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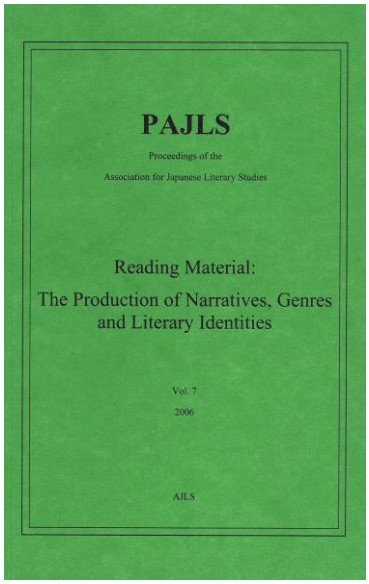

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Consumption and Leisure:

An Intratextual Reading of Hisao Jūran's *Kyarako san*

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With the advent of cultural studies, we have, as critics of modern Japanese literature, come to accept the value of reading intertextually—in terms of historicity, discursive milieu and the way works are in conversation with each other. But at the same time, we often only examine the *zenshū* (collected works) format of the text, ignoring the original context of production, usually a serialization in newspapers or magazines. In order to retrieve lost meanings and nuances, it is important for us to read intratextually, that is, to consider how a work articulates meaning within the original publication venue. Such re-readings can range from an examination of the text's interaction with the advertisements and other columns on the physical page, to an exploration of how the text shapes and is shaped by the targeted readership or the venue's self-representation. These intratextual analyses, in conjunction with an intertextual approach, provide us with crucial insight into the work as well as the broader cultural imaginary of the time.

In this paper, I examine Hisao Jūran's *Kyarako san* (Miss Calico), published in *Shinseinen* (New Youth), a cosmopolitan journal known for detective fiction as well as other "modern" story genres. Serialized from January to December 1939, this work features the adventures of the eponymous hero nicknamed Kyarako san, a 19-year-old daughter of a retired army general; she travels around Japan, influencing/reforming others through her stellar virtue and wholesome morals. *Miss Calico* was a successful and popular work; it won the *Shinseinen* readers' award, was republished in book form and also made into a film.[1] It is also an extremely puzzling work, with a strange, seemingly contradictory message. On the one hand it extols the integrity of nationhood and empire, the value of the war effort, and wartime virtues of frugality,

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[1] The serialization is made up of 12 individual episodes. In the 1939 book version, there are only 10 episodes with considerable revisions; most notably, the sixth episode has been changed and combined into the fifth episode, and the last episode has been omitted. The *zenshū* version has 11 episodes, using the book version and adding the last episode from the serialization: *Hisao Jūran zenshū* vol. 7 (Tokyo: San'ichi shobō, 1974).

Miss Calico won the first *Shinseinen* shō (*Shinseinen* readers' award) in the August 1939 issue while the serialization was still continuing. See the author's comments in accepting the award: Hisao Jūran, "Rensaku *Kyarako san* ni tsuite," *Shinseinen* vol. 20, no. 10 (August, 1939): 263; reprinted in *Hisao Jūran*, vol. 1 of *Sōsho Shinseinen*, eds. Eguchi Yūsuke and Kawasaki Kenko (Tokyo: Hakubunkan shinsha, 1992), 244-45.

See actors Todoroki Yukiko and Yamamoto Reizaburō's comments on the filming of *Miss Calico*: "Roke zakki," *Shinseinen* vol. 20, no. 14 (November, 1939):140-43.

productivity and (for women and girls) domesticity, chastity and motherhood. Yet on the other hand, the text is overrun with French and English words and people of mixed blood, the cohesion of national identity is questioned, and forbidden luxury items as well as risqué female sexuality are described in loving detail. By revisiting the material context of its publication and the specific historical moment of articulation, I hope to illuminate the complex layers of meaning in *Miss Calico*, a simultaneously complicit and resistant text. The story fulfills a critical role within *Shinseinen* and offers an instructive commentary on the magazine during Japan's escalating militarism/imperialism in 1939.

With the beginning of the China War in 1937, the Japanese government began the National Spiritual Mobilization campaign (*Kokumin seishin sōdōin*), urging subjects to go without in a time of dearth and forego various creature comforts while soldiers were in battle.[2] The government eventually restricted the consumption of certain household items, foodstuffs, electricity and entertainment, and urged the abandonment of frivolous luxuries with slogans such as "Let's stop getting permanent waves," "Let's cut off long kimono sleeves," and "Luxury is our enemy."[3] Within this context, Kyarako san embodies what the narrator lauds as "common sense" values, acquiring her nickname from the sensible practice of wearing underwear made of high-quality cotton, or calico, instead of silk. She is an ideal Japanese girl, virtuous, innocent, honest, healthy, smart, thrifty, useful and kind; the author himself notes that he wrote this work in a spirit of patriotism, aiming to nourish young women, the "wombs (*botai*) that will carry future subjects," not with "cheap sweets garishly colored with vulgar love and kneaded with nonsense," but with "wholesome fare, full of nutrition such as lecithin, vitamins and calcium."[4]

In the story, Kyarako san is presented as a role model. The first episode shows her staying in an expensive hotel in Kawana with her aunt and cousins. While others around her spend their days pursuing frivolous and costly pleasures, Kyarako san alone remains frugal; she is also the only one who shows kindness to a mysterious old man, a guest at the hotel reviled by others for his shabby, beggarly appearance. It turns out that this man is a famous millionaire named George Yama, who has made his fortune in the U.S., and Kyarako san is rewarded for her exemplary ways. Yama makes her his official heir before he is drafted to fight in China, not expected to return alive. Kyarako san's frugality thus makes her wealthy, and as the story proceeds, she goes on to travel throughout Japan, learning new things from her experiences and influencing people for the better.

Miss Calico appeared in *Shinseinen* while the magazine was making an awkward transition from being a liberal journal full of Western works to one with pro-imperialist stories and reportage. Although *Shinseinen* is remembered today as a chic venue that gave rise to the

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[2] The National General Mobilization Law was enforced in 1938: *Kindai Nihon sōgō nenpyō daisanpan* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1991), p. 314.

[3] See Nagahara Kazuko and Yoneda Sayoko, *Onna no Shōwashi* (Tokyo: Yūhikaku, 1996), pp. 77-80. In June 1939, the National spiritual mobilization committee decided on directives for "lifestyle changes" such as shutting off neon signs, stopping women from getting permanent waves, prohibiting long hair for students and ceasing the practice of giving summer and winter gifts: *Kindai Nihon sōgō nenpyō*, p. 318.

[4] "Rensaku *Kyarako san* ni tsuite," *Shinseinen* vol. 20, no. 10: 263; reprinted in *Hisao Jūran*, vol. 1 of *Sōsho Shinseinen*, pp. 244-45.

detective fiction boom in the 1920s, by the end of the 1930s it had undergone considerable changes. In order to survive censorship and restrictions on paper production, *Shinseinen*, like many other magazines, was forced to adopt a pro-war, nationalistic policy with the start of the China War.[5] During the 1940s, it received the stamp of approval by the government as an acceptable "entertainment magazine" suitable for sending to soldiers abroad, and remained in circulation throughout the Pacific War when many magazines were no longer being published.[6]

Considering *Shinseinen*'s circumstances of production and forced transition from a liberal magazine to a pro-empire venue, it is not surprising that *Miss Calico* is full of mixed messages, putting forth a nationalistic agenda but simultaneously undermining it. In revisiting the 1939 issues of *Shinseinen*, we realize that while towing the official line, Jūran's narrative also fills in certain gaps in the magazine—gaps left by the images, features and columns erased because of wartime considerations.[7] Although it is impossible to know the full extent of authorial control over the text's presentation in the magazine, it is worth noting that by 1937 Jūran was closely involved with the production of *Shinseinen.* He was writing not only fiction, but also interviews and humor columns under different names; he also translated Western works and wrote the advice column. One then contemporary source noted that in recent years *Shinseinen* seemed to be the result of collaborative work by Jūran and the editor.[8]

Jūran depicts Kyarako san as an embodiment of frugality, she is ironically also a medium for showcasing fashion and "modern" luxuries, items of interest to both male and female readers. A magazine targeted for the sophisticated urbanite, *Shinseinen* originally contained columns and ads that underscored its image as a cutting-edge journal. In particular, there was a fashion column called "Vogue en vogue" (Voganvogu), in which a certain Miss Hara (Misu Hara) gave advice on the latest trends for both men and women. This column, full of photographs, was devoted to explaining the latest fashion, ranging from clothes, makeup, accessories, hats, and perfume. With the change in the political clime, however, being "in vogue" became less important than addressing the perceived needs of the nation. In the August 1938 "Vogue en vogue," we still see lighthearted fashion advice from Miss Hara, such as the best color for pedicures ("a shade slightly lighter than your lipstick"). But at the same time, there is an effort to balance out such vanity with wartime concerns: in the same column, she argues that the ideal *kokuminfuku* (national subjects' clothing) should have a militaristic style, and be sturdy enough so that it will "even repel poison gas."[9] Despite such attempts to be patriotic and practical, "Vogue and vogue" was cancelled by the end of 1938, creating a void in terms of fashion-related articles in *Shinseinen.*

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[5] See *Shinseinen dokuhon zen ikkan*, ed. *Shinseinen* kenkyūkai (Tokyo: Sakuhinsha, 1988), pp. 160-61; Eguchi Yūsuke, "*Shinseinen* no sono jidai," *Eureka* vol. 19, no. 10 (September, 1987): 228-29.

[6] *Shinseinen dokuhon zen ikkan*, pp. 156-58, 201. The final issue is *Shinseinen*, vol. 31, no. 7 (July, 1950).

[7] I follow the Japanese practice of referring to Hisao Jūran (Abe Masao's penname) by his first name as "Jūran." For his chronology, see Eguchi Yūsuke, "Hisao Jūran nenpu," *Hisao Jūran*, vol. 1 of *Sōsho Shinseinen*, pp. 295-315; Eguchi Yūsuke, "Hisao Jūran nenpu," *Hisao Jūran* (Tokyo: Hakusuisha, 1994), pp. 183-93.

[8] *Shinseinen dokuhon zen ikkan*, p. 127. The editor was Mizutani Jun, who also wrote for the magazine.

[9] "Voganvogu," *Shinseinen* vol. 19, no. 12 (August, 1938): 358-9.

As if to make up for this deleted column, the characters in *Miss Calico* are often dressed tastefully in elegant clothing, a point emphasized visually by the illustrations accompanying the text. These pictures, drawn by Matsuno Kazuo, the magazine's cover artist, show evening dresses and the latest casual vacation wear. In *Miss Calico*, fashion is an integral part of the plot, and there are ample descriptions of the high life. Readers follow the adventures of Kyarako san as she makes gourmet food, travels to various resort areas in Japan, and socializes with the upper-classes and foreigners. She is constantly engaged in leisure activities, such as skiing, swimming, hiking, camping, shooting clay pigeons, riding horses, taking walks and cruises, all the while saving people from vice and helping the nation at war. With a discerning eye, she makes a point of differentiating luxuries of good taste that are restful and soothing to the soul, as opposed to ones that are unnecessary and without meaning.[10] In many ways *Miss Calico* encapsulates what might be called a "wartime fantasy," not only providing clear guidelines for determining acceptable commodity and behavior, but also allowing leisure and consumption to play an important role within the imperialist project.

An example of this can be seen in the September 1939 issue, in an episode in which Kyarako san and a group of young girls spend the summer at a resort in Katase-shōnan Beach. In one of the accompanying illustrations, we see the girls in the latest swimwear, posing like high-fashion models on the beach against the distant backdrop of Enoshima Island.[11] This visual presentation of fashion is reminiscent of a "Vogue en vogue" column published exactly a year earlier in 1938, introducing the newly created "tricot" bathing suit with a photograph of a reclining model.[12] Both the text and images of *Miss Calico* fulfill the role of the cancelled fashion column, and in addition, create a fantasy narrative that makes commodity and leisure fit into the goals of the wartime nation. The girls, who follow an orderly and resourceful lifestyle even during summer vacation, are admirers of the Hitler Youth; they had seen this Nazi youth group marching in Tokyo station during their much publicized visit to Japan. The narrative makes light of the girls' simplistic aping of the Hitler Youth; the girls go so far as to exercise by promenading up and down the beach in a similar military style, even as they are ridiculed by the other sunbathers. These innocents, however, play an important role in the war effort. While the girls swim every day for fun and visit the elegant Kaihin Hotel, they also manage to save the homeland by catching international spies who have been recording the ocean currents and tides of Sagami Bay. These girls may seem as if they are just playing around, but they are, in fact, thwarting unspeakable threats to the nation while looking quite stylish.

In the February episode also, notions of leisure and commodity are intertwined with a story that has an edifying ending. Kyarako san and the girls are on a ski vacation in Shiga kōgen, a well-known winter resort. Here, Kyarako san stops one of the girls from marrying an older playboy and saves her from suicide. The girl's smart appearance in skiwear, illustrated by Matsuno, is cleverly juxtaposed in the pages of the serialization with an ad for the latest skiwear by Kanebō. In the same issue, there is also a column for travelers titled "Where should we go to

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[10] See for example *Hisao Jūran zenshū* vol. 7, pp. 197-98.

[11] See *Shinseinen* vol. 20, no. 12 (September, 1939): 258-9.

[12] "Voganvogu," *Shinseinen* vol. 19, no. 14 (September, 1938): 373.

ski this year?"—an introduction to various ski tours including those to the Shiga kōgen area.[13] This handy guide includes a detailed train schedule and an explanation of famous sites that can be seen en route. The skiing excursion episode of *Miss Calico* enables fashion and travel to be highlighted within *Shinseinen*, and at the same time ties leisure with the creation of moral integrity. During the 1930s, Japan was promoting healthful sports such as swimming or skiing in order to build up the strength of its subjects, particularly future mothers. It was, however, crucial to achieve the delicate balance between such leisure activities and a need to be thrifty and productive; creating legitimate spaces for fun in wartime Japan meant underscoring their useful purpose. Emblematic of this effort is an article in the February 1941 issue of *Shinseinen* that argues for the creation and practice of "National Protection Skiing (*kokubō skii*)"—to ski, not for empty frivolity, but to heighten abilities and stamina in order to serve the nation.[14]

Miss Calico's complicated balancing act, providing an ideal marriage of leisure/commodity/fun and nationalistic values, intrinsically mirrors *Shinseinen*'s own agenda as it tries to find a way to remain a modern journal of entertainment even while advocating thrift and empire-building. The adventures of Kyarako san, touted in a 1940 ad copy as "the sweetheart of New Japan" (Shin Nihon no koibito), enable readers to appreciate/participate in consumption through textual and visual presentation of fashion, travel and food, while at the same time embracing values suitable for the times.[15]

In the April episode, later titled "Onna no te" (The Female Hand), Kyarako san endorses the traditional, gendered division of labor as a way to gain victory for the nation.[16] While hiking through the Tanzawa mountains, Kyarako san befriends a group of patriotic scientists who are searching for useful resources by excavating abandoned mines. She asks to join their cause, to use the "woman's hand"[17] for fighting in war, because women's work is just as relevant as men's. She cooks, cleans and nurses the sick; and after the men find a rare precious metal in a closed mine, she even diffuses the rivalry between different groups by singing and inspiring them to serve the nation together. The schema of public men's work versus private women's work reinforces traditional roles for women, but at the same time, it provides another message vis-à-vis the issues of leisure, luxury and commodity. At first, the men are completely ineffectual since they refuse to take any time to rest, eat proper meals, or practice general hygiene. It is only

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[13] See *Shinseinen* vol. 20, no. 2 (February, 1939): 6-7; 365; 376-7. Kawasaki Kenko's article mentions the Kanebo ad and shows its picture: "*Shinseinen* wa ōdan suru: Hisao Jūran fū 'Shōjo to sensō kikai," *Eureka* vol. 19, no. 10 (September, 1987): 154-55. In the reprint of this article, she does not include the picture: *Shōjo biyori* (Tokyo: Seikyūsha, 1990), p. 106.

[14] Kojima Rokurō, "Kokubō skii no kensetsu e!" *Shinseinen* vol. 22, no. 2 (February 1941): 90-92.

[15] This ad for the book edition of *Miss Calico* is mentioned in Kawasaki, "*Shinseinen* wa ōdan suru," p. 156; *Shōjo biyori*, p. 108. Another descriptive used for Kyarako san in this ad is: "*kōa Nihon o seotta wakaki josei no hōpu to simboru*" (the hope and symbol for young women who are the future of Japan that raises Asia). The ad is found in *Shinseinen* vol. 21, no. 3 (February, 1940): B-4.

[16] The original episode is titled "Niji iro no hata," *Shinseinen* vol. 20, no. 5 (April, 1939): 442-66. The book version is revised significantly in terms of plot and ending.

[17] "Niji iro no hata," p. 456; *Hisao Jūran zenshū* vol. 7, p. 178.

after Kyarako san decorates their quarters, forces them to eat her gourmet cooking, and promotes the importance of "rest" (*kyūyō*) and "enjoyment" (*tanoshimi*) that their "uneconomical" (*fukeizai*) lifestyle is amended, and they become miraculously productive in discovering an important resource for the war.[18]

Although presented in terms of gender-suitable work, therefore, Kyarako san's message also promotes the importance of supposed luxuries or non-essential leisure. Her exaggerated competence, exemplified by the ease with which she whips up full-course French meals from plants and fish found in the area, combined with the complete reliance of the scientists on this young girl, can be read as being both complicit and resistant to the mobilization effort. This episode idealizes the powers of womanhood in terms of domestic prowess (and the virtues of the gendered division of labor), but simultaneously undermines the wartime emphasis on frugality and belief in male authority.[19] The triumph of "rest" and "enjoyment" here, in addition, highlights the value of entertainment of the type provided by *Shinseinen*. That is to say, the magazine validates its own function in the marketplace through the figure of Kyarako san, advocating the need for amusement as a foundation for effective productivity. Rather than simply reading this text in terms of its complicity and resistance, we should also view it as an integral part of the story of *Shinseinen*, a journal striving to find its proper place in the changing landscape.

In *Miss Calico*, the clearest reference to *Shinseinen* is found in the character of George Yama, Kyarako san's mysterious benefactor, who disappears from the story after the first episode. Yama is obviously a homage to George Tanny, better known as Tani Jōji, a famous *Shinseinen* writer who died in 1935. George Tani (valley), like his fictional counterpart George Yama (mountain), traveled in the U.S.; he wrote about his experiences in *Shinseinen* in a series called "*merikenjappu mono*" (American Jap tales), and became an extremely popular (and financially successful) author.[20] As George Yama/Tani's successor, Kyarako san wanders through Japan promoting the war effort in conjunction with entertainment and leisure; for a readership familiar with the history of *Shinseinen*, this gesture to its past is a nostalgic moment that recalls the heyday of the magazine when authors such as Tani Jōji were important contributors.

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[18] "Niji iro no hata," pp. 453, 454; *Hisao Jūran zenshū* vol. 7, pp. 176, 178.

[19] Most critics seem to suggest that this work is both complicit and resistant to the war. In reading this particular episode, Kawasaki Kenko argues that Kyarako san's "excess" that allows her to perform consistently better than men is parodic and has a subversive message: "Tamashii no shōjo tantei ron: Hisao Jūran *Kyarako san* o megutte," *Waseda Bungaku* no. 123 (August, 1986): 76-77; reprinted in *Shōjo biyori*, pp. 121-22.

Horikiri Naoto sees Kyarako san's "common sense" as a resistance to "madness": "Kyarako san to Daikon jō: Hisao Jūran," *Nihon dasshutsu—otoko wa bōmei, onna wa enmei: Horikiri Naoto hyōronshū* (Tokyo: Shichōsha, 1991), pp. 194-98.

Watanabe Keisuke also reads this work as a parodic critique of the war: "Kaisetsu," *Hisao Jūran zenshū* vol. 7, p. 328.

[20] Tani Jōji is a penname for Hasegawa Kaitarō. He also wrote under other well-known pennames such as Hayashi Fubō and Maki Itsuma. For his chronology see "Hayashi Fubō, Maki Itsuma, Tani Jōji nenpu," *Hayashi Fubō, Maki Itsuma, Tani Jōji shū*, vol. 18 of *Taishū bungaku taikei* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1972), pp. 797-800.

This notion of nostalgia dovetails with the idea of wartime fantasy—Kyarako san's thriftiness in using calico for her undergarments is actually an anachronistic virtue, articulating the text's desire for times past. By 1939 cotton was a luxury item since the mobilization effort had placed restrictions on raw cotton imports since 1937. This led to a massive buyout and purchasing cotton in and of itself became an unpatriotic act. Eventually pure cotton disappeared from the market, forcing people to make do with fabric blended with what is known as *sufu* ("staple fiber"), a poor quality synthetic substitute.[21] In rewriting the meaning of "calico" as a frugal purchase, the work creates a space for nostalgic fantasy—that the war can be fought with few minor sacrifices, and the homeland's abundant capacity for goods and leisure can buttress rather than impede "spiritual mobilization." But this usage of calico as a central motif also suggests the malleability of signification—an expensive product unattainable for most people can also symbolize frugality and common sense values. This multivalency is the very essence of *Miss Calico,* and by extension, *Shinseinen*, as they strive to be both luxurious *and* practical, shaping themselves into desirable commodities.

During the late 1930s, it was imperative for *Shinseinen* to find a way of presenting itself as both a fun entertainment magazine and a vital product necessary for strengthening the empire. In Kyarako san's travels, we see the journal's own search for self-definition, exploring the ways in which entertainment, leisure and luxury fit into a new world where self-sacrifice, lack and non-consumption are increasingly equated with patriotism. By rereading *Miss Calico* both intertexually and intratextually, we can begin to question the broader issues regarding the production, function and meaning of popular literature in wartime Japan.

[21] See *Onna no Shōwashi*, pp. 77-78; *Kindai Nihon sōgō nenpyō*, p. 312.