
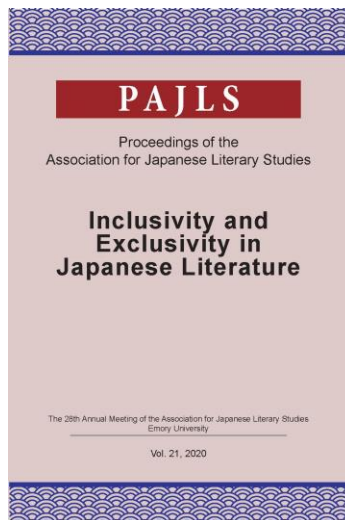


“Love and Sexuality in Tomishima Takeo’s Junior Fiction”

Hiromi Tsuchiya Dollase 

Proceedings of the Association for Japanese Literary Studies 21 (2020): 135–146.



PAJLS 21:
Inclusivity and Exclusivity in Japanese Literature.
Editor: Cheryl Crowley
Managing Editor: Matthew Fraleigh

LOVE AND SEXUALITY IN TOMISHIMA TAKEO'S JUNIOR FICTION

Hiromi Tsuchiya Dollase¹
Vassar College

INTRODUCTION

In 1963, the teen film *Kōkō sannensei* (High School Senior) became a blockbuster hit. The film depicted high school seniors' romances and their resistance against old-fashioned Japanese conventions. The film greatly resonated with young people: postwar baby boomers who were born in the late 1940s. In the 1950s and 1960s, there was "a tremendous boom in movies and novels about adolescence. Mass culture producers began to recognize youth culture as a popular theme" (Sherif 2008, 175). Many popular films came to be based on adolescence-themed novels, and *Kōkō sannensei* was an adaptation of *Asu e no akushu* (Handshake towards Tomorrow) written by Tomishima Takeo.² Tomishima is known for having helped develop the genre *junia shōsetsu* (junior fiction or junior novel), and many of his works were adapted to television and films.

Junior fiction, which emerged in the late 1950s (Kan 2008, 76), is considered an evolved form of *shōjo shōsetsu* (girls' fiction) (Ōhashi 2014, 93). Whereas traditional girls' fiction, which had continued since the prewar era, placed emphasis on girls' friendship and emotional intimacy, junior fiction, which always took place at coeducational schools, dealt with heterosexual love and romance. The schoolboys and girls depicted in the world of junior fiction were energetic, lively, and opinionated; possessed of democratic principles and values, they were depicted as a new kind of youth that emerged during the postwar era. Tomishima Takeo was a pioneer, a driving force, and the standard bearer of this genre.

Tomishima held teenagers' love and sexuality as a main theme and unabashedly depicted the teenage sexual drive, including that of girls. He recognized the sexual urge as an important part of young people's development and believed that writers should not shy away from addressing it. Tomishima related love and sexuality to postwar notions of

¹ <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3692-0709>

² Tomishima Takeo (1931–1998) started his career as a writer while he was still a student at Waseda University. His "Sōka no inu" (Mourning Dog, 1953) was nominated for the Akutagawa Prize and was highly regarded by Edward Seidensticker. After working as an editor at Kawade shobō until 1957, Tomishima started writing stories for teenage magazines. He is also known for writing *kannō shōsetsu* (sensual stories) aimed at a mature audience.

equality and freedom, treating them as powerful ideals that contested old conventions. Many writers followed, and by the late 1960s, sexual depictions came to be the characteristic that people most associated with junior fiction.

This article will discuss the contribution of junior fiction to Japanese girls' culture and to see how junior fiction played a role in delivering postwar ideals and values to a youthful female audience. By paying close attention to Tomishima Takeo, I will reveal how he depicted young people of the rising generation within the framework of the postwar culture, and how he wove postwar notions of freedom and equality into his work.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF JUNIOR FICTION

Genre labeling—such as putting *shōjo shosetsu* (girls' fiction) in front of the title of a story—has long been a convention of Japanese girls' magazine stories. The label *junia shōsetsu* was first used in *Jogakusei no tomo* (School Girls' Friend) magazine in 1955 (Iwasaki 1993, 413). The late 1960s saw a publication rush of junior fiction magazines: *Shōsetsu junia* (Novel Junior) was founded in 1966, *Bessatsu jogakusei no tomo* (School Girls' Friend, Supplementary Volume) was reborn as *Junia bungei* (Junior Literary Art) in 1967, *Shōsetsu jogakusei kōsu* (Fiction School Girls' Course) was created in 1967, and *Junia raifu* (Junior Life) and *Sebuntin* (Seventeen) were both founded in 1968. The word “junior” embodies modern, western, and democratic meanings. The new labeling suggests the magazine editors' determination to create stories suitable for readers of the postwar generation. Hayashi Chikara, the editor of *Junia bungei* magazine, explained:

Conventional girls' stories took place in a closed world, and in this world, same-sex love, instead of heterosexual love, was more valued. Junior fiction mirrors the cultural situation in which young people's views toward romantic love have changed as the result of the humanistic freedom obtained after the war. (qtd. in Ozaki 1969, 44)

The intended readers of these magazines were a newly emerged consumer segment, teenagers, born in the mid-1950s. The distinctive characteristic of these magazines is that they all upheld the theme of “heterosexual romance” and “sexual love.”

The growing popularity of *ren'ai kekkon* (romantic love marriage) was a contributing factor which made editors and writers think that they should deal with teenage love and sex in their magazines. In 1970, the

percentage of marriage based on romantic love (*ren'ai kekkon*) surpassed traditional arranged marriage (*omiaiai kekkon*) (Kōsei rōdō shō 2015, n.p.). Discussion of “love and sex” could no longer be avoided in girls’ magazine culture. Articles on sexual education and sexual counseling were incorporated into the magazines. Fiction writer Miura Shumon (1968), for instance, teaches readers in 1968:

As a woman, it is natural to be attracted to a man, be embarrassed, and be confused in front of him. When you are strongly attracted to someone, what do you have to do?... You need to know that all men have sexual drives ... Male sexual drives are similar to an appetite for food. For teenage boys, hunger for sex is intense ... You might feel that it is disgusting. But men also feel the same way.... If you find someone you love, keep his “animal” inside the cage, and if you have your own animal, please keep it inside as well. (177–82)

However, there were some girls who felt uncomfortable with the influx of sexual terms and descriptions. In 1971, a sixteen-year-old reader named Itō Saeko expressed her discomfort in a readers’ section called “Letter Box”:

Of course, I have sexual desire and am curious about sexual stories.... But pure romantic love stories emotionally influence us more and stay with us longer.... Today’s girls’ stories are too overwhelming. What is written in a story might be reality, but I still want romance in the stories I read. (494)

However, the editor’s response to her stated that today’s “‘juniors’ should not ignore the issues revolving around love and sex. We present stories in a way that is suitable for them to read” (Itō 1971, 494). Writers and editors always spoke from a superior position as they played the role of counselors and teachers. They reiterated that boys are sexually and biologically different from girls, and underscored that it is girls’ responsibility to understand boys and to accept the difference.

Tomishima’s stance toward teenage sexuality mainly aligned with the view presented above. The difference, however, is that he did not differentiate the sexuality of boys and girls. His literature sometimes employed double perspectives, through which he illuminated teenagers’ psyche and desires, revealing that sexual desire is an important part of cultivating a beautiful love relationship.

KON'YAKU JIDAI: JUN'AI IDEAL FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

Kon'yaku jidai (Engagement Period), serialized in *Shōsetsu junia* in 1974, is a romantic story about two high school students, Kazuki and Shizuko. They have been a couple since junior high school, but around the time when they entered high school, they started to feel awkward around each other. Kazuki realizes that he has come to have the two conflicting desires for *jun'ai* (platonic love) and *seiai* (sexual love) toward Shizuko, and feels confused. He sometimes finds his physical desire overwhelms him and feels guilty for looking at her sexually. There is a scene in which Kazuki confides to Shizuko that he wants more than kissing. When he is rejected, he is embarrassed and jokingly tells her that he will find someone else. With Shizuko's furious reaction, Kazuki wonders: "Shizuko and I are lovers. Isn't it natural for me to desire her? I have been holding myself back.... Shizuko is now angry at the fact that I am a man" (Tomishima [1974] 1997, 111).

Shizuko understands that it is natural for young people to have carnal desire, but she is still scared of it. The story explains: "She had been pushing the idea [that Kazuki physically desired her] far from herself. But tonight, Kazuki brought that agenda forward" (115). Shizuko reflects on what he said that night: "If I say okay, ... we can be together and I can get to know him [on a deeper level]" (117). She similarly desires him and is tormented by her sexual impulse.

Kazuki confides the incident to his father. His father acknowledges that it is a natural thing to desire the person he loves. However, he tells Kazuki that, if he loves Shizuko and is going to marry her in the future, he should treat her with respect. The father adds: "There are special women. When you graduate from high school, I will take you to a professional place. Don't you think that I am an understanding father?" (140). Kazuki is confused by his logic and sees the absurdity of the misogynistic cultural convention which treats women based upon class. Kazuki states:

From a moralistic standpoint, Shizuko should protect her virginity until marriage. But normally it does not work the same way for boys. It is uncommon for men to stay virgins until marriage.... That means that they all have had experiences with women.... Behind a chosen bride, there is at least one woman who sacrifices herself. This is wrong. This is a logic created for the convenience of elites. Behind the moral lesson that adults teach, discrimination exists. (141–142)

Tomishima argues that gender is like class and that people tend to label and categorize women based on their family, financial, and occupational backgrounds. In his 1966 *Seifuku no mune no koko niwa* (In the Heart of the Uniform), the same idea is presented through the story of a schoolgirl who is “sold” by her poor family to become the mistress of a rich man. The term *junketsu* (physical purity) was widely recognized at that time because of the purity education (*junketsu kyōiku*) which was actively promoted from 1947 to 1972 by the government to guide young people to eventual marriage (Saitō 2007, 221). But the story spotlights a marginal girl who cannot embrace *junketsu*. Tomishima emphasizes the facts that girls in the disadvantaged class are constantly in danger of becoming victims in male-centered society, and that their bodies could easily be commodified and traded by men. Tomishima’s work implicitly denounces society that ignores economic disparities among girls and the educators who avert their eyes from the existence of underprivileged girls.

Tomishima upholds the ideal of love and asserts the importance of having respect between men and women. He believes that *junketsu* is assigned not just to girls and that boys should also acknowledge its importance. The story ends with Kazuki and Shizuko’s decision to marry while they are still in high school. They promise their *junketsu*, purity, will remain until they marry. The *junketsu* that Tomishima asserts connotes spiritual faithfulness as well. Kazuki and Shizuko promise their parents that they will study hard for their college entrance exams and that the marriage will help them succeed. They want their parents and teachers to respect their decision and celebrate their unity based on love. Their decision to marry while still in school is presented as a challenge against social conventions and represents Tomishima’s message that marriage should be a manifestation of individual freedom.

OSANAZUMA: SEIAI AS RESISTANCE

Tomishima believed that *jun'ai* (pure love) and *seiai* (sexual love) should both be anchored in marriage and repeatedly pronounced that spiritual love and physical love should not be disconnected. However, as long as the stories took place in schools, a sacred sphere, it was hard for him to address the physical aspect of love. *Osanzuma* (Young Wife), serialized in *Junia bungei* in 1969, allowed Tomishima to explore physical love, because it deals with marriage.

Osanzuma is about eighteen-year-old Reiko. After the death of her mother, she becomes an orphan and starts living with her aunt’s family. However, her uncle harasses her sexually. One day, she is nearly raped by him. This experience convinces her that the sexual drive is animalistic and

vicious when it is detached from the notion of love. After the incident, she leaves their place and starts living alone in an apartment.

Although Reiko is still in high school, she takes a part time assistant's job at a nursery school, where she becomes acquainted with a man named Yoshikawa. He is the father of a girl named Mayumi, a student at the nursery school. Single father Yoshikawa works at a publishing company, and after work, he always comes to the school to pick up his daughter. Through Mayumi, Reiko and Yoshikawa start to become close. Yoshikawa is twelve years older than Reiko. The facts that he is much older and that Reiko is still in high school do not prevent their romantic relationship; they eventually get married. Although she is still a high school student, Reiko becomes a wife and stepmother.

Her teachers and the PTA at her school are not happy about her marriage and are concerned that she will negatively influence other students, stirring up their thoughts on sexual matters. Although the Japanese constitution stipulates the legal marriage age for women as sixteen, and about two percent of girls became brides while still teenagers in 1970 (e-Stat),³ the fact that Reiko is still in school labels her as a degenerate. Reiko is criticized, not only by conservative adults and peers, but by progressive people, too. Even a girl who is involved in a women's activist group criticizes Reiko on ostensibly feminist grounds, stating:

You have succumbed to the traditional and conservative form of heterosexual relationship. We are increasingly deprived of our freedom nowadays, but you are just trying to be a good wife. Women have not been liberated yet, but you are only thinking about your husband's meal. You are a girl who has not been liberated ... (Tomishima [1970] 1988, 218–219)

Reiko argues in her mind: "I am not a new woman like you.... I just want to find reachable happiness.... I love my husband. This is my truth" (220–221).

To Tomishima, freedom of choice is more important than social or political agendas. The point that he underscores is not the social and cultural role Reiko has assumed, but the brave action that she has taken. Through Reiko, Tomishima asserts that, although the roles Reiko has

³ For a long time, the legal marriageable age has been 18 for men and 16 for women with their parent's consent. The difference in marriageable ages between men and women has been a longstanding concern, for it violates the international human rights law of gender discrimination. Effective in 2022, the legal age will be 18 for both men and women.

chosen—housewife and mother—are traditional, it does not mean that her marriage is a result of compromise or a sign of weakness; Reiko’s marriage is the result of her individual choice. He writes: “Public opinions and social conventions are not important. The most important thing is choosing the best future path through each individual’s own judgment” (167).

Tomishima depicts conjugal interaction without hesitation in this work. Reiko’s honeymoon night with her husband is graphically portrayed. Yoshikawa teaches Reiko that a married couple should enhance love by sharing physical pleasure, stating:

I am now about to create you [Reiko] into a marvelous piece of art. Sex is a great artistic activity, and you present yourself as a pure and raw material in front of me.... It is my great pleasure to be able to complete you. As you married me while still mentally and physically pure, I will make you into a superior woman. (194)

Reiko starts to feel that she has “metamorphosized from a girl into a woman” (196) after the marriage. Tomishima’s philosophy of *seiai* is presented here. Depicting sexual intercourse, Tomishima breaks the typical conventions of *shōjo shōsetsu*. The inclusion of *seiai* into junior fiction can be interpreted as Tomishima’s challenge to taboo, as well as his assertion of his own freedom as a writer. Individuality and freedom, the pillars of Tomishima’s literature, are at the forefront.

However, as Tomishima focuses on conjugal relationships, his equivocal view toward gender roles starts to emerge. Succinctly stated, his view on marriage is male centered. Yoshikawa’s statement in the quotation above is a good example of Tomishima’s phallogentric logic. Another example is Reiko’s statement on her “metamorphosis from girl to woman”: in essence, through Reiko, Tomishima is saying here that “perfection as a woman” cannot be achieved without a husband’s lead and guidance. Tomishima’s ideal of heterosexual love is steadfastly tied to marriage based on phallogentric principle which teaches that a man should be the cultivator of the sensitivity and maturation of a woman. While Reiko is liberated sexually and enjoys sexual pleasure, still she is confined by Tomishima’s stereotyped views of women’s gender role as passive.

Yoshikawa comes to delegate domestic responsibilities to Reiko and starts returning home late from work. No longer a single father, he can devote himself to his career as an editor at a publishing company. The story depicts Reiko’s loneliness and unease stemming from her loss of companionship. When she confesses her concerns to her husband, he

teaches her that trust is the most significant component in a marriage and promises that he will always be truthful to her.

The final scene of *Osanazuma* portrays Reiko waiting in a park at sunset for the return of her stepdaughter Mayumi from a school excursion. Reiko recollects her own lonely childhood and remembers that she was always waiting for her mother to come to get her at nursery school. Compared to her childhood, she feels fortunate now to have a family. Reiko sees Mayumi running toward her. The story ends with the following sentence: "There are still people who criticize Reiko, but she tells herself that the most important thing is her own life" (Tomishima [1970] 1988, 277). Although Reiko's strong will and individualism are foregrounded there, she settles into a normative modern family model, which rigidly assigns the social realm to the husband and the domestic realm to the wife.

JUNIOR FICTION DEBATE

Tomishima's *Osanazuma* created a commotion because of the vivid depiction of teenage sex and marriage. Tomishima was invited to appear on TV shows and to have debates with educators and critics who believed that "young people of age seventeen are physically mature but mentally still children, and therefore do not have a sense of correct judgment" (Tomishima 1970c, 241). In his article published in the magazine *Ushio* (Tide) in April 1970, Tomishima (1970c) explains how mass media picked up the sexual depictions in junior fiction and treated them with extreme sensationalism. Tomishima's (1970a) frustration and anger are observed in this newspaper article, writing:

What is junior fiction?... It is wrong to think that a good literary work cannot be a good junior fiction work or vice versa.... We use the term junior fiction not because it is read by teenagers, but because it deals with the realistic issues that teenagers have. Junior fiction of high quality can be appreciated by readers in their twenties and forties.... I depict sexuality, because it is a concern that normal teenagers always face in their development. Avoiding this matter is not the right thing for a fiction writer. (242)

The debate continued in *Mainichi shinbun*.⁴ Literary critic Matsubara Shin'ichi (1970) wrote:

⁴ These newspaper articles are posted on *Fumi's blog*: <https://blog.goo.ne.jp/folkfumi/e/551a1dd205c47f5cbe396e23ae782ff0> (Retrieved on November

Tomishima Takeo writes stories to excite readers' curiosity... What is the point of sexual depictions that are overwhelmingly detailed?... This grotesque tendency has created a pornographic manga trend and crept into the world of children.... I hope that young people won't be sexually stimulated and become victims of junior fiction. (3)

Tomishima (1970b) responded to Matsubara thus:

A seventeen-year-old person's sexual desire and interest in sex should not be summarized by the simple word "curiosity." It is their parents' overprotectiveness that poisons seventeen-year-old boys and girls.... I just write about youth based on my own experiences. Audiences find truth in what I write, so my stories are supported by teenagers who are going through a sensitive phase of development. (5)

Tomishima regarded junior fiction as literature written *about* teenagers and his readers as mature adults. Critics and educators, on the contrary, insisted that junior fiction should be "healthy" stories written *for* teenagers. In 1970, about twenty percent of young people left school after eighth grade; as new so-called *shakaijin* (members of society) they were adults by convention, if not by age. However, this group of people was not the critics' concern (e-Stat). The teenagers they felt needed to be guided and protected were children around the age of seventeen who were attending high school.

Tomishima's critics felt that the story's depiction of sex was too stimulating, particularly for girls; they wanted to prevent girls from learning about female sexuality as if it were non-existent, despite the near adulthood of the girls they were trying to protect. Paradoxically, however, as soon as they were married, young women were encouraged by the culture to extoll sexual love for the achievement of an exultant marriage.

In the end, Tomishima's opponents—the forces critical of junior fiction—prevailed, and junior fiction magazines ceased publication one after another. *Shōsetsu jogakusei kōsu* and *Junia raifu* ended in 1970, and *Junia bungei* ended in 1971. Only *Shōsetsu junia* survived, but even it ceased publication in 1982. The termination of junior fiction magazines was partially due to the bashing they received from educators, PTAs, critics, etc. Tomishima (1982) posits his own theory for the deterioration

27, 2020).

of junior fiction, stating that the burgeoning popularity of manga in the 1970s was the major factor (20–21). Tomishima's biographer Arakawa Yoshihiro (2017) keenly surmises that, unlike *shōjo* (girls') manga, junior fiction could neither situate the stories in a fantasy realm nor detach them from the realm of school, which limited authors' ability to explore youthful desires (214).

CONCLUSION

Although the junior fiction boom ceased in the first half of the 1970s, we cannot ignore the fact that there were devoted young readers of junior fiction magazines. These girls appreciated the magazines' openness to sex and enjoyed exploring their sexuality without having a sense of guilt. Junior fiction introduced the topic of heterosexual love, in particular, "*seiai*" (physical love), to girl readers. Through junior fiction, teenage girls "discovered" boys, as well as their own bodies and sexuality.⁵ The legacy of junior fiction is witnessed in manga culture. The themes of love and sex became important in *shōjo* manga in the 1970s. Manga artists explored expressions of "*seiai*" (physical love) from young women's points of views and revised them to meet female readers' expectations.

Moreover, *Shōsetsu junia* served as a venue where young aspiring writers could test their talent; without it, the population of the current generation of fiction writers may have looked very different. Himuro Saeko and Masamoto Non, for instance, submitted stories to *Shōsetsu junia*'s readers' composition contest. These young writers and others like them debuted in this magazine and came to shift its direction. They contested the old-fashioned portrayal of boys and girls, and instead presented free, lively and cheerful boys and girls who were not bonded by conventional cultural and gender norms. *Shōsetsu junia* eventually changed its name to *Cobalt* in 1982. *Cobalt* employed many young female writers and tried to serve as a magazine where young women who live in "the Age of Women" could be inspired and empowered.

WORKS CITED

Arakawa Yoshihiro. 2017. "*Junia*" to "*kannō*" no *kyoshō*: Tomishima Takeo den. Tokyo: Kawade shobō shinsha.

⁵ Manga *Baku-chan no Vita Sexualis* (Baku's Vita Sexualis), written by male mangaka Tachihara Ayumi, is noteworthy. This manga was serialized in *Shōsetsu junia* in 1978-1980. The story follows the sexual awakening and encounters of a high school student, Baku. The story delicately depicts his emotional vulnerability and sensitivity, showing how similar boys and girls are. Until he finds his true love, his sexual pilgrimage continues. This manga was well received by readers.

- e-Stat. “Gakkō kihon chōsa nenji tōkei.” <https://www.e-stat.go.jp/dbview?sid=0003147040>. Retrieved on November 27, 2020.
- Fumi. 2011. “Junia bungaku ronsō o yomu.” *Tomishima Takeo sakuhin dokusho nōto: Fumi no jikken kiroku*. July 19, 2011. <https://blog.goo.ne.jp/folkfumi/e/551a1dd205c47f5cbe396e23ae782ff0>. Retrieved on November 27, 2020.
- Inoue Yoshio. Director. 1963. *Kōkō sannensei*. Daiei.
- Itō Saeko. 1971. *Shōsetsu junia* 6.1: 494.
- Iwasaki Mariko. 1993. “Junia shōsetsu.” *Nihon jidō bungaku daijiten* vol. 2, edited by Osaka Kokusai Jidō Bungakukan. Tokyo: Dainihon Tosho. 413–414.
- Kan Satoko. 2008. “Watashitachi no ibasho: Himuro Saeko-ron.” *Shōjo shōsetsu wandārando*, edited by Kan Satoko, 75–85. Tokyo: Meiji Shoin.
- Kōsei rōdō shō. 2015. *Heisei 27 nenban kōsei rōdō hakusho: jinkō genshō shakai o kangaeru*. <https://www.mhlw.go.jp/wp/hakusyo/kousei/15/backdata/01-01-03-009.html>. Retrieved on November 27, 2020.
- Matsubara Shin’ichi. “Junia shōsetsu e no gimon.” *Mainichi Shinbun*, March 9, 1970: 3.
- Miura Shumon. 1968. “Junia no tame no jinseiron nōto.” *Shōsetsu junia* 3, no. 13: 176–182.
- Ōhashi Takayuki. 2014. *Raito noberu kara mita shōjo/shōnen shōsetsushi*. Tokyo: Kasama Shoin.
- Ozaki Hotsuki. 1969. “Junia shōsetsu no kiso: Junia shōsetsu to shōjo shōsetsu no sōi.” *Gakkō toshokan* 221: 43–47.
- Saitō Hikaru. 2007. “‘Danjo no kōsai to reigi’ no kiso kenkyū.” *Kyoto seika daigaku kiyō* 33: 219–238.
- Sherif, Ann. 2008. *Japan’s Cold War: Media, Literature, and the Law*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Tachihara Ayumi. 1980. *Baku-chan no Vita Sexualis*. 8 volumes. Tokyo: Shūeisha.
- Tomishima Takeo. (1966) 1977. *Seifuku no mune no koko niwa*. Tokyo: Shūeisha.
- . (1970) 1988. *Osanazuma*. Tokyo: Shūeisha.
- . (1974) 1997. *Kon’yaku jidai*. Tokyo: Shūeisha.
- . 1963. *Asu e no akushu*. Tokyo: Gakushū Kenkyūsha.
- . 1970a. “Junia shōsetsu wa bungaku ka.” *Mainichi Shinbun*, February 7, 1970: 5.
- . 1970b. “Junia shōsetsu wa bungaku ka: sairon.” *Mainichi Shinbun*, March 23, 1970: 5.
- . 1970c. “‘Junia shōsetsu’ seishosetsu o warau.” *Ushio* 124: 240–245.

Tomishima Takeo. 1982. "Seishun no saigetsu." *Shōsetsu junia* 17, no. 6:
17–23.