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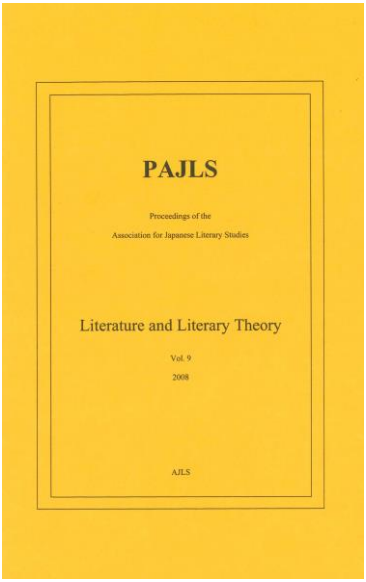

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Manchukuo and the Creation of a New National Literature: Kawabata Yasunari and 'Manchurian' Culture, 1941-1942

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Introduction

From 1941-1942, at the height of the war with China and the Japanese military's invasion of southeast Asia, the prominent Japanese author and critic Kawabata Yasunari (1898-1968) was invited to the nominally independent "nation" of Manchukuo[1] three times by the Kantō Army and the *Manshū nichinichi shinbun* (Manchurian Daily Times) in accordance with propaganda prerogatives of the state-run *Manshūkoku kōhōdōsho* (Manchukuo Publicity and News Bureau). This organization first enlisted the writer to participate in a star-studded *zadankai* (round-table discussion) of Japanese intellectuals debating the topic of culture in Manchukuo, the proceedings of which appeared in the above newspaper. Kawabata soon obligingly published a serialized novel for the same paper and edited at least two collections of literary works by the five "official" ethnicities in the new state. These collections appeared in Japanese, the language of the imperial center. In his introduction to one of the volumes, Kawabata warned of the Chinese "threat" while extolling the past accomplishments of the Han Chinese ethnicity, whose now-moribund nation could only revive through Japanese guidance and cultural superiority. The *zadankai* and these editions compiled by Kawabata asserted that Manchukuo was a template for the future establishment of Pan-Asian ideals elsewhere, and particularly in conquered areas in China and southeast Asia.

The fact that a prominent cultural figure of Kawabata's stature from the imperial capital became a mouthpiece of the new "Manchurian literature" and Japanese cultural superiority is historically significant. It further reveals that Manchukuo was not "independent" from the *naichi* (domestic Japan), despite official rhetoric, and that this interdependence between the two "nations" functioned in a hierarchical, paternalistic fashion. Cultural production in the form of literature here served as a means of cultural integration with domestic Japan, now viewed as crucial to the success of the Japanese imperial state in wartime. Despite Kawabata's utopian intentions, his writings illustrate that the creation of an *independent* literary culture in Manchukuo was soon subsumed under the exigencies of war. This article is part of a larger study investigating the wartime activities of prominent Japanese avant-garde writers and artists, and seeks to address the little-known role of this future Nobel Prize winner in literature in promoting culture and literature in Manchukuo in the early forties.[2]

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[1] In this article, I will use the name "Manchukuo" for this nominally independent nation, since this is what it is most commonly known as in English-language scholarship. In Japanese, the term is *Manshūkoku*, and in Chinese, it is *Manzhouguo*, usually prefaced by *wei* [false]. For more about the nomenclature of Manchukuo, see Prasenjit Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2003); Gavan McCormack, "Manchukuo: Constructing the Past," in *East Asian History*, no. 2 (1991), 105-124; and Yamamuro Shin'ichi, *Kimera: Manshūkoku no shōzō* (Tokyo: Chūō kōronsha, 1993).

[2] I thank the librarians at the *Nihon kindai bungakukan* (Museum of Modern Japanese Literature) in Tokyo for locating and copying rare sources for me in 2004-2005. This article evolved out of the fortuitous discovery of two editions of literature edited by Kawabata in 1942 and 1944. I also wish to express my gratitude to Iino

Culture in the Modernist Utopia of Manchukuo Under "East Asian" Principles

The nominally "independent" state of Manchukuo was founded under Japanese directives in 1932, and followed by Japan's withdrawal from the League of Nations and progressive military involvement in China south of the Great Wall. Manchukuo symbolized the political initiatives of the imperial Japanese government and that of certain intellectuals concerned about "finding in Manchuria a frontier where they could realize a vision that many considered impossible to achieve in the established society of Japan."[3] Against this epistemological backdrop, Manchuria became the utopian canvas upon which the realization of a Japanese-led East-Asian modernity under traditional Confucian principles was depicted by visiting intellectuals from the *naichi*. However, the new state ultimately became inextricably subsumed into the imperial project of the Japanese nation; as Prasenjit Duara asserts, "As a national *idea*, Manchukuo was predictably weak, because the commitment of its makers to independence from Japan was weak and variable."[4] Clearly, Manchukuo could never have survived for almost fifteen years without the sustained aid of the onsite South Manchurian Railways corporation (also known in Japanese as "Mantetsu")[5] or the leadership of local Chinese elites. However, its main political infrastructure was based on a Japanese model under Japanese guidance issuing from the imperial capital, Tokyo.

The Japanese government had long viewed Manchuria as a critical part of the Japanese empire not only for economic reasons but also because it symbolized the strength of Japan's civilizing mission and cultural dominance in a framework of modernization, and later, a paternalistic Pan-Asianism. The area became culturally important to the extension of Japanese civilization immediately after the Mantetsu conglomerate began to develop the southeastern part of the region after the 1905 Japanese victory in the Russo-Japanese War. As a matter of company policy, the corporation soon began inviting notable *bunkajin* (cultural figures) from Japan like Natsume Sōseki (1867-1916) to tour the region and portray its development favorably in their works. Louise Young notes that in the following decades, the tour of Manchuria and Manchukuo even served as a form of "cultural legitimation of those who aspired to the high

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Masahito, Curator at the Yamanashi Prefectural Museum of Art, for sending me invaluable materials, including the privately published *'Manshū bijutsu' nenpyō* (Chronology of "Manchurian Art") and a chronology of the wartime activities of artists entitled *Sensō ni itta gakkatachi* (Artists at War). For an expansion of the topics discussed in this article, see Annika A. Culver, Chapter Five, "The Japanese Avant-Garde in Service of the State, 1932-1943," in "'Between Distant Realities': The Japanese Avant-Garde, Surrealism, and the Colonies, 1924-1943" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2007), 333-429. I also thank Charles Cabell of Toyo University for sharing with me key chapters of his dissertation, including part three, "The Empire Dressed in Nationalist Drag: Kawabata's Essays on Manshūkoku," in Charles Cabell, "Maiden Dreams: Kawabata Yasunari's Beautiful Japanese Empire, 1930-1945." (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1999).

[3] Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, 62.

[4] Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, 2.

[5] Nishizawa Yasuhiko believes that without the political power and financial backing of the South Manchurian Railways Corporation, the Kantō Army's engineering of the "Manchurian Incident" would never have occurred, and the subsequent founding of Manchukuo could never have been achieved. The Kantō Army originally developed out of a small police force maintained to patrol SMR-administered portions of track garnered by Japan in the wake of the Russo-Japanese War. Nishizawa Yasuhiko, *Mantetsu: "Manshū" no kyojin* (Tokyo: Kawade shobō, 2000), 70.

arts."[6] Manchuria's initial economic, military, and cultural ties to Japan through the South Manchurian Railways corporation, Kantō Army connections to the Japanese military, and peripatetic colonial settlers ensured that the region remained firmly entrenched in the Japanese imperial sphere. For nearly three decades, the narratives of visiting Japanese intellectuals helped to support the spread of Japanese economic development in Manchuria and the cultural rhetoric behind it.

After 1932, Japanese policy makers in Manchukuo actively promoted the creation of a new national culture, art, and literature in addition to a body of work describing the physical and symbolic construction of the new multi-ethnic nation. Military mastermind Ishiwara Kanji (1889-1949) and others emphasized Manchukuo's cultural uniqueness and independence despite its establishment under Japanese guidance and directives from the imperial government. According to Duara, the discourse of culture could provide a unifying role in the ideological formation of the state: "Culture, as produced in the new nationalism, represented an important and novel form of knowledge to address problems generated by the divergence of imperialism and nationalism."[7] Culture, in the symbolic space of *Manshū* (Manchuria), now functioned as a means to differentiate *Manshūkoku* (Manchukuo) from Japan. Rather than serving as a gauge to measure the region's level of *bunmei* (civilization) against the backdrop of the paternal imperial state as it had in previous decades, culture in the new nation of Manchukuo now became an important propaganda tool emphasizing its uniqueness and the political harmony of divergent cultures or ethnicities. However, as evidenced in the works of authors including Kawabata, this uncoupling from Japan and its imperium through culture was only partially achieved by the discursive separation of a conceptual *Manshū* from the state entity of Manchukuo.

As emphasized by Kawamura Minato and Komagome Takeshi, culture in Manchukuo was in reality characterized by a primary focus on imperial Japan as the center, with the Japanese language as the official, dominant means of communication at the top of a hierarchy where the Chinese and Korean languages were relegated to a semi-colonial status, despite the Manchukuo government's official promotion of *gozoku kyōwa* (harmony of the five races/ethnicities).[8] This is evident in the fact that most sources by state propaganda organizations are printed in Japanese, with English a close second, and occasionally in Mandarin. In these materials, the hybrid culture of a country described as the "Paradise of the Kingly Way," or *Ōdō-rakuchi*, and represented by the propaganda slogan *gozoku-kyōwa*, was intended to reflect a modern, Westernized, multi-ethnic nation rationally ordered by traditional (East Asian) Confucian principles. However, it is clear in many of these materials (including those written by Kawabata) that the audience is Japanese, or at least Japanese-speaking. Duara notes that state-sponsored organizations such as the *Kyōwakai* (Concordia Association) formed "to realize a visionary modern polity" and carry

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[6] Louise Young, *Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Expansion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 267.

[7] Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, 17.

[8] See Kawamura Minato, *Bungaku kara miru "Manshū" "gozoku kyōwa" no yume to genjitsu* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1998) and *Umi o watatta Nihongo: shokuminchi no "Kokugo" no jikan* (Tokyo: Seichi-sha, 1994); and Komagome Takeshi, *Shokuminchi teikoku Nihon no bunka tōgō* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1996). I prefer to use the term "ethnicity" rather than "race" for *zoku*, because other than a small White Russian and European population, most inhabitants of Manchukuo were Asian, with the largest numbers belonging to the Han Chinese. White Russians and other Caucasians were rarely included in Japanese accounts as part of the officially designated "five ethnicities." For more on "ethnicity" and "race" in Manchuria and Manchukuo, see Mariko Asano Tamanoi, "Knowledge, Power, and Racial Classifications: The 'Japanese' in 'Manchuria,'" *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 59, no. 2 (May 2000), 248-276.

out the political and cultural ideals of the new state, blending Western modernity with familiar Eastern values.[9] This new culture of Manchukuo, while intrinsically doomed to fail due to its own internal contradictions, initially provided Japanese intellectuals with what Young calls a "blank canvas" on which they could "paint their vision of a utopian society."[10]

The above ideals were supported by the *Manshūkoku kōhōdōsho*, the propaganda arm of the organization. The vision of a multi-cultural utopia disseminated by the *Kyowakai* and other official propaganda organs was artificially created through a Japanese lens, with Japanese as the dominant form of cultural and linguistic representation. As a result, Japanese nationals in Manchukuo and *naichi* visitors received the majority of funding from a state obsessed with representing itself. Here, the nation truly becomes "narration."[11] In truth, Manchukuo was largely a part of the Japanese cultural and linguistic sphere despite its nominal independence. Its regime attempted to fashion the culture of the new state into one that reflected how the five official ethnicities harmoniously accepted *Japanese* culture while only superficially recognizing cultural difference.

The Wartime Consolidation of Cultural Activities in Manchukuo

After the 1937 eruption of the second Sino-Japanese War, the consolidation of state control and the official sponsorship of cultural activities in Manchukuo soon paralleled that in the *naichi*. Official aims to promote a new culture in Manchukuo as an independent entity in the early to mid-thirties were soon subsumed under those of the Japanese state with the advent of the total war system, or *sōryokusen taisei*, in 1938.[12] After this date, culture, literature, and the arts in Manchukuo were aggressively manipulated to showcase the ideals of a benevolent Japanese empire and the interdependent relationship of Manchuria to the *naichi* in correspondence with Pan-Asianist beliefs. Cultural activities were linked to those in domestic Japan by various state organizations in the new wartime climate. Though Manchukuo was never officially a colony of Japan, this evinces a facet of the process of transculturation where the periphery determines the center in its "obsessive need to present and re-present its peripheries and others continually to itself," a concept described by Mary Louise Pratt.[13] The presence of transculturation in Manchukuo and the *naichi* became even more notable during wartime, as Japan waged a war against China also on the cultural front.

During the intensification of the China conflict, inviting *naichi* intellectuals, journalists, and government officials to Manchukuo became a crucial part of state policy to augment the ideological mission of Japanese nation-building across Asia by solidifying support for the Japanese empire through cultural endeavors. The reinforcement of Japanese culture in the border region of Manchuria was now of utmost strategic importance due to its geographical location between the communist Soviet Union to the north and Republican China as an enemy of Japan south of the Great Wall. Individuals from domestic Japan, including Kawabata Yasunari and Haruyama Yukio, were sponsored by organs of the Manchukuo government. They brought the

[9] Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, 75.
[10] Young, *Japan's Total Empire*, 248.
[11] See Homi Bhabha, *Nation and Narration* (London: Routledge, 1990).
[12] For a detailed account of the economic and social ramifications of this system, see Kobayashi Hideo, *Teikoku Nihon to sōryokusen taisei* (Tokyo: Yūshisha, 2004).
[13] Mary Louise Pratt, "Introduction," in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), 6.

culture of the *naichi* to the Manchurian region while serving as authoritative sources of information about the new state during wartime. They were also enlisted to explain the political and strategic importance of Manchukuo to domestic Japan in cultural terms. Behind this rhetoric lies an assumption that culture, and specifically Japanese culture, needed to be strengthened and expanded throughout the region to support the new wartime initiatives of imperial Japan.

The close relationship between Japan and Manchukuo was highlighted by the wartime reorganization of cultural organizations and activities. Many of the same wartime transformations of institutions in Japan were later instituted in Manchukuo. Officially recognized artists' associations, exhibition venues, and writers' groups were forcibly consolidated by the Japanese state in domestic Japan around 1940.[14] Not surprisingly, this process of consolidation began a year later in Manchukuo in connection with mass mobilization in the *naichi* and its colonies. The intensification of the war in 1941 prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor marks a key date for the beginning of the consolidation of cultural activities in Manchukuo while the nation was prepared as a military base from which to attack Southeast Asia while conducting long-term operations in China proper. This state-sponsored consolidation marks a fundamental change in Manchukuo's formerly liberal cultural policies advocated by Ishiwara Kanji since the early thirties.

The Manchukuo Publicity and News Bureau and the 1941 "Prospectus for the Guidance of the Arts and Culture"

A key example of this trend of cultural consolidation in both Japan and Manchukuo during wartime is when, on March 23, 1941, the Manchukuo Publicity and News Bureau issued the *Geibun shidō yokō* (Prospectus for the Guidance of the Arts and Culture) at the national *Geibundaikai* (Arts Congress) in the capital city of Shinkyō (contemporary Changchun).[15] The six officially recognized "arts" of literature, art, music, dance, theater, and film were now subsumed under this propaganda organization. This order put the arts under direct control of this centralized bureau and divided up cultural activities and art education into research organizations in five different categories.[16]

In connection with this prospectus issued in March, a six-part series of a round-table discussion called *Zadankai: Mutō Tomio kōhōdōshochō ni kiku* (Round-Table Discussion: Inquiring of Publicity Department Chief Mutō), headed by Mutō Tomio (1904-1998) appeared in the widely-read *Manchurian Daily Times* Japanese-language newspaper from July 4-9, 1941.[17] As the chief of publicity for the Manchukuo general affairs department, Mutō served as both the moderator and facilitator. This round-table discussion boasted an impressive group of Japanese cultural critics, thinkers, and writers, many of whom had Marxist[18] inclinations: Kyoto School

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[14] See Culver, Chapter One, "Transnationalism, Surrealism, and the Avant-Garde in the Japanese Empire, 1924-1941," in Culver, "'Between Distant Realities,'" 45-147.

[15] Iino Masahito, *'Manshū bijutsu' nenpyō* (Kōfu: Yamanashi Prefectural Museum of Art, 1998), 4. For a contemporary description by a Japanese writer describing the consolidation process under the prospectus and its effects on culture in Manchukuo, see Haruyama Yukio, *Manshū no bunka* (Hōten [Fengtian, Manchukuo]: Osakaya go shoten, 1943), 356.

[16] Iino, *'Manshū bijutsu' nenpyō*, 70.

[17] Iino, *'Manshū bijutsu' nenpyō*, 72. This round-table discussion was actually held in Tokyo on June 10, 1941.

[18] Both Miki Kiyoshi and Ozaki Hotsumi would be brought into police custody for their Marxist convictions or alleged communist connections not long after participating in this round-table discussion. After his arrest in the early forties, Miki later died in prison in September 1945. During the infamous 1941 *Mantetsu jiken* (SMR

philosopher Miki Kiyoshi (1897-1945), the cultural philosopher Tanigawa Tetsuzō (1895-1989), former *Asahi shinbun* reporter and Mantetsu research department employee Ozaki Hotsumi (1901-1944), and the popular novelist Kawabata. The writer was invited specifically by this newspaper (also under the auspices of the Manchukuo Publicity and New Bureau) as an authoritative cultural figure from domestic Japan to take part in this highly publicized debate on culture.

By inviting Japanese cultural figures important to the arts and literature to Manchukuo, publicity chief Mutō hoped to strengthen the new state's cultural ties to the *naichi*. His initiatives as head of the state's propaganda organization reflect Pratt's concept of transculturation where the periphery is informed by the metropole and the metropole obsessively represents itself to the periphery in various media.[19] Gennifer Weisenfeld notes that, in the case of imperial Japan, "identities of the metropole/empire and the periphery/colony were mutually constitutive . . . the colonies by their very existence reformed Japan as much as Japan shaped colonial space."[20] The same process appears in state-supported cultural initiatives in Manchukuo in the early forties.

Notably, this is seen in descriptions of writers from domestic Japan, like Kawabata and the avant-garde critic and poet Haruyama Yukio (1902-1994), who wrote about the consolidation of the arts through the *Geibun shidō yokō* and how it inspired his own thoughts on Japanese culture and the new nation of Manchukuo. This writer also visited the new state on two occasions, once in 1940 and then again in 1942, prompting two books published in Japan or Manchukuo on the natural features of Manchuria and the culture of the region.[21] Haruyama, as former editor of the influential 1930s avant-garde poetry magazine *Shi to shiron* (Poetry and Poetics), describes in philosophical terms the fundamental changes in Manchukuo's cultural policies connected to the prospectus after the spring of 1941 in his 1943 account *Manshū no bunka* (Manchurian Culture).[22] In the essays in this book, Haruyama assumes the role of the cultural critic in explaining why Japan should take control of China's culture in ways resembling Mutō's scientific consolidation in Manchukuo proposed by the Prospectus of March 1941.

Haruyama apparently views the region of *Manshū* (Manchuria, discursively separated from the state of Manchukuo) as a part of China in at least *cultural* terms. According to his book, the cultural sphere of Chinese civilization once included the Manchurian region, but it is now part of Manchukuo, a modern state fashioned under Japanese guidance.[23] Haruyama echoes Kawabata's ideas (discussed in the following section) and argues that China's culture has become stagnant, and thus, this necessitated the infusion of Japanese culture, because it was more adaptable to modern conditions.[24] His voice resembles that of many avant-garde writers who underwent *tenkō* (political conversion) in the early thirties and renounced their left-wing political beliefs in support of the Japanese government's paternalistic Pan-Asianist ideology in regards to China. According to Haruyama, one of China's faults was that it was a country that

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Incident), Ozaki was implicated in the Zorge Affair, in which he was accused of spying for the Soviet Union due to his connections with Victor Zorge and Agnes Smedley. He was executed after trial.

[19] Pratt, "Introduction," 6.

[20] Gennifer Weisenfeld, ed., "Guest Editor's Introduction," in Special Issue "Visual Cultures of Japanese Imperialism," *positions: east asia critique*, vol. 8, no. 3 (Winter 2000), 592.

[21] Haruyama's impressions from his first visit to Manchukuo appeared in his first book; see Haruyama Yukio, *Manshū fūbutsushi* (Tokyo: Seikatsusha, 1941).

[22] See Haruyama, *Manshū no bunka*, 334-336.

[23] Haruyama, *Manshū no bunka*, 329-330.

[24] Haruyama, *Manshū no bunka*, 331.

possessed *bunmei* (civilization—a fixed entity with inherent, essential qualities), but not *bunka* (culture—a property with the ability to change and adopt scientific innovation), and therefore, Japan should export its technological expertise to Manchuria to supplement a traditional Chinese civilization now moribund due to national degeneration and foreign domination.[25] His words reflect the cultural preoccupations of the state and the key role of Japanese intellectuals in disseminating these ideas. Not surprisingly, Haruyama's ideas had previously been voiced by Kawabata in 1942.

Kawabata's Role in Promoting "Manchurian" Culture under Japanese Auspices

Japan's leading role in the process of wartime cultural consolidation in Manchukuo was evident in how the new nation's literature itself was being represented to readers in the *naichi* by prominent Japanese cultural figures enlisted by the Manchukuo government. Young notes that so many Japanese writers traveled to Manchukuo, which had the effect of further boosting their credentials upon their return, that "this parade of literary luminaries made the Manchurian tour a badge of distinction."[26] In addition, according to Kawamura Minato, going on the Manchurian tour after the founding of Manchukuo in 1932 often served as a public display of the renunciation of left-wing beliefs by Japanese writers who had undergone *tenkō*.[27] After 1932, various state propaganda organizations connected to the Manchukuo Publicity and News Bureau and the Kantō Army began to organize visits by Japanese cultural figures, while the SMR had previously been the main sponsoring organization for these literary tours. The production of literature in Manchukuo or with the new nation as its topic soon became a collaborative effort between *naichi* and colonial Japanese writers, a process that intensified in wartime.

In the early forties, various presses in Tokyo and Manchukuo published bound editions of literary works to show how writers of diverse ethnicities engaged in cultural production in support of the new state. Representing the cultural interdependence between the center and the periphery, these editions were often edited back in domestic Japan by famous *bundan* (literary establishment) authors like Kawabata. As noted before, he visited Manchukuo in the spring of 1941 to learn about the aforementioned round-table discussion sponsored by the *Manchurian Daily Times*, and returned in autumn 1941 with Hino Ashihei (1907-1960) and others invited by the Kantō Army.[28] In the above newspaper from 1943-1944, Kawabata also wrote an unfinished serialized novel entitled *Tōkaidō* (The Way East) about a high school teacher named Ueda who lectures his daughter on the essence of Japanese culture and the importance of travel in the literary pursuits of writers in the Heian (792-1185) and other periods.[29] Here, the prominent Japanese author appears to be communicating the belief that "Japaneseness is a special, nontransferable racial virtue," an assumption that Gavan McCormack notes is common to many of the endeavors surrounding the Japanese-generated culture of Manchukuo.[30] The products of

[25] Haruyama, *Manshū no bunka*, 330-331.
[26] Young, *Japan's Total Empire*, 267.
[27] Kawamura Minato, "One View of the History of Japanese Proletarian Literature: On Nogawa Takashi," David Rosenfeld trans., essay delivered at the Proletarian Literatures of East Asia Symposium, University of Chicago, 2002, 1-4.
[28] Donald Keene, *Dawn to the West: Japanese Literature of the Modern Era (Fiction)* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 820.
[29] Keene, *Dawn to the West*, 821.
[30] McCormack, "Manchukuo: Constructing the Past," 109.

Kawabata's two visits to Manchukuo were published not long after his return and served the cultural propaganda purposes of his two hosting institutions.

In 1942, to enact his ideals fostering the new culture and literature of Manchukuo, Kawabata edited at least two Japanese-language collections of short stories or poetry by Japanese and other Manchurian natives, including *Manshūkoku kaku minzoku sōsaku senshū 1* (Anthology of Compositions by Each Ethnic Group in Manchukuo 1) and *Manshūkoku kaku minzoku sōsaku senshū 2* (Anthology of Compositions by Each Ethnic Group in Manchukuo 2).[31] Notably, in these collections, Japanese authors dominate, with a handful of Han Chinese and Russians contributing, while works by Koreans are conspicuously absent. These editions were part of Kawabata's initiative to portray the pioneering efforts of Manchukuo's new literary culture to domestic Japan and the colonies.

In his introduction to the edition *Manshūkoku kaku minzoku sōsaku senshū 1*, Kawabata points out his role as a traveler receiving a glimpse of the new creation of literature in Manchukuo, and cautiously states:

> In my role as tourist, I momentarily had two viewpoints concerning Manchukuo's literature. One of these was the issue of the high-speed ideals of Manchurian literature. Literature as new as the country, in the way writers of this country say, perhaps fashions a myth of constructing the country or perhaps guides a history of its creation. Plus, five ethnicities are launching this type of literature together. On this virgin earth, both the significance of literature and its mission have appeared extremely clear. Another one of these is the issue of the everyday reality of Manchurian literature. The exhortations of the nation and [its] general desires are still dawning, organizations to publish literature still have not been set up, and the market is constricted.[32]

While supporting ethnic cohesion in literary endeavors in this "virgin" territory now under Japanese guidance, Kawabata advocates the creation of a publishing infrastructure to develop a market for new literary production while the nation converts its ideals into reality. He is particularly concerned about the role of literature in creating a national narrative. In fact, the Japanese author strongly believes that literature is directly tied to the successful communication of national ideals in Manchukuo.

Though most compositions in both the nature of the topic and the author featured reflect the wartime climate, a few works achieved Kawabata's utopian dream of cultural and literary innovation in the new nation. For example, the author's same edition includes the short story "Tonsu ni iku hitobito" (The People Going to Dunzi)[33] by the avant-garde former proletarian writer Nogawa Takashi (1904-1944), whose work was even nominated for the Akutagawa prize.[34] Finding his own rural utopia in Manchukuo, the writer portrays Chinese peasants in a sympathetic light while viewing their communal society as consistent with his former Marxist ideals. Nogawa's short story suitably fits Kawabata's qualifications for describing the

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[31] Kawabata Yasunari, *Manshūkoku kaku minzoku kaku minzoku sōsaku senshū* 1 (Tokyo: Sōgansha, 1942); and Kawabata Yasunari, *Manshūkoku kaku minzoku kaku minzoku sōsaku senshū* 2 (Tokyo: Sōgansha, 1944).
[32] Kawabata, *Manshūkoku kaku minzoku sōsaku senshū* 1, 6.
[33] Kawabata, *Manshūkoku kaku minzoku sōsaku senshū* 1, 250-277.
[34] Nogawa's novel *Gobō* (Burdock Root) was nominated for the Akutagawa prize. Kawamura, "One View of the History of Japanese Proletarian Literature," 4.

development of the new state in agricultural areas while Japanese are shown working harmoniously with other ethnic groups like the dominant Han Chinese. However, contrary to Kawabata's hopes, most of the texts and poetry in these two volumes were largely influenced by the Japanese war effort and the corresponding need to focus on patriotic topics. Thus, they have little to do with the positive portrayal of *Manshū* or the creation of a national narrative for Manchukuo. Presumably, the authors of these works either lived in Manchuria/Manchukuo or spent a significant amount of time there developing their literary careers before their return to Japan. The bulk of the literary compositions were written by Japanese, with only a few exceptions. In the same volume, Liu Hanji (dates unknown), whose name could be either Chinese or Taiwanese according to the *kanji* (Chinese characters), authored the prose poem "Nihon kōra no uta" (Japanese Armor [Shell] Song) about the Japanese Army storming the jungle beaches of Borneo to "liberate" its indigenous inhabitants from the Dutch.[35] The shell/armor motif becomes an emotionally-laden symbol of Japanese invincibility and nostalgia for the home islands. It appears that Liu also sent in his work from the battlefield on the southern front. Despite Kawabata's best intentions, it is clear from these prose and poetry writings he edited that his utopian desire to set up an *independent* literary culture in Manchukuo is subsumed under imperial Japan's war effort.

In his introduction to *Manshūkoku kaku minzoku sōsaku senshū 1,* Kawabata stresses the Japanese Army's progressive wartime "advance" into the less developed regions of Southeast Asia, while asserting that Manchukuo now serves as a template for the building of culture in other nations in the Japanese-controlled Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere.[36] He views this as a joint effort between the Japanese and Han Chinese ethnic groups in the context of Manchuria, and believes that literature in particular has a role to play in the creation of Manchukuo's new culture and the ideals of the state. The Japanese author states:

> Japan has now even progressed southward in its war, yet there is no other country but Manchukuo constructing [its] nation with other ethnicities and launching [its] culture. Pan-Asian ideals were first put into practice in Manchuria, though if they are not attained here, then it should not just be assumed that they cannot be attained anywhere, but [we must] continuously implement them together with the Han race, as this is Manchuria's [most] important *raison d'être.* It goes without saying that this is because there is no other superior race quite like the Han Chinese ethnic group. In looking at the cultural domain, it is obvious that this is so.[37]

Kawabata proposes that Manchukuo's cultural development should provide a shining example for other countries in Asia to establish Pan-Asian ideals in the other nations "liberated" by Japan. Incidentally, in early 1942, Singapore is conquered by Japanese troops, and Japanese intellectuals are sent there by the *naichi* government to support the propaganda efforts of the renamed Japanese-led state of *Shōnan* ("Enlightened South"). However, in contrast to the efforts to entrench Japanese culture amongst peoples of Malay descent in newly conquered territories in

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[35] Kawabata, *Manshūkoku kaku minzoku sōsaku senshū* 1, 88-93.
[36] Kawabata, *Manshūkoku kaku minzoku sōsaku senshū* 1, 5.
[37] Kawabata, *Manshūkoku kaku minzoku sōsaku senshū* 1, 5.

southeast Asia,[38] Kawabata asserts that the Han Chinese are the only culturally superior ethnic group in Asia (like the more modern and adaptable Japanese who initially adopted their culture). Therefore, he believes that they are worthy of the establishment of Manchukuo as an *independent* new nation under an initial Japanese tutelage.[39]

As noted by Richard H. Mitchell, Japanese Sinologists (and, arguably, others who boasted some expertise on China) often viewed China as symbolic of "their cultural roots, a foil for the problems of modernity, and the referent for their concepts of Asia."[40] This idea of China as an "other" and convenient point of comparison to a more dynamic Japan resembles Kawabata's complex attitude and anxieties expressed towards China as seen in his introduction. Interestingly, here he warns of the current Chinese threat while still professing great admiration for China's traditional and therefore unchanging culture. This general idea is echoed later in the writing of the author's contemporary, Haruyama Yukio, who focused on the issue of culture in Manchukuo and Japan's leading role in supporting it.

On the way back to Japan after his summer 1941 visit to Manchukuo after the Tokyo round-table discussion on culture published in the *Manchurian Daily Times*, Kawabata stopped in Beijing where he met with other Chinese writers. The famed Japanese author may have generated warm memories of his visit in the Japanese-occupied former imperial capital of the Qing dynasty, but his hosts appear to have expressed a more cautionary view of Japan's politics now that historical conditions prompted hostilities between the two nations. Kawabata advocates literary creation as a positive, cooperative effort between Japanese and Han Chinese writers in Manchukuo, but adds a most disconcerting caveat in the light of the current wartime political conditions between the two nations:

"As I had traveled to Beijing myself, I knew that there were Han Chinese who stretched their hands out to Japanese literary figures who should put their strengths together to construct a new path of literature. Our greatest friend as well as our greatest enemy can be none other than the Han ethnic group."[41] On the one hand, it is obvious that the Japanese writer assumes that the cultural views of Chinese in Japanese-occupied Beijing are no different from those in Manchukuo in terms of the joint mission to create new literature in territories under Japanese occupation. However, most importantly, these phrases betray Kawabata's knowledge of Han Chinese writers' support of resistance movements against Japan. This passage by an important literary figure from domestic Japan further reinforces the great contrast between the utopian ideals generated by the Japanese-led establishment of the new nation of Manchukuo and the violent reality of military aggression behind its takeover that eventually led to the second Sino-Japanese War sparked by the Marco Polo Bridge Incident outside of Beijing.

Conclusion

As resistance by anti-Japanese movements increased amongst Han Chinese and ethnic Koreans, the diverse cultures of the five ethnic groups officially composing the state of Manchukuo were no longer viewed as harmonious but as potential threats that could cause

[38] For more on this topic, see Faye Yuan Kleeman, *Under an Imperial Sun: Japanese Colonial Literature of Taiwan and the South* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003).
[39] Kawabata, *Manshūkoku kaku minzoku sōsaku senshū 1*, 5.
[40] Richard H Mitchell, "Japan's Peace Preservation Law of 1925: Its Origins and Its Significance," *Monumenta Nipponica*, vol. 28, no. 3 (Autumn 1973), 269.
[41] Kawabata, *Manshūkoku kaku minzoku sōsaku senshū* 1, 6.

subversion and centrifugal political tendencies through the raising of ethnic consciousness, or *minzoku ishiki*, that could be used against the unity of the state. In his introduction to a volume celebrating the literary compositions of Manchuria's five ethnicities, Kawabata Yasunari, as one of Japan's most prominent critics, even warned about the potential danger of Han Chinese nationalism to the Manchukuo state oriented towards a predominantly Japanese culture.

The Manchukuo regime under the relatively liberal policies of Ishiwara Kanji allowed mild criticism of its endeavors by Japanese intellectuals until the early forties. However, with the entrance of the United States into World War II in the wake of the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, the political climate in Manchukuo drastically changed, and the state launched an all-out attack on political expression diverging from national aims from 1941-1942.[42] Mass arrests of suspected communists occurred in 1942 amongst a Japanese population already subject to self-disciplining by organizations like the Concordia Society and the ever-present surveillance of the *Kenpeitai* (military police). In early July of 1937, this region began to serve as a military base for the attack on China south of the Great Wall, and after 1941, Manchukuo soon became the center for operations in Southeast Asia. Writers in Japan and the colonies were progressively drafted to depict the war effort in China proper and elsewhere with the advance of the conquering troops. As shown in this article, cultural initiatives were part of their wartime duties.

It is evident that Manchukuo's cultural activities along with its political fate remained inseparable from control by the *naichi* after the advent of total war and Japan's deepening military engagement in China. Much of the media produced after visits to Manchukuo by Japanese intellectuals reflects its political bond with Japan. In the early forties, Kawabata Yasunari served to bring legitimacy to Manchukuo's cultural endeavors as an important *naichi* literary figure. However, the pervasive intrusion of the war into even the cultural domain ultimately made the realization of his ideals extremely difficult, if not impossible, on all but a propaganda basis.

[42] For a more detailed description of the Manchukuo regime's organized targeting of a supposed communist conspiracy by the persecution of intellectuals and others allegedly sympathetic to communism or Marxist movements, see Young, *Japan's Total Empire*, 301-302.