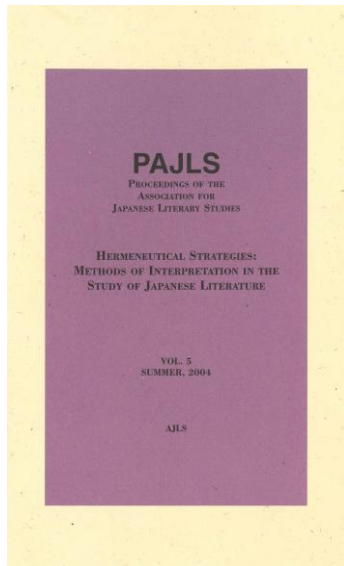


“Pleasures of Permutation: Detective Fiction and Cultural Globalization”

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PLEASURES OF PERMUTATION: DETECTIVE FICTION AND CULTURAL GLOBALIZATION

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As the popularity of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's book *Empire* attests, the question of "globalization" is becoming one of the most eagerly explored areas of scholarly inquiry today. In light of this general trend, the field of literary studies has been charged to find models that can cogently discuss what is involved in the process of literary globalization and the dynamics of international genres or schools.¹ One example of a literary genre suitable for such an inquiry might be detective fiction, an internationally oriented genre that has its origins in Anglo-American writings from the mid-19th century and was subsequently transplanted in other areas of the world such as continental Europe, Latin America, and Asia. The genre arrived in Japan during Meiji period, and has occupied a prominent place the literary scene ever since.

The genre's foreign birth, however, poses a few technical difficulties in considering it within the framework of Japanese literature. In the early days of Western scholarship on Japan, many cases of intercultural influence involving Japan and the West were conceived in terms of a unilateral relationship between pupil (invariably Japanese) and master (Western). In this model, the master stands as an insurmountable pinnacle of literary achievement, with the pupil always worried about originality and independence.²

This framework, however, fails to account for the self-awareness of Japanese detective fiction authors who did not necessarily see themselves as indebted cultural underlings. They often were proud of being under the influence of a noted figure or renowned work, and willingly disclosed the source of their inspiration. The numerous instances of unintentional overlaps or confluences between Western and Japanese detective fiction

¹ See Michael Hardt and Toni Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).

² In much the same way the post-Renaissance poets are supposed to have operated in English tradition. More recently, Miriam Sas has suggested a new model based on the Freudian notion of "trauma" and "shock," and conceptualized the kind of intercultural (or any kind of) influence that enters the realm of the unconscious as the most powerful one. See Miryam Sas, *Fault Lines: Cultural Memory and Japanese Surrealism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999).

suggest that what we may intuitively perceive as results of intercultural influence may be mere coincidences made possible by cultural globalization. I will discuss some examples from Japanese detective fiction that suggest notions of originality and authenticity that differ from the conventional Romantic ideal of a unique creator and by doing so question models of direct influence that have heretofore dominated the interpretation of this particular genre and possibly others. I would like to rethink the idea of originality by suggesting that in detective fiction, the measure of originality is not how “new” the story is but rather how existing tropes and narrative structures are reorganized and reconceived in artful and unexpected ways (hence my title “pleasures of permutation”). What I propose here is a more formal way of looking at how works within a very formulaic prose genre can influence one another, with relative disregard to national boundaries and artificial intellectual hierarchy.

DIRECT INFLUENCE FALLACY

Some examples found within detective fiction, Western and Japanese, question the myth of direct influence—in that occasionally what appears to be the result of direct influence is in fact the consequence of the permutation of similar generic rules. One example of this would be *Nisen dōka* [Two Sen Copper Coin] (1923) by Edogawa Ranpo (1894-1965) and *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* (1926) by Agatha Christie (1890-1976). When *Nisen* appeared in *Shinseinen*, the flagship magazine of the publisher Hakubunkan that regularly featured foreign as well as domestic detective fiction, the work was praised by authors such as Morishita Uson (1890-1965) and Kozakai Fuboku (1890-1929) for both observing some of the signature elements of detective fiction (e.g. the mystery of the missing jewelry, the trick two-sen coin, and the mysterious code found inside) while also overturning some of the central conventions of the genre (e.g. through the deceitful narrator and the absence of resolution). Ranpo completely dismantles the implicit expectation of the narrator as a sidekick to an able detective and a faithful chronicler of his friend’s triumphs (as embodied by his Western predecessors such as the anonymous friend of C. Auguste Dupin in Poe’s Dupin trilogy and Dr. Watson in Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes series). In *Nisen dōka*, the nameless “watashi” gets the last laugh not only from his friend who took himself as a great detective but also the readers who expected his narrative to be sincere and “complete.”

For today’s audience, the presence of the deceitful narrator who is not apologetic for giving the reader an incomplete account of the case and his involvement in the central plot suggests Christie’s *Ackroyd*. In *Ackroyd*, the audience accesses the story through the viewpoint of Dr. Shepherd, the

sidekick to the now retired detective Hercule Poirot. Shepherd is not only the narrator but also the culprit who was in Ackroyd's room at the time of his murder. However, Shepherd also happens to be the killer, and he hides his criminality by omitting the crucial detail in his narrative. In much the same way as in *Nisen dōka*, the readers are set up to realize the incompleteness and deceptiveness of a (subjective) narrative. The two works share such similar narrative deception that many would assume Ranpo's work to be a "copy" of Christie's.

However, the original publication dates of the two works—*Nisen dōka* predates *Ackroyd* by a few years—exclude the possibility that Ranpo learned the trick from Christie and directly copied it. Instead, the sequence of events suggests that Ranpo and Christie detected the same generic convention and decided to permute it in the same way, making a conscious choice of exploiting the naïveté of such assumption and using it to entertain readers. The speed and quantity of Japanese translations of Western detective fiction in the interwar period was such that it was easy for Ranpo—or any other committed aficionados—to monitor the latest developments in the genre from afar. The facility with which the Japanese authors could access translations seems to fuel the direct influence fallacy and devalue their creative production.

The abundance of translations can also be understood as both proof of the cultural globalization in progress in this era and a means through which detective fiction authors could acquire the common cultural capital of the genre. Ranpo and Christie arrived at the same conclusion via different paths. This is an example of authors coincidentally coming up with the same or similar combinations of elements as they share the same or similar literary heritage. Both Ranpo and Christie are aware of this generic convention of faithful and sincere sidekick narrators that has its origins in Poe's anonymous narrator to Dupin, Doyle's Dr. Watson to Holmes, and Christie's own Captain Hastings to Poirot, and regard it as one of the blind spots the authors can use to outsmart (and entertain) readers.

The example of Edogawa Ranpo's work *Injū* [The Devil in the Shadow] (1928) and Dashiell Hammett's *The Maltese Falcon* (1930) further disproves the direct influence fallacy. *Injū* is a story of a beautiful female killer, Shizuko, who kills her husband while playing three different characters to cover up her crime. In the process, she also starts an affair with a young writer named Samukawa, who is also the detective on the case. *The Maltese Falcon* features Brigid O'Shaunessey, one of Hammett's most admired *femmes fatales*. Just like Shizuko, Brigid starts a sexual relationship with Sam Spade, the private eye whose professional partner she has killed.

The two characters use very similar—in fact almost identical—strategies of persuasion toward their lovers as they hide their murders. As they are accused by their men of pulling the strings all along and being responsible for a murder, the two women try to convince them of their innocence that they were not responsible. In doing so, they emphasize their physical and emotional weakness. Confronted by her lover for deceiving him and killing her husband, Shizuko repeatedly claims that she is scared of the way he talks and the suggestion of her as murderess:

‘The way you talk gives me the creeps. Let’s stop such morbid talk. I don’t want to talk about it especially in a dark place like this. Let’s talk about it some other time, and just have fun tonight. As long as I’m with you, I don’t have to think about Hirata [the supposed prime suspect who is also her old lover].’³

When distracting him does not work, she also melodramatically appeals through her sexual charm: “I don’t want to waste our precious time on such a scary story. Don’t want these lips of fire? Can’t you hear my heartbeat? Hold me, hold me.”⁴ She also suggests that Samukawa whip her as before.⁵ When all attempts to stop him fails and he exposes her entire scheme, she gradually gives up swaying him with words and use her physical charm. Samukawa describes her: “[Shizuko], now naked, clung onto me. She pressed her cheek hard against my chest, so as to make me feel the warmth of her tears.”⁶ Finally, she falls completely quiet: “I [Samukawa] picked her up by her shoulders and shook her lightly. She couldn’t raise her head, perhaps because of the shame and guilt. She remained motionless and silent.”⁷

In a similar vein, Sam Spade in *The Maltese Falcon* accuses his lover Brigid of shooting his former partner Miles. As her lover turns against her, Brigid uses the strategy of persuasion through sexuality and evocation of their sweaty lovemaking sessions similar to Shizuko’s: “But—but, Sam, you can’t! Not after what we’ve been to each other.”⁸ Just like Shizuko, Brigid involves some tears:

³ Edogawa Ranpo, *Edogawa Ranpo Zenshū*, vol. 3 (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1970), p. 73.

⁴ Ranpo, p. 74

⁵ Ranpo, p. 74.

⁶ Ranpo, p. 75.

⁷ Ranpo, p. 78.

⁸ Dashiell Hammett, *The Maltese Falcon* (New York: First Vintage Crime, 1992), p. 211. Originally published in 1930.

"This is not just." She cried. Tears came to her eyes. "It's unfair. It's contemptible of you. You know it was not that. You can't say that. [...]" Brigid O'Shaunessey blinked her tears away. She took a step towards him [Sam Spade] and stood looking him in his eyes, straight and proud. "You called me a liar," she said. "Now you are lying. You're lying if you say you don't know down in your heart that, in spite of anything I've done, I love you."⁹

Despite their insistence, Brigid and Shizuko are murderous women who have killed in the past. Yet, they demonstrate a great ability to play weak, frail women who cannot control their emotions.

In addition to questions of gender and crime, the similar depictions of women in Ranpo and Hammett raise some interesting issues when considered within the framework of authenticity, artistic precedence, and cross-cultural artistic inspiration. During the late 1920s to early 1930s, European dominance in the field of translated detective fiction was slowly being overtaken by its American counterpart. In the midst of this transition, the works of Hammett, with an array of seductive *femmes fatales*, made their way to Japan through both literary translations and film adaptations.¹⁰ Yet the publication of *Injū* predates that of *The Maltese Falcon* by two years, so there could have been no imitation despite frequent importation of Western works to Japan. Similarly, as Japanese texts were rarely translated into Western languages (if not "never"), it is highly unlikely that Hammett emulated a fellow detective writer in the Far East.

If Ranpo's work had been written even a day after Hammett's the similarity between their works would have been explained away by the usual theory of cross-cultural influence, where Western writers invariably influence the Eastern or Japanese writers. However, the earlier publication date of *Injū* preempts this banal (and sometimes misleading) explanation. Rather, the striking similarity between Hammett's and Ranpo's works should be viewed as evidence potentially pointing to at least two theories. From the standpoint of social history, it can serve as another piece of evidence illustrating what Unno Hiroshi and other critics of interwar culture in Japan and other places have called "*sekai dōjisei* [global simultaneity]," the emergence of a global culture to which America,

⁹ Hammett, *The Maltese Falcon*, p. 212.

¹⁰ Hasebe Fumichika, "Ōbei tantei shōsetsu honyaku shi: Dashiiru Hametto" in *EQ* (September 1995): 206-11.

Europe, and Japan belonged.¹¹ It can also be understood as what Harry D. Harootunian calls “an inflection of a larger global process that constituted what might be called co-existing or co-eval modernity, inasmuch as it shared the same historical temporality of modernity (as a form of historical totalizing) found elsewhere in Europe and the United States.”¹²

Another more formalist explanation would be that Hammett and Ranpo, both students of the formulas and techniques of detective fiction, orchestrated these elements in similar ways. In the world of science, such occurrences are more readily acceptable—most famously, Newton and Leibniz developed the same model of differential and integral calculus independently of each other in the same period, and Gauss and Bolyai came up with identical theories of non-Euclidean geometry without ever consulting each other.¹³ In both cases, all parties were given credit for their achievements. Perhaps the case of Ranpo and Christie calls for a new way of looking at various formalist literatures and cross-cultural literary inspiration and encourages the willingness to go beyond the existent hierarchy of influence and de-emphasize originality and priority.

KUROIWA RUIKŌ AND THE QUESTION OF ORIGINALITY

Once we dismantle the notion that absolute value lies in absolute originality, we can begin to appreciate different kinds of creativity that previously escaped our critical radar. In many ways, Japanese detective fiction writers’ disinterest in originality was already apparent with Kuroiwa Ruikō (1862-1920) while he was translating Western works of detective fiction into Japanese during the 1880s and 1890s. During this period, Ruikō tirelessly undertook projects of translating Western detective fiction—mostly French and English texts by such authors as Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849), Emile Gaboriau (1832-1873), and Fortuné de Boigobey (1821-1891). The key players who sustained the genre’s boom in the interwar period—such as Edogawa Ranpo (1894-1965) and Yokomizo Seishi (1902-1981)—all experienced their first thrill of mystery with Ruikō’s translations.

However, the fact that Ruikō “translated” other writers’ works—rather than “created” his own stories from scratch—often gives the impression of Japanese detective fiction as derivative of its Western counterpart. To those who value “originality” as the sign of a great writer, to credit Ruikō as the “founding father” of detective fiction in Japan may

¹¹ The idea of *sekai dōjisei* runs through Unno Hiroshi’s *Modan toshi Tokyo: Nihon no 1920 nendai* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1988).

¹² Harry Harootunian, preface to *Overcome by Modernity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. xvi.

¹³ I thank Gerald Prince for bringing these examples to my attention.

appear questionable, as he left but one “creative” work of his own.¹⁴ In addition, Ruikō often emphasized in personal essays and prefaces that his involvement in the text is limited to that of a “translator” [*yakusha*] and his writing a “translation” [*yaku*].¹⁵ Because of the liberal manner in which he translated, his works are now often called *hon'an shōsetsu*, with *hon'an* literally meaning “translating ideas.”¹⁶ His seeming disinterest in creativity and originality may have social and commercial roots. In mid-Meiji, the notions of “copyright” and creative licensing were vague at best: for instance, none of the writers whose works sold millions in Japan thanks to Ruikō’s translation ever saw any of these profits. Ruikō called his own endeavor “translation” partly because of the mask it offered him, partly because of the licensing system of his own time, and partly because of his personal conception of (or indifference to) “creativity” and “originality.”

Such an utter disinterest in originality and authenticity is a curious phenomenon that needs to be examined in global context as it may be a historical phenomenon. During the late 19th century to the early 20th century, Anglo-American detective fiction from the tradition of Poe was exported to not only Japan but also to other faraway places such as Italy,

¹⁴ The work is called “Muzan [Merciless]” (1889).

¹⁵ Ruikō’s self-labeling, however, should not be taken at face value. For instance, as Ruikō reduced his own role as the translator, he also erased the contribution of the original author by often omitting his/ her name completely from the translation (because of this, it is often hard for today’s Ruikō scholars to pinpoint exactly the original texts). As Ruikō translates the original text, he converts it by giving the characters and places Japanese names and infusing the story line with his own social agenda. One example of this is *Hito ka oni ka* [Human or Beast?] (1888), Ruikō’s translation of Emile Gaboriau’s *L’Affaire Lerouge* (1867). In the preface, Ruikō declares that he translates in order to: “inform people of the difficulty involved in the profession of detective [*tantei*] and enlighten them of the sacredness of judicial ruling and “illustrate the preciousness of human rights [*jinken*] and the importance of not slighting [*keiyō subekaran*] the law” (Kuroiwa 1889: Preface). This is an odd statement to make, especially because the changes he makes to the original text suggest anything but the acceptance of the law as just and perfect. It is his deliberate strategy to escape the censors by minimizing his involvement in and responsibility for the final product: the importance of realizing this goal outweighed the right to any claim of creativity and/ or originality.

¹⁶ The commercial success of Ruikō’s translations encouraged many others to translate Western detective fiction, especially after Ruikō slowed down his production of translations in the mid-1890s; however, none of these translations enjoyed the kind of wild popularity that his did. Even though Ruikō never acknowledged his “creativity,” his readers seem to have known that the translator’s choices could directly affect their enjoyment of the text.

Latin America, and China. In China, for instance, the business of translating Western detective fiction took off during the last days of the Qing and early days of the Republic¹⁷; a similar explosion took place in Latin America in the early twentieth century and in Italy in the 1920s.¹⁸ In studying the endeavors of Chinese translators of detective fiction, Jeffrey Kinkley too points out the existence of a different kind of “originality” in their minds: author-translators such as Cheng Xiaoping (1893-1976) and Sun Liaohong (1897-1958), who translated works of Conan Doyle and Maurice Leblanc, respectively, “preferred to rationalize their imitativeness rather than cover it up,” conceiving the “modern analytical detective story as an international, not just a Western form.”¹⁹ What this suggests is that there is a willing forfeiting of any claim to originality in detective fiction throughout the regions where it was transplanted. The effects of the development of the notion of copyright on the genre—or the genre’s influence on the notion of copyright—certainly merit further investigation.

HAMAQ SHIRŌ: CREATION THROUGH PERMUTATION

One literary benefit involved in forfeiting any claim of absolute originality is to be able to use someone else’s text in order to generate suspense in your own. Hamao Shirō (1896-1935) takes the ideas of *hon’an* and permutation a step further with his *Satsujinki* [The Murderous Devil] (1931) and uses his Western model, *The Greene Murder Case* (1928) by S. S. Van Dine (1887-1939) as a red herring.

Though reputed to be one of the best full-length, *honkaku* [authentic] detective fictions of its time, *Satsujinki* is full of parody and pastiche. In the story, a misogynist detective Fujieda Shintarō is hired by a beautiful young client, Akikawa Hiroko, who fears that her father is being blackmailed and her family is in danger. The female protagonist as a damsel in distress who is constantly watched over by the killer echoes the image of Hiroko in Ranpo’s *Injū*, and the serial killings in an isolated mansion alludes to the setting of Van Dine’s *Greene*. Hamao is aware that his readers—and even his fictional creation Fujieda—would have read these two works before taking this case. However, the knowledge of these precedents only serves to deceive both Fujieda and the literary detective. Though everything about Hiroko describes her as a concerned filial

¹⁷ Jeffrey C. Kinkley, *Chinese Justice, the Fiction: Law and Literature in Modern China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), p. 181.

¹⁸ See Amelia S. Simpson, *Detective Fiction from Latin America* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990), and Stefano Tani, *The Doomed Detective: The Contribution of the Detective Novel to Postmodern American and Italian Fiction* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1984).

¹⁹ Kinkley, p. 171.

daughter seeking the help of a professional, Fujieda thinks that it is all an act, and that she is the one who is pulling the strings behind the scenes. When Hiroko answers that she was reading none other than Van Dine's *Greene* at the night of her mother's murder, Fujieda's suspicion for her grows even stronger. As the reader will find out later, Hiroko mentions the text only in an attempt to give Fujieda verbal clues into who she thinks is the killer, but he is too busy suspecting her to notice, and the readers who are familiar with *Greene* are likely to read it as Hiroko's challenge.

Through the tension between Fujieda and Hiroko, Hamao asks a number of important questions about literary influence between two sharply different traditions: Is Hiroko the killer, like Ada Greene? How much does Hamao take from *The Greene Murder Case* to write *Satsujinki*? The answer is not much, as the readers ultimately discover that the solution of the case does not follow Van Dine's work at all. The answer to whodunit depends not only on the specific clues presented within the story but also on the extent to which the reader recognizes the referential play at work between the lines.

IMAGINED GUILD

What enables this referential play—guiding those who have read *The Greene Murder Case* to read *Satsujinki* in a certain way and confuse them by the allusion—is the concept of genre as cross-cultural classification tool among both readers and authors. I believe that the best way to describe the awareness of Japanese authors vis-à-vis Western authors and the genre might be the notion of a kind of “guild.” The proponents of Japanese detective fiction in this period shared an awareness that they were participating in an international genre, and often took pride in further facilitating the inflow of information from overseas.²⁰

This awareness of the global nature of their endeavors allowed Japanese detective fiction writers to operate within an imagined guild of likeminded aficionados. This community is “imagined” in the same sense that Benedict Anderson's idea of “nationhood” is imagined; and it is worthy of the name “guild” as it is a grouping based on professional achievement and skill that stretches across class, race, and gender. The way I conceive of this “imagined guild” is also close to a kind of

²⁰ For instance, when Japanese translations of new Western works were slow in coming, some writers took the initiative themselves to make them available to the Japanese audience. Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke translated several Van Dine works, and Inoue Yoshio translated stories by Crofts and Ellery Queen. For more information on the translation of Western detective texts into Japanese, see Hasebe Fumichika, *Ōbei suiiri shōsetsu hon'yakushi* (Tokyo: Hon no Zasshisha, 1992).

“synchronic tradition.” In discussing the field of English poetry, T. S. Eliot defines “tradition” as the sum of all precedent works, accepted as “great,” against which a new work is judged.²¹ However, rather than stretching across time, detective fiction as synchronic tradition stretches across geographical boundaries, and allows individual instances of transnational affinities to emerge. In addition, the guild does not seek active extermination of individual talent as Eliot and his concept of “tradition” do; rather, it recognizes indigenous sensibility as well as the global poetic mind and values the subjective application of taste and judgment involved in the act of permutation. When the participants of this guild import works from faraway places, they learn the mechanisms of the “rules” that make possible the finished product. They take in these rules as “tools” with which to construct their own works. These authors at the receiving end assume that the tools come without the expensive tariffs of intellectual indebtedness. Therefore, writers such as Hamao do not have to shy away from disclosing the underlying texts upon which their current murder mysteries are based: rather, they can actively use them as tools of playful deception.

In such an imagined guild of detective fiction writers, one is a master among other masters, and one takes and uses the tools others offer as one sees fit. Mentioning names and plots from preexistent works is not an admission of creative piracy but a way to show one’s mastery of the genre’s conventions.

CONVENTIONS OF A GENRE: YOKOMIZO SEISHI

The best example of this can be found in the works of Yokomizo Seishi (1902-1981) from the period immediately after World War II. After spending the war years writing *torimono chō* [tales of criminal investigations set in the Edo period] in order to escape the censors, Yokomizo Seishi created works that were inspired by classic texts of Western detective fiction: *Honjin satsujin jiken* [Murders at the Main Manor] (1946) is inspired by a series of locked room mysteries by John Dickson Carr (1906-1977), *Chōchō satsujin jiken* [The Butterfly Murder Case] (1946) is a direct product of *The Casket* (1920) by Freeman Willis Crofts (1879-1958).

Yokomizo shares Ruikō’s disinterest in absolute originality and willingly reveals his sources of inspiration. This is reflected in the way in which he describes his first work in the postwar period, *Honjin*, via the character of the enigmatic first person narrator:

²¹ T. S. Eliot, “Tradition and Individual Talent,” in *Selected Works of T. S. Eliot* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1950), p. 4.

When I heard the truth of what happened in this case, I looked for similar cases among the works of detective fiction I had read. Gaston Leroux's *The Mystery of the Yellow Chamber* [Le Mystère de la chambre jaune] immediately came to my mind, and then Maurice Leblanc's *Les dents du tigre*, S. S. Van Dine's *Canary Murder Case* and *Kennel Murder Case*. I even thought of Dickson Carr's *The Plague Court Murders* and Roger Scarlet's *The Murder Among the Angells*, a perverted locked room mystery.²²

The narrator compares the current case with a wide range of existent Western detective fiction, and shows his erudition of the genre in the process. He then goes on to make a comment that neither declares nor refute the case's uniqueness:

But the current case differed from all of these stories. However, it did occur to me that the killer may have read them, dissembled the elements of tricks in these stories, and constructed the designs for his own crime using only the parts he needed.²³

This not only describes the actions of the story's killer but also how Yokomizo himself constructs the story as the author. For instance, Yokomizo reveals in an essay that his other work from the same period *Gokumontō* [Gokumon Island] (1946) is a montage of stories he read during the war – such as Christie's *And Then There Were None* (1939) and Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Problem of Thor Bridge" (1927).

In comparing *Honjin* to other known cases, the narrator discloses that he already knows the entire account of what happened, including whodunit. After impersonally reporting how Kindaichi (the detective on the case) solves the locked room mystery of the main manor, the narrator reappears at the end of the story to make a comment about his own storytelling.

I feel that I have written everything there is to be known about the murders surrounding the main manor [*honjin*]. I did not once do anything that would mislead the readers. I specified

²² Yokomizo Seishi, *Honjin satsujin jiken* (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 2003), p. 7.

²³ Yokomizo, pp. 7-8

the location of the water wheel. Moreover, at the beginning of the record of this incident, I said the following. ‘In that regard, I have to express great appreciation for the cruel and violent criminal who chopped up the man and woman. The “man and woman” here of course refer to Shimizu Kyōkichi [the man with three fingers] and Katsuko. Katsuko was murdered but Kyōkichi was not [he died a natural death], so I intentionally avoided writing “the criminal who killed the man and woman.” If you readers thought that the criminal killed both Katsuko and Kyōkichi, it is a hasty conclusion/ assumption on your part. In addition, when I described the murder scene, I did write that there were a man and a woman covered in blood and lying dead, but not killed and covered in blood. It is because Kenzō was not murdered. I learned from Agatha Christie’s *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* that detective fiction writers ought to write like this.²⁴

In this passage, Yokomizo’s nameless narrator brags about the narrative feats he achieved and willingly discloses his creative master. Yokomizo does not feel threatened or dwarfed by “copying” his predecessors and colleagues in other literary traditions, as he is simply re-using the tools, the means of creation that now exist in the public domain (so to speak), and not duplicating their final product.

CONCLUSION: GLOBALIZATION, LOCALITY, AND THE PLEASURES OF PERMUTATION

The examples of Japanese detective fiction mentioned in this paper suggest that the process of literary and cultural globalization (involving Europe, America, and Asia) was well underway in the early twentieth century, at least in this genre. This is not to say, however, that everyone everywhere was writing the same kind of detective fiction. As Hardt and Negri suggest, globalization “should not be understood in terms of cultural, political, or economic *homogenization*,” because the end product and the effects it creates are always different and haphazard. Globalization “should be understood instead as a *regime* of the production of identity and difference, or really of homogenization and heterogenization.”²⁵ (Hardt and Negri, 45) The case of detective fiction as a global phenomenon also supports this idea: the same set of “standard” rules, disseminated through translation, end up producing very distinct works, rather than identical

²⁴ Yokomizo, pp. 198-9

²⁵ Hardt and Negri, p. 45

ones, because of different processes of permutation and subversion. Just as it is impossible to completely duplicate a text, it is also impossible to completely purge it of its locality, even if such a text comes into being with the consciousness of participating in an international genre such as detective fiction. Creation through permutation has both sociological and aesthetic explanations, and the example of Japanese detective fiction writers not only attests to the realization of the pleasures and values of permutation but also its active endorsement through practice.