



Topographies of Japanese Modernism

By Seiji M. Lippit

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What happens when a critique of modernity? a "revolt against the traditions of the Western world"? is situated within a non-European context, where the concept of the modern has been inevitably tied to the image of the West?

Seiji M. Lippit offers the first comprehensive study in English of Japanese modernist fiction of the 1920s and 1930s. Through close readings of four leading figures of this movement? Akutagawa, Yokomitsu, Kawabata, and Hayashi? Lippit aims to establish a theoretical and historical framework for the analysis of Japanese modernism.

The 1920s and 1930s witnessed a general sense of crisis surrounding the institution of literature, marked by both the radical politicization of literary practice and the explosion of new forms of cultural production represented by mass culture. Against this backdrop, this study traces the heterogeneous literary topographies of modernist writings. Through an engagement with questions of representation, subjectivity, and ideology, it situates the disintegration of literary form in these texts within the writers' exploration of the fluid borderlines of Japanese modernity.

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Editorial Review

Review

This is a far-reaching and penetrating work that will be indispensable to rethinking the questions of modernity and postmodernity.

(Kojin Karatani)

Here is a dazzling modernist work that questions our fictional assumptions, captures the impact of the new, and enlarges the perimeters we permit 'ourselves.'

(Donald Richie *Japan Times*)

Richly suggestive... always engaging... an impressive contribution to the field.

(*Choice*)

Topographies of Japanese Modernism is an accomplished addition to the growing scholarly literature on the 1920s and 1930s. This study achieves a fine balance between addressing broad historical and critical topics and providing detailed analyses of a small number of important texts...a fine piece of scholarship... is thoughtful and carefully researched, and it makes a fascinating period in Japanese literary history more accessible to literary scholars across the academy.

(Dennis Washburn, Dartmouth College *Journal of Japanese Studies*)

In his excellent book *Topographies of Japanese Modernism*, Seiji M. Lippit explores Japanese modernism of the 1920s and 1930s... The result is a richly argued and intellectually exciting entree into one of the most significant periods of modern Japanese fiction...*Topographies* is a superb contribution to our knowledge of twentieth-century Japanese literature.

(Susan Napier *Monumenta Nipponica*)

Lippit's book is destined to become an indispensable guide to modernist Japanese fiction.

(Ken K. Ito *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*)

Review

A richly textured, elegantly written, historically and theoretically contextualized analysis of 1920s–30s Japanese literary modernism, which radically questioned and reshaped contemporary categories of cultural production. Indispensable for understanding Japanese modernism and its lasting cultural implications.

(Tomi Suzuki, Columbia University)

About the Author

Seiji M. Lippit is assistant professor in the department of East Asian languages and cultures at the University of California, Los Angeles. He is the editor of *Essential Akutagawa*.

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