Tokuda Shūsei and Theodore Dreiser:
A Study in Contrasts (1)

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Ashiato (Footprints, 1910) by Tokuda Shūsei (1871-1943) describes the struggle of a girl who comes from the country after the ruin of her old house. In this connection, the world of Ashiato resembles that of Jennie Gerhardt, published in 1911, by Theodore Dreiser, who "remains one of the American writers most devoted to the study of feminine psychology,"¹ and is darker than the latter. The heroine, Jennie, of Jennie Gerhardt, appears at the age of eighteen, and her subsequent life of twenty-five years is traced. In Ashiato the heroine, O-sho, at the end of the story, visits a young couple for whom her mother works in the early spring of 1903. Then "feeling relaxed as if she found herself at Mother's retreat and sitting in a close living room, she had a long talk with Mother toward evening."² Counting from the opening sentence, "When O-sho and her family moved to Tokyo, she was barely eleven or twelve years old,"³ one thus finds the story covering ten years or so in O-sho's life.

The theme of Ashiato, exhibiting characters who are the victims of circumstances or forces beyond their control, is, apart from the depth of pursuit of Shūsei and Dreiser, closely similar to that of Jennie Gerhardt. As the heroine's world in Jennie Gerhardt is cheerless and cloistered wherever she goes, so O-sho's world in Ashiato goes against
her, no matter how hard she works. Under the shadow of this “dark,” Jennie is concerned about her parents, brothers, and sisters most of the time, and O-sho also is worried about her mother who has no place to sleep. “O-sho, worrying about Mother, who was quite ignorant of household economy, wanted to see her and talk with her about her future career. Even though she left Tokyo, where a dark shadow had been hanging low over her, and went far away, what she had to do before everything else was to make sure of her mother's future security.”

As Jennie falls a victim to her brother and father, so O-sho has the little money she had in her purse snatched away by her father, who is forced to return home due to his inability to find employment in Tokyo. These two heroines experience both the anguish of the time in which they live and the pressure of the household still lingering even after its collapse. Jennie's first lover, a senator, suddenly dies; she has become pregnant and then is robbed of another lover by a rich and well-placed woman. In like manner, O-sho is betrayed and abandoned by a man with whom she has been on close terms for three long years. The former story exactly coincides here in plot with the latter.

Ashiato and Jennie Gerhardt, although they are also alike in being autobiographical, become widely different when it comes to the treatment of subject matter, a difference in life attitude between Shūsei and Dreiser. Dreiser thought that extremes of poverty and wealth are unfair and that a society that tolerates them should be reformed. Jennie Gerhardt is not, however, a social tract. The novel, although weak and less poignant in tone when compared with A Trilogy of
Desire published in later years, is something of a protest novel, but there is an utter absence of protesting intentions in Ashiato.

Shüsei regarded inequity as an unavoidable phenomenon of life. In other words, he lacked romantic aspirations or a strong desire of emancipation. In Dreiser's book, Jennie and Lester Kane, a rich young man, are drawn to each other and live together, but are troubled with rumors beginning to fly about among their conventional neighbors. Good impressions given by Jennie's personality count for little as soon as her disgrace is made known. They are gradually driven to a corner by their neighbors, in irony and scorn, which compelled the author to describe a socially-ostracized scene and to find an outlet for his pent-up emotions, which were acceptable to the reader, and with which he could establish an unshakable protest against social injustice. He showed how the life of a kept woman was blighted by society's treatment of what it considered her immorality. Conventional moral standards controlled Jennie's life and prevented her from achieving happiness. On the other hand, Shüsei had no intention of attaching importance to O-sho's amorous life, drifting from one person to another. He wrote her life dispassionately as if nothing significant occurred. He never let his own feelings get the better of his judgment. It is scarcely surprising, therefore, that the similarity between Ashiato and Jennie Gerhardt is in fact only superficial. They differ in the most important aspects, and these differences constitute a most significant theme in this paper.

Such being Shüsei's attitude in Ashiato, he refrained, naturally enough, from describing the rise and fall of the romantic movement during the period between the wars waged with China and Russia.
Neither did he give, from such an angle, a critical interpretation to various other problems related closely to the times. His long novels often describe the lives of women and hence he is called the Maupassant of Japan.\(^6\) *Ashiato* is no exception; it brings forth a large number of women, having no relation to the life of the heroine. They are divided into two groups: women of the same age as the heroine, such as O-tori, O-teru, and O-masu, and women advanced in age, including O-sho's mother, the wife of an old man for whom the heroine works soon after arriving in Tokyo, the wife of her mother's brother, and others. Among them, apart from O-sho's mother who has already lost her house, the wife of an old man and her aunt remain unchanged in their lifestyles in which they manage to keep their households going while spending money in visiting temples or going to the theater to divert their minds from a sense of bondage to their households. On the other hand, O-tori and her young generation rebel against the old morality, assuming a recalcitrant attitude to defend themselves against ruin. The marked difference between such young and old people seems to be of great importance in Dreiserian style, but Shûsei was poles apart and took no heed whatsoever of the significance and value of such an attitude toward life.

Rather, Shûsei treated all of these figures on the same level, presenting all the phenomena in a unity as the changeful destiny of O-sho and giving a feminine portrait in both body and soul. He viewed human events as having the same weight and depicted them in an absolutely objective sketch and could produce a clear image of a woman by leaving the footprints made by her during a critical period of her life.
The main reasons for objectivity toward life in Shūsei are his career and the temperament which he inherited. He started as a writer belonging to the Kenyūsha (Friends of the Inkstone Society),7 with Yabukōji (The Spearflower, 1896) treating the miserable fate of a girl emerging from an outcast community, as his maiden work. The story appeared in an age when shinkoku shōsetsu (depth novels) and social novels were well received, a fact showing that he was interested in the wretchedness of existence. His outlook on life corresponds to the literature of naturalism, the nucleus of which finds the only justification for its existence as "protest literature"8 in describing a hopeless plight of life under pressure of circumstances or the melancholy and ennui of those whose hard struggle is in vain.

Shūsei abandoned the naturalistic criticism and endeavor, nonetheless, after the publication of Arajotai (The New Couple, 1908), showing a keen interest in watching life and its complex nuances and delicate effects.9 The lack of critical sensibility to objectify the problem at hand, and his realism strongly influenced by shaseibun (sketch writing)10 style, which came into vogue in the fourth decade (1897-1906) of the Meiji period—these two factors are chiefly responsible for his dramatic change. He loved nature and had a considerable taste for haiku, inclining toward shaseibun. Even more important is that he was affected by the Kenyūsha style, the ultimate aim of which is to respect elegance and sentiment. Since he became known as one of the big-four followers of Ozaki Kōyo, he seemed to have retained traces of the Kenyūsha influence although he left his master later and became independent.11

Shūsei's world, intended to develop along the lines of shinkoku
shōsetsu and social novels and to be critical of what would stand in their proper progress, miserably collapsed. His failure, however, was accepted as unavoidable by a unique way of expressing himself through a constant and conscious resistance to any "solution" for life. The "solution-free" attitude toward life, the type of naturalism he best represents in temperament, gained support, contributing to change his style, which should have become naturalistic after the fashion of Zola. His naturalism, with his firm character delineation fitted precisely into the scheme of the literary trend of his time, occupied a place in the main current of Japanese naturalism.¹²

Shūsei's literary conversion seems to be born out of his due cognizance of temperament. His literary debut is told in detail in his autobiography, Hikari o Ōte (Seeking Light, 1938). According to the book, he suffered from stomach trouble most of the time and felt melancholy as if beaten by cloudy weather. He became passive and now and then felt desperate or idle, not knowing what to do with himself. While living in despair, he was an ardent admirer of literature, however. He could not find his way out of despondence for a long time, groping painfully among complexities he could not fathom. His stomach disorder was more or less serious, growing worse in the course of time, and he says in Hikari o Ōte: "I was so completely depressed that I felt like dying. Although death lay beyond the range of my comprehension, I wanted to write something and to leave it before my death."¹³

Shūsei was proud of writing about people, most especially displaying his skill in women,¹⁴ when he became a writer. The women were often prostitutes, or those women who endure hardships although they
are mere puppets of circumstances, which called for special attention in the future vis-à-vis his style. Not only his protagonists, but also most of the supporting characters were quite common; men and women of great stature or of singular type were absent in his stories. This came in part from many instances of which he was a constant eyewitness, and in part from his temperamental incompatibility with glaring sunlight.\textsuperscript{15} He says again in the book, reflecting on his temperament: "I was endowed with a cool sentience, to say nothing of my inborn character, from my mother."\textsuperscript{16} He saw no need for this disposition to call out struggle slogans such as "destruction," "exposure," "resistance," or "disillusion," which had become popular and flooded over in the literature of naturalism in the 1900s. His birth, which "cast a shadow over everyone's mind,"\textsuperscript{17} his childhood when he "gradually felt acutely the harshness lying in the bottom of fate on many occasions,"\textsuperscript{18} and his observations on the ruin his family members were compelled to fall into—with all this, he did not see any need to be concerned about abstract slogans. In other words, he did not have to shout hysterically, as did other naturalists. It was enough for him to grow and act independently; his temperament inherited from his mother could be a powerful weapon in altering a conventional attitude toward naturalism.

Dreiser had nothing to do with the "genteel tradition," which had been built up on the Atlantic Ocean coastal region and the South. He was from the Midwest. The "genteel tradition" was strongly supported by writers of British descent. Dreiser was the son of a German immigrant. The later nineteenth century, in which he spent his youth, was an age when America, with the extinction of the frontier,
underwent a radical change—from an agricultural country to a modern industrial nation. The "genteel tradition" was a far cry from his life experiences in American society. The more he wanted to describe faithfully the truth of life and the realities of American society, the farther he went away from the "genteel tradition" although he was not altogether aware of this. In 1911, when he published Jennie Gerhardt, the movement against the hypocrisy, convention, and bigotry of the "post-Victorian moral complacency" began to rise actively, a movement to leave Americans free to determine their fate. It fell in line with the national consciousness of the nation's creative literary efforts. And to the critics and writers who drove forward the movement, Dreiser became a symbol or a leader of the group, unparalleled in American literary history.

Before Dreiser succeeded as a novelist, he had experienced a severe struggle for livelihood and climbed the ladder of success as a laborer, journalist, and magazine editor, learning much about the struggle for existence. He turned to a theory of social evolution at an early age, received a stronger impression than any other Spencerian of the concept of this British philosopher, and concluded that a writer's job was to find material from the lives of social misfits or the slum streets of a large city. Through the works of his fellow journalist, Robert H. Hazard, he was indirectly influenced by French naturalism and began to read books by Honoré de Balzac and Zola avidly.

The two big factors in Dreiser's stories—money and sex—were the symbols of success or failure as far as he was concerned. For example, Dreiser's father, with every action colored by a large family and a lack of money, became an irascible and melancholy old man,
living breathlessly in a day-to-day battle for survival. Prostitution, alcoholism, gambling, theft, and dying beggars were everyday affairs around Dreiser when he was a boy. He was endlessly impressed by the instances he saw of life's steady and purposeless flux. The tangle of life, its unfairness and indifference to the moods and longings of any individual, swept over him weighing him down far beyond the power of expression. Here a completely passive acquiescence in the laws of nature, as seen in the novels by Feodor M. Dostoevski and Zola, and a passion for social revolution in Dreiser's consciousness joined hands in establishing the so-called "American naturalism."

According to Dreiser's memory, his father, a skinny person, was a bigoted Catholic and, with The Lives of Saints and German newspapers on his knees, was moping in the house all day. Although he had no ability to support his family, he was strict with his children's behavior, trying to force them into practicing assiduously the Roman Catholic rites. The father, who was wanting in human affection, knew nothing about the world, failed to see life as it was, and faithfully and ignorantly inherited the feeling that the teachings of the Catholic Church were of great import. And so his household became a God-fearing one. His family, although deplorably miserable, had no misfortune to be broken up, the credit being justly due to his wife who was illiterate but warmhearted. She courageously struggled to keep her family going under any circumstances.

What was most striking in Dreiser's life and career was that he was always in poverty and, seized with a sense of anxiety for a living, he criticized the hypocrisies of Christians and their social conventions. In this respect, the ingredients for the doctrine Dreiser later reiterated
and fueled by his experience were present in his environment. In addition to this, another factor which contributed to the publication of Jennie Gerhardt was his mother, in whom he found every virtue with which Jennie is endowed: compassion, gentleness, a yielding softness, generosity, selfless love, and fidelity.

Asahi describes the life of a woman is based on the realities of life of the people. The heroine is Shüsei's wife, Ozawa Hama, and the story pursues minutely Hama's personal history and life experience before she married him. The girl, while dragged about by the whim of fate, is gradually awakened physically and spiritually. Her father, having ruined his fortune through dissipation, sells his property and goes to Tokyo with his wife and five children. There is no hope of success there, although he dreams of making a fortune at a stroke. O-sho, a mere child, is sent to work for a cosmetic shop, work followed in succession by several other menial jobs, which include service as maid at a teahouse. While doing this, she becomes intimate with a student, who has a secret meeting with another woman. Resigning herself to such a situation, she decides to marry the son of a restaurant owner, but finding they are temperamentally at odds with each other, she runs away from him.

O-sho, born of a good family, becomes poor due to her father's failure. Moral corruption hangs over her and those around her. Her father is infatuated with women of suspicious character; her uncle abuses his company's money, also suffering from syphilis and T. B.; her first lover steals his friend's wife; the step-mother of the family she has married into drags a man into her house soon after her husband dies; and her husband, an idiot, occasionally goes insane in a fit of
anger. Amid such an atmosphere, she gradually awakens to her sensuality and ego as a result of her changing destiny in the midst of a large and decadent city. She wanders from man to man, passing through many vicissitudes of fortune.

The disillusionment of life and the process of yielding to inertia is fully displayed in *Ashiato*. It is a phase of life without any ideal or solution. Instinct or the force of nature controls life, and one cannot escape from it but does nothing but stand in fear of it. Human existence becomes mechanical, leading to the idea that a person is, after all, a slave of fatality. The human will is not free to operate independently; it has no power to bring its impulses to fulfillment. A gloomy and dark atmosphere thus broods over the whole world. Except for sexual desire, life is too dreary for O-sho and other young women. A continuation of life soiled with the dust of a drab world makes existence intolerable. This is, however, the way of life of common people, and Shūsei's shrewdness shines as a realist when he says that this is quite true, and he establishes a unique judgment that the life of the masses is composed of continuous sufferings and great dissatisfaction with but small comforts, which compound his feeling of apathy.

Jennie Gerhardt is the daughter of a poor glass blower. She has an illegitimate child, suffers from the men she truly loves. She lives in a closed society, ruled by conventions, the violation of which brings destructive consequences. Lester's father dies declaring in his will that his son will be threatened with disinheritance if he does not give up Jennie. She feels hurt through and through by this denouement. Finally, however, she decides to live apart from Lester, living together
with her fatherless daughter. She yields to the coercive strength wielded by society and economics. Against such powers, love eventually stands defenseless. Lester loves Jennie but does not understand her superiority to the world to which he is committed, and marries a rich widow of polite society. Jennie’s daughter, the embodiment of her faith in the goodness of Nature, dies of illness, and she mourns, in the face of a waning existence, that life is really lonely. Later, however, as her mind still retains all of the heart and the innocence and unsophistication of her youth—and living by her code delivered by Nature, which lifted her above a world of convention that follows the dead letter and the goals of greed—she adopts two orphans.

In the meantime, Lester, falling seriously ill and learning that Jennie has meant more to him than anyone else, sends for her, asking her forgiveness, and dies. Thus, fate robs her of those dear to her. Jennie is incapable of coming to any fixed conclusion as to the meaning of life. She ponders: “Before her was stretching a vista of lonely years down which she was steadily gazing. Now what? She was not so old yet. There were those two orphan children to raise. They would marry and leave after a while, and then what? Days and days in endless reiteration, and then—?”

Jennie had no will to live harmoniously together with her environment; she lacked all instinct of self-protection. Why did such a woman as she fail in American society? The greatest cause for her misery was that her family was helplessly poor. She was so poor that she became a woman of unique patience. Vague thoughts of sympathy and divine goodness permeated her soul. She loved Lester and did everything she could, but her love was unsanctioned morally
and unprofitable socially. The Kanes refused to recognize her as Lester's legal wife, showing that an individual, born and bred in one environment, is practically unfitted for any other state.

From the fact that Jennie was the daughter of a poor scrubwoman working for a hotel, she was "the victim of an uncompromising society."20 Her affection, because she was born poor, was destroyed by the difference of status existing between the disintegrating Gerhardts and the wealthy Kanes, and she remained, after all, a woman in the shade. Her beautiful mind, surrounded with a thick wall which stood towering between the poor and the rich in a cold-hearted social environment, was unable to move because of fear. She always feared something: the birth of a natural child, the indignity and dishonor befitting her family and her position, or the contemptuous eyes of those close to her. She felt humble, out of place. Instead of attempting to go behind the will and identify the components of its free volitions, she is thwarted by social and economic forces.

Dreiser reported through the unhappy life of a poor woman the pressure of society. He was not complaining of this unhappy affair, nor appealing about it to the minds of the reader. He was writing out of what he knew best. In the accumulation of these facts, Jennie was delineated as a social failure. When critics and moralists put this novel in question, what worried them the most was not that Jennie wandered about, but that her behavior was explicitly approved, instead of being criticized, by the author. Adoration of the instincts of nature, transcending the conventional moral values dictatorially made by people, probably prompted him to write Jennie Gerhardt; this was a tremendous surprise to conventional moralists.
Shūsei, who had written along the lines of shinkoku shōsetsu and social novels, had no consciousness of a sense of emancipation and other related problems, which was quite impossible to imagine, because one of the features in his early stories was to emphasize that life is strange, dark, and uncertain. The complexities of this problem left him completely in the dark, however, and he did not know how to cope with it. Instead of finding a solution, he gave up in despair about this hopeless subject, and tried to rely on his most pervasive and successful fictional technique: writing about human problems in a realistic method and construction from a "no-solution" and "non-ideal" attitude, a method considered to be most appropriate for him when his personal career and temperament are taken into consideration.

This is clearly demonstrated by a group of women described in Ashiato. His vision of life is projected not only in them but also in O-shō's uncle, who struggles hard but unsuccessfully under the economic strain of the age in which he lives, although he seriously believes he has to do something for O-shō and her mother. The uncle is the only person who was portrayed with an economic factor for a background: "Business which had been brisk after Japan scored a victory over China began to slacken, and the buoyant mood of people sank, assuming a melancholy aspect. He was one of those nameless people who were destined to be drawn into an economic whirlpool." In the case of other people, however, there are no such statements, which indicates that the author was very limited in handling the current problems.

Because of this limitation, Shūsei cared nothing about the social or economic currents of the times although he succeeded in depicting various kinds of people shouldering many imminent problems,
attempted to express impressively the various stages of life, adding a new dimension to naturalism, a style which was ultimately the most desirable for him. *Ashiato*, in which he described men and women tossed about by the waves of an age, was, as expected, devoid of social consciousness. His style lacked color and charm. He made little reference even to the Sino-Japanese War (1984-1985), not to mention the ups and downs of the current trends of thought in his age. It is, therefore, apparent that his naturalism was different from that which, as mentioned earlier, began as “protest literature.” Nevertheless, since he was a naturalist in letting his own inborn talents develop naturally rather than through theory, and because his naturalism was solidly grounded in the nature of realism, this nonchalant, most “natural”

naturalist of all came to be called a “born naturalist.”

From this tendency, *shinkyo shōsetsu* (mental state novels) and *watakushi shōsetsu* (the “I” novels) were born one after another in later years when he turned his eyes on himself and his mental state. By the symbolical portrayals of human groups saddled with unhappiness and the penetrating observation of a young woman groping in the dark of a closed society, which prevents individuals from living up to their full, inherent potentialities, *Ashiato* became one of those stories which transmitted a voice reflective of his era and prophetic of naturalism to come. On this score, *Ashiato* and *Jennie Gerhardt* are vastly different from each other.

In *Jennie Gerhardt*, a sharp contrast is made between the poverty of Jennie’s family and the luxury of the hotel where Senator Brander stays. As the story goes on, the contrast becomes clearer when Jennie begins to work for a rich family as maid and later comes into contact
with Lester's family. She comes to realize the wretchedness of her position and its helplessness, and understands that "She is a victim sacrificed to the injustice of the society she lives in."\textsuperscript{26} She ponders the value of her life, murmuring, half to herself, "I wish we were rich."\textsuperscript{27} From her gratitude toward the generosity shown her by Brander, she gives herself to him, becoming an unwed mother. This is her punishment for having made a mistake. She has made her bed, and she must lie on it. She is devotedly faithful to Lester, a devotion he has never known before; but to no avail. Lester is carried off by another woman. She sacrifices herself for those she loves—for something beyond her—in a way they would seem foolish to a practical mind.

Now, Jennie can see what the world thinks: "A fish, for instance, may not pass out of the circle of the seas without courting annihilation; a bird may not enter the domain of the fishes without paying for it dearly."\textsuperscript{28} And Jennie finally learns that her real enemy is economic inequalities. "... wealth and position in this hour were typified to her mind as a great fence, a wall, which divided her eternally from her beloved. Had it not always been so? Was not her life a patchwork of conditions made and affected by these things which she saw—wealth and force—which had found her unfit?"\textsuperscript{29} Among many egotists created by Dreiser, Jennie was the only protagonist who was pure and innocent, and yet she had to suffer from the material corruption of modern American society.

Jennie was true, good, and womanly to the very center of her being; a largeness of feeling not altogether squared with intellect drew men, first Brander and then Lester, to her. She was also a woman who
thought it possible to lead a life worthy of human dignity in spite of toil and privation. Notwithstanding this, Jennie, poor but pretty, feels at the end of the story, "She had evidently been born to yield, not seek." The deaths of her beloved ones, which include not only Senator Brander and Lester, but also her parents and daughter, and the final dissolution of her household, are "determined" and have a mechanistic continuity. There was no light in the immense darkness of her existence.

Dreiser's actual experiences and the unhappiness of his family, as in the case of Shūsei, are reflected in the story and his sympathy resides with Jennie, but the story is not melodramatic, as evidenced by the following: "... he is never frivolous; his seriousness and sobriety are evident; however awkward, he means what he says." Is it possible to be poor and moral? The question dogged Dreiser all his life, and its answer is the main point in the story. His naturalism denied the optimistic and pastoral view of American Nature. Jennie, a child of Nature, with no schooling in the ways of polite society, but with a feeling for the beauty of life and the lonely things in human relationship, found no room to survive in this machine age of America, failing to assert her authority. It is often repeated in the story that she is the reflection of the American image of Nature, and that both Brander and Lester are the invaders who are intent on destroying this indigenous view of American Nature. These two men are "rebels," both lonely and unhappy, and the relationship between them and her coincides with that of "assailant" and "victim." Brander disappears from the story very soon; Lester, when he parts from Jennie, abandons a happy pastoral dream and becomes an unhappy but successful busi-
nessman. On his deathbed, he sarcastically and ruefully says: “After all, life is more or less of a farce... It’s a silly show. The best we can do is to hold our personality intact. It doesn’t appear that integrity has much to do with it,” adding, “I haven’t been any happier.” Right after this beautiful scene, there appears in the last chapter of the story at one of the platforms of the railroad station a woman in black, heavily veiled, who cannot go with the others onto the train, but stands in an inconspicuous corner peering through the iron grating for a glimpse of Lester’s coffin.

Jennie’s “goodness—goodness of heart,” overwhelmed by wealth and position, is nothing but an illusion, stressing the helplessness of “virtue.” In a world so envisaged, good intentions do not necessarily bear good results. Nor is what is conventionally called evil punished. Hence standard ethics are discredited because they do not represent a realistic interpretation of social relations. As Dreiser points out, “‘Caged in the world of the material... such a nature is almost invariably an anomaly.’ Meeting misery and insult with a quiet selflessness, she, an ‘excluded outsider,’ ends her days, appropriately enough, without a real family of her own.” Jennie’s “goodness” is valued more highly than the society which destroys her chance for happiness. Dreiser denies that she is sinful; he always laments the moral code which inflicts a sense of guilt on her; he considers her good and beautiful. And yet she “is equally a victim of temperament.” These conclusions show that Dreiser believes in the ethical code which exists above the complexities of actuality. He does not account for it, but affirms its presence in Jennie and strongly deplores the social conditions which damage its growth and free expression. This
is the keynote of Dreiser's naturalism which he brought to fullest expression in *Jennie Gerhardt*, constituting the first stage of its progression in the context of the developing struggle.

**Notes**

7. The Kenyūsha was a society of amateur writers, organized in 1885, its members being Ozaki Kōyo (1887-1903), Yamada Bimyo (1868-1910), and others. At first the organization had no specific principle or opinion, but in the process of its development the Kenyūsha formed its own peculiar opinions and way of writing, exercising an influence on the growth of literature in the third decade (1887-1897) of the Meiji period. Kōyo became its leader, and strengthened its movement for a new literature. With his death in 1903, however, the Kenyūsha faced a crisis, being unable to be regarded as the main current of the literary world. Despite its brilliant debut, the society was short-lived because the playful attitude of writing, after all, prevented it from establishing a permanent foundation on which to build new literary values.
8. Naturalism took a stand against nationalism which advocated the doctrine that the interests and the security of individuals are less important than national considerations. To point out frankly the irrationality of the old morality and social order, which impeded the progress of an individual ego, was the most important aspect of naturalism. The literature of the Meiji period was, in a word, the civilization of bureaucrats, who carried out the reform of Japan's political and social systems. A majority of people were
helpless before them, never interfering in the government policies. Japan was proud of having become an advanced country after winning a victory over Russia in 1905, which ended in a matter of illusion. Japan was 50 or 100 years behind Western countries because its modernization movement was introduced in a hasty and superficial manner. In order to make this illusion seem as plausible as possible, however, the government took every possible means to encourage the ideas of the "family nation" and "ultranationalism" as guiding principles to push through its policies. This tendency invited the revival of Confucianism, Chinese classics, and other relevant studies, leading naturalism to be regarded as "dangerous thought" literature.

9 Japanese naturalists, by sketching impressive "ruins" in the passage of time, thought that they would be able to contemplate the truth of life. Herein lies a sense of resignation to a gloomy life which defies resistance or denial. Thus, they came to assume a "no-solution" and "non-ideal" attitude, which was well reflected in a candid description of their personal experiences and the daily life of ordinary people. Such a note was most evidently recognized in Shūsei's works. (Yoshida Sēichi, A Study of Naturalism, Vol. II (Tokyo: Tokyo-do, 1964), p. 71; Iwanaga Yutaka, The Formation and Development of Naturalism (Tokyo: Shimbi-sha, 1972), p. 62.)

10 Shaseihun arose centering on Masaoka Shiki (1867-1902), a poet who expounded in his haiku and tanka the theory of sketching from life and extended it to prose writing. With its theoretical basis given by his followers, it began to move into the area of the true novel form, repudiating the classic and elegant style and aiming principally at lucid impressionism and simplicity.


14 Noguchi Fujio, op. cit., p. 233.

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27 *Jennie Gerhardt*, *op. cit.*, p. 21.
31 Cf. "Jennie, dangerously near as she comes to being a soap-opera heroine of the Stella Dallas stamp, manages to rise above mere sentimentality and to take shape as a recognizable human figure." (Philip L. Gerber, *Theodore Dreiser* [New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1964], p. 83.); "Dreiser saves the novel from this fate in two ways. He soon shifts its direction—initially and to a slight degree in the second seduction and then completely in the major segment dealing with Lester and Jennie after her second ‘fall’... Dreiser also raises the seduction from its bathetic base by endowing Jennie and Brander with ‘human’ characteristics within their stereotyped roles...." (Donald Pizer, *The Novels of Theodore Dreiser: A Critical Study* [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976], p. 107-108.)
34 Jennie Gerhardt, op. cit., p. 386.
36 Ibid., p. 299; Cf. "Many of Dreiser's succeeding novels would show goodness of heart trodden into the dust under the greedy human stampede toward materialistic rewards." (Philip L. Gerber, op. cit., p. 86.)
37 Cf. "... all life seemed to flow so softly and so smoothly. But to where? And for what?" This same sense of the endless flux and its inexplicability, greatly deepened by the generous resources of Jennie's nature, was what he brought to fullest expression in his second novel." (F. O. Matthiessen, Theodore Dreiser [New York: William Sloane Associates, Inc., 1951], p. 125.);
"Luck is more important than careful planning, and goodness does not necessarily appeal to the unknown or nonexistent controllers of destiny." (Charles C. Walcutt, American Literary Naturalism, A Divided Stream [Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1956], p. 197.);
"The cruelest irony within this process of events is that the most generous and unselfish character in the novel, Jennie Gerhardt, is the one who suffers the most." (Richard Lehan, Theodore Dreiser: His World and His Novels [Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969], p. 94.)
38 Jennie Gerhardt, op. cit., p. 28.
40 Charles Shapiro, op. cit., pp. 16-17.
41 Richard Lehan, op. cit., p. 93.