature was proletarian literature. Nevertheless, this discomfort with ideological labeling is itself, paradoxically, often found in anarchist discourse. It resembles the position of Tsuji Jun, who would say – in this case looking back on anarchism - that "I followed anarchism. At one time I believed a bit in an anarchist utopia (anâkii no yûtopia), but that was shattered....What makes up [political organizations] is people" (i.e., and not ideology)¹⁸⁶ and "I have called myself things like Dadaist and nihilist, and have been called by these names too. But now I want to be liberated from all labels and -isms."¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁴ Aka to kuro, vol. 4, 6.

¹⁸⁵ Aka to kuro, vol. 4, 7.

¹⁸⁶ Tsuji Jun, Tsuji Jun zenshû, vol. 4 (Tokyo: Satsuki Shobô, 1982), 407. This statement was made in the journal Kaihô in 1927.

¹⁸⁷ Quoted in Itagaki Tetsuo, Kindai Nihon no anakizumu shisô (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kôbunkan,

The poems in Aka to kuro show continuity with features of anarchist literature we have identified previously. While journalistic realism, reasonably enough, is not aimed at in these poems, a concern for impoverished farmers is found in many of Hagiwara's poems. Tsuboi shows a similar concern for the underclass and wishes for them to rebel in a short poem entitled "Kaze no naka no kojiki" (The beggar in the wind): "Oh, beggar in the wind / the beggar who was blown to the side of the road / the beggar who had everything taken from him / your entreaty springs out from the dark earth.... / The cold, cold winter night / the stars must be falling even in the depths of your heart / no tears: get angry!"¹⁸⁸

A vitalistic focus on the body can be found in the imagery such as that quoted from the Manifesto of hearts and blood (the word for heart is shinzô, the physical organ). However, this physicality sometimes suggests, as Gardner points out, a fragmented subjectivity, as seen in a later poem by Hagiwara in which the poet describes himself as consisting of "several bodily cavities and a bumpy face and several round sticks and / yellow and hair and *springs* and a *compass* and tendons and a *tapeworm* and socks and a calling card! / A dirty *shirt* with several *buttons* coming off and *pants* that look like I just changed----that instrument called me!" [From Shikei senkoku, 1925, translation by Gardner].¹⁸⁹ Here the individualism of Ôsugi Sakae is not to be found. On the other hand, the individual nihilist or terrorist still makes his appearance in some poems. These poems recall the nihilistic rebellion of Miyajima Sukeo, but the rebellious acts

1996) 183.

¹⁸⁸ Aka to kuro, vol. 1, 14.

¹⁸⁹ Gardner, 199.

seem even less likely to result in positive social change than did the actions of Ishii Kinji. For example, Hagiwara describes an apparent assassination attempt in a poem that would be partly reworked into the poem “Hibiya” two years later:¹⁹⁰ “Go! Immediately / to the third place / to the intersection / ----that person, to his grave / ----that person’s chair, without an owner”¹⁹¹ Yet self-assertion is set off by self-loathing, while blind action seems futile, as seen in Tsuboi’s poem:

I’ve gotten to completely hate seeing myself
 Oh! The handcar has gone off the tracks and turned over
 My, my, what have we here!
 The sun has stopped still
 my face is moving on top of someone else’s chest
 it’s so unpleasant I can’t stand it
 it feels so good I can’t stand it
 I can’t just casually point a pistol
 at society and fire it
 my hands have lost their strength lately
 the handcar which has gone off the tracks¹⁹²

Here, hostility towards society is combined with pleasure in destruction, but a sense of futility pervades.

If anarchist poetry often suggests a declining and self-destructive movement, it can also be a powerful vehicle for the affirmation of anarchist ideals of freedom, destruction, and rebuilding. Ono Tōzaburō does so in his poem entitled “Kyomu shugi ni” (To nihilism), in which he addresses Nihilism itself as a familiar friend or lover, using the intimate pronoun omae:

You know, your contents
 like ballast pouring out of a cargo ship
 crash roughly over my brain
 but the chain which holds you in place

¹⁹⁰ Hagiwara Kyōjirō, Shikei senkoku (reprinted edition, Tokyo: Nihon Kindai Bungakukan, 1972), p. 94.

¹⁹¹ Aka to kuro, vol. 3, 6.

¹⁹² Aka to kuro, vol. 3, 4.

swaying in the waves
lengthens and contracts freely like a kite on a string
each time it rides over the water.
The sheer freedom of your action,
like the bourgeois art of living
which drags along its barnacle-encrusted anchor everywhere,
fills me with admiration!

For the anarchist poet, nihilism, with its radical denial of traditional values and beliefs, is likened to an enormous ship which spews an overwhelming amount of “content” on his mind. The ship is held in port by a chain, presumably of representing conventions and beliefs or the force of authority, but despite the suffering and hardship nihilism brings, the poet celebrates its power to liberate. Like Hirabayashi Taiko, he accepts the hardships which come from a commitment to radical politics and to defying conventional beliefs and social customs.

That anarchism remained until the early 1930s a movement capable of inspiring impassioned literary activity is well demonstrated by the poetry written by anarchists. At the same time, a sense of the futility of the movement, noted by Hirabayashi Taiko and suggested even in the early anarchist poetry of Aka to kuro, seems to have grown increasingly clear. In 1932, the following poem by Miyamoto Masakichi appeared in an anthology entitled Nankai kokushoku shishû (Black poetry collection):

To the Poets

Once, our pens lived for freedom and justice
once, we tore up maps and waved the flag of freedom
at the world.
Is it not so? Our pens were our struggle
and every drop of ink was our blood which loved freedom
Our song of negation:
and against that negation came their negation

in winter, we kept our purity amidst the fierce, cold suffering
that is why we sung a song of triumph and drank a libation
for the god of poetry amidst the reality of our terrible defeat
Look! We alone prepare for the fight to survive amidst the death
of those who were robbed

Oh, poets
friends of freedom
we set off:
now, our voices dry out
now, our pens break
now, our lips split open

Oh, my Self!
Become a hot fire and burn
or freeze and summon your friends
ten million of me facing the tempest
Hear me, you lonely Me among them!

Miyamoto calls for a cleansing fire, as did the poets of Aka to kuro, but the fire is not the destruction of the obstacles for a new self, but a final blaze of glory as one fights for a hopeless cause. This poem expresses the passion felt by members of the anarchist movement and the sacrifices made by them, but it also shows the profound sense of futility that had come to the movement by the early 1930s. Politically marginalized, lacking resources, torn by internal disputes and personal ambivalence toward the anarchist movement, the die-hard adherents expressed their dreams of revolution in a poetry which offered no sense of the future.

CONCLUSION

The decline of literary anarchism

This study has surveyed the origins and development of Japanese anarchist literature, finding its generic sources in journalistic realism and Japanese naturalism, its political-philosophical base in individualism and nihilism, and its imagery and motifs in the Japanese “vitalist” tradition which reified and personified ideas like “life,” “nature,” rebellion, conquest, and sexuality in extended imagery. Literary anarchism flourished in the late 1910s and early 1920s with numerous works of realistic prose, many associated with the proletarian literary movement, but distinguished from Marxist literature in their political perspective and artistic approach. The decade between 1920 and 1930 saw the anarchist literature at the peak of its vitality and passion, but like the explosion of a firework, its bursting into numerous, dazzling sub-movements was simultaneously its fading and dying out. Anarchist literary production did continue until about 1935 when the governmental crackdown and economic privation essentially crushed the anarchist movement, but it had been declining for several years prior to that. It did have the distinction of outlasting the Marxist proletarian literary movement by two or three years, due to the more amorphous nature of the anarchist movement, which made anarchists a less clear target for suppression.

The primary cause of the decline of anarchist literature was the combination of police oppression and political mind control which, by the mid-1930s, had put an end to the relatively free production of literature enjoyed during the Taishô era. At the same time, a survey of Japanese anarchist literature suggests that internal factors, ones perhaps inherent to a radical revolutionary literature, contributed to the decline of literary anarchism, a decline which paralleled the decline of anarchism as a political movement.

The most immediate threats of police surveillance and the possibility of being arrested and imprisoned at any time were accompanied by less intense but equally trying social pressures. Anarchists were unable to hold respectable jobs and often were disowned by their families. The elation at the feeling of being involved in a movement that would remake the world and the individual was offset by these pressures. Nor was external oppression the only source of difficulty. The pursuit of social and sexual liberation took its toll on individuals and strained relations within the movement, as Hirabayashi Taiko's stories demonstrate so well. The life of an anarchist entailed a commitment not only to a life on the fringes of the law but also an ideological or philosophical commitment to the destruction of old modes of existence and ways of thought. Yet in practice, anarchists, like all people, had within themselves needs and values which contradicted the anarchist project. The simple dismissal of family, nation, religion, material comfort, and everything else as "bourgeois" and antiquated could not change this reality. This perhaps explains why someone like Hagiwara Kyôjirô could turn from agrarian anarchism to agrarian national socialism at the end of his life.

The antagonism of anarchists to Marxism, so evident in the Aka to kuro poetry, also led to a certain drifting from the aspects of anarchism which previously had made it into a viable political and literary movement. In the increasingly strident attacks on Marxism found in anarchist literature of the late 1920s, one senses that anarchists had in fact conceded too much to their ideological opponents. In Akiyama Kiyoshi's assessment, anarchist literature became a literature of opposition, anakizumu bungaku rather than anakisuto no bungaku, literature for the purpose of anarchism rather than literature by anarchists. While attacking the Marxists' subordination of art to the role of a political tool, anarchist writers, more and more, showed a similar tendency in their own writing. This problem was compounded by the disputes between factions, particularly between the syndicalists and the "pure anarchists." The result was that the movement, while putting on an ever more radical and violent front, actually became increasingly concerned in internal conflict.

Anarchism and Japanese culture: influences and continuities

This study has traced a continuity of anarchistic and libertarian motifs in the so-called "early proletarian literature" of Japan, emphasizing the close relation between these works and mainstream Japanese fiction. During the period covered, in the first three decades of the 20th century, a colloquial form of Japanese closer to the spoken language was adopted almost universally for the writing of fiction, and this language survives with relatively minor changes as the written Japanese of today. It is at least symbolically significant that the rejection of the prestige language of pseudo-classical Japanese for fiction and

poetry (apart from traditional genres) corresponded to a flourishing of works which challenged existing social hierarchies and argued for the greater democratization of Japanese society.

Akiyama Kiyoshi has argued that “anarchist literature” constitutes a meaningful category of early proletarian literature in Japan, one which can be meaningfully opposed to the Marxist and Marxist-Leninist literature to which the term “proletarian literature” later came to be exclusively applied. This renewed focus on anarchist literature, led by Akiyama, Moriyama Shigeo, Odagiri Susumu, and others in the 1960s and 1970s, was an important contribution to Japanese literary historical studies, and the time is ripe for additional scholarship. In Japan, there has been a clear renewal of interest in international and Japanese anarchism in the fields of history and politics. This has no doubt been inspired partly by anarchism’s reappearance on the world political scene in the form of the anti-globalization movement and a new wave of pacifist activism since the early 1990s.

Highlighting the importance of anarchistic thinking for modern Japanese literature in general and for proletarian literature in particular has certainly been one of the goals of this study. However, another purpose has been to chronicle, in the field of literature, what might be called a “libertarian” impulse in Japanese society. Although the popular image of Japanese society as deeply conformist and structured according to a strict, authoritarian hierarchy persists in western discourse, it should also be reasonably evident to those informed about Japan that Japanese culture has a side to it that values the spontaneous expression of emotion and detests authority. Indeed, common sense suggests that there exists a

universal human yearning for freedom from social constraints which will be expressed in some form in any society. How this is expressed, though, varies according to the cultural history of the society in question. The expression of the libertarian impulse in Japanese cultural discourse is rich and multifarious, and it deserves critical attention.

Struggles over political ideology in Japan following World War II have tended to involve the dominance of the generally pro-American and nationalistic (though not particularly free-market) Liberal Democratic Party, offset by the minority Socialist and Communist parties whose persistent opposition to certain LDP policies has acted as a check against its unrestrained power. Grassroots citizens' groups, labor unions, and so on have constituted another check against centralized power. What is striking in Japanese political discourse is the way in which resistance to central political authority has persistently been expressed in terms of hostility and suspicion of the State (kokka). Accompanying this attitude has been a yearning for freedom and a return to a state of "nature." These motifs bear a clear relation to those listed at the beginning of this study as characteristic of Japanese literary anarchism: the rejection of the nation-state and the emperor system, the utopian quest for a return to a natural order, individualism, nihilism, and vitalism.

There is a danger, of course, in exaggerating the prestige and influence of Japanese anarchism in the context of Japanese socialism as a whole. Anarchism has not been a viable political movement in Japan since the 1920s, and in present-day Japan the term anakitsumu is virtually unheard of in mainstream discourse. However, in view of the common rejection of the state and authority in Japanese

socialism and other “resistance” movements, a case can be made that Japanese left-wing thought as a whole, including Japanese communism, has an anarchistic aspect to it. The anarchistic qualities of the literary works of Hirabayashi Taiko and Yamakawa Ryô, who are classified by literary historians as very anarchistic despite their associations with Marxism, suggest such a tendency in many leftwing thinkers of the 1920s. Numerous other leftwing writers, including such prominent names as Nii Itaru, Eguchi Kan, Ono Tôzaburô, and Ogawa Mimei, show a similar tendency.

While the anarchist movement itself never died out in Japan, the anarchistic tendencies of certain postwar Japanese writers provide more convincing evidence for a lasting anarchist influence in Japanese literary discourse. “Decadent” writers such as Ishikawa Jun and Dazai Osamu – with concrete ties to left-wing movements and anarchism in their youths – examined the destruction and upheaval of social structures and values brought on by the devastation of World War II, and explored the idea of the emergence of a new morality and a new type of person emerging from the wreckage. Their attack on the authority of the postwar Japanese government was a prominent part of this exploration. Abe Kôbô’s fiction, particularly in works like The Woman in the Dunes (1962), experimented with surrealistic narratives which sought to contribute to the transformation of society by first changing human consciousness. That Abe’s Dadaist experimentation followed his expulsion from the Japanese Communist party over ideological matters, in a manner reminiscent of the 1920s, cannot be entirely coincidental.

More concretely, Japanese writers since World War II have revisited the history of Japanese anarchism in order to cast light on contemporary issues – a tendency seen most clearly in the 1960s and 1970s, just as members of 1920s anarchist movements like Akiyama were writing anarchism back into the history of proletarian literature, from which Marxist revisionism had suppressed it. Takami Jun, for instance, in his novel, Iya na kanji (An unpleasant feeling; 1963), dealing with the 1920s anarchist movement, explored the tendency for revolutionary activity to morph into pointless, nihilistic violence. Meanwhile, Ôsugi Sakae and Itô Noe were depicted as a passionate, tragically doomed couple in Yoshida Kijû's 1969 film Erosu purasu gyakusatsu (Eros + slaughter). The novelist Setouchi Jakuchô also used the lives and deaths of Ôsugi and Itô as material for her novels like Bi wa ranchô ni ari (Beauty is in chaos, 1966). Setouchi, who took the tonsure in the early 1970s to become a nun in the Shingon Buddhist sect, became a respected television personality whose firm pacifism is informed as much by her interest in anarchism and leftwing thought as by her Buddhist beliefs. Ôsugi was even turned into the hero of a detective novel by Gorô Tenkyû entitled Tantei Ôsugi Sakae no shôgatsu (New year for detective Ôsugi Sakae).

The Japanese libertarian critique of society: anarchism's continuing relevance

The Japanese government is in no danger of withering away or of being overthrown in a revolution, but the critique of centralized, external authority found in expressions of hostility to government and the state remains a strong one in Japan. Japanese anarchism and its related movements constitute just such

a critique, which may be called “libertarian” in the broad sense of the word, connoting the championing of freedom as a fundamental political value. If we judge the impact of Japanese anarchism by its contribution to political debate rather than by its failure to achieve its political goals – and no country has ever had a successful anarchist revolution – it emerges as a significant element of political and social discourse. For many of the social issues of concern to the early anarchists and socialists have been central to the development of modern Japanese society.

Japanese pacifism furnishes a good example of the influence of anarchism in Japan. The ambitions of conservative politicians to loosen the restrictions of the anti-war clause of the constitution are consistently opposed by citizens and political groups who take literally the declaration in Article 9 that war is never an acceptable way to resolve a dispute. Anarchists like Kôtoku Shûsui were among the first in Japan to articulate this principle of pacifism in its modern, secular form. To this day, the writings and examples of Shûsui, Ôsugi, and other anarchists serve as reference points for contemporary progressivism.

More broadly, anarchists were among the first to advocate and discuss all of the major democratic social reforms implemented in Japan after World War II and refined ever since. The anarchistic “vitalism” discussed in this study is reflected in contemporary Japanese environmentalism, and anarchistic internationalism and internationalism continue to inform minority-rights movements (for the burakumin, for instance) are the inheritors of anarchism’s internationalism and egalitarianism. Despite its failings, anarchism in Japan has been closely involved in numerous reforms which seem commonsensical today;

along with these political reforms, anarchistic artistic expression has nourished the imagination of the progressive mind. What has here been termed the “libertarian impulse” is certain to continue to assert itself as Japanese society changes and develops.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Japanese Sources

- Abe Namiko. Hirabayashi Taiko: hana ni mi o. Tokyo: Musashino Shobô, 1986.
- Akiyama Kiyoshi. Anakizumu bungaku shi. Tokyo: Chikuma Shobô, 1975.
- . Anakisuto shishû. Tokyo: Kaien Shobô, 1974.
- Aono Suekichi "Shizen seichô to mokuteki ishiki" Gendai nihon bungaku zenshû. Vol. 78. Tokyo: Chikuma Shobô, 1957. 79-81.
- Arahata Kanson. Arahata Kanson chosaku shû. Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1976.
- Araki Den. Ôsaka shakai undô no genryû. Osaka: Tôhô Shuppan, 1989.
- Aramata Hiroshi. Puroretaria bungaku wa monosugoi. Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2000.
- Asukai Masamichi. Nihon puroretaria bungaku shiron. Tokyo: Yagi Shoten, 1982.
- Eguchi Kan (Miki). "Atarashii shakai undo no nami to Ôshû anakizumu no genzai." Shin Nihon bungaku 645 (Sept.-Oct. 2003): p. 6-17.
- Furuta Masao. Meiji shakai shugi seitô shi. Tokyo: Mineruva Shobô, 1971.
- Gorô Tenkyû. Tantei Ôsugi Sakae no shôgatsu. Tokyo: Hayakawa Shobô, 2003.
- Hagiwara Kyôjirô. Shikei senkoku. Reprinted edition. Tokyo: Nihon Kindai Bungakukan, 1972.
- Hirabayashi Taiko. Hirabayashi Taiko (Nihon bungaku zenshû 46). Tokyo: Shûeisha, 1974.
- . Hirabayashi Taiko zenshû. Tokyo: Ushio Shuppansha, 1979.
- . "Kô iu onna," "Seryôshitsu nite." Tokyo: Kôdansha, 1996.

- . Miyamoto Yuriko. Tokyo: Bungei Shunjû, 1972.
- Itagaki Tetsuo. Kindai Nihon no anâkizumu shisô. Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kôbunkan, 1996.
- Hiraoka Toshio. Kunikida Doppo: tanpen sakka. Tokyo: Shintensha, 1983.
- Horikiri Toshitaka. Yume o kû. Tokyo: Fuji Shuppan, 1993.
- Itô Akira. Musan seitô to rônô undô. Tokyo: Shakai Hyôronsha, 1990.
- Kinoshita Naoe. Hi no hashira. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1954.
- Kitano Akihiko. Kunikida Doppo "Wasureenu hitobito" ron hoka. Tokyo: Ôfûsha, 1981.
- Kojima Tsunehisa. Nihon no rôdô undô. Tokyo: Kawaide Shobô Shinsha, 1987.
- Kokubungaku rinji zôkan. Gakutôsha, July 2002.
- Kondô Kenji. Watashi no mita Nihon anakizumu undôshi (Fukuoka: Heimin shinbun, Kôban Insatsu, 1952). 1983 reprint without colophon.
- Kôtoku Shûsui. Kôtoku Shûsui shû. Kindai Nihon shisô taikei. Vol. 13. Ed. Asukai Masamichi. Tokyo: Chikuma Shobô, 1975.
- Kunikida Doppo. Kunikida Doppo shû. Chikuma Shobô, 1956.
- Kurahara Korehito. "Puroretariya rearizumu e no michi." Shôwa hihyô taikei. Vol. 1. Ed. Muramatsu Tsuyoshi. Tokyo: Banchô Shobô, 1968. 65-72.
- Kurihara Yukio, ed. Geijutsu no kakumei to kakumei no geijutsu. Shisô no umi e "kaihô to kakumei". Vol. 14. Tokyo: Shakai Hyôronsha, 1990.
- , ed. Haikyo no kanôsei: gendai bungaku no tanjô. Tokyo: Inpakuto Shuppansha, 1997.
- Kuroko Kazuo. "Miyajima Sukeo josetsu." Taishô rôdô bungaku kenkyû. Vol. 1. (autumn 1978): 22-32.
- . Miyajima Sukeo josetsu (2)." Taishô rôdô bungaku kenkyû. Vol. 2 (spring 1979): 47-57.
- . "Miyajima Sukeo no dôwa." Taishô rôdô bungaku kenkyû. Vol. 3 (autumn 1979): 10-20.

- Matsubara Iwagorô. Saiankoku no Tôkyô, ed. Tachibana Yûichi. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1988.
- Matsuda Michio. Anâkisumu. Gendai Nihon shisô taikai. Vol. 16. Tokyo: Chikuma Shobô, 1963.
- Miyajima Sukeo. Miyajima Sukeo chosakushû. Tokyo: Keiyûsha, 1983.
- Miyamoto Takekichi et. al. Nankai kokushoku shishû. 1934. Facsimile edition. Shakai ansorōjii shûsei (jô). Senki Fukkokuban Kankôkai, 1983.
- Mochizuki Yuriko. Kagirinai jiyû o ikite. Tokyo: Domesu Shuppan, 1988.
- Moriyama Shigeo. Bungaku anakizumu no senryû. Kôchi city: Tosa Shuppansha, 1987.
- . Hyôden: Miyajima Sukeo. Tokyo: San'ichi Shobô, 1984.
- . Taigyaku jiken: Bungaku sakka ron. Tokyo: Sanichi Shobô, 1980.
- Muramatsu Tsuyoshi, ed. Shôwa hihyô taikai. Vol. 1: Shôwa shonendai. Tokyo: Banchô Shobô, 1968.
- Nihon Bungaku Kenkyû Shiryô Kankôkai. Puroretaria Bungaku. Tokyo: Yûseidô, 1971.
- Odagiri Hideo. "Miyajima Sukeo to Miyachi Karoku." Taishô rôdô bungaku kenkyû. Vol. 7 (1984). 136-143.
- Odagiri Susumu. Meiji shakai shugi bungaku shû. Meiji bungaku zenshû 83-84. Tokyo: Chikuma Shobô, 1965.
- Okamoto Jun. "Aka to kuro to Damudamu." Hon no techô. vol. 8-9 (1968): 21-29.
- . Domin no shisô: taishû no naka no anakizumu. Tokyo: Shakai Hyôronsha, 1990.
- Ono Tôzaburô. Ono Tôzaburô shishû. Maki Yôko, ed. Tokyo: Yayoi Shobô, 1974.
- Ôsawa Masamichi, Anakizumu shisôshi. Tokyo: Gendai Shichôsha, 1963.
- Ôsugi Sakae. Ôsugi Sakae zenshû. Tokyo: Gendai Shichôsha, 1964.
- Ôta Sadayoshi. Ashio dôzan no shakaishi. Tokyo: Yûkon, 1992.
- Ôwada Shigeru. "Ôsugi Sakae, hangyaku seishin to media senryaku."

- Pê Chorun. "Kantô dai shijnsai hachijûnen to zainichi kankoku chôsenjin." Shin Nihon bungaku 645 (Sept.-Oct 2003): 72-75.
- Sasabuchi Tomoichi. Shôsetuka Shimazaki Tôson. Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1990.
- Shimazaki Tôson. "Kyûshujin," "Mebae." Tokyo: Shinchôsha, 1969.
- . Tôson zenshû. Tokyo: Chikuma Shobô 1966-1971.
- Shiroyanagi Shûko. Tekka sekka. 1908. Facsimile edition. Meiji bunken shiryô sôsho. Tokyo: Meiji Bunken, 1965.
- Sofue Shôji. Nijusseiki bungaku no reimeiki: "Tane maku hito" zengo. Tokyo: Shin Nihon Shuppansha, 1993.
- Sôma Tsuneo. Shizen shugi saikô. Tokyo: Yagi Shoten, 1981.
- Suzuki Sadami. Nihon no "bungaku" gainen. Tokyo: Sakuhinsha, 1998.
- . "Seimei" de yomu Nihon kindai. Tokyo: NHK Books (NHK Bukkusu), 1996.
- , ed. Taishô seimei shugi to gendai. Tokyo: Kawaide Shobô Shinsha, 1995.
- Tachibana Yûichi. Meiji kasô kiroku bungaku. Tokyo: Chikuma Shobô, 2002.
- Tachimatsu Kazuhei. "Kôfu to watashi." Taishô rôdô bungaku kenkyû. Vol. 7 (1984): 125-35.
- Takami Jun. Iya na kanji. Tokyo: Bungei Shinsha, 1963.
- Takayama Keitarô (Akiyama Kiyoshi). "Anakisuto no bungaku to anakizumu no bungaku." In Hon no techô vol. 8-9 (1968): 6-20.
- Takenaka Rô. Dan'ei Ôsugi Sakae. Tokyo: Chikuma Shobô, 2000.
- Tanaka Hiroshi. Kindai Nihon to riberarizumu. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1993.
- Tanizawa Eiichi. Kindai bungaku shi no kôsô. Osaka: Izumi Shoin, 1994.
- Tayama Katai. Tayama Katai shû (Gendai bungaku taikei 10). Tokyo: Chikuma Shobô, 1966.
- Toda Fusako. Moete ikiyo: Hirabayashi Taiko no shôgai. Tokyo: Shinchôsha, 1982.
- Tokunaga Sunao. "Sôsaku hôhō jô no shin tenkan." Shôwa hihyô taikei 1. Ed. Muramatsu Tsuyoshi. Tokyo: Banchô Shobô, 1968. 226-236.

- Ueda Hiroshi et al. Taishô bungaku shi. Kyôto: Kôyô Shoin, 2001.
- Umemori Naoyuki. "Gôrei to enzetsu to anâkizumu: Ôsugi Sakae ni okeru 'kitsumon' no mondai." Shoki shakai shugi kenkyû. No. 11 (1998): 63-96.
- Yamada Seizaburô. Puroretaria bungakushi. 2 vols. Tokyo: Rironsha, 1968, 1973.
- Yamaizumi Susumu. Heiminsha no jidai: hisen no genryû. Tokyo: Ronsôsha, 2003.
- Yamakawa Hitoshi. Shakai shugi shôshi. Tokyo: Shakai Shugi Kyôkai Shuppanyoku, 1979.
- Yokomitsu Riichi. "Shinkankakuha to komyunizumu bungaku." Shôwa hihyô taikai. Vol. 1. Ed. Muramatsu Tsuyoshi. Tokyo: Banchô Shobô, 1968. 59-65.
- Yamamoto Toshio (Torazô). Kyomu no ashiato. Tokyo: Zantôsha, 1975.

English Sources

- Anderer, Paul. Arishima Takeo and the Bounds of Modern Japanese Fiction. New York: Columbia University Press, 1984.
- Barshay, Andrew E. "Postwar Social and Political Thought, 1945-90." Modern Japanese Thought. Ed. Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998. 273-355.
- Bergson, Henri. Creative Evolution. Trans. Arthur Miller, 1911. Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 1998.
- Bourdaghs, Michael. The Dawn that Never Comes: Shimazaki Tôson and Japanese Nationalism. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.
- Bergson, Henri. Creative Evolution. Translated by Arthur Mitchell. Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 1998.
- Bruner, Jerome. Actual Minds, Possible Worlds. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986.
- Chomsky, Noam. The Chomsky Reader. Ed. James Peck. New York: Pantheon Books, 1987.
- Crump, John. Hatta Shûzô and Pure Anarchism in Interwar Japan. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993.

- Doak, Kevin. Dreams of Difference: The Japan Romantic School and the Crisis of Modernity. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994.
- Duus, Peter and Irwin Scheiner. "Socialism, Liberalism and Marxism, 1901-31." Modern Japanese Thought. Ed. Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi,. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998. 147-206.
- Eagleton, Terry. Literary Theory: an Introduction. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.
- Fowler, Edward. The Rhetoric of Confession: Shishôsetsu in Early Twentieth-Century Japanese Fiction. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988.
- Fujii, James. Complicit Fictions: The Subject in the Modern Japanese Prose Narrative. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993.
- Gardner, William O. "Avant-Garde Literature and the New City: Tokyo 1923-1931," Dissertation, Stanford University, 1999.
- Gorky, Maxim, The Three. Trans. Margaret Wettlin. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1961.
- Guérin, Daniel. No Gods No Masters: An Anthology of Anarchism. Trans. Paul Sharkey. San Francisco: AK Press, 1998.
- Hane, Mikiso. Reflections on the Way to the Gallows: Rebel Women in Prewar Japan. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.
- Kasza, Gregory. The State and the Mass Media in Japan, 1918-1945. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988.
- Kropotkin, Peter. The Conquest of Bread and Other Writings. Ed. Marshall Shatz. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- . Memoirs of a Revolutionist. Trans. James Allen Rogers. New York: Doubleday and Company, 1962.
- Marshall, Peter. Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism. London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1992.
- Morton, Leith. Divided Self: A Biography of Arishima Takeo. Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1988.
- Mitchell, Richard H. Thought Control in Prewar Japan. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976.

- Notehelfer, Fred G. Kôtoku Shûsui: Portrait of a Japanese Radical. Cambridge and London: Cambridge University Press, 1971.
- Nozick, Robert. Anarchy, State, and Utopia. New York: Basic Books, 1974.
- Ôsugi Sakae. The Autobiography of Ôsugi Sakae. Translated with an introduction by Byron K. Marshall. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.
- Pipes, Richard. Communism. New York: The Modern Library, 2001.
- Rabson, Steve. Righteous Cause or Tragic Folly: Changing Views of War in Modern Japanese Poetry. Ann Arbor: The Center for Japanese Studies, 1998.
- Rubin, Jay. Injurious to Public Morals: Writers and the Meiji State. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1984.
- Setouchi Harumi. Beauty in Disarray. Trans. of Bi wa ranchô ni ari. Goldstein, Sanford and Kazuji Ninomiya. Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle, 1993.
- Shea, George Tyson. Leftwing Literature in Japan: A Brief History of the Proletarian Literary Movement. Tokyo: Hosei University Press, 1964.
- Sibley, William F. "Naturalism in Japanese Literature." Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies, 28 (1968): 157-69.
- Silverberg, Miriam. Changing Song: The Marxist Poetry of Nakano Shigeharu. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990.
- Stirner, Max. The Ego and Its Own. Ed. David Leopold (trans. Steven Byington). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Stanley, Thomas A. Ôsugi Sakae - Anarchist in Taishô Japan: The Creativity of the Ego. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982.
- Tanaka, Yukiko, trans. and ed. To Live and to Write: Selections by Japanese Women Writers, 1913-1938. Seattle: Seal Press, 1987.
- Tayama Katai. Literary Life in Tôkyô 1885-1915. Trans. with an introduction by Kenneth G. Henshall. Leiden, Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1987.
- . The Quilt and Other Stories by Tayama Katai. Trans. with an introduction by Kenneth G. Henshall. Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1981.
- Tolstoy, Leo. Resurrection. Trans. Louise Maude. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1927.

Woodcock, George. *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements*
(New Edition). London: Penguin Books, 1986.