

THE CLARTÉ MOVEMENT IN JAPAN AND KOREA, 1919-1925

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI‘I AT MĀNOA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

EAST ASIAN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES (JAPANESE)

DECEMBER 2017

By

Quillon Arkenstone

Dissertation Committee:

Joel R. Cohn, Chairperson

Ken K. Ito

Yung-Hee Kim

Nobuko M. Ochner

Lonny E. Carlile

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express gratitude to the members of my committee, past and present, for their help in the completion of this dissertation: Chairperson Joel Cohn, Ken Ito, Yung-Hee Kim, Nobuko Ochner, Lonny Carlile, and Arthur Thornhill.

I would also like to thank the Korea Foundation, the Center for Japanese Studies at the University of Hawaii, Tokiko Bazzell, Patricia Polansky, Scott Kramer, Hanae Kurihara Kramer, Suk Lee, Robert Huey, Andre Haag, Evelyn Nakanishi, Lois Agena, Coleen Sekigawa, Audris Wataoka, and my family for their love and support.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Kyoungwon, who stood by me throughout my time in graduate school, and my son Julian, who served (and continues to serve) as a constant reminder that there is more to life than a dissertation.

ABSTRACT

The Clarté movement was an international writers' association founded in France after the Great War, which had as its goal the rallying of the intellectual elite of the world in order to prevent further war. The movement had branches in countries from Western Europe to East Asia. Scholars have examined the transfer of the movement to and within East Asia, but have not considered the underlying ideological mechanisms that enabled this transfer. This dissertation sets out to identify these mechanisms, referred to collectively throughout as the Clarté *problematic*. Borrowing Louis Althusser's concept of the problematic, the study approaches Clarté as a distinct ideological phenomenon, separate from the movements for which it served as support.

Chapter One considers the origins of the Clarté movement in Europe, with a discussion of its founder Henri Barbusse, his experiences in the Great War, and his attempts to create an international of intellectuals. Chapter Two turns to Komaki Ōmi, the founder of *Tane maku hito*, and highlights his association with Barbusse and efforts to link European anti-war movements with those in Japan. Chapter Three centers on the three-year existence of *Tane maku hito*. The journal's efforts at social criticism and action are examined, concerns highlighted in its subtitle, *hihan to kōdō*; both fiction and criticism are considered. Chapter Four discusses the movement in Korea, specifically Kim Ki-jin's efforts to replicate *Tane maku hito* with the journal *Kaebyoŏk*. Chapter Five examines how the Clarté movement (and problematic) fell victim to the international conjuncture, being cast as an oppositional ideology before giving way to Marxism-Leninism.

In addition to the construction of the “Clarté problematic” as a distinct object of study, the dissertation engages a period of intellectual and literary development of leftist literature that has not received as much attention as the later period of proletarian literature proper. *Tane maku hito* is traditionally placed at the fount of proletarian literature, but this study scrutinizes this assumption of theoretical continuity, arguing that what the journal was attempting to do was to propagate the Clarté movement, not found the new genre for which it is credited.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	ii
Abstract	iii
Introduction: The Clarté Movements	1
I. Henri Barbusse and the Origin of the Clarté Movements	1
II. The Clarté Problematic	4
III. Methods and Terminology	7
III. Clarté and the Emergence of Proletarian Literature	14
V. Previous Scholarship on Clarté	16
VI. Chapters	17
Chapter One: The Great War and the Clarté Problematic	19
I. Introduction: The Clarté Movements as Ideological and Political Practice	19
II. Europe, 1919	19
III. Henri Barbusse	22
III. The Clarté Movement	28
V. The Clarté Problematic	35
VI. The Clarté Movement Internationally	38
VII. Romain Rolland	41
VIII. The Rolland-Barbusse Debate, 1921-22	44
VIII. The End of the Clarté Movement and the Later Activities of Barbusse	49
X. Conclusion	51
Chapter Two: Komaki Ōmi and the Clarté Movement	54
I. Introduction	54
II. Komaki Ōmi	56
III. Mushanokōji Saneatsu's <i>Aru seinen no yume</i>	63
III. Fall 1919: Meeting Barbusse	71
V. Komaki's Visit to Switzerland	74
VI. Legacy	76
Chapter Three: Clarté in Japan	80
I. Introduction	80
II. 1920: Laying the Groundwork	83
III. 1921: Debut of <i>Tane maku hito</i>	86
III. <i>Ana-Boru Ronsō</i> : The Rolland-Barbusse Debate in Japan	94
V. The Japanese Interpretation of the Debate	104
VI. Komaki's Understanding of Barbusse	107
VII. The Clarté Problematic in Literature: Asō Hisashi's "Shitai no hakkutsu," Kaneko Yōbun's "Sake"	111

VIII. The Publication of <i>Kurarute</i>	123
VIII. The End of <i>Tane maku hito</i>	128
X. Conclusion	134
Chapter Four: Clarté in Korea	138
I. Introduction	138
II. Korean Literature 1894-1920	139
III. Kim Ki-jin	143
III. Ideological Practice: Clarté-related Articles in the Journal <i>Kaebyoŏk</i>	144
V. Kim’s Understanding of Barbusse	157
VI. Clarté and the Korean Communist Parties	160
VII. The Clarté Problematic in Literature: Kim Ki-jin’s “Pulgŭn chwi”	162
VIII. Further Activities	170
Chapter Five: From Clarté to “Proletarian Literature”	172
I. Introduction	172
II. The International Background	173
III. The East Asian Background: Japan and Korea	181
III. The Marxist-Leninist Problematic in Korea: Chosŏn P’ŭrollet’aria Yesulga Tongmaeng, Kim Ki-jin’s “Mollak”	183
V. The Marxist-Leninist Problematic in Japan: Nihon Puroretaria Bungei Renmei, Maedakō Kōichirō’s “Umi no karuwaza”	189
VI. The End of Clarté	196
Conclusion	201
Appendix A: English Translation of Kim Ki-jin’s “Pulgŭn chwi”	207
Bibliography	227

INTRODUCTION:
THE CLARTÉ MOVEMENTS

I. Henri Barbusse and the Origin of the Clarté Movements

In the autumn of 1916, as the battle for the ancient fortress of Verdun reached its bloody peak, the French author Henri Barbusse published his novel *Le Feu* (Under fire). Flung in the face of an endless stream of sanguine and patriotic reports on the war emanating from official government and unofficial but censored sources, *Le Feu* was a torch in the darkness, narrating for anyone who would listen the grim truth of the tragedy that had been unfolding since August 1914. As a visceral reaction to Barbusse's time spent on the Western Front, it was shocking in its realistic and unflinching description of the brutality of trench warfare. Its popularity spread like wildfire and soon it was being read by soldiers on all sides of the conflict. It made Barbusse a household name as the unfiltered voice of the common fighting soldier, and by the time of the armistice in 1918 he had risen to be the most famous writer in France.¹

After the war Barbusse released his next novel, *Clarté* (Light, 1919). A work that mirrors his own intellectual evolution, *Clarté* chronicles the enlightenment of its protagonist from fanatical revanchism to socialist pacifism, contending that the war was the product of deceitful capitalist governments that had knowingly and willingly led millions to their graves. More than the individual nation-states, though, the very economic system that supported them was culpable, and both needed to be swept away and replaced by a more equitable and just organization of society. For *Clarté*, that ideal society was socialism. The achievement of such a society could only come through cooperation on an international level, a point upon which the Clarté

¹ Leonard V. Smith, *The Embattled Self: French Soldiers' Testimony of the Great War* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2007), 154.

movement would remain adamant throughout its existence, as Barbusse had warned prophetically that “...as long as the entirety of things is not overthrown . . . men cannot achieve the impossible, and sooner or later their too-beautiful inclinations will be isolated and misunderstood.”²

Clarté lent its name to the Clarté movement, which Barbusse founded in Paris in May 1919. The goal of Clarté, declared in the newspaper *L'Humanité* that month, was the formation of an “International of the Mind” (Internationale de la Pensée), a grouping of the brightest intellects from all European nations who would together “combat prejudice, errors, and above all ignorance that separates and isolates men and has up until now thrown them blindly against each other” (*combattre les préjugés, les erreurs trop habilement entretenues et surtout l'ignorance—qui séparent et isolent les hommes et ont permis jusqu'ici de les jeter aveuglément les uns contre les autres*).³ Many of the most prominent cultural names of the day participated, and the movement had enthusiastic adherents from almost every academic and artistic discipline. As an intellectual vanguard, Clarté was to work in conjunction with the various worker internationals but signaled its intent to remain independent of party influence and abstain from direct political practice. Instead, it was envisioned as an umbrella organization that would unite all the fractured internationals in the pursuit of socialism. It would do this through persuasion, as the organization was not meant as a direct instrument of social change but rather one that would function in the background as a sort of ideological puppet master.

The revolution Barbusse insisted on was to begin in the mind, and this initial focus and positioning of man as the central agent of history highlighted the movement’s liberal humanist origins. Barbusse trusted that if his organization could simply enlighten people as to what needed

² Henri Barbusse, *Light*, trans. Fitzwater Wray (London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1919), 285.

³ Henri Barbusse, “Le Groupe Clarté,” *L'Humanité*, May 10, 1919, 1. My Translation.

to be done, they would rise to the occasion and fulfill their historical task. This task, the overthrow of capitalism and establishment of a socialist society, could in theory be simple, for as Barbusse pointed out, no matter the opposition from global king and clergy, the sheer numbers of the proletariat ensured its eventual triumph: “[The] exploited are fifteen hundred millions here on earth,” he had explained in *Clarté*, “[They] are the Law because they are the Number.”⁴

As an international endeavor, the Clarté movement was active in many countries. Fueling this expansion was Barbusse’s assumption that his message, tailored to a belief in the liberal humanist subject, was universally valid and therefore applicable to societies across the globe. He appeared initially to have been right: from its origins in France in 1919 Clarté quickly spread to many nations of Europe (including former Allied, Central, and neutral powers) and from there to locations overseas, until eventually it had branches on almost every continent. In 1921 the movement reached East Asia with the debut of the journal *Tane maku hito* (The sower), which served as its main organ in Japan for the next several years; two years later, in 1923, it began activities in colonial Korea.

Although Clarté had endeavored to maintain a position of political neutrality from the start, these efforts were short-lived. The movement’s members had from the beginning taken a keen interest in the Russian Revolution and Bolshevism, and with the founding of the Third International in 1919 many joined their local Communist Parties and began to pull the movement toward political involvement. In forcing it to choose between allegiance to its liberal humanist origins and the competing Bolshevik view that held not man but the class struggle to be the true motor of history, the relationship to the Communist Party would prove to be Clarté’s greatest dilemma throughout its existence, one that would occupy it no matter what country it operated in.

⁴ Barbusse, *Light*, 286.

Whether in France, Japan, Korea, or elsewhere, the attraction of the Party was magnetic, and the stronger it was, the more influence it exerted on the movement. As this relationship deepened, the neutrality of the movement was compromised and the further expansion of its activity into political practice became inevitable.

For those who stood by the movement's liberal humanist beginnings, however, the Marxist dictatorship of the proletariat underway in Soviet Russia was an increasingly unacceptable avenue to socialism. When disagreements surfaced in late 1921 over whether or not to continue supporting Bolshevik violence, many national sections (such as the English) left, precipitating the movement's European collapse. While it survived in name, by the end of 1922 Clarté was, in Western Europe at least, a spent force. Barbusse gave it the coup de grâce at the beginning of 1923 when he himself joined the French Communist Party, signaling an abandonment of the movement's principles of pacifism and neutrality as well as solidifying a shift to political rather than ideological practice. Clarté's demise in its native France was by no means the end of its worldwide presence, however: on the contrary, its afterlife was to be felt long after its disappearance in Europe. Its East Asian iterations in particular, on which this study will focus, managed to outlive their European counterparts by several years in addition to leaving an indelible imprint on artistic and intellectual developments within their own respective social formations.

II. The Clarté Problematic

The Clarté movement as a historical entity serves as the point of departure for the present study, which will follow the movement as a political and theoretical force from its first appearance in Western Europe in 1919 to its manifestation in Japan in 1921 and finally its

transfer to Korea in 1923. The terminal period is the latter half of 1925, when the triumph of Marxism-Leninism over the international communist movement and the establishment of the first proletarian cultural organizations in the Japanese empire marked the end of direct Clarté influence. In considering the range of forms the movement took in these various social formations, one of the opening arguments of this study is that Clarté should not be viewed as a monolithic whole (that is, “the Clarté movement”), but instead as a plurality of movements, joined by their relation to a common theoretical framework.

The fundamental question addressed in the following pages concerns precisely this framework that allowed the movement to operate under the same name in such different forms and environments. In accounting for this peculiarity, this study will advance as its central element (and answer) an argument for the existence of what will be termed the “Clarté problematic.” As employed by Louis Althusser, a problematic is the unconscious scaffolding of a theory, and every theory is unified by its own problematic, which serves to define concepts within its field, situate those concepts in relation to each other (thereby giving rise to their significance), and establish its main concerns or problems.⁵ As Althusser explains, in addition to unifying a theory in this way, a problematic also serves as its epistemological boundary, dictating the range and forms of problems and solutions it is able to pose:

[A theory] can only pose problems on the terrain and within the horizon of a definite theoretical structure, its problematic, which constitutes its absolute and definite condition, and hence the absolute determination of *the forms in which all problems must be posed*. . .⁶

⁵ Althusser’s terminology in discussing the concept of the problematic varies, as he describes it as the scaffolding of, alternatively, a theory, a science, and an ideology, using the terms interchangeably. Where possible, this study will prefer use of the term ‘theory.’

⁶ Louis Althusser and Étienne Balibar, *Reading Capital*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: Verso, 2009), 26. Althusser’s italics.

Acting as terrain and horizon (while at the same time delimiting them), therefore, the Clarté problematic served to undergird Clarté theory, which in turn informed and propelled the Clarté movements.

An important element of the problematic, however, is its operation on a subconscious level. In this sense the problematic serves as the unconscious boundary of a theory. A problematic in itself is by no means self-evident, and oftentimes adherents to a particular problematic are unaware of its existence, their theory's dependence on it, or of the boundaries it constructs. For a problematic is not something one thinks of, but is rather something one thinks *through*:

[Before] it is unconscious of the real problems it is a response (or non-response) to, an ideology is already unconscious of its 'theoretical presuppositions', that is the active but unavowed problematic which fixes for it the meaning and movement of its problems and thereby of their solutions. So a problematic cannot generally be read like an open book, it must be dragged up from the depths of the ideology in which it is buried but active, and usually despite the ideology itself, its own statements and proclamations.⁷

It was the existence of this Clarté problematic that allowed the Clarté movement to be active simultaneously in societies as varied as France, Germany, Austria, England, Imperial Japan, and colonial Korea, despite the fact that there was no singular blueprint for how it was to operate. Each national section constructed its own image of Clarté, and while this image often contrasted with other sections, they were all working to achieve what they believed to be the goals of the movement. This illustrates that the Clarté problematic—which can be briefly characterized here by its attachment to the liberal humanist subject, an assumption of a unionized industrial proletariat, and a general anti-war and revolutionary pacifist stance—provided the theoretical foundation for the Clarté movements worldwide, but was in no way dependent on the existence of those actual movements, which were simply avenues of its expression. During the

⁷ Althusser, *For Marx*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: Verso, 2005), 69.

lifespan of the Clarté movements, the Clarté problematic remained singular and unvaried, and can thus be isolated and studied as a self-contained object of knowledge. And while the attention of this study will in the main be directed toward such an isolation and examination of this problematic, by doing so it also hopes to contribute to a wider understanding of how social, intellectual, and political movements react when taken out of their own social formation (and genesis of their problematic) and introduced into foreign ones.

III. Methods and Terminology

Studies of the Clarté movement have been conducted mainly within the domains of history and literature. Both present difficulties. With the historical approach comes the problem of defining the object under examination, and for Clarté the issue lies in its traditional characterization as a movement. Although the term “movement” will be retained throughout for the sake of convenience, its applicability is tenuous at best. Clarté was in certain respects tangible (it had membership circles and a press which published both a journal as well as individual works of members), but it does not conform to the idea of a historical movement as commonly understood as an organization working together to advance a common goal. Indeed, not only did any goals it set for itself become increasingly muddled, one could hardly call it organized. Many national sections were ephemeral, their supporters and members were suspicious of each other’s motives, and they held a myriad of allegiances across the entire range of the political and ideological spectrum. These differences, already pronounced within the Western European movements despite their many shared cultural and political assumptions, were sharpened when the movement surfaced in East Asia. As a consequence, defining the movement was as difficult for the people who took part in it then as it is now for those working with the

benefit of historical hindsight, a fact that played no small part in its demise. In providing a working definition, therefore, one could perhaps go back to the initial declaration of Clarté in *L'Humanité* as a *Groupe*, and to posit the historical Clarté movement as a loose international grouping of intellectuals founded by Henri Barbusse in 1919, joined by their adherence to a particular theory (itself based on the Clarté problematic), whose relations with each other were in the final instance dictated by their degree of sympathy toward the revolutionary methods of the Bolsheviks in Russia.

The second approach to Clarté has been through literary criticism, and here the problem lies not with defining the object but rather the domain (here “literature”), whose very independence is frequently called into question. Such an approach is appealing, of course, when considering the fact that the movement was sparked by a literary text and saw much of its influence subsequently manifested through written material (fictional or otherwise). The problem, though (more concerning than the question of autonomy), is that the literary approach often makes the mistake of taking its object’s definition of both itself and its domain at face value. Clarté made a persuasive argument for itself as representative of a transition between a bourgeois art under capitalism and a newly-emerging proletarian art of the socialist future, but in doing so it freely borrowed the concept of art from both periods. While this in itself does not present any difficulties (after all, a movement is free to label itself as it sees fit), complications arise when considering Clarté’s historical attempt to position itself as a purveyor of a *class-based* art, for in doing so it was impelled to provide not only a solid definition of art, but was forced to declare from which class (bourgeois or proletarian) that art originated.

Such a definition was never offered by Clarté. Content to simply raise the banner of an art based on class, Clarté issued a steady stream of chaotic and contradicting characterizations of

art, all the while leaving uninvestigated the true class origin of its own artistic products. In approaching the movement as artistic or literary, therefore, this study will heed Althusser's warning against taking any art (bourgeois, proletarian, or otherwise) at its word and accepting the definition it gives of itself.⁸ Rather, the focus will be on interrogating the culture of the society that gives rise to such art, specifically its class function. As a result, the following chapters will not be concerned with Clarté's definitions of art but rather in ascertaining the social conditions that made those definitions possible.

In addition to presenting their own particular problems, historical and literary methods share the fallibility of domain-specific approaches in their dependency on methods inherent to those domains. These methods, based as they are on the problematic of their respective domains, can at times actually limit the range of possible questions in advance by demanding a conformity to domain and ideologically-determined answers. In explaining this tendency, as well as the dangers it poses, one can again turn to Althusser, who warns that:

[The] formulation of a *problem* is merely the theoretical expression of the conditions which allow a *solution* already produced outside the process of knowledge because imposed by extra-theoretical instances and exigencies to recognize itself in an artificial problem manufactured to serve it both as a theoretical mirror and as a practical justification.⁹

While the present study will undertake an analysis of Clarté in both the historical and literary domains, it will try to escape the limits imposed by these extra-theoretical conditions by maintaining a critical eye toward both its methods and its conclusions, especially if it appears that those conclusions might be affected by the domain in which they are given. When treating Clarté-related fiction, manifestoes, articles, and theoretical and political texts, this study will concern itself entirely with how those works function as expressions of the Clarté problematic. In

⁸ Louis Althusser, "Lecture 1," in *Philosophy and the Spontaneous Philosophy of the Scientists*, trans. Warren Montag (London: Verso, 2011), 93-4.

⁹ Althusser and Balibar, *Reading Capital*, 56. Althusser's italics.

this way this study views its criticism, both historical and literary, as an important corollary in the production of its object, a comprehensive examination of the Clarté problematic. These are not the only methods, though, and in themselves they are insufficient in understanding the Clarté problematic. In order to submit Clarté to a comprehensive critique it must be discussed not only as a historical or literary phenomenon, but as a theoretical one as well, and this study will follow the development of Clarté as *both* movement and theory, from its beginning in Europe to its end in East Asia.

When considering Clarté as a movement, that is, an actual historical grouping of individuals, this study will apply the term *practice*, which it considers to be “any process of *transformation* of a determinate given raw material into a determinate *product*, a transformation effected by a determinate human labor, using determinate means (of ‘production’).”¹⁰ A practice proceeds from a theory (which in turn proceeds from a problematic) and operates in an *instance*, and this study considers a social formation, such as France, Japan or Korea, to be composed of three instances, the economic, political, and ideological.¹¹ These instances are in turn interrelated on the basis of a determinate mode of production, and all can be seen operating simultaneously in what is called the *conjuncture*, a term used by Althusser to refer to a specific historical moment (similar to Lenin’s ‘current moment’ or ‘current situation’). Each of these instances contains an innumerable number of practices, and the Clarté movement as a practice operated in both the political and ideological instances of the social formations in which it was active. Of particular concern will be how the movements’ actions in each instance were influenced (or ‘articulated,’ to retain Althusser’s terminology) by their respective conjunctures.

¹⁰ Althusser, *For Marx*, 166. Althusser’s italics.

¹¹ Althusser would later add a fourth instance, the theoretical or scientific.

Broadly speaking, the conjunctures to be considered occurred in the social formations of the French Third Republic, Imperial Japan, and colonial Korea between the years 1919 and 1925. During this time France and Japan were imperial powers based economically on a capitalist mode of production. Although not as advanced as England or Germany, both societies were in the process of industrialization. In the case of Japan this drive had gained momentum in the years following the Russo-Japanese War, although society as a whole would remain agricultural well into the 1930s.¹² And as in the case of France, this shift toward industrialization had brought into being a corresponding amount of political and economic liberalism in the political instance.¹³ It was in part this development that allowed initially for the Japanese iteration of the Clarté movement to be replicated in similar fashion to France. The situation in France and Japan differed drastically from colonial Korea, though, at the time predominantly agrarian and lacking the political and economic liberalism, as well as the existence of an industrial proletariat, enjoyed by both of the former. These latter conditions would necessitate a rapid alteration in Clarté theory.

In its overall examination of these conjunctures this study uses the social model put forth by Althusser which takes the Marxist superstructure/base formula, with the economic instance (the base) having a determinant effect on development in the political and ideological instances (the superstructure). Of course, for Althusser this economic determinacy is not direct, and explaining superstructural phenomena purely in terms of the economic instance is impossible. As such, this study will not offer an interpretation based on the (vulgar) assumption of direct economic determinism, but will instead attempt a more nuanced view through the concept of the conjuncture mentioned above. The lead here is again Althusser's, who, in pointing out that

¹² Jon Halliday, *A Political History of Japanese Capitalism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975), 57.

¹³ Lonny E. Carlile, "Zaikai and Taishō Demokurashii," in *Japan's Competing Modernities: Issues in Culture and Democracy 1900-1930*, ed. Sharon A. Minichiello (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998), 289.

Marx's characterization of determinacy in the economic instance on one side and the relative autonomy of the superstructure on the other "has at least given us the 'two ends of the chain'" in understanding the former's effect on the latter, has provided the launch point for the present study, where Marx's injunction to find out what goes on between the two ends will be undertaken with respect to Clarté's own chain, with its determinant problematic serving on one end as the base and the (ostensibly) autonomous movements that developed on the other end serving as the superstructure.¹⁴

The second consideration of Clarté is as a theory grounded in a specific problematic, and here the question of how the problematic is to be identified must be addressed. As mentioned above, although it serves as the foundation of a theory, a problematic is not something that can be read like an open book. Instead it must be identified through what Althusser termed a 'symptomatic' reading, which analyzes the articulation of a theory in an attempt to locate its unconscious, unstated elements, bringing into view what previously existed only allusively or practically.¹⁵ The isolation and exposure of these elements provide a view of the problematic in its entirety. Buried in the unconscious of the Clarté movement was an unrecognized dependence on several elements, which collectively show that its 'universal' message was not quite as universal as it might have thought, and it will be argued that these elements of the Clarté problematic were indeed dragged up from its unconscious depths when the movement entered East Asia, where they were subjected to a symptomatic reading by the movement's Japanese and Korean adherents, readings which led to local alterations in the theoretical overlay.

The first instance of a symptomatic reading (and the focus of Chapter Three) occurred in Japan when Komaki Ōmi (1894-1978), its chief exponent there, saw through Clarté's pretense to

¹⁴ Althusser, *For Marx*, 111.

¹⁵ Althusser and Balibar, *Reading Capital*, 34.

internationalism by isolating several elements of its problematic, particularly its reliance on humanism and efforts to create a revolutionary-minded united front. He was in a unique position to question the importance of these elements: in Japan revolutionary internationalism had been put on ice after the so-called Great Treason Incident in 1911, when the execution of the anarchist Kōtoku Shūsui and eleven others presaged the onset of the so-called ‘winter period’, a decade-long span in which leftwing political activity ceased under government pressure.¹⁶ The period following the Great War did see an explosion of discontent, but much of it had been limited to domestic concerns (such as the soaring price of rice). Genuine labor organization and internationalist sentiment, while extant, was rare, and its revival had only recently (and tentatively) been signaled by widespread anger following Japan’s deployment of troops to Siberia.¹⁷ Thus the Clarté movement arrived in Japan at the end of 1919 to witness a comparatively underdeveloped state of internationalism and unionization, both key elements of its problematic, and this led Komaki to alter Clarté theory in order to bring the movement’s practice into conformity with the Japanese conjuncture.

The second crystallization of the Clarté problematic (discussed in Chapter Four) occurred in Korea, when Kim Ki-Jin (1903-1985) realized that its dependence on internationalism, the industrial proletariat, and a belief in the liberal humanist subject rendered it inapplicable to local conditions. The situation in Korea in the period immediately following the Great War was similar to that of Japan in that internationalist sentiment was nowhere near as strong as it was in Europe, and while many Koreans had found the proclamations of Woodrow Wilson appealing, the state of unrest on the peninsula culminating in the 1919 March First

¹⁶ Germaine A. Hoston, *Marxism and the Crisis of Development in Prewar Japan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 19.

¹⁷ Halliday, *A Political History of Japanese Capitalism*, 98.

independence movement was for the most part inspired by nationalist concerns.¹⁸ Additionally, as mentioned above, the industrial proletariat that was to launch the social upheaval desired by Clarté formed an insignificant portion of the population. Finally, the liberal humanism embraced by the Korean intelligentsia was reactionary in nature, and actually worked against the movement by leading them further into the ivory tower instead of out into the street. Collectively, these difficulties led to Kim's own theoretical intervention in an attempt to align the movement with the Korean conjuncture.

IV. Clarté and the Emergence of Proletarian Literature

Situating the East Asian Clarté movements with respect to the Clarté problematic becomes especially relevant when considered in light of their historical role in the development of the genre of proletarian literature. In the case of both Japan and Korea, activity in the political and ideological instances by Clarté-related figures (particularly Kim and Komaki) is credited with helping to facilitate the emergence of proletarian literature. The decline of the Clarté movement and the appearance of proletarian literature dovetail historically, and this study will investigate thoroughly the point where the former gives way to the latter. In this it will follow previous scholarship in acknowledging in the emergence of proletarian literature the pivotal role of the newly-established Marxist-Leninist problematic, whose overlaying theory would eventually be enshrined as central to the proletarian cultural movement. Where it will diverge from more orthodox historical and literary studies that take the Marxist-Leninist problematic as a given, however, is in its argument for the incompatibility between Clarté products such as *Tane maku hito* and the problematic of Marxism-Leninism.

¹⁸ Ki-Baik Lee, *A New History of Korea*, trans. Edward W. Wagner (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 340.

Ultimately, the following pages will highlight the uneasy relationship between the Clarté movement and its products and the dominant teleology of proletarian literature. Many histories of the proletarian literary movement posit figures such as Kim and Komaki at its head.¹⁹ And yet this role, achieved by the end of 1925 and continuing until the collapse of the genre in the 1930s, is difficult to reconcile with the endeavors of the two, who were at this point in their careers attempting to spread the Clarté movement, not found a new genre. What would happen historically is that Clarté would be linked to proletarian literature through the efforts of Barbusse, despite the fact that his own role in launching that literature happened well after his break with Clarté. Moreover, the emergence of this literature itself, accompanied by the establishment of the Marxist-Leninist problematic that would serve as its theoretical basis, took place during (and was a direct result of) the internecine struggles then under way in Soviet Russia between Leon Trotsky and the triumvirate of Joseph Stalin, Gregory Zinoviev, and Lev Kamenev. Proletarian literature would have emerged with or without the involvement of figures like Komaki or Kim, to say nothing of their writings, grounded as they were not in Marxism-Leninism but in the Clarté problematic.

This dissertation is not offered as a corrective, and does not aim to rewrite the political, intellectual or literary history of the Clarté movement, nor of proletarian literature. The Clarté movement as a historical entity existed, and in doing so left a concrete legacy on the two East Asian societies under discussion. What this study intends to do is to track this legacy while at the same time contributing to the argument that these types of lineages in general are far from simple, and while one can claim a place for the influence of Barbusse, Komaki, Kim and the Clarté

¹⁹ Yamada Seizaburō, for example, in his classic *Puroretaria bungakushi* (1954), situates *Tane maku hito* at the beginning of the formation of the proletarian literary movement. In *Gendai Nihon bungaku nyūmon* (1953), Hirano Ken designates everything before *Tane maku hito* as the “riverbed” (*kashō*) of proletarian literature. And in putting forth his own periodization in *Nihon puroretaria bungakushi ron* (1982) Asukai Masamichi puts *Tane maku hito* at the head of the “first period” of proletarian literature along with Ōsugi Sakae’s journal *Kindai shisō* (Modern thought).

movement on the emergence of proletarian literature, this study will at the very least question the place of Clarté and its products in that line, at whose head they are frequently found. In this it joins others, such as Heather Bowen-Struyk, who have scrutinized the genealogical line of proletarian literature and shown that it is not one teleological development but instead one that progressed in fits and starts, subject as it was to the vicissitudes of a multitude of influences both internal and external to the environment in which it was developing.²⁰ In the end this study will demonstrate that, while Clarté was undoubtedly interested in a certain type of proletarian literature, it was not the proletarian literature of the Marxist-Leninist type.

V. Previous Scholarship on Clarté

The Clarté movement has been discussed extensively in its native France; elsewhere, however, and especially within the areas on which this study focuses, scholarship has been more limited. In English, discussion of the movement has mainly arisen as a part of studies of Barbusse, and these studies will be relied on throughout. For example, Leonard V. Smith's treatment of Barbusse, especially in his book *The Embattled Self*, is a model of how to break out of a domain-specific approach, as he analyzes Barbusse and his work through a multitude of lenses, including that of gender and *témoignage* (testimony).²¹ Barbusse is also discussed at length in Frank Field's *Three French Writers and the Great War*.²² One of the older articles to discuss the movement in English is Nicole Racine's "The Clarté Movement in France, 1919-21," which has served as footnote for many a cursory reference to the movement.²³ Although many

²⁰ Heather Bowen-Struyk, "Rethinking Japanese Proletarian Literature" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, UMI 3000927, 2001), 4.

²¹ Smith, *The Embattled Self*. See also his chapter "Masculinity, Memory, and the French World War I Novel: Henri Barbusse and Roland Dorgelès," in *Authority, Identity and the Social History of the Great War*, ed. Frans Coetzee and Marilyn Shevin-Coetzee (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1995).

²² Frank Field, *Three French Writers and the Great War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).

²³ Nicole Racine, "The Clarté Movement in France, 1919-1921." *Journal of Contemporary History* 2, no. 2 (1967).

of Barbusse's novels were translated into English soon after their release, writings on Clarté have not been widely translated outside of occasional articles contemporaneous to the movement, such as those found in the periodicals *The Nation* and *The Liberator*.²⁴

In the case of Japan and Korea much scholarship on Clarté has been done by Yi Su-gyong, who has explored in several monographs and articles the relationship between Komaki, *Tane maku hito*, and the spread of the Clarté movement to Korea.²⁵ Hōjō Tsunehisa as well has done extensive research on *Tane maku hito* and its relation to Clarté.²⁶ Where the present study departs from these is in its attempt to offer a comprehensive view encompassing all of these movements under the category of the Clarté problematic. In other words, whereas most of the linking is done in these studies on a human level, the present study attempts to break away from such an explanation that takes the individual as agent, replacing it with one in which these agents of the Clarté problematic are simply subjects acting under the determination of the social relations of their particular conjuncture.

VI. Chapters

Chapter One will present an overview of the development of the Clarté movement in Western Europe. It will pay special attention to the establishment of the Clarté problematic in order to set the stage for the movement's subsequent manifestations in Japan and Korea, where through critical engagement on the part of Japanese and Koreans the problematic was exposed,

²⁴ See for example "The Ivory Tower: An Argument," in *The Nation* 114, no. 2953 (1922), and Max Eastman's "The Clarté Movement" in *The Liberator* 3, no. 4 (1920).

²⁵ I Sūgyon [Yi Su-gyong], *Kindai Kankoku no chishikijin to kokusai heiwa undō: Kim Ki-jin, Komaki Ōmi, soshite Anri Barubyusu* (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 2003). Also, Anzai Ikurō and I Sūgyon, eds., *Kurarute undō to "Tane maku hito": hansen bungaku undō "Kurarute" no Nihon to Chōsen de no tenkai* (Tokyo: Ochanomizu Shobō, 2000).

²⁶ Hōjō Tsunehisa, "*Tane maku hito*" kenkyū: *Akita no dōjin o chūshin to shite* (Tokyo: Ōfūsha, 1992), and *Tane maku hito: Komaki Ōmi no seishun* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1995).

leading to theoretical alterations in the movement. Chapter Two will focus on the decade that Komaki Ōmi spent in France, his sixteenth through twenty-sixth years. It will examine his meeting with Barbusse in the fall of 1919 as well as his activities related to the Clarté movement during that time. Chapter Three follows Komaki as he returns to Japan, tracing the launch of the Clarté movement there with the founding of the journal *Tane maku hito* in the spring of 1921 and continuing until the end of the movement in later 1923; readers anxious to get to the East Asian iterations might begin here. Chapter Four considers the movement's efforts to break ground in colonial Korea in the latter half of 1923 through Kim Ki-jin and his articles on the Clarté movement in the journal *Kaebiyōk*. Chapter Five examines the conjuncture of the movement's demise in East Asia in the context of the global turn toward stability following the war and the emergence of Marxism-Leninism as the defining theory of proletarian literature, developments that left little room for Clarté influence. This is followed by a conclusion discussing the legacy of the Clarté movement and problematic in the cultural landscape of Japan and Korea.

CHAPTER ONE:
THE GREAT WAR AND THE CLARTÉ PROBLEMATIC

We want to make a revolution in men's minds.
– Henri Barbusse, *La Lueur dans l'Abîme* (1920)

I. Introduction: The Clarté Movements as Ideological and Political Practice

In that Clarté was from its inception an international project, a thorough grasp of the European conjuncture in which it developed is crucial in understanding the subsequent determinacy it exercised over East Asian developments. That is, in order to properly gauge what was changed theoretically it is necessary to investigate what the movement actually was, and this chapter will therefore focus on the beginning of this process, the establishment of the Clarté movements in Western Europe and their rise to prominence after the Great War on the theoretical foundations of the Clarté problematic.

II. Europe, 1919

The Clarté movement as an idea was already germinating in November of 1918, when the guns fell silent in Europe. As the armies emerged from their frozen, waterlogged trenches, there was a palpable belief and hope that this in fact had been the war to end all wars. The stated aims of the Entente, especially the repeated claims of American President Woodrow Wilson and his Fourteen Points, buoyed the wishes of citizens everywhere that the postwar settlement would be just and that the promised League of Nations would lay the foundation for an order of collaboration rather than conflict among the nations of the world. Even as the year 1919 dawned, and the tightening *cordon sanitaire* around the new Soviet republic in Russia and Allied

intervention in the brewing civil war there indicated that the aims of the peace brokers might not have been all that benevolent, the mass of people were unshaken in their belief that the looming Versailles settlement would pave the way for a peaceful, prosperous future.

The window for imposing such a peace was closing fast. For the statesmen gathering outside of Paris the greatest threat was considered to be communist revolution, both without and within their respective nations. The collapse of the Tsarist empire in Russia had been but a prelude to the Bolshevik seizure of power there in October 1917; a year later, the mutiny of the Kaiser's fleet in Kiel heralded the outbreak of revolution in Germany, an uprising punctuated by the Spartacist revolt in Berlin in January 1919 and the formation of a short-lived Soviet Republic in Bavaria in April. Two hundred miles to the east, in March 1919, Béla Kun established the Soviet Republic of Hungary on the ashes of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Though these revolutions were unsuccessful, radicals across the continent continued their efforts unabated, and similar Soviet-style councils were established in almost every nation of Europe. These were unnerving developments for the peacemakers, enough to convince them that time was not on their side. Although the majority of the leaders shared only a murky understanding of Bolshevism, they knew enough to realize the threat it posed, and were agreed that stability needed to be imposed quickly. This sense of urgency became all the more apparent following the establishment of the Third, or Communist, International in Moscow in March 1919, which stated as its goal nothing short of world revolution. For the Bolsheviks, Moscow's position as the seat of the new International was to be only temporary, and in their excitement at the seeming inevitability of revolution, leaders such as Leon Trotsky and Gregory Zinoviev declared that future congresses, as soon as the following year, would in all likelihood be held in capitals

successively to the west, the stepping stones of Berlin, then Paris, and finally London.¹ A nervous President Wilson perhaps summed it up best as the conference opened when he declared that “we are running a race with Bolshevism, and the world is on fire.”²

Apart from the necessity of stabilizing Germany, the Allied nations were also concerned with their own recovery, and the country with perhaps the most interest in a quick postwar settlement was France. With over a million war dead, and over six thousand square miles of crop, steel, and ore-producing land having been destroyed during German occupation, France had been practically bled white during the war, and had an understandable interest in a new international system that would prevent another conflict.³ France wanted both the breathing space to recover from the war and assurances that Germany’s recovery, if even permitted, would be put off into the distant future so that it would not soon be able to strike again. To this was added an insistence that Germany take full responsibility for the war and pay reparations. These demands would poison the conference, exasperating other leaders and eroding popular support and ultimately leading to a treaty that functioned not as a peace, but rather as what prescient French general Ferdinand Foch called “an armistice for twenty years.”⁴

In addition to concerns at the international level, the French government also had a keen eye toward a volatile domestic situation. The ending of the war had been accompanied by the very visible dissolution of the *Union sacrée*, the wartime truce between the government and oppositional elements in society, particularly left-wing political parties. The end of the union heralded the revival of socialist politics, which rode a growing wave of unrest across the country.

¹ Edward Hallett Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923*, vol. 3 (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1953), 124.

² Anthony Read, *The World on Fire: 1919 and the Battle with Bolshevism* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2008), 160.

³ Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919: Six Months that Changed the World* (New York: Random House, 2001), 28.

⁴ Spencer Tucker and Priscilla Mary Roberts, eds., *World War I: Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2005), 426.

Swelling the ranks of this movement were many cultural figures, who had perhaps realized that they could not long remain above the fray. Specifically, among the many returning and invalided soldiers of the French army were writers, who upon their return proceeded to take up the pen once again, this time in the service of a future perhaps more promising than the one currently being shaped at Versailles. One of the most vocal of these writers was Henri Barbusse (1873-1935).

III. Henri Barbusse

Of all French literary figures to emerge in the immediate aftermath of the Great War, perhaps none did so with as much prestige as Barbusse. Born in 1873, he had spent his youth as something of an aesthete, mixing in the company of writers like Marcel Proust and Oscar Wilde, and making his first foray into the literary world in 1895 with a collection of symbolist poems, *Pleureuses* (Mourners). He was marginally known before the war, although predominantly as a decadent writer, and his greatest mark on the French literary establishment had come in 1908 with the publication of the novel *L'Enfer* (Hell).⁵ *L'Enfer* is the story of an unnamed young man from the provinces who travels to Paris to work in a bank. He takes a room in a boarding house, and before long notices a hole in the wall that lets him see (unseen) into the adjacent room. There he witnesses the violation of a host of social taboos such as adultery, homosexuality, incest, and various criminal acts, after which he succumbs to a sickness, concomitant with a desire to be crucified on the wall. The shocking story encapsulated Barbusse's prewar descent into decadence and nihilism, where he remained mired for several years.

It was the outbreak of war in 1914 that knocked Barbusse from his ennui, and although he was forty-one years old, he immediately joined the French army, serving at the front for over

⁵ Frank Field, *Three French Writers and the Great War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 31.

a year and a half. Invalided toward the end of 1915 he wrote *Le Feu* (Under fire), which was serialized from August 3 to November 9, 1916, in the daily paper *L'Oeuvre* before being published in book form by Editions Flammarion in December.⁶ The novel is centered on a platoon of soldiers serving on the Western Front during the period 1914-15 (when Barbusse himself was on the front lines), and details with cold clarity the conditions experienced by troops in the trenches, reserving special hostility for the perceived shirkers and war profiteers in the rear. This hostility becomes most pronounced at the novel's end, when a flooding of the French and German trenches is followed by a bitter discussion among French soldiers, who have finally realized on whose behalf they are actually fighting. The narrator, a member of the platoon, quotes the soldiers:

We don't know at all why [soldiers make war], but we can say *who* we make it for. We shall be forced to see that if every nation every day brings the fresh bodies of fifteen hundred young men to the God of War to be lacerated, it's for the pleasure of a few ringleaders that we could easily count; that if whole nations go to slaughter marshaled in armies in order that the gold-striped caste may write their princely names in history, so that other gilded people of the same rank can contrive more business, and expand in the way of employees and shops--and we shall see, as soon as we open our eyes, that the divisions between mankind are not what we thought, and those one did believe in are not divisions.⁷

As they survey the postdiluvian landscape, the surviving members of the platoon become convinced that only a revolution greater than that of 1789 can prevent future wars, and even then, it would only be possible if "the peoples of the world . . . come to an understanding, through the hides and on the bodies of those who exploit them one way or another."⁸ These lines, with their insistence on internationalism and support for revolutionary pacifism, marked the beginning of Barbusse's own internationalism, and the two elements would later become an important part of

⁶ Constance Dulles Weems, "The Intellectual Odyssey of Henri Barbusse (1873-1935)" (PhD diss., McGill University, 1980), 145, ProQuest (NK52180).

⁷ Henri Barbusse, *Under Fire: the Story of a Squad*, trans. Fitzwater Wray (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1917), 351.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 350.

the Clarté movement.

Le Feu caused a sensation when it was published, and in 1916 Barbusse was awarded one of France's highest literary prizes, the Prix Goncourt. It was read and commented on by members of all the warring nations.⁹ Ordinary soldiers wrote to Barbusse thanking him for enlightening civilians to what was happening at the front, while an embarrassed French military mission had to persuade the United States that the sentiments expressed in the book did not in fact represent the majority of French opinion.¹⁰ Part of its reception was hostile as well, though, as some accused the book of violating the *Union sacrée* by displaying pro-German sentiment (though it was in fact banned in Imperial Germany). Nevertheless, it was a book that engaged people on all levels of the political spectrum. Even a writer such as Charles Maurras, a staunch monarchist and principal philosopher of the far right group Action Française, was forced to admit begrudgingly upon its publication that the book had its merits. "I cannot say that [*Le Feu*] . . . shows no talent," he began, going on to say that "[it] is full of the well-known, predictable kind of talent whose nature and tradition were established by the novels of Émile Zola."¹¹ He found fault with the book chiefly in the fact that it refused to consider certain motives compelling the men to fight, mainly patriotism and hatred of the Germans, and he concluded by refuting the book's claim to truth, saying that, "[although Barbusse] claims to be offering a true picture, reality is beyond him, and what he gives us instead is an angry work of propaganda."¹²

The words of Maurras, while encapsulating the typical reaction of far right readership,

⁹ An English translation by Fitzwater Wray was published in 1917 by E. P. Dutton & Co. (see note 7), and sections of the novel were published that same year in German translation in *Die weissen Blätter*, a Swiss-based journal run in part by future Clarté member René Schickele.

¹⁰ Field, *Three French Writers*, 40.

¹¹ Debra Popkin and Michael Popkin, eds., *Modern French Literature: A Library of Literary Criticism* (New York: Ungar, 1977), 91.

¹² *Ibid.* Animosity between the two writers would linger for decades. By 1930 it had degenerated into name-calling, with Barbusse labelling Maurras a "sad and surly scribe." Henri Barbusse, *One Looks at Russia*, trans. Warre B. Wells (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1931), 137.

indicate little more than a cursory reading of the book. While *Le Feu* did provide a realistic portrayal of life at the front, and may have even contained general anti-war sentiment, it said nothing against the *present* war; on the contrary, throughout the conflict Barbusse remained unwavering in his support of a total French victory (in fact, after awakening to their predicament and delivering the lines quoted above, the collective platoon in *Le Feu* soon returns to the trenches to continue the fight). It was only with the conclusion of hostilities in 1918 that he, like many intellectuals of the left, came to reject the war, and it was this stance that would later prefigure a rereading of the book in an antiwar light.¹³ Following this reassessment Barbusse became a spokesman against war in all its forms and came to embrace a stance of revolutionary pacifism which, despite its name, was willing to sanction violence provided it was in the service of a better (and usually socialist) future; in his adoption of this stance he was no different from many other intellectuals after the war.¹⁴ Thus, despite the fact that by the time of his meeting with the Japanese writers Komaki Ōmi and Yoshie Takamatsu (1880-1940) at the end of 1919 he was viewed as an anti-war figure, he had actually arrived at such a position only recently.

Barbusse's subsequent novel *Clarté* (Light), serialized in *Le Populaire de Paris* from January to April 1919 and published in book form in February of that year, expanded on the notion of war guilt begun in *Le Feu* and served as a wake-up call to intellectuals concerned with the direction of the postwar Versailles settlement. Serving also as a sort of retelling of the process by which Barbusse himself arrived at his postwar views, the novel is narrated in the first person

¹³ Leonard V. Smith, Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, and Annette Becker, *France and the Great War, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 57.

¹⁴ Barbusse's transformation from decadent to revolutionary was even noticed by Lenin, who took his enlightenment as evidence of the imminent revolution, remarking that "The collapse of capitalism is inevitable. The revolutionary consciousness of the masses is everywhere growing; there are thousands of signs of this. One small sign, unimportant, but impressive to the man in the street, is the novels written by Henri Barbusse (*Le Feu*, *Clarté*) who was a peaceful, modest, law-abiding petty bourgeois, a philistine, a man in the street, when he went to war." V. I. Lenin, "Answers to an American Journalist's Questions," *Collected Works* Volume 29 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1966), 518.

by one Simon Paulin, a low-level factory clerk who, like most in his town, adheres to a stringent variety of revanchist nationalism. Enlisting in the army as soon as war breaks out, he parts from his wife and leaves amid great fanfare for the front. After several uneventful months spent in and around the region of the Aisne his position is attacked by the Germans, and he finds himself locked in hand-to-hand combat with an enemy infantryman. The struggle continues amidst a bombardment, and a shell comes crashing down, killing the German and knocking Paulin unconscious. He wakes up to find himself immobilized atop a dying horse, and as he lies slowly bleeding to death he slips into a delirium, which takes him back to the beginnings of organized warfare. Starting with his German adversary, who rises and points with a skeletal hand to the region of his blown-out heart, Paulin communes with the ghosts of centuries of war dead, from the legendary figure of Roland, the most famous of Charlemagne's paladins, to the citizens of warring Brittany and Maine, to a corsair proclaiming France's eternal hatred for the English. His vision then settles on his wife, with whose rabid enthusiasm for French militarism he had first gone off to war. Declaring the existence of kings and priests to be behind the eternal presence of war, the apparitions warn him that the current organization of society is untenable and must be upended by the proletariat in order to prevent future bloodshed. He finally materializes on a beach, where a troubled Christ reflects on the evil done in his name, admonishing men not to rebuild God's churches after the war, saying that "they are not what you think they were."¹⁵ Paulin wakes up in a hospital, and after a period of convalescence returns to his village, finding himself estranged from and hostile to all of his former friends. His lone experience of camaraderie comes in the company of the local blacksmith, a socialist with whom he had almost come to blows earlier in the novel. At the conclusion of the work Paulin decides to undertake the difficult job of spreading the truth, or "light" (giving the novel its name), that is, the necessity of

¹⁵ Henri Barbusse, *Light*, trans. Fitzwater Wray (London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1919), 210.

the revolution the ghosts had called for. Additionally, the groundwork for the future movement is laid with Paulin's contention that the revolution will begin in the mind. He lays out his convictions to the reader as follows:

I [Paulin] am not afraid, as many are, and as I was once myself, of being reviled and slandered. I do not cling to respect and gratitude for myself. But if I succeed in reaching men, I should like them not to curse me. Why should they, since it is not for myself? It is only because I am sure I am right. I am sure of the principles I see at the source of all—justice, logic, equality; all those divinely human truths whose contrast with the realized truth of to-day is so heartbreaking. And I want to appeal to you all; and that confidence which fills me with a tragic joy, I want to give it to you, at once as a command and as a prayer. There are not several ways of attaining it athwart everything, and of fastening life and the truth together again; there is only one—right-doing. Let rule begin again with the sublime control of the intellect.¹⁶

Clarté marked the beginning of Barbusse's revolutionary activity, which would continue until his death in 1935. It also marked a further evolution of his thinking, for whereas *Le Feu* had been concerned with the narrow outlook of a platoon of soldiers, who argued only in general terms that war must be abolished and society restructured, in *Clarté* "Barbusse no longer surrounds himself with a squadron . . . it is an army, an army of the humble and the victimized, to whom he brings a clear-sighted faith and a promise of regeneration, in the great dawn rising from the East—the Russian Revolution."¹⁷ With the release of the novel this promise was linked to the Bolshevik experiment (Bolshevism is mentioned in the novel), providing Barbusse and others with hope for the future and the impetus to work for social change; both characteristics would become a key part of the theoretical foundation of his movement. This union of the novel with Bolshevism would also portend the movement's failure, though, as the Bolsheviks, and consequently Barbusse, came to rely increasingly on revolutionary violence to achieve their ends. This reliance would only become more pronounced as the postwar revolutionary wave receded.

¹⁶ Henri Barbusse, *Light*, 295.

¹⁷ Debra Popkin and Michael Popkin, eds., *Modern French Literature: A Library of Literary Criticism*, 92.

III. The Clarté Movement

Clarté was published by Barbusse to mark the founding of the Clarté movement, which was formally announced in a manifesto in the newspaper *L'Humanité* on 10 May 1919. Barbusse had been planning such an organization since 1916 when he had first discussed the idea with Raymond Lefebvre and Paul Vaillant-Couturier. In launching the movement he endeavored to rally the intellectual elite, which he called the “workers of the mind,” of all European countries, hoping in the reconciliation following the war to create an international organization that would parallel the various labor internationals in rejecting nationalism and militarism while propagating socialism to the masses. As he himself stated, the movement was intended to be “an international union of intellectuals designed to create an unbroken and unbreakable bond stretching around the world, ignoring the so-called frontiers, uniting in fellowship all disciples of the great ideal of truth.”¹⁸ War veterans, socialists, and radicals were all solicited, and initial support included notable personages from across a broad international academic, political and cultural spectrum, with the French writers Romain Rolland, Anatole France and Georges Duhamel joined by the English writers George Bernard Shaw, Bertrand Russell and Siegfried Sassoon, the Swedish intellectual Ellen Key, and the Austrian writer Stefan Zweig as early participants. The effort was unprecedented, and constituted the first international writers’ association in history.¹⁹ The first international meeting was held in Paris on 9 September 1919, where the movement declared as its goal “the conversion of Europe to a new gospel of social life and the complete reconstruction of the world.”²⁰ In the *L'Humanité* declaration Barbusse stated that, “The new spirit of

¹⁸ *The World Tomorrow* 3, no. 4 (April 1920), p 101.

¹⁹ Michael Denning, *Culture in the Age of Three Worlds* (London: Verso, 2004), 57.

²⁰ Philip Gibbs, “Paris Has Society of Intellectuals,” *New York Times*, September 10, 1919. Oddly enough, Gibbs goes on to note Barbusse’s absence from the gathering, saying that “from what I hear of him I fancy he would smile

liberalism, the disobedience to the old barbaric laws that is trembling and shaking over the whole earth, the sure and profound popular explosion, rising to rule the day and change the face of society, has been created by thinkers” (*L’esprit nouveau de libération, de désobéissance aux vieilles lois barbares, qui frémit et s’agite sur toute la terre, la sûre et profonde poussée populaire, qui monte pour régner un jour et changer la face de la Société, ont été créés par les penseurs*).²¹

The Clarté movement was originally intended to function through persuasion, as Barbusse wanted the revolution to be implanted in men’s minds by its intellectual adherents. By acting upon the realm of consciousness he hoped that his group could enlighten the proletariat to the necessity of social revolution (the movement’s “truth”); further, this emphasis on the ideological instance as the sphere of activity marked an initial resolve on his part to remain independent from political activity. This resolve would become increasingly difficult to maintain for the Clarté movement during its existence, especially given the fact that Barbusse was trying to use ideological practice in order to effect political change. While he had his reasons for this tactical choice, not least of which was a deep-rooted attachment to liberal humanism, many in the movement would end up trying to expedite the process of revolution by channeling their activities directly into political practice.

However, Barbusse was adamant from the outset regarding Clarté’s independence from any political party or movement. As with the earlier novel, the journal *Clarté*, the first issue of which appeared in October 1919, was to support the movement by winning converts through a highlighting of the connection between war (both Great and otherwise) and the current social

at that queer crowd of enthusiasts and intellectuals perspiring hotly in an upper room while they listened to a program of universal brotherhood.”

²¹ Henri Barbusse, “Le Groupe Clarté,” *L’Humanité*, May 5, 1919.

system.²² The movement also had its own press, and its attempts at enlightening the populace to the existence of this link between capitalism and war ran from expository pieces such as Barbusse's *La Lueur dans l'Abîme: Ce que veut le groupe Clarté* (The light in the abyss: what the Clarté group wants), E. D. Morel's *La Genèse diplomatique de la Guerre* (The diplomatic origins of the war), and Henry Torrès' *Histoire d'un Complot* (History of a conspiracy), novels such as Gustave Dupin's *Les Robinsons de la Paix* (The Robinsons of peace), and published lectures such as Gabriel Reuillard's *Les Rapports Franco-Allemands de 1870 à 1914* (The Franco-German relationship from 1870 to 1914) and Charles Rappoport's *Causes occasionnelles et permanentes de Guerre* (Occasional and permanent causes of war). This commitment to ideological practice was expressed by the English section of the movement in 1920 with its claim that "a conflict of ideas has succeeded to the conflict between guns and tanks—a conflict still more profound, since it goes down to the roots of all existing institutions."²³ Given the large proportion of membership with communist sympathies who were drawn to political practice, however, and the rapidly evolving political situation, Barbusse's attempts to keep his movement within the ideological instance were untenable, and the Clarté group evolved into the dialectical relationship of elements favoring an exclusive focus on ideological practice and those advocating political practice.

The rise of the Clarté movement paralleled the explosion of revolutionary activity that followed the end of the war. Attempting to harness as much of this energy as possible and maximize its appeal, the initial goals of the movement were only outlined in vague terms, resulting in a situation where people of radically different political persuasions could join. Thus at its beginning the movement presented a united front, in which a mixture of anarchists,

²² The journal would be published irregularly.

²³ *The World Tomorrow* 3, no. 4 (April 1920), p 101.

syndicalists, communists, liberals, pacifists and the non-communist left mingled with former jingoists in jockeying for position.²⁴ As the postwar revolutionary wave in France reached its peak in early 1920, it brought the Clarté movement to high tide. In May 1920 the review *Clarté*, the group's journal, boasted a readership of 45,000, with members gathering at thirty local sections of the movement across France.²⁵ These numbers soon fell, however, as the revolutionary wave ebbed and Europe made the turn to a lasting postwar stability, and at this point the movement began to lose its ideological heterogeneity and shift toward the left. Reasons for this included the draconian provisions made in the Treaty of Versailles and the continued Allied intervention in Russia, both of which served to convince Barbusse that Lenin had been correct all along and that communist revolution was the only solution for the apparently insoluble contradictions of capitalism. Nor was Barbusse alone in this view, as many of his initial collaborators within France were militant members of the Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière (French Section of the Workers' International), who would in 1920 take the lead in the creation of the Parti Communiste Français (French Communist Party, hereafter PCF).

This turn toward political practice inevitably led to the Third International, and Barbusse's increasing support for that organization alienated the movement's more moderate members. While for many a commitment to revolutionary pacifism meant that the use of force was to be provisionally sanctioned, Barbusse's open endorsement of Bolshevik violence in his 1921 pamphlet *Le Couteau entre les Dents* (The knife between my teeth) was perhaps the final straw, and the pamphlet triggered mass defections. In arguing that it was the duty of the intellectual to lead the masses to revolution, the work was an important contribution to the

²⁴ Nicole Racine, "The Clarté Movement in France, 1919-1921." *Journal of Contemporary History* 2, no. 2 (1967): 208.

²⁵ Weems, "The Intellectual Odyssey of Henri Barbusse," 275.

ideological instance for Barbusse, but one that exemplified the often blurred distinction between the ideological and the political, as its message was meant to resonate in both instances. Perhaps most importantly, it represented a definitive turn for Barbusse toward a specifically Marxist philosophy, for while he had often expressed sympathy with the Bolsheviks, he had up to this point had no more than a superficial understanding of Marx, and had simply believed that his ideas regarding international solidarity were echoed in the Bolshevik project.²⁶

The effect on the Clarté movement of Barbusse's enthusiasm for Bolshevik-style Marxism was fatal. In the face of his insistence on unconditional support for revolutionary violence many national sections, such as the English, balked, and the movement splintered. Its symbolic end came in 1923 when Barbusse formally joined the PCF on the heels of the French army's occupation of the Ruhr Valley, a move that ended all pretenses to his own and Clarté's intellectual independence.²⁷ Eventually, though, Barbusse grew disillusioned with the movement's abandonment of artistic and political autonomy (curious given his own role in the process), and he finally resigned as editor of *Clarté*, severing all links with the movement in 1924.²⁸

Despite Barbusse's best efforts the Clarté movement never attracted the wide constituency he had hoped for. What it did produce, however, was a legacy centered on an obsessive pursuit of truth. It remained vague as to what exactly the concept signified for the movement, to say nothing of what it might have meant to Barbusse personally, but at the very

²⁶ William S. Lewis, *Louis Althusser and the Traditions of French Marxism* (New York: Lexington Books, 2005), 33.

²⁷ It should perhaps be emphasized, though, that the party discipline experienced by Barbusse was of a special variety. From early on the Bolsheviks had realized the utility of Western intellectuals to be greater if they operated in ostensible independence, and Barbusse was given much more leeway than the average party member enjoyed. Sturrock, *The Word from Paris: Essays on Modern French Thinkers and Writers* (London: Verso, 1998), 126.

²⁸ Field, *Three French Writers*, 196 note 20.

least the concept was meant to be equated with socialist ideology.²⁹ *Le Feu* had been praised for exposing the truth, but its truths were in fact several. The first was historical, and was exterior to the novel itself, consisting of the concrete conditions and daily slaughter soldiers were experiencing on the Western Front.³⁰ That *Le Feu* was able to successfully narrate this truth was never in doubt, although as Maurras indicated it was not without stylistic precedents, most notably Zola's 1892 novel *La Débâcle* (The downfall).³¹ Nevertheless, *Le Feu*'s truth was accepted by soldiers of all sides, and the furious denunciations from official and military circles only served to reinforce for Barbusse and his supporters the belief that he was in fact speaking the truth.

The second type of truth was universal, a germinating concept of capitalism's relation to war that would come to fruition in *Clarté*. The first glimpse of this truth occurs in the last chapter of *Le Feu*, aptly titled "Dawn," where the soldiers, emerging from the flood, are convinced that the present war must be the last. However, their thinking does not go much beyond the question of how this is to be achieved, as the most they can accomplish is to posit a vague, class-based concept of equality and a hatred for the system of privilege they see as being responsible for the war. The idea, therefore, remains nascent, and as mentioned previously, after arriving at this truth and establishing to themselves at least the criminality of the war as well as those who are believed to be behind it, the soldiers prepare to return to the trenches and continue the fighting. Though the present conflict may be the last, the necessity of prosecuting it to the bitter end is never called into question.

²⁹ Leonard V. Smith, "Masculinity, Memory, and the French First World War Novel: Henri Barbusse and Roland Dorgelès," in *Authority, Identity and the Social History of the Great War*, ed. Frans Coetzee and Marilyn Shevin-Coetzee (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1995), 257.

³⁰ The argument for historical and eternal truths was a topic in proletarian literature going into the 1930s. See Rosemary Chapman, *Henry Poulaille and Proletarian Literature 1920-1939* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1992), 27-39, specifically her discussion of Paul Nizan on p. 30.

³¹ Sturrock, *The Word from Paris*, 121.

With *Clarté* truth becomes a central concern, and Barbusse is able to translate his anti-clerical, anti-nationalist, anti-capitalist mélange into a coherent cry for social revolution. The situation begins much as it ended in *Le Feu*: Paulin, returning from the war, has arrived at the realization that all men are in fact the same, and that it is the falsities perpetuated by kings, priests, and the idea of nationhood that sustain the boundaries between them. Like the soldiers in *Le Feu*, therefore, Paulin has identified the problem; where he goes beyond them is in his discovery of its solution: the necessity for revolution. Instead of delaying action for a future date like the squad in *Le Feu*, Paulin in *Clarté* understands the importance of the moment, believing that the truth must be spread as quickly as possible in order to prevent society's ruling classes from duping the masses in victory and stabilizing the status quo. He also knows that this commitment to truth will not go unchallenged, but must inevitably lead to revolution. In fact, the process has already begun, and Paulin is convinced that in the coming clash the truth will ultimately prevail, in all likelihood through revolution:

“I believe, in spite of all, in truth's victory. I believe in the momentous value, hereafter inviolable, of those few truly fraternal men in all the countries of the world, who, in the oscillation of national egoisms let loose, stand up and stand out, steadfast as the glorious statues of Right and Duty. To-night I believe—nay, I am certain—that the new order will be built upon that archipelago of men. . . Truth is only revolutionary by reason of error's disorder. Revolution is Order.”³²

There remains one final facet to Barbusse's truth, one that focuses on the act of reading. Barbusse's discussion of the truth, especially as it appears in *Clarté*, is more than a statement or declaration of belief in the concept, it is also an agreement or at least an assumption on the part of Barbusse that his understanding of the truth is shared by the reader.³³ Thus the enlightenment of Paulin at the end of *Clarté* is expected by Barbusse to extend to the reader, who is not only to share in the belief that Paulin has in fact been enlightened, but is to second his conclusions as

³² Henri Barbusse, *Light*, 296.

³³ Smith, “Masculinity, Memory, and the French First World War Novel,” 261.

well. And though this may have been the case with much of Barbusse's readership, the reaction could hardly have been universal, as the war had produced about as many "truths" as people who fought it. For Barbusse, however, as for Paulin, the truth was that the old structure of society was unworthy of continuation and in need of immediate change. And although vacillating on the methods for such change at the outset, Barbusse would eventually settle on the necessity of upheaval at any cost. This set him on a collision course with other members of the movement, for although the shared sense of the importance of international cooperation initially obscured fundamental differences in Clarté's approach to social change, these differences would eventually come to a head on this very question.

V: The Clarté Problematic

Barbusse's postwar concept of truth, as expounded in *Clarté*, can be defined as a sense of internationalism coupled with a belief in the need for social revolution.³⁴ In fact, this internationalism, grounded in humanism, was easily the most important aspect of Barbusse's thought and, when extended to the Clarté movement, remained a key facet throughout its existence, as there was never a moment when the movement did not look upon itself as international in orientation. Paulin had again paved the way for such a posture in *Clarté*:

National cliques cultivate narrowness and ignorance, they cause originality to waste away; and the national academies, to which a residue of superstition lends respect, are only pompous ways of upholding ruins. The domes of those Institutes which look so grand when they tower above you are as ridiculous as extinguishers. You must widen and internationalize, without pause or limit, all which permits of it. With its barriers collapsed, you must fill society with broad daylight and magnificent spaces; with patience and heroism must you clear the ways which lead from the individual to humanity, the ways which were stopped up with corpses of ideas and with stone images all along their great curving horizons.³⁵

³⁴ Weems, "The Intellectual Odyssey of Henri Barbusse," 301.

³⁵ Barbusse, *Light*, 292.

Internationalism was crucial for Barbusse in that without it there could be no guarantees of preventing another war. He therefore staked the entire success or failure of his movement on the existence of internationalism, believing it (like Paulin) to be an essential aspect of the empirical, universal subject “man”; to succeed, his movement need only appeal to this already-existing essence. It should be noted, therefore, that Barbusse’s internationalism at this stage was worlds apart from that understood in the Marxist or Bolshevik senses, based as they were on the notion of class. Instead, his internationalism was grounded in three specific elements which, taken together, served as the foundation for the theory of the Clarté movement as a practice. This foundation was the Clarté *problematic*.

The first element of the problematic was a shared concept of and belief in liberal humanism. For the first years of its existence, up until 1921, the movement and Barbusse put great stock in the notion, and initially the identification of the movement as humanist in origin gave it a wide appeal, as many of its most important early participants were believers in the concept. Barbusse himself was during this time convinced that it was men who made and could make history, and although a close look at Lenin and the Bolshevik project finally seemed to convince him otherwise, it is arguable that he never completely shed his humanist faith. Thus, in one of the supreme ironies of a movement that was soon to witness a bitter anti-humanist argument among its members, the intellectual roots of Clarté’s conscious effort to upend the bourgeois order lay precisely in the latter’s humanist ideology. The cracks in this humanist ideal had already begun to appear in the Western European movements by 1921, and they would be widened further in the East Asian manifestations.

Liberal humanism was joined by the second element of the Clarté problematic, a general anti-war stance coupled with an understanding of the necessity of revolutionary pacifism. The

majority of the countries initially targeted by the movement had either taken part in or were in close proximity to nations that had taken part in the Great War, and this experience had fostered a collective hostility toward and rejection of war overall. The populations of France, the United Kingdom, Germany and Austria, all of which initially saw the successful expansion of the movement, shared a bitter memory of the War, and this served as an impetus in their desire to prevent future conflicts through cooperation and social change. This did not make them pacifists, though, as their shared aversion to warfare was limited to that waged on behalf of the capitalist state. Aware that the removal of that state might not necessarily come through peaceful means, many of the movement's members were prepared to tolerate a measure of violence provided it was used in the interests of the social revolution Clarté was calling for.

The third element of the Clarté problematic dealt with who exactly was to undertake this social revolution (whether through violent or peaceful means): the industrial proletariat. For Barbusse, the intellectuals who formed the movement were to serve as the vanguard in the creation of a new society, but it was the proletariat which was to do the actual creating, with intellectuals showing the way in the capacity of foremen or overseers. Thus, humanism would bring the intellectuals in, and the proletariat would do their bidding. Because this was a stance similar to that taken by the Second International, and supported by Lenin in his *What is to be Done?*, the movement was on familiar ground in Europe, as it was in one sense simply trying to reconstruct the internationalist framework that had collapsed with that organization in 1914. However, Barbusse's ambition went further, as he anticipated his organization rising above the workers' internationals to direct all of them in a united front. He would not be able to function without them, though, and as with its dependence on a collective rejection of war, countries in which the Clarté movement saw its greatest successes were those with the existence of a large,

organized industrial proletariat.

From its inception in 1919, the Clarté problematic served as the basis for the theory of the Clarté movement as a practice as it attempted to spread worldwide, and the unchanging nature of the problematic gave rise to superstructural changes in the movement as it entered different social formations. For in serving as its theoretical scaffolding the problematic also limited the range of outlook for the Clarté movement, presenting difficulties for theoretical coherence in the face of changing realities within individual societies. This was illustrated several times when the movement was faced with a conjuncture which presented certain existential questions. The most prominent instance of this was a 1921 debate between Barbusse and Romain Rolland over the role of the intellectual in revolution. In the debate Rolland argued against the necessity for revolutionary violence, while Barbusse was unwavering in his support. Pared down to a question of individual choice, the argument brought to the fore the liberal humanist element of the Clarté problematic, and while this brief exposure went unrecognized by the participants of the debate, it did not escape the notice of Japanese and Koreans. On the contrary, it was to provide them with the impetus to launch their symptomatic readings of the movement, readings that preceded the theoretical adaptation of the movement to their specific conjunctures.

VI. The Clarté Movement Internationally

Barbusse had originally envisioned Clarté as rivaling (if not exceeding) in size existing entities such as the Second (and now Third) International. As such, he had encouraged the establishment of sections in as many countries as possible, with the plan that the movement would start with a network of intellectuals at the local and national level, and expand progressively to the international level. Thus, even before the launch of the movement in May

1919 Barbusse had already secured the participation of intellectuals from several European nations. Domestically he was able to enlist many young intellectuals as well as established writers such as Anatole France (whose name was the only one to appear alongside that of Barbusse in the initial Clarté declaration published in *L'Humanité*).

Other sections were quickly established, representing what Frank Field has called “the flower of the left-wing European intelligentsia.”³⁶ The English section was launched on 14 November 1919, supported by a group which included the critic and playwright George Bernard Shaw, the political journalists Robert Dell and E. D. Morel, the poet Siegfried Sassoon, and the writers H. G. Wells and Aldous Huxley. Also involved was philosopher and polymath Bertrand Russell, who in the immediate postwar period shared much of Barbusse’s philosophy. Like Barbusse he was a revolutionary pacifist, although in this stance he actually preceded Barbusse, who had only adopted the position in 1920. However, whereas Barbusse’s trajectory would see him increasingly disposed to revolutionary violence and attempting to link the Clarté movement with the Third International, Russell would move in the opposite direction. This was the result of a trip he made to Russia in May 1920, where after spending time individually with Lenin and “in company” with Trotsky he was able to see the results of the revolution up close. Upon his return a disillusioned Russell stated unequivocally that the endeavors of the Bolsheviks and the Third International could not possibly lead to socialism.³⁷

Clarté was received enthusiastically in the former Central Powers as well, which was encouraging for Barbusse, as a large part of his project was structured around the mitigation of the historical enmity between France and Germany. The German section of the movement began

³⁶ Field, *Three French Writers*, 48.

³⁷ “[The] method by which Moscow aims at establishing Socialism is a pioneer method, rough and dangerous, too heroic to count the cost of the opposition it arouses. I do not believe that by this method a stable or desirable form of Socialism can be established.” Bertrand Russell, *The Practice and Theory of Bolshevism* (London: Unwin Brothers Ltd., 1920), 8.

in 1919 with the support of the writers René Schickele and Heinrich Mann. The newly-created Austrian Republic was represented by the writer Stefan Zweig, and his counterpart in the Hungarian section was the film critic Béla Balázs. Barbusse found a receptive voice in non-belligerent nations as well, as the Scandinavian countries saw the establishment of local sections, with members including the aforementioned Key in Sweden. In Italy, although there was no official movement, Clarté wielded significant influence, with its journal serving as the editorial model for Antonio Gramsci's journal *Ordine Nuovo* [New order].³⁸

Despite this widespread support, however, there was little uniformity among Clarté sections internationally apart from their attraction to Barbusse's initial proclamations.³⁹ His break with those proclamations in 1921 sent shockwaves through the movement, with some following him to an endorsement of Bolshevism, and others breaking with the movement altogether. In addition, in many countries Clarté remained little more than an entity on paper, and when sections did get off the ground they were often completely different from Clarté sections operating elsewhere. For example, in Greece Clarté was credited with founding the Communist Party, whereas the Scandinavian sections took a decidedly anti-communist tone; also, some sections, such as that in Brazil, were led by politicians, the very segments Barbusse had railed against in his search for intellectuals.⁴⁰ And this drive to create an international of intellectuals was in itself distasteful to yet other potential adherents, such as the American Max Eastman, whose journal *The Liberator* had been proposed as a possible organ around which a section of Clarté might develop in the United States.⁴¹ Nevertheless, the movement found followers in

³⁸ Walter L. Adamson, *Hegemony and Revolution: A Study of Antonio Gramsci's Political and Cultural Theory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 51.

³⁹ Michael M. Hall and Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, "The Clarté Group in Brazil." *Le Mouvement Social*, no. 111 (1980): 217.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Not only was Eastman not interested, he also predicted the split in the movement several months before it occurred, saying "[if] M. Barbusse and his associates are really revolutionary in their wills, however unwilling their

many locations across Europe, Africa, and South America, and although they had superstructural differences, ensconced beneath them all was the Clarté problematic and its reliance on liberal humanism, revolutionary pacifism, and an organized industrial proletariat.

VII. Romain Rolland (1866-1944)

Barbusse's assumption that the intellectual had a prominent role to play in the creation of a postwar order was not unique. Many had voiced similar sentiments during the war, perhaps none so passionately as Romain Rolland, who had from the start staked out the intellectual's territory in much of his writing. Rolland had been popular before the war as a playwright and novelist, with his best-known work being the ten-volume roman fleuve *Jean-Christophe*, published from 1904 to 1912. The allure of the work, a chronicle of the life of German musical genius Jean-Christophe Krafft, lay in its humanism and idealism, much of which was centered on a rapprochement between France and Germany. Rolland's support for this pan-European spirit, evident throughout the work, was exemplified in a symbolic scene where Jean-Christophe crosses the Rhine River, the historical barrier between the two nations.⁴² This optimism fades toward the end of the work, however, as it looks toward the cataclysm of 1914.

At the beginning of the war the forty-nine-year-old Rolland was in Switzerland. Like many others he hoped for a quick French victory, as much for Germany's sake as for France's, as he viewed the present Germany of Prussian militarism to be suppressing the idealistic legacy of

minds might be to enter into the hard science of revolution, they will soon learn from the facts themselves that what they are trying to do can not be done. An organization for the revolutionary transformation of the world, which contains bourgeois liberals like H. G. Wells and Blasco Ibanez on one side, and proletarian revolutionaries like [Théophile] Steinlen and Anatole France and Raymond Lefebvre on the other, will either split in two at the first active effort it makes, or making no active effort will expire with a long sigh like any pious and impractical intention." Max Eastman, "The Clarté Movement." *The Liberator* 3, no. 4 (1920): 42.

⁴² Harold March, *Romain Rolland* (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1971), 68.

the illustrious writers, artists, and thinkers of the nation's past.⁴³ His support for a French victory was strengthened at the end of August with the German Army's burning of the Belgian town of Louvain, in which it destroyed (along with everything else) the university and library, causing a wealth of irreplaceable cultural material to be lost. Incensed, Rolland penned an open letter to the German dramatist Gerhard Hauptmann, calling on him and the intellectual elite in Germany to condemn such actions:

Are you the grandsons of Goethe or of Attila? Are you making war on enemies or on the human spirit? Kill men if you like, but respect masterpieces. They are the patrimony of the human race. You, like all the rest of us, are its depositories; in pillaging it, as you do, you show yourselves unworthy of our great heritage, unworthy to take your place in that little European army which is civilization's guard of honor.⁴⁴

The letter sparked a flurry of correspondence and essays between Rolland and others that was published collectively in 1915 under the title *Au-dessus de la Mêlée* (Above the battle). By this time Rolland's thinking had shifted from a simple condemnation of Germany to a concern about the implications of the war for European civilization as a whole.⁴⁵

At its core *Au-dessus de la Mêlée* lamented what Rolland saw as the complete loss of reason among European nations in their rush to war. He was shocked at how quickly the various nationalities and peoples, in particular the socialists of the Second International, had capitulated to xenophobia and nationalism, hurriedly lining the trenches for a slaughter that, for him, was nothing short of a European civil war. The work earned Rolland both respect and censure, and the savage attack launched by intellectuals of several warring nations only increased his stature among sympathetic listeners. Bolstered by the 1915 Nobel Prize for literature, throughout the

⁴³ William Thomas Starr, *Romain Rolland and a World at War* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1956), 3.

⁴⁴ Romain Rolland, *Above the Battle*, trans. C. K. Ogden (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1916), 21.

⁴⁵ Frank Field, *British and French Writers of the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 192.

war he continued to issue from Switzerland a steady stream of exhortations to the belligerents to recover their sanity.

Rolland emerged from the war with considerable prestige, and like Barbusse he had an interest in creating a pan-European organization of intellectuals. A month after the Clarté movement was declared in *L'Humanité* Rolland published in the same paper a “Déclaration d'Indépendance de l'Esprit” (Declaration of the independence of the mind), in which he continued his efforts at facilitating rapprochement between the intellectuals of Europe. The “Déclaration” reaffirmed Rolland’s insistence on the absolute independence of intellectuals, who in the service of humanity were to overcome the interests of party, class, and nation. He did not blame intellectuals for supporting their respective governments during the war (a fact that put off some potential signatories, angered by his inclusion of German intellectuals), and hoped to now enlist as many as possible in building an organization that in the future would be able to rise above the interests of the state. The “Déclaration” was not an incitement to social action, however, which Rolland viewed as transient and personally distasteful; instead, the focus was on what he considered to be the eternal qualities of truth.⁴⁶ It enjoyed wide appeal, and its initial signatories included many who were also participating in the Clarté movement.

The similarity in the immediate postwar stances of Rolland and Barbusse meant that some sort of cooperation was to be expected, and the Clarté movement, at least in its initial stage, owed much to Rolland’s involvement. Like many others, Rolland had been impressed with *Le Feu* and was initially supportive of Barbusse’s Clarté project. Problems soon emerged, however, as Rolland became concerned at the inclusion of men such as Anatole France and Maurice Maeterlinck, whose wartime jingoism he thought conflicted with the stated goals of the movement. He felt that some signatories were simply evolving their stances to remain in step

⁴⁶ Starr, *Romain Rolland and a World at War*, 167.

with public opinion and that others who had previously attacked his own anti-war stance (such as France and Maeterlinck) had suddenly come around to support it.⁴⁷ As such, he resigned from the Clarté central committee in June 1919, hardly a month into the movement's existence, and the rift between him and Barbusse continued to grow as the Clarté movement increased its support for the Third International. Their differences would erupt into a debate over the responsibilities of the intellectual during a time of revolution, a debate that would have wide-ranging implications for the Clarté movement worldwide.

VIII. The Rolland-Barbusse Debate, 1921-22

The debate between Rolland and Barbusse occurred at the end of 1921, and the resulting schism which opened up in the movement had a definitive influence on all Clarté groups. The foundations of the argument had been laid earlier with Rolland's resignation from the committee and Barbusse's continuing support for Bolshevism, and it was here that these issues came to a head. The argument between the two effectively led to the end of the Clarté movement, for at its conclusion Barbusse remained steadfast in his course, driving away many of the more moderate members, who were angry that the humanist manifesto they had signed their names to was now being used to justify an increasingly inhuman amount of revolutionary violence.

At its core the dispute that arose between Barbusse and Rolland concerned one of the most important theoretical tenets of Clarté, that of the social and political responsibilities of the intellectual during a time of revolution. Specifically, it pitted Rolland's adherence to ideological practice against Barbusse's growing belief in the necessity of direct political practice. At issue as well was a concern over whether revolutionary violence should be supported unconditionally in order to attain the society Clarté envisioned. The background for the debate was a growing

⁴⁷ George Paizis, *Marcel Martinet: Poet of the Revolution* (London: Francis Boutle Publishers, 2007), 195.

uneasiness among Western European intellectuals with the violence being perpetuated by the Bolsheviks in Russia. This was punctuated toward the end of the debate in March 1922 with the announcement of the trial of the Socialist Revolutionaries, which further complicated Western European intellectual support for Bolshevik rule.⁴⁸

Barbusse launched the first salvo of the debate in December 1921 in an article in the journal *Clarté* called *L'Autre Moitié du Devoir: A propos du 'Rollandisme'* (The other half of duty: concerning Rollandism). In it he supported the use of violence as a catalyst for social change, claiming that words were no longer sufficient to bring about a new order. According to Barbusse, although Rolland's condemnation of the Great War in 1915's *Au-dessus de la mêlée* had preserved the independence of the intellectual, it had only constituted a beginning. He now needed to take the next step and help in the construction of a new social order:

This noble and dreadful impotence must be abandoned. To escape it we must admit that the struggle against the false laws of society entails two steps: the destructive and the constructive; and that these twain are inseparable and consequential. . . Failing of support upon a positive plan, the most vigorous and loftiest criticism drifts like a cloud. A philippic against the existing order is but a vain complaint unless it be the reverse side of a new statute.⁴⁹

Declaring Rolland and his followers guilty of stopping at the destructive stage, Barbusse leveled a bevy of accusations against them including antipathy to politics, a fear of violence, trafficking in moralistic and inapplicable ideas, and a hope that change could be brought about without direct action.⁵⁰ Condemning this isolated, ivory tower humanitarianism, Barbusse defended the intellectual's sanctioning of revolutionary violence, urging Rolland to regard it situationally and in context. For him, intellectuals who considered their job done after having simply lodged an

⁴⁸ Marc Jansen, *A Show Trial Under Lenin: The Trial of the Socialist Revolutionaries, Moscow 1922*, trans. Jean Sanders (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1982), 164.

⁴⁹ Henri Barbusse and Romain Rolland, "The Ivory Tower: An Argument," *The Nation* 114, no. 2953 (1922): 144.

⁵⁰ David James Fisher, *Romain Rolland and the Politics of Intellectual Engagement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 91.

eloquent complaint against the evils of society were little better than the anarchists, with their penchant for operating on the extreme fringe of the social struggle. Rolland, responding in January 1922 in the Brussels-based journal *L'Art libre* (Free art), held fast to his pacifism, arguing that in the case of Russia the ends did not justify the means, and stressing his reluctance to sanction militarism, police terror and brute force simply because they had become the instruments of communists rather than plutocrats, and he urged Barbusse to see beyond the short-term:

We seek, for those who shall come after us, to save and to concentrate the forces of reason, of love, of faith, which will aid them in weathering the tempest when, having accomplished its work of a day, your credo—pardon me for foreseeing its end—your communist credo will be lost in the shadows, compromised in the injustices of the combat, or led astray by the indifference which follows fatally upon the heels of all victories too exclusively political.⁵¹

Bringing into the debate his growing interest in Mohandas Gandhi he argued that Europe needed time, generations perhaps, to heal from the War, and that further bloodshed would not hasten the establishment of a socialist society, a development which he placed in the distant future.⁵²

Barbusse countered by seizing on what he saw as Rolland's distinction between the concepts of *liberté* (liberty) and *égalité* (equality), and he painted Rolland as a detached mystic who refused to engage and take risks, preferring instead to remain "above the battle." As noted by David James Fisher, for Barbusse, Rolland's defense of liberty "was perfectly consistent with his position: liberty was a vague notion readily modifiable by external circumstances. Equality, in contrast, was scientifically exact and attainable."⁵³ For Barbusse it was simple: the intellectual

⁵¹ Barbusse and Rolland, "The Ivory Tower: An Argument," 146-7.

⁵² Fisher, *Romain Rolland and the Politics of Intellectual Engagement*, 96.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 98. Barbusse's position had appeared as far back as *Le Feu* in a passage in which the narrator comments that "equality is always the same. Liberty and fraternity are words while equality is a fact." Henri Barbusse, *Under Fire*, 349.

needed to take an all or nothing stance, and a dogmatic defense of the individual's right to an obscure concept of liberty was incapable of effecting (or protecting) real social change.

Though the debate frayed relations between Barbusse and Rolland it was not entirely unexpected, as divergences in opinion had been evident for several years. Rolland had voiced misgivings on the practicality of the Clarté movement from the start, expressing his concerns with the intellectual composition of the movement and resigning from its central committee in June 1919. He did this in part to protest what he believed was the deceptive editorial structure of the journal *Clarté*, which consisted of two parallel committees: an ornamental committee made up of internationally recognizable figures like Anatole France, Upton Sinclair, and H. G. Wells, and a secretive central committee made up of the Parisian inner circle of the Clarté movement. These misgivings were confirmed during the course of the debate, as Barbusse maintained full editorial control of the journal, using it as his platform to attack Rolland. He also refused to publish Rolland's responses, forcing the latter to turn to the peripheral *L'Art libre*.

Fed up with the suffocating reaction and intrigue of Paris, Rolland returned to Switzerland in April 1922. There he tried to expand the parameters of the debate by involving other European intellectuals, most of whom actually sided with him (whether publicly or privately). He also founded a new Paris-based journal, *Europe*, that appeared in February 1923, but by then the debate had long since subsided. Fisher cites as a fitting epilogue a rather scathing critique of Rolland published by Leon Trotsky in May 1922, where he argued for the inefficacy of Rolland's Gandhi-inspired pacifism, which he labeled outdated and irrelevant:

As long as the people suffer the dictatorship of capital, Romain Rolland poetically and aesthetically condemns the bourgeoisie; but should the working class endeavor to burst the yoke of their exploiters by the only means in their power, by the force of revolution, they in turn encounter the ethical and aesthetic condemnation of Romain Rolland. And thus human history is in sum only

material for artistic interpretation or for moral judgment. Romain Rolland, the pretentious individualist, belongs to the past.”⁵⁴

A chastened Rolland returned to creative work and the debate marked the break between Barbusse’s insistence on the intellectual’s engagement in the pursuit of social change and Rolland’s continued adherence to pacifism. Shortly after the conclusion of the debate many supporters (such as Russell) withdrew from the Clarté movement, dismayed at Barbusse’s attempts to link the group to Bolshevism, and the debate and its aftermath can be taken as an important, if not deciding, factor in the end of the Clarté movement as a unified whole.

Through its contestation on a theoretical level, the debate revealed several important characteristics of the underlying Clarté problematic. As the product of the stabilization of Western European societies after the war, the debate was the first significant challenge to Clarté’s ability to adapt to conditions outside of its original conjuncture. At issue was the uneasy coexistence within the problematic of two views of society: liberal humanism and the individual on one hand, and the proletariat and class struggle on the other. The debate illustrated that, because of the change in conditions, both could not exercise an equal amount of determinacy over Clarté’s development. Instead, one had to be dominant: it was either going to be men who made history, or the class struggle. Barbusse’s position showed his belief in the latter. Further, it showed that Clarté’s response to the changing situation was to dig in, promoting the element of its problematic tied to Bolshevism. Barbusse’s humanism remained, but it was no longer as

⁵⁴ Fisher, *Romain Rolland and the Politics of Intellectual Engagement*, 107. The comments were first printed in *Izvestia* in May 1922 and later reprinted in English in the journal *Labour Monthly* in August 1922. While obviously critical of Rolland, Trotsky’s position should not be taken as an endorsement of the Clarté movement. Two years earlier, in July 1920, he had offered a sweeping assessment of the movement (and others like it), remarking that “Purely intellectual groups like Clarté are highly symptomatic of a pre-revolutionary epoch, when the small and best section of bourgeois intelligentsia, sensing the approach of a profoundly revolutionary crisis, edges away from the utterly rotted ruling classes and seeks a new ideological orientation for itself. Organically inclined toward individualism and toward separating out as isolated groupings on the basis of personal sympathies and views, elements of this type are, by their very nature as intellectuals, capable neither of elaborating nor—all the less so—of applying a definitive system of revolutionary ideas; and they therefore reduce their work to an abstract and purely idealistic propaganda, painted up to resemble Communism and diluted with a purely humanitarian bias.” Leon Trotsky, *The First 5 Years of the Communist International, Volume 1* (New York: Monad Press, 1972), 92-93.

important as his belief in the proletariat. Theoretically, Clarté had broken with its underlying problematic, the view that held Man to be the Subject of history.

VIII. The End of the Clarté Movement and Later Activities of Barbusse

By the end of 1923 the Clarté movement as it had existed in 1919 was gone. Though its journal was still functioning, radical elements had usurped editorial control and had aligned it firmly with Bolshevism (several years later it would become a Trotskyist vehicle under the name *Lutte des classes*). Barbusse, disillusioned by these developments, had begun to withdraw from active participation. However, he himself surely must bear some of the blame, for it was he who had initially opened the floodgates to a shift toward political practice through his polemic with Rolland. While he may have been surprised at the extremes to which his organization had turned (extremes including revolutionary conspiracy), this turn had been made possible through his support of revolutionary violence. In this he was heading in the opposite direction from many foreign sections of the movement, for even though the beginning of Clarté had seen associates prepared to brook violence in the service of socialism, an increasing chorus of figures such as Russell provided cautionary words regarding the efficacy of such a strategy, and soon the ongoing violence became difficult to sanction.

Barbusse, who had ignored these warnings initially, did come to share Rolland's contention that the violence in revolutionary Russia had gone too far, and he became hesitant to support it. By this time it made little difference, though, as he no longer exercised any control over the organization, and he himself finally plunged into political practice in January 1923, joining the PCF on the heels of the French Army's march into the Ruhr. The turn toward

communism and political practice was complete, and the goal of making a revolution in men's minds was abandoned as Barbusse turned to political practice to make the revolution in reality.

After his withdrawal from Clarté, Barbusse remained indefatigable, and he was extremely active throughout the 1920s and 1930s, organizing conferences, holding speaking tours, and launching institutions such as the World Committee Against Fascism and War. In 1928 one of his more lasting efforts was achieved with the founding of the periodical *Monde*, which in many ways constituted a second attempt of the Clarté movement. Whereas the latter had quickly escaped his control, with *Monde* Barbusse showed that he had learned much from his earlier mistakes, as the periodical was kept strictly under his editorship from its inception until his death in 1935, and remaining largely independent of Party influence.⁵⁵ As with Clarté, *Monde* was focused on intellectuals, as Barbusse hoped once again to create an international movement which would join hands with the workers. In this he was successful, as the governing body of *Monde* included some of the most prominent intellectuals of the day, with the names of Albert Einstein, Maxim Gorky, Victor Serge, and Upton Sinclair adorning its pages. Barbusse had by this time even reconciled with Romain Rolland, who joined as well.

Barbusse eventually moved to the Soviet Union, a major coup for the country, and he was fêted extensively until his death. While in Russia he worked at a furious pace, diving headlong into the anti-fascist movement and the defense (ideological and political) of the Soviet Union, and continuing his appearances at various international meetings and conferences. However, his relationship with his Soviet hosts was contentious, and his insistence on ideological independence coupled with his resistance to becoming a propaganda tool for the country earned him the ire of communist writers both there and internationally. He was also drawn into local

⁵⁵ Guessler Normand, "Barbusse and his *Monde* (1928-1935): Progeny of the Clarté Movement and the Review Clarté." *Journal of Contemporary History* 11, no. 2/3 (1976): 182.

politics, particularly the struggle between Stalin and Trotsky as well as later drama involving former Clarté member and communist Victor Serge.

Another notable aspect of Barbusse's later career was his role in the development of proletarian literature.⁵⁶ Barbusse was very active in the field of proletarian literature, and was instrumental in creating the official variant which would be codified and supported in Soviet Russia before being exported internationally through the Communist International. However, even here his contributions were not without controversy, as on many points his views failed to coincide with the concept then taking shape in the Soviet Union. Eventually, and in yet another example of one of his creations escaping his control, Barbusse's insistence on intellectual independence earned him censure at the 1930 Kharkov Writer's Conference, where the delegates attempted to pressure him into making *Monde* conform ideologically to the International Association of Revolutionary Writers (MORP), a group he had been instrumental in founding.⁵⁷ Barbusse died of pneumonia in Moscow on 30 August 1935, and was given an enormous state funeral before his remains were returned to France, to be buried in the Père Lachaise Cemetery.

X. Conclusion

The various national Clarté movements attempted to carve out a space in the ideological and political instances of several Western European societies in the aftermath of the Great War. Born from experience with and reaction to the war and its perpetrators, they wanted to illuminate for the masses the true nature of the capitalist society they held responsible for the conflict as well as convince them of the necessity for its overthrow and replacement by a universal republic. The persuasiveness of the movements relied on a set of underlying concepts, held to be universal,

⁵⁶ Discussed at length in Chapter Five.

⁵⁷ Ludmila Stern, *Western Intellectuals and the Soviet Union, 1920-1940: from Red Square to the Left Bank* (London: Routledge, 2007), 53.

that helped the movements adjust to conditions in each nation in which they were active. While these adjustments were in some instances significant, enough commonalities existed among Western European societies that Clarté was able to enjoy a considerable appeal during the first few years of its existence, and Barbusse facilitated this as much as possible, maintaining correspondence with adherents in not only Europe but North Africa and Latin America as well.⁵⁸

The appeal of Clarté lasted until the arrival of postwar stability challenged the movement to adapt to a conjuncture different from the one that had fostered its emergence, and its inability to do so exposed both the limited applicability of its underlying concepts as well as the fact that its universal pretenses were in fact based on local conditions. Brought to light was the fact that the Clarté movements were by definition a product of specific conjunctures of the social formations in which they arose, being in essence an overdetermined result of these particular moments in their societies. Supportive of Clarté's rise had been the large scale reaction to the war at its end, disillusionment with the Treaty of Versailles, and the threat (or promise) of communist revolution. These were present in most societies in which Clarté operated, and the movements took full advantage of them in their early successes. The biggest test for Clarté as a whole (or *groupe*), and related to the specificity of its emergence, was its global ambition. And the movement was indeed global; the question that arises, however, is whether or not it succeeded internationally with its original theoretical base (its problematic) intact, or whether it was forced to break with that base and create something new. For even though the movements enjoyed a large measure of autonomy while occupying a space in particular instances of their own social formation, when taken out of this overdetermined whole and inserted into corresponding instances in a foreign social formation, it was inevitable (and will be shown) that changes would have to ensue if the movement was to survive.

⁵⁸ Weems, "The Intellectual Odyssey of Henri Barbusse," 278.

When judged according to its own agenda, the Clarté movement must be deemed a failure. It succeeded neither in preventing another war nor in uniting intellectuals and workers in an organization that would prevail over national differences in the service of an overarching concept of socialism and humanity. Dwindling membership showed that Barbusse's dogged support of Bolshevism and the Third International had caused widespread defections, but had not been able to attract a corresponding membership enthusiastic about the change in orientation; if anything, the declining numbers showed the limited appeal of his new position. Barbusse's joining of the Communist Party in 1923 further served to call into question the relevancy of his organization, for if intellectuals were duty-bound to join in the struggle with the communists in the Party, there was little reason for them to join the Clarté movement. Additionally, the growing number of Communist Party members in Clarté's governing body blurred the line between the two entities even more so, leading to a complete turnaround from Barbusse's intent to have the organization remain above party politics.

With the benefit of historical hindsight, it can be said that the charged atmosphere of early 1919, the conjuncture that had given birth to the Clarté problematic, was gone by the end of 1921. The initial success the movement had enjoyed in Europe had masked problems in its theoretical underpinnings, and these were reflected in the dispute between Barbusse and Rolland. At the time, this dispute failed to bring to the surface a complete view of the Clarté problematic, which might have resulted in orientational shifts that would have allowed the movement to survive in the new conjunctures in which it found itself. Instead, the movement was unable to adapt to the change in circumstance, and quickly faded from the postwar political and intellectual landscape. The problematic remained, however, and at the same time it was ceding ground in Europe it was being propagated in Japan by Komaki Ōmi, to whom we now turn.

CHAPTER TWO:
KOMAKI ŌMI AND THE CLARTÉ MOVEMENT

[Men] (plural), in the concrete sense, are necessarily subjects (plural) *in* history, because they act *in* history as subjects (plural). But there is no Subject (singular) *of* history. And I will go even further: “men” are not “the subjects” *of* history. – Louis Althusser, Remark on the Category: “Process without a Subject or Goal(s)”

I. Introduction

The Clarté movement’s ability to spread beyond the initial confines of postwar Europe to Japan can be attributed to many historical factors. Had the movement attempted to take root any number of years before or after, it would have seen both a different situation and results. However, by way of its historical development up to the years 1919-21, Japan contained many political and ideological similarities to Western Europe, assuring that Clarté theory would enjoy at least some measure of reception among intellectuals, its target audience. In fact, many Japanese intellectuals had been just as active in promoting elements of the Clarté problematic as their European counterparts. Mushanokōji Saneatsu’s 1916 play *Aru seinen no yume* (Dream of a youth), for example, while not necessarily drawing on the same wartime experience as Barbusse’s *Le Feu*, had its basis in anti-war and humanist sentiment, and even contained an element of revolutionary pacifism. Politically, the unionized industrial proletariat so important to Clarté also existed in Japan, and although not yet commensurate in size with its European counterparts, it had been enjoying an expanded amount of influence following the conclusion of the war. Though different quantitatively, therefore, the necessary groundwork for Clarté success had already been laid.

With these factors in mind, and as will be shown in detail with Mushanokōji's play, it could be argued that the Clarté problematic already existed in Japan; what remained was simply for its scattered elements to be unified theoretically. Acting in the capacity of overseer of this process was Komaki Ōmi. Komaki is credited with introducing Clarté to Japan via the journal *Tane maku hito* in February 1921, though he was certainly not the only one engaged in promoting the movement, which would have found an interested audience irrespective of his activities. And yet, Komaki's influence personally on the development of the movement there is undeniable, and it is arguable that, when juxtaposed with the agency of Barbusse, severely curtailed amidst a crowded field of competing national sections, Komaki's influence in shaping the movement was greater.

The fact that it was Komaki Ōmi who consolidated the Japanese section, though, predetermined the direction the movement would take, for while wide-ranging in terms of number of members, Komaki's experience and knowledge of the Clarté movement was limited to the French section, and this would have a bearing upon his sympathies and perception of events as they unfolded both in Europe and within the Clarté movement in Japan. In fact, it was to be the French iteration alone that would retain a determinacy over the development of Clarté in Japan. This was of course inevitable, as Komaki's encounter with the movement came during its infancy, before the other national sections had been formed. The effect of this was to place the French section in a dominant position, and throughout the brief life of Clarté in East Asia those involved with the movement showed little or no evidence of contact with any sections other than the French. Thus, they looked upon developments in France as both a blueprint for their own foundations and as a guide during theoretical disputes. This meant that not only would the

French section of Clarté set the example for the development of the movement within Japan proper, it would serve as the only example for the Japanese empire as a whole.

Komaki's activities on behalf of Clarté in Japan amounted to fashioning its theory over the already-existing elements of its problematic. He was able to achieve this due to his experiences in Europe during the period of the Great War. He was exposed to socialism before war's outbreak, drawn into pacifist activity during the fighting, and met with Barbusse and other figures of the Clarté and the international communist movements following the war's conclusion. This background and first-hand participation ensured that he would return to Japan with not only a privileged position from which to access information but one from which his authority over the development of the movement would go unchallenged, at least until the emergence of the Japanese Communist Party in June 1922. While not constituting the "subject" of the historical transfer of Clarté to Japan (indeed, with the constitutive elements of its problematic already in existence, the movement had no need of a subject), therefore, he nevertheless played the crucial role in its constitution there by assembling the already-existing parts into a replica of the French movement as it had existed in late 1919.

II. Komaki Ōmi

Komaki Ōmi was born Ōmiya Komaki in the port city of Tsuchizaki, Akita Prefecture, on 10 May 1894. He came from a prosperous background: his father Eiji, originally from the wealthy Hatayama family, had married into the equally successful Ōmiya merchant family, taking over the family business before serving as a member of first the prefectural assembly and then the Imperial Diet. Komaki attended elementary school in Tsuchizaki until graduation in March 1906, after which he left for Tokyo, where he attended the Gyōsei Middle School until

March 1910. In July he and his father traveled via Siberia to Belgium, where the latter was a delegate at the Sixteenth Inter-Parliamentary Union Conference in Brussels. When the elder Ōmiya returned to Japan in October he left Komaki in Paris, enrolling him in the prestigious Lycée Henri-IV. The father's rationale for leaving his son in France was that it would help to prepare him for a future in the national diplomatic service.

Though sixteen at the time he entered the Lycée, Komaki had had only limited exposure to the French language, and his skills were such that he was placed in a class with students much younger than himself, with the average age of his classmates being around twelve years old. This did not, however, stop him from making an important friend in Pierre de Saint-Prix (1901-1994) who, noticing that Komaki was left behind every weekend while the other dormitory students returned to their homes, invited him to come and stay at his. The Saint-Prix family was prestigious, claiming descent from a Saint-Prix who had sat on the National Convention during the French Revolution, and the boy's maternal grandfather, Émile Loubet, was a former President of the French Republic. Among Komaki's many visits to the Saint-Prix residence was the 1911 New Year, in which Loubet himself presided over dinner.¹ Pierre also had an older brother, Jean de Saint-Prix (1896-1919), who was much closer to Komaki in age, and who would serve as Komaki's main conduit into European politics at the end of the war, when both brothers became involved in revolutionary activity.

Komaki's studies at the Lycée continued until the winter of 1912, when his father lost a local election back home and could no longer support him financially. This in turn forced Komaki to quit the Lycée and leave his dormitory, and he spent the next year scraping by on the streets of Paris, working a number of odd jobs while attending a free workers' school at night. He continued this until the early summer of 1913, when a summons arrived from the Japanese

¹ Hōjō Tsunehisa, *Tane maku hito: Komaki Ōmi no seishun* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1995), 24.

embassy. With a European war seemingly imminent, the new ambassador to France, Ishii Kikujirō, was charged with confirming the status of the over 100 (registered) Japanese residents of Paris. The summons was more than perfunctory, however, as Ishii was also a friend of Komaki's father, who had requested that he check up on his son. At their meeting Ishii offered Komaki a job at the embassy as well as the means with which to return to school. The offer was welcome, and in the spring of 1914, while working at the embassy, Komaki began studying for the entrance examination for the Sorbonne.²

Having passed the examination in the early fall (he was one of two foreign applicants accepted), Komaki prepared to enter the university. However, the deteriorating political situation in Europe meant that this was to be delayed. Austria's Archduke Franz Ferdinand had been shot on 28 June in Sarajevo, and three days later Jean Jaurès, the leader of French socialism and a key voice opposing war, was assassinated at the Café du Croissant in Paris. That night, Komaki encountered the massive funeral procession for Jaurès on the Avenue de Wagram, which consisted of thousands of marchers singing *L'Internationale*.³ This incident was to have profound significance, despite the fact that when he saw the procession he did not recognize it for what it was. Only the next morning when he read the papers did he realize that Jaurès had been killed and that what he had witnessed had in fact been the funeral procession. This realization merely served to solidify the original effect, though, because as he later explained, he was at this point a blank slate ideologically, and the impression given by the event served as the beginning of his shift in sympathy to the left. During the war he would be exposed to the world of French politics at the Sorbonne, which included the traditionalism of Maurice Barrès, the ultranationalism of Paul Déroulède, and the socialism of Jaurès, as well as other currents in

² Hōjō, *Tane maku hito: Komaki Ōmi no seishun*, 48.

³ Komaki Ōmi, *Aru gendaishi* (Tokyo: Hōsei Daigaku Shuppanyoku, 1965), 32.

French political thought. It was the pacifism of Jaurès, though, that would segue to his later interest in the antiwar stance of Henri Barbusse, and he speculated that, had he not seen the funeral procession that night, the chain of events that led to his involvement in the Clarté movement would not have been set in motion.⁴

Its impact on Komaki notwithstanding, the assassination of Jaurès had done little to slow the pace of events, and by August Europe had plunged into the abyss. Germany declared war on Russia on 1 August; two days later war was declared on France and the gears of the Schlieffen Plan began to turn. Though the last infantryman on the right stopped somewhat short of brushing the English Channel with his sleeve (as Schlieffen had called for), by early September the Germans were practically at the gates of Paris. In the East, Japan, honoring the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, declared war on Germany on 23 August, and began the assault on the colony of Tsingtao shortly thereafter. On 2 August there was a general meeting of Japanese Parisian residents at the embassy. Though many wanted to evacuate, options for relocation were limited; some went to England while others, such as the prominent author-in-exile Shimazaki Tōson and the artist Masamune Tokusaburō (the younger brother of the writer Masamune Hakuchō), went south to the city of Limoges. Still others, such as the artist and longtime Paris resident Fujita (Foujita) Tsuguharu, decided to risk staying in Paris. In early September, with French taxicabs streaming toward the River Marne, the Japanese embassy evacuated Paris south to Bordeaux. Komaki went with them and stayed there until early 1915, when he returned to Paris and entered the Sorbonne.

In November of 1917 Komaki spotted a pamphlet written by Jean de Saint-Prix, *Le Panthéon*, at a bookstore. His relationship with the Saint-Prix family had fallen off following his departure from the Lycée, and he took this opportunity to send a letter to Jean, renewing his

⁴ Komaki, *Aru gendaishi*, 33.

contact with the family. After a long absence Komaki was back at the Saint-Prix residence, where Jean introduced him to the burgeoning anti-war movement in France, in which both brothers had become active. They were publishing in several anti-war journals, and Jean had begun a correspondence with Romain Rolland, whom he had met in the summer of 1917, about the nature and implications of the conflict, but more specifically about the event currently on the minds and lips of everyone: the February Revolution in Russia.

Jean introduced Komaki to various figures involved in activities opposing the war, and an important connection came at the end of 1918, when he took Komaki to meet Boris Souvarine. Souvarine was a naturalized Frenchman who had been born in Kiev (as Boris Lifschitz; he took the name Souvarine from the anarchist character in Zola's *Germinal*), and at the time of their meeting he was working at two newspapers, the anarchist *Le Journal du Peuple* (The people's journal) and the socialist *Le Populaire* (Popular).⁵ He was also active on the Comité pour la Reprise des Relations Internationales (Committee for the Resumption of International Relations), an organization of French anti-war socialists and syndicalists he had helped form in January 1916 with the help of Russian exiles such as Leon Trotsky. The Comité took its name from the fact that, unlike the pro-war socialists who refused to meet with their counterparts across the trenches, it sought to facilitate cooperation among socialists from all the belligerent nations. In 1919 it would be renamed the Comité pour la Troisième Internationale (Committee for the Third International) and the following year Souvarine would play a key role in the founding of the Parti Communiste Français during the 1920 Tours Congress, going on to serve as its representative on the Executive Committee of the Communist International. Komaki's relationship with Souvarine was of paramount importance to the development of the Clarté movement in Japan, and much of the information he received, especially concerning the Third International and the evolving

⁵ Robert Wohl, *French Communism in the Making, 1914-1924* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966), 69.

political situation in Europe, was the result of ongoing correspondence between the two. This direct link, as well as Komaki's relationship with other future members of the Communist Party, would in the future serve to distinguish the Clarté movement in Japan and its journal *Tane maku hito* from other contemporary movements and journals, which had little, or in most cases no, direct contact with their European counterparts and were forced instead to receive news through more circuitous routes.⁶

In June 1918, as the last battles of the German Spring Offensive on the Western Front came to a close, Komaki completed his studies at the Sorbonne, graduating with a degree in labor law. That October the Allies finally broke through the Hindenburg Line and the guns faded into the east; at the same time, a combination of cost cutting measures and criticism over his increasingly leftist activities led to the end of Komaki's tenure at the embassy.⁷ Out of a job and without a place to stay, he went to the apartment of the artist Koshiha Kinji, a former classmate from the Gyōsei Middle School who was in France studying Western art.

While staying at Koshiha's throughout the fall, Komaki turned his attention to a new project, a translation of Mushanokōji Saneatsu's play *Aru seinen no yume*. The play had been serialized in the journal *Shirakaba* (White birch), which Komaki had been receiving in France, and he had been impressed by its critique of the relationship between nationalism and war, noting similarities to the anti-war and humanistic ideals being espoused by figures in Europe such as Romain Rolland.⁸ This humanism, discussed earlier as a key facet of the Clarté problematic, would also lead him to seek out Mushanokōji's help once he returned to Japan. At

⁶ Asukai Masamichi, *Nihon puroretaria bungaku shiron* (Tokyo: Yagi Shoten, 1982), 35. These routes were usually American periodicals.

⁷ Hōjō, *Tane maku hito: Komaki Ōmi no seishun*, 115.

⁸ Watanabe Kazutami, "Kurarute" to "Tane maku hito" (jō), *Bungaku* 4, no. 2 (1993): 140. The play was serialized from March to November of 1916.

the time, eager to add an assenting Japanese voice to what was emerging as an international viewpoint, he decided to try to publish the work in French.

While working on the translation at Koshiba's at the end of 1918, Komaki received a letter from the new Japanese ambassador to France, Saburi Sadao. Although the embassy had let him go, it soon found that it needed his services again, and Saburi asked him to resume work, this time as a member of the delegation to the upcoming treaty talks, which were to be held outside Paris at Versailles. The Japanese government had initially expected the conference to take place in either the United States or Britain, and so news that the talks were to be held in France caught it somewhat off guard, forcing it to scramble to put together a French-speaking delegation under Prince Saionji Kinmochi.⁹ As a longtime French resident with significant local experience and language ability, Komaki was a logical choice. He took the job, moving in with the delegation at its headquarters in the Hotel Bristol in Paris. During the talks he accompanied the delegates, a group that included two future prime ministers in Konoe Fumimaro and Yoshida Shigeru, on their visits throughout the country, including a trip to the battlefields around the old fortress of Verdun.

The Versailles Conference opened officially on 18 January 1919, and continued until the treaty was signed on 28 June. Although Komaki was undoubtedly grateful for the work as it would pay for his return to Japan, this commitment and the ensuing days spent in the splendor of Versailles prevented him from taking Souvarine up on an invitation to attend another, different type of conference being held concurrently in the slightly less resplendent Kremlin: the founding congress of the Third International. The call had gone out in January for a congress to be held in February (in part a Bolshevik response to the attempted reconstruction of the Second

⁹ Barbara J. Brooks, *Japan's Imperial Diplomacy: Consuls, Treaty Ports, and War in China 1895-1938* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000), 33.

International that month in Switzerland), and a handful of delegates attempted to break the Allied blockade to attend. After a delay of several weeks to allow for the arrival of more delegates, the conference finally took place during the first week of March. Komaki's employment at Versailles prevented his attendance but, as later recounted by Taguchi Unzō (who in turn heard it from Katayama Sen), there was in fact a certain Ōmiya listed as a delegate to the conference, although his seat remained unfilled.¹⁰

With the treaty signed at the end of June Komaki prepared to return to Japan. It was around this time that he published a small collection of poetry in French, *Quelques Poèmes* (Some poems), through the publisher François Bernouard. Released in a limited edition of several hundred copies, the collection carried an illustration on each page by Fujita. Komaki had kept in touch with Fujita throughout the war, and the latter had even given him his sketchbook for safekeeping during the uncertain days of August and September 1914; Komaki returned the book the following spring.

III. Mushanokōji Saneatsu's *Aru seinen no yume*

It was also during this period that he completed his translation of *Aru seinen no yume*. At the beginning of 1919 he showed the translation to Jean de Saint-Prix, who suggested he take it both to Rolland and to the offices of the journal *Demain* (Tomorrow), located in Switzerland. *Demain* was a journal run in Geneva by Henri Guilbeaux, a French socialist and associate of both Rolland and Lenin. Founded in January 1916, throughout the war it had served as an important platform for Marxists like Lenin and Trotsky, as well as for pacifists like Rolland; Jean de Saint-Prix as well had published several articles in the journal, including some of his exchanges with Rolland. Although publication of *Demain* had ended in October 1918, and

¹⁰ Komaki, *Aru gendaishi*, 35.

Guilbeaux had left for Russia the following year, its publishing house was still active, and Jean believed it would be a good venue for getting Mushanokōji's play into publication. For Komaki, giving the translation to Rolland was desirable as well: not only was he certain that Rolland's intellectual similarities with Mushanokōji would arouse his interest in the work, but it had been Mushanokōji's journal *Shirakaba* that had introduced Rolland's writings to Komaki in the first place, particularly *Jean-Christophe*.¹¹ Reading Mushanokōji's play in *Shirakaba* in turn he had been deeply impressed by the fact that humanists were active in Japan, and he felt compelled to translate and introduce them to a European audience.¹²

It is not difficult to see why Komaki thought the work would be appealing to Rolland. It shares many similarities with the latter's thought, most obviously the pacifist stance that he had espoused during the war. It also expresses the very humanistic opinion that the ability to get mankind back on track lay with mankind itself. There is a key difference, however, in how this opinion is expressed: for Mushanokōji, mankind's deviance from the correct path into war had been caused by an abandonment of religion, specifically Buddhism and Christianity, and self-correction for him was to be achieved by a resumption of the faith. For Rolland, the agency also lay with man, but here the emphasis was on mutual cooperation as the only method through which war could be abolished. The restoration of an individual or collective faith did not factor in. There is also a difference in the scope of their message: Mushanokōji's anti-war stance is taken with an eye toward the benefit of humanity as a whole, whereas for Rolland the concern is more circumscribed, focused on the recovery of a pan-European state of cultural advancement and prosperity.

¹¹ Komaki Ōmi, "Jan Kurisutofu to watashi," *Roman Roran kenkyū* 7 (1952): 172.

¹² Komaki, *Aru gendaishi*, 37.

Aru seinen no yume is a play in four acts, most of it taking place within the head of the titular youth as he sleeps.¹³ At the beginning he encounters a stranger (*mishiranu hito*) who claims to have something to show him. He takes him to what is essentially a peace conference of the dead in which scores of those killed in various wars come forward to tell their stories. Although most of the dead are civilians, conscripts and professional soldiers also appear, in many cases confronting those they have killed or been killed by. After stories by ghosts of recent German, French, and Belgian casualties of the war of 1914, older ghosts appear from the Russo-Japanese war and the talk shifts to Japan, whose people are renowned (or notorious) for their martial prowess.¹⁴ In one of the more openly critical segments of the play, Mushanokōji dispenses with generalities and points a finger at those directly responsible for war, an act that would be followed three years later by Barbusse in *Clarté*:

Ghost of Beautiful Woman: Is there no peace society in Japan?

Youth: There is.

Ghost of Beautiful Woman: Who is the president?

Youth: ...

Ghost of Beautiful Woman: Do you not know?

Youth: I know. But to say would be embarrassing for Japan.

Ghost of Beautiful Woman: Why would it be embarrassing?

Youth: Because that person is famous for lying. And because he is someone who says that war is necessary for peace. And because, while professing to the world as president of the peace society that peace is unattainable without the elimination of arms, as prime minister he is taking great pains to expand armaments. Nor is that all. He gladly went to war. And for that reason, my close friends here died.

美しい女の亡霊：日本には平和協会はないのですか。

青年：あります。

美しい女の亡霊：会長は誰です。

青年：。。。。。。

美しい女の亡霊：御存知ないのですか。

青年：知つてゐます。しかしそれを云ふのは日本の耻です。

¹³ Mushanokōji Saneatsu, *Aru seinen no yume*, in *Mushanokōji Saneatsu zenshū* vol. 2 (Tokyo: Shōgakukan: 1988), 499-606.

¹⁴ Mushanokōji alludes to such a reputation in his preface to the play, saying, “When speaking of a people that likes war, the world’s people would probably soon form an image of the Japanese in their heads.” Mushanokōji, *Aru seinen no yume*, 499.

美しい女の亡霊：何ぞ耻なのです。

青年：その人間は嘘つきで有名な人ですから。それに平和の為に戦争が必要だと云ふ人ですから。平和会長としては軍備をなくさなければ平和は得られないと世界に公言しながら、総理大臣としては軍備拡張に骨を折つてゐるのですから。それ許ではありません。彼は好んで戦争をしました。こゝにゐる私の親友はその為に死んだのです。¹⁵

The message of the ghosts is unequivocal and sets the tone for the entire play: organized warfare is a feature of the modern system of nation states, and when that system disappears the disappearance of war will follow. As for the means with which to achieve this, the ghosts and the youth agree that mankind must again uphold the teachings of Jesus and the Buddha. However, the youth questions whether this would be sufficient and alludes to the possibility of a humanist path to peace:

... [If] the teachings of Jesus and the Buddha truly rule over humanity then war should disappear. However, as to whether or not that time will come, it is true to say that it will not. We imagine that a time will come when there is no war, but I cannot believe that it will come as a result of any Christian or Buddhist tendency of selfless love or principle of nonresistance. I think that, if war is going to disappear, it will have to be because of the inclusion of a more selfish or egotistical position.

。。。耶蘇や釈迦の教が人類を真に支配すれば戦争はなくなるはずです。しかしさう云ふ時が来るか来ないかと云へば、来ないと云ふ方が本当です。我々は戦争がなくなる時のくることを想像しますが、それは耶蘇教や仏教のやうな無我愛、或は無抵抗主義的な傾向から来るものとはどうも思へません。もつとずつと主我的な、エゴイストな立場がまじりこんで、戦争がなくなればなくなるだらうと思ひます。¹⁶

The ghosts then vanish, leaving the youth and stranger to contemplate a landscape blanketed in human bones.

The second act begins with the youth standing on the outskirts of a village, and it is at this point that the stranger informs him that this is a dream. He sees various people buying bread,

¹⁵ Mushanokōji, *Aru seinen no yume*, 521-522. The unnamed prime minister is Ōkuma Shigenobu, under whose cabinet Japan entered the Great War.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 523.

and although he would like some himself, we learn that he does not work at present (though he is an aspiring novelist) and, as a consequence, has no money. A charitable woman offers to buy him some bread but he spurns her overtures, decrying as ludicrous the very idea of borrowing money from a woman. He meets another girl who presses money on him before drawing a pistol, and in response to the startled youth's request for an explanation the girl claims it to be a harmless prop. She then proves otherwise by fatally shooting a bird, provoking a discourse about lies and deceit. The gun does double as a prop, though, in a play the girl and her group subsequently perform for the youth, centered on a woman whose lover was killed in war.

Act Three transports the youth to the top of a hill where he meets an artist whose son has been killed in an unspecified war. With the commotion of a train of soldiers departing for the front serving as a backdrop, the artist explains how his son's death, unbearably tragic to himself, is held up as a noble sacrifice for the village, one to be extolled by all. However, he complains bitterly that such sentiments fail to assuage the grief involved with his loss, and as the scene shifts to the front of a small shrine the youth realizes that such a mindset is at fault. Communities have become convinced that death in battle is noble, and this has led them to accept the wholesale destruction of many thousands of lives. Expressing a sentiment that predates Paulin's own reaction upon returning to his village in *Clarté*, the youth explains that people need to see and understand the futility of sending loved ones to war in order for the situation to change. He admits that this might be difficult, inasmuch as the glorification of war dead is ideologically embedded in the current political system, but concedes that something must be done:

[With] things like worldly institutions and human egocentrism war will not stop. I cannot bear to become a casualty of that. But if, before long, the time comes when humans stop thinking from the position of one country and look at things from the position of humanity, and the customs and habits of countries harmonize to an extent, and the interests of countries harmonize to an extent, and live without

displaying their egocentricity to each other, I think that war will disappear naturally. However, before that, various inconsistencies need to disappear.

しかしまだこの世の制度や、この世の人間の我執では中々戦争はやまないでせう。その犠牲者になつてはたまりません。しかし今に一国の立場から見ずに人類の立場からものを見、国と国との風俗や習慣がある処まで調和し、国と国との利害がある処まで調和し、お互に我執を振りまわさずにする時来たら、戦争は自づとなくなるだらうと思ひます。しかしその前に色々不合理なものがなくならなければならないでせう。¹⁷

The fourth and final act, the play's longest, focuses on a duel between God and the Devil to exert influence over a group of youths, each heading his own geopolitical entity. The youths, with names such as Nichitarō, Eitarō, Dokutarō, Ōtarō, Futsutarō, Rotarō, etc., are thinly veiled references to contemporary nation states.¹⁸ While God sleeps (which he does through most of the act) the Devil manages to orchestrate a series of disasters and wars (the Russo-Japanese War, Balkan turmoil, the outbreak of the Great War), tailoring his strategy to each youth in order to maximize casualties. He first goads Nichitarō to fight with Rotarō by promising him, following a certain victory, entry into the ranks of first-rate nations as well as the loyalty of Chōtarō (Chōsen, or Korea) as a prize. He then convinces Dokutarō to enact conscription, confident that the others will follow (eventually even Eitarō, who holds out until the end). He maneuvers them into alliances, causes assassinations, and manipulates in minute detail everything leading up to the outbreak of a general war. The penultimate scene of this play-within-a-play moves to a conversation between the Devil and God, who has awakened to see the disaster that has unfolded. Although disappointed in the manner in which His children have behaved, he professes an enduring belief that the good in humanity can still be salvaged.

¹⁷ Mushanokōji, *Aru seinen no yume*, 562.

¹⁸ The names correspond to Japan, England, Germany, Austria-Hungary, France, and Russia, respectively.

The appropriateness of this optimism is questioned in the play's final moments as a black curtain rises and the Goddess of Peace (*Heiwa no megami*) takes to the stage. She begins by describing the emotions she feels upon seeing humanity tear itself apart, emotions that range from sanctimonious self-satisfaction at seeing humanity reap what it has sown (*jigō-jitoku to ieba jigō-jitoku da*) to a physical sickening at seeing the deadly harvest of war. As she tries to understand mankind's behavior, she posits that it ultimately stems from an abandonment of her:

How miserable I am! I must love a humanity that does not know love for me. I think it would be good if humanity would do me the favor and wise up, and get rid of the stupid idea of grafting their own happiness onto the misfortune of others. I think that, were they to do this, it is obvious that they would become happy; and yet they unconcernedly make themselves unhappy, rejoicing in creating misfortune and concentrating only on base pleasures.

妾は本当に情けないよ。妾を愛することを知らない人間を、妾は愛しないではゐられないのだからね。早く早く妾は人間がもつと利口になつて、他人の不幸の上に自分の幸福をつぎ木するやうな馬鹿な考をすてゝくれるといゝと思ふよ。かうすれば、幸福になれるにきまつてゐると思ふのに平気で自分を不幸にして、禍を生じ下等な快樂許りに心をつかつて得意になつてゐるだらうね。¹⁹

Like God, she retains a sliver of hope, and despite the fact that humanity is currently ignoring her pleas for peace she has not given up on them; in fact, she *cannot* give up on them, for as she concedes, they are her sole reason for existence. Thus her own future is tied to her relationship with humanity:

I wonder what I need to do in order to make humanity listen to what I have to say. It is especially unfortunate that there are so many victims; I am wishing for humanity's happiness. Nevertheless, humanity despises me. . . I do not curse humanity. I am here to be loved by humanity. Humanity, love me from your hearts. Because I love you.

本当にどうしたら人間は妾の云ふことをきくやうになるだらう。それ迄の犠牲者こそ本当に気の毒だね妾は人類の幸福をのぞんでゐるのだよ。それなのに人間は妾を軽蔑してゐる。。。人間を呪うものではないよ。妾は人

¹⁹ Mushanokōji, *Aru seinen no yume*, 605.

間に愛される為にゐるのだよ。人間よどうか妾を心から愛しておくれ。妾はお前を愛してるのだよ。²⁰

With optimism in the ability of humanity to save its future by rekindling its relationship with the gods reaffirmed, the stranger leads the youth back to waking consciousness and the play ends.

The similarities between *Dream of a Youth* and Rolland's thought during and after the war are many. Like Rolland, Mushanokōji does not probe the causes of war, believing it simply to be the result of certain nefarious machinations (both blame Germany, but Mushanokōji adds the Devil as puppet master). Also, Mushanokōji's contention that a return to spirituality was the answer for humanity's ills has a faint echo in Rolland's abhorrence of direct political action and later insistence on the primacy of liberty and spirituality over political practice. And yet, the play's implication that a revolution might be necessary before war is abolished does mirror the contemporary revolutionary pacifism endorsed not only by Rolland but a host of European intellectuals during and immediately after the war.

However, there are differences in the thought of the two men that could conceivably have given Rolland reservations, chief among them the supposedly humanist emphasis of the work. While on the surface it appears that their belief in the agency of mankind is similar, a closer look at the play shows that Mushanokōji is in fact at some distance from Rolland who, while believing spirituality to be important, did not attribute to it as much importance as Mushanokōji does. For Rolland, spirituality was only to augment mankind's drive for recovery; the real work was to be undertaken by individuals outside of the realm of spirituality (to say nothing of secular institutions) by forging very concrete links in the chain of mutual cooperation. Mushanokōji's agency appears to lie with mankind as well, but the implication of the play is that man's ultimate act of agency should be the transfer of this very agency back to the gods. This is not only

²⁰ Mushanokōji, *Aru seinen no yume*, 606.

revealed in the repeated assertions that the decline of religion is to blame for current woes: the point is driven home in the final scene of the play, where the Goddess of Peace decries the collective lack of love shown her by mankind. For Rolland mutual cooperation was to be the final act in opening the door to a peaceful future; for Mushanokōji, it was the first step in a return to collective worship of the gods.

Aru seinen no yume, while offering solutions to mankind's problems, does so in contradictory ways. On one hand it condemns class conflict, nationalism, patriotism, and the bourgeois system of modern nation states, hinting that violent revolution might be necessary to surmount present difficulties. On the other hand, mankind's ultimate deliverance from its current misery lies not within itself, but in a very pre-bourgeois faith in divinity. In this way the work functions as a bridge between providential and bourgeois ideology, offering what appears to be tentative support for revolution, but quickly retreating to the familiar comforts of religious salvation. Mushanokōji himself would hold true to this course as well, offering tacit support for revolutionary activity but never committing explicitly.

III. Fall 1919: Meeting Barbusse

Although he intended to facilitate Komaki's trip to Switzerland, Jean de Saint-Prix died in February from the Spanish Flu, leaving Komaki without a reliable channel to approach Rolland. The logical answer was Souvarine, and at the end of October 1919 Komaki, along with Yoshie Takamatsu (1880-1940) and Arano Kenkichi (? – ?), called on him at the offices of *Le Populaire*.²¹ Souvarine showed his guests around the offices and introduced them to its staff,

²¹ There is some discrepancy as to when exactly the meeting with Barbusse took place. In *Aru gendaishi* and the later *Tane maku hito: keisei to mondasei*, Komaki recalls that he met with Barbusse in late September or October of 1918, a date taken up by many later sources. In his *Tane maku hitobito*, however, he cites 1919 as the date of the meeting. The date 1918 is assuredly an error, for two reasons: first, Barbusse had not yet founded the Clarté

many of whom would serve as future European correspondents for the Clarté movement in Japan. Souvarine also arranged for Komaki to get a letter of introduction from Rolland's sister, Madeleine, to use in his approach to Rolland once in Switzerland. Most importantly, however, Souvarine took Komaki, Yoshie, and Arano up to the third floor of the offices where, operating out of a single room, was the headquarters of Henri Barbusse and the Clarté movement.²² This meeting between Komaki and Barbusse, who had just that month begun to publish the journal *Clarté*, was to be the genesis of the Clarté movement in Japan, and in the office the men listened while Barbusse explained both the movement and the general international state of affairs.

Komaki later described the meeting:

It was on an evening in the fall of 1919. Mr. Yoshie Takamatsu, Mr. Arano [Kenkichi], and myself visited Henri Barbusse at the Paris headquarters of the Clarté movement. Though it was called the Clarté Society it was really just operating out of a room belonging to a socialist newspaper, and what attracted one's attention was the bare wooden bookcase, green shaded lamp (under which Ms. Magdeleine Marx was scribbling furiously with her pale arm) and a couple of unfriendly-looking chairs. With all of the chairs occupied by our intrusion Barbusse moved to the rugged desk, dangling his legs limply. From the beginning he was easygoing and affable. . . He talked on and on about the International of the Mind. From this barrack-like room, so small there was almost no place to sit, he was issuing the call of the Clarté movement to the thinkers and artists of the world.

一九一九年のある夕暮のことである。吉江高松氏、荒野君、筆者の三人が巴里のクラルテ本部にアンリ・バルビュスを訪ねたことがあつた。クラルテ社といつても或る社会党系の新聞社の一室を借りてみるといふだけのことで、眼につくものは、内容のあまり豊富でなささうな白木造りの書類棚、青い笠の電燈—その下でマグドレエヌ・マルクス女史がペンを走らせてみたが、その腕は蒼白かつた—それに無愛想な椅子が二三脚。私たちの闖入によつてすつかり椅子を占領されたバルビュスは、ごつごつしたテーブルの上に腰をかけて足をだらりと伸した。最初からさうした呑気な人懐っこい彼だつた。。。バルビュスはしきりに思想のインターナショナルについて

movement (in *Aru gendaishi* the founding date is erroneously given as May 1918). Second, Yoshie, who was present at the meeting, had fled Paris for southern France in the spring of 1918, and did not return to the capital until the latter half of 1919.

²² Hōjō, *Tane maku hito: Komaki Ōmi no seishun*, 138.

て辯じ立てた。あの足の置きどころのないやうな狭いバラックの一室から、全世界の思想藝術家に向つてクラルテ運動の叫びを發してゐたのである。
23

Komaki was not the only one impressed by Barbusse. The meeting also had a significant effect on Yoshie, and although he did not return to Japan with the same messianic fervor to spread the movement as Komaki, his support of the Clarté movement was to be crucial. At the time of the meeting Yoshie was a professor of English at Waseda University, and had already published a wide range of translations of authors including Turgenev, Maupassant, Maeterlinck, Pierre Loti and Anatole France. Finding his main interest to be in continental literature, he had arrived in France at the end of 1916, during the conclusion of the Battle of Verdun. He attended lectures at the Sorbonne throughout 1917 until the spring of 1918, when the German offensive on the Western Front brought heavy guns and airplanes within range of Paris, at which point he left the capital for the safety of southern France, spending two summers in and around Grenoble. With the war over, he returned to Paris in 1919, where he published French translations of two dramas by Tsubouchi Shōyō, *En no Gyōja (L'Ermite: Légende Dramatique en Trois Actes, 1920)*, and *Shinkyoku Urashima (Ourashima: Légende Dramatique en Trois Actes, 1922)*; both saw performances in Belgium and Switzerland. Back in Japan in September 1920 Yoshie returned to Waseda, where he founded the Department of French Literature and began teaching courses in both literature and drama. He also supported the Clarté movement through several publications after his return. His recollection of meeting Barbusse mirrors Komaki's:

Perhaps because of his English parentage, Barbusse's build was a little slim like that of the English, with a high nose, and his smart, intelligent, firm-featured face really looked like that of a revolutionary. He possessed the emotional sharpness of a falcon, a flowing mind, and feelings that were illuminated by the wisdom of a poet. The light from his keen eyes as well felt like it shone all the way to one's

²³ Komaki Ōmi. "Anri Barubyusu ni tsuite," in *Sekai bungaku zenshū*, vol. 32 (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1929), 6.

innermost heart. Meeting him I was struck by the . . . feeling that for the first time I had met a true revolutionary.

バルビュスは親が英国人であるだけに、彼の體も少々英国人型の、すらりとした方で、鼻の隆い、俊敏な、聰明な、引きしまった顔はいかにも革命家らしい。隼のやうな鋭さと、流るるやうな心の働きと、詩人の持つ叡智に照らされた感情の持主である。鋭い目の光りもこの人にあつてはまことに心持よく人の肺腑の中まで照らし入る。私はこの人に逢つて、初めて眞の革命家に逢つたやうな。。。感じを受けた。²⁴

During his discussion with the three men Barbusse asked a number of questions about Japan, and they assured him that Clarté ideals would find a receptive audience among the enlightened citizens of its empire. Barbusse explained that his goal was to have ten or twenty members of the movement operating in each country, and he implored the Japanese to facilitate this as much as possible by founding a local section of the Clarté movement in Japan upon their return. At the conclusion of the meeting the guests shook hands and Barbusse distributed autographed copies of his books, giving *Le Feu* to Yoshie and *Clarté* to Komaki.²⁵ Although the move certainly owed something to hubris, and Barbusse was never one to shy away from self-promotion, the gesture was important, as all of the books would soon be translated into Japanese.²⁶ Later, they would serve as the basis for translations into Korean. As for the newspaper *Le Populaire*, it too would continue to provide a steady source of European news for Komaki after he returned to Japan.

V. Komaki's Visit to Switzerland

²⁴ Yoshie Takamatsu, *Kindai bunmei to geijutsu* (Tokyo: Kaizōsha, 1924), 125. Barbusse's mother was English.

²⁵ Komaki Ōmi, "Anri Barubyusu yuku," *Kaizō* 17, no. 10 (1935): 399.

²⁶ Komaki Ōmi, "Jigoku kara kurarute e: Barubyusu to no kaiken kara," *Nihon hyōron* 26 (1951): 158.

At the end of 1919 Komaki traveled to Switzerland to see Rolland. Leaving from the Gare de Lyon on 2 November, he made his way south, crossing the Swiss frontier on his official diplomatic passport. Border crossing at the time was not easy: having weathered three general strikes (the most recent in Basel in August) as well as the fallout from the collapse of the very close Bavarian Soviet Republic in May, the authorities were on edge, and entry into the country could be difficult. Aided by his diplomatic status, Komaki made his way to Geneva, going first to see a contact of the brothers de Saint-Prix, who attempted to arrange the visit. Rolland, however, was ill at the time and ultimately the meeting never took place. Komaki went instead to the publishing office of the pacifist newspaper *La Feuille* (The leaf), where he left the *Aru seinen no yume* translation with the publisher Jean Debrit to forward to Rolland. Also present at the office at the time was Franz Masereel, the Belgian cartoonist whose iconic illustrations in *La Feuille* would serve as an inspiration to the artist Yanase Masamu (1900-1945), who would be the main illustrator for *Tane maku hito* as well as numerous other proletarian cultural outlets throughout his career.

Komaki next visited the printing offices of Guilbeaux's journal *Demain*, where he was able to obtain almost the entire catalogue of the journal, which would serve as a stylistic template for *Tane maku hito*. Komaki also attended a meeting of the Jeunesses Socialistes Romandes (Young Socialists of the Suisse Romande), where he came into possession of the pamphlet *Troisième Internationale: ses principes, son premier congrès* (Third International: its principles, its first congress). The pamphlet was important in that details about the Third International were at the time extremely sparse (its existence was still relatively unknown) and so it provided much of the material that, once translated, served as the introduction to Japanese audiences of the

existence of that organization in Komaki's article *On shirazu no kojiki* (Ungrateful beggars), which was published in the first issue of *Tane maku hito* in February 1921.²⁷

With his business in Switzerland complete, Komaki returned to Paris, where he delivered the reply of the Swiss socialists to another Clarté member, Henri Torrès, before making his way to Marseilles where he soon embarked, ending his ten-year stay in France. He arrived at the port of Kobe on Christmas Eve, 1919, eager to begin his Clarté activities in Japan.

VI. Legacy

Komaki's decade-long stay in Europe can be viewed in terms of his activities in both the ideological and political instances. Much of his energy was directed toward the former where, along with Yoshie, he was responsible for the transfer to Japan of a considerable amount of French literary material. Even before his return, his attempt to publish the Mushanokōji translation, born from an assumption of the ideological similarities between European and Japanese writers, showed his activity in that sphere, and although ultimately the play remained unpublished, the importance was in the gesture, and there was obvious agreement among Jean de Saint-Prix and others that the play fit with their humanist ideology and that it would merit publication.

Unlike the unpublished translation, Komaki's participation in political practice left a more concrete legacy. The fact that he had played an active role in the French section of Clarté during his visit to Switzerland made him the authority on the movement once it was founded in Japan in 1921, and this role would go unchallenged until the ascendance of Bolshevism in 1922-23. Throughout that time Komaki maintained strict control over the interpretation and dissemination of knowledge about Clarté, and while there would emerge many leftwing writers

²⁷ Hōjō, *Tane maku hito: Komaki Ōmi no seishun*, 151.

and organizations in Japan sympathetic to the movement's concerns, Komaki's personal relationship with Barbusse and other European members of the movement assured him a privileged position when it came to accessing and interpreting those concerns.

In this sense the most important portion of Komaki's stay in Europe was the end of 1919. These last few months were crucial in terms of the contacts he made while in France and during his trip to Switzerland. Aside from Barbusse and Souvarine, Komaki also met additional figures who would shortly assume major positions in the emerging communist parties and Communist International, such as Jules Humbert-Droz, a founding member of the Swiss Communist Party and later liaison for the Communist International. His close association with that organization was to be extremely useful to Komaki and the Clarté movement in the future. Also, Humbert-Droz was on the International Bureau of the Proletcult (the proletarian artistic movement that had developed in Revolutionary Russia), which was founded in 1920, where he would exercise considerable influence over the development of proletarian literature worldwide. Komaki would maintain his contact with these figures at considerable risk while continuing to work for the Japanese government in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs news bureau.

One important element that should be further emphasized was his place within the French section of Clarté. It is apparent that Komaki's visit to Switzerland was made at least in part in the interests of the movement. The people he saw there and the people he stayed with were all members of Clarté.²⁸ All evidence indicates that Barbusse took him quite seriously, as he was the key to spreading the movement into Japan, a country Barbusse had some interest in, as well as further in East Asia.²⁹ During his last several months in Europe he met Barbusse several times,

²⁸ Komaki, *Aru gendaishi*, 48.

²⁹ Evidence of Barbusse's personal interest in spreading his movement to Japan can be found in an article he wrote specifically introducing the movement there that was carried in the April 1922 issue of the journal *Kaizō*

cementing a relationship that was to carry on into the future as well, as many of Barbusse's projects throughout the 1920s would try to establish Japanese branches, often through the offices of Komaki.

Despite all of this, however, it is difficult to ascertain Komaki's actual understanding of the *Clarté* movement at the time of his departure at the end of 1919. As stated, Rolland had resigned from the movement in June, and Komaki had been unable to meet with him in Switzerland. Though he had known Souvarine throughout his time serving with the delegation at Versailles, he had only met Barbusse in October and so could only have been an active member of the movement for at most two months. Also, the first issue of the journal *Clarté* only came out in the middle of October, meaning that he would have been able to take back to Japan at most one or two issues.

Thus two facts bear emphasis when assessing his understanding: first, it is apparent that Komaki's conception of the movement must have come in the main from his conversations with Barbusse and the other members of the movement he associated with who, as mentioned earlier, were to a man French or Romand. It must therefore be acknowledged that he received no exposure to either the viewpoints put forth by dissenters from the movement (e.g., Rolland) or to those of other sections, none of which had yet been founded. It would have been impossible, for example, for Komaki to gauge the respective attitudes of the Austrian and English sections of *Clarté*, the two sections that would take up a position in the middle of the spectrum, and which would be the first to defect from the movement after the debate between Rolland and Barbusse. This became relevant later once the *Clarté* movement had begun in Japan, for Komaki's encounter with the movement only in its early stages meant that he returned with an

(Reconstruction). The article, published in both the original French and Japanese, shows a considerable amount of knowledge of Japan on the part of Barbusse.

understanding of only one section and not with any of these competing voices that would shortly emerge. Because there were as yet no other national sections, the viewpoint of the French iteration and Barbusse in particular would become the foundation upon which the Japanese and later Korean iterations of the movement would develop. And while they would exercise a degree of autonomy in their own social formations, Komaki's meetings with Barbusse served to establish with the French iteration a determinacy in the final instance when it came to the Japanese and Korean iterations of Clarté. Thus it should be acknowledged that Komaki's vision of Clarté was that proposed by the movement's French section and Barbusse in particular; this would have repercussions once the movement splintered in 1921.

CHAPTER THREE:
CLARTÉ IN JAPAN

This magazine was born from a feeling that we can no longer bear living in an age filled with lies and deceit, and that we must do something about it. – *Tane maku hito*, February 1921

I. Introduction

The Clarté movement in Japan was one of many left-leaning movements to emerge in the aftermath of the Great War. Its problematic existed in a crowded field of competing ideologies that included parliamentary liberalism, anarchism, socialism, and communism, all of which jostled for influence in the political and ideological instances of the landscape of Taishō democracy. And though it was by no means the only movement active in either instance, being forced to compete for attention in each field, it nevertheless did find a receptive audience. In the political instance, for example, the end of the winter period that had followed the execution of Kōtoku Shūsui in 1911 had been heralded by the large-scale demonstrations and growing influence of labor unions during and immediately following the war. At the same time, working in the ideological instance were writers, who had been pursuing many of the same questions that the movement would take up, particularly the humanist-inspired search for truth. This was exemplified by the affiliates of the Shirakaba-ha, whose own search for truth in their writings had become central to their preferred mode of expression, the I-novel. It was to these writers that the movement would first turn to for support.

Clarté's search for truth was a familiar one in Japan, and debate over the utility of the arts in its pursuit was a well-trodden path. If anything, such a goal was a cornerstone of the modern literary project. A form of truth had been called for by Tsubouchi Shōyō in his 1885 *Shōsetsu shinzui* (Essence of the novel), considered the genesis of modern literature in Japan, and it had

been the avowed goal of the Naturalist movement in the early twentieth century, through which many Shirakaba-ha members had come. Others as well had considered the literary approach to truth through representation to be the supreme goal of the writer.

And yet, while this interest in truth seemed to position the Clarté movement in close proximity to these other groups, an important distinction remained. For Tsubouchi, the Naturalists, and some members of the Shirakaba-ha coterie such as Shimamura Hōgetsu, the goal was the appropriation of truth in art through an accurate observation of life.¹ For Clarté, the process was to be reversed: the goal was the appropriation of truth *through* art. Nor was Barbusse peddling vague notions of truth, but had brought an understanding of the type of truth to be attained with a concrete referent in the events of 1917. Not interested in the mere depiction of truth as an ultimate goal, Barbusse and his movement were issuing a formal challenge to writing itself as something that, if successful, would replace the search for truth in art with the search for truth through art. In the case of Clarté this went back to its intention to enlighten readers as to the necessity of revolution, an intention that would be later affirmed by critics that acknowledged *Clarté* as heralding a new understanding of the function of the novel.

The movement was formally launched in February 1921 with the establishment of the journal *Tane maku hito* (The sower) and its parent company Tanemakisha. Consolidated and promoted through the pages of the journal, the Clarté problematic took shape in the ideological instance, where it would become a topic for both those with narrow sectarian interests and the general literary establishment (*bundan*) at large. Its activities were highlighted by translations of contemporary European writings, including a centerpiece in Barbusse's *Clarté* in May 1923. The journal also included local and international news, original fiction by members (such as Asō Hisashi's "Exhumed" and Kaneko Yōbun's "Sake," examined below), translated fiction,

¹ Edward Fowler, *The Rhetoric of Confession* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 93.

criticism, and political tracts, all of which accompanied the expansion of Clarté influence in Japan.

The activities of the Tanemakisha in the political instance were no less effective, and the chief contribution of the Clarté movement in Japan lay in its existence as a movement engaged in both the ideological and political instances. Although its first forays into the latter instance were tentative and cautious, by the fall of 1923 it had a record of political activity rivalled only by its closest competitors, the Japanese Communist Party and the Japan Federation of Labor (Sōdōmei). Of course, the aims and members of the three often dovetailed, and while the Tanemakisha was not as radical as the JCP, its contributions were nevertheless lasting. It participated in the very first May Day celebrations in Ueno Park in 1920, provided financial support to domestic strike actions as well as to the Soviet Union, and undertook many speaking engagements across the country to promote Clarté.

Despite the limited years in which the movement was active, its influence was long felt. By the time of the movement's end following the Kantō earthquake in September 1923, it had not only outlived its European counterpart (or at least several proclamations declaring the death thereof), it had also exceeded Barbusse's goal of rallying ten or so sympathizers per country, for in addition to the Tanemakisha's core members, who numbered eleven in 1923, the founding membership of the Kurarute no kai (Clarté Association) in May of that year numbered well over fifty, and *Tane maku hito* at that point was enjoying a peak circulation of over three thousand, an amount approaching the contemporaneous circulation of the French journal *Clarté*. Although the problematic would not survive the arrival of Marxism-Leninism and its attendant codification of the arts (especially literature), many of the Clarté movement's characteristics would endure. Specifically, its emphasis on activity in both the political and ideological instances would not

only influence writers such as Kobayashi Takiji (1903-1933), whose own first journal was called *Kurarute*, but would be replicated by the proletarian cultural movement as a whole. And while the latter movement may not necessarily have shared the same goal as Clarté's enlightenment of the proletariat via intellectuals (preferring instead to take its message straight to the masses), it did agree that activity in both the political and ideological instance was an important means of achieving that goal, a conviction it owed to Clarté.

II. 1920: Laying the Groundwork

Komaki Ōmi disembarked at the port city of Kobe on 24 December 1919, and immediately began the process of assembling the Clarté movement in Japan. After reuniting with his family, now in Kyoto, Komaki began to seek out intellectuals he felt would be sympathetic to the movement, beginning with the writer Mushanokōji Saneatsu. Komaki had developed an admiration for Mushanokōji's work while living in France, and was an avid reader of *Shirakaba* (White birch), the coterie journal for which Mushanokōji often wrote. It was here that he first read Mushanokōji's play *Aru seinen no yume* (The dream of a youth, 1916), which he had translated into French. He felt that the humanistic ideals espoused in the work were similar to those championed by the Clarté movement and that Mushanokōji would therefore be a natural ally. Mushanokōji invited Komaki to Atarashiki Mura (New Village), the quasi-socialist experimental village he had recently founded in Kyushu, and once there Komaki tried to solicit the author's help with consolidating a domestic arm of the Clarté movement. Although Mushanokōji agreed in principle with the goals of Clarté and acknowledged similarities with his own philosophy, he refused to join, claiming to be against direct political participation. Instead he recommended Komaki to Arishima Takeo (1878-1923), a fellow *Shirakaba*-ha member who

he felt might be of more direct and effective assistance.² Arishima's sympathy for various leftwing causes was at the time well known, and despite a somewhat tortured relationship with the so-called fourth estate (the proletariat), he was seen as a very generous supporter of its ideals and goals. Arishima's assistance would indeed be invaluable later once *Tane maku hito* had reestablished itself in Tokyo, but for the time being Mushanokōji's rebuff had a somewhat deflating effect. Mushanokōji should probably be given more credit for the referral than he has received, though, as this rare gesture of solidarity on the part of the Shirakaba-ha marked a change in unofficial policy for the group, which since its inception had abstained from any political activity.³ This solidarity would be cemented later by the appearance of the names of group members Mushanokōji, Arishima, and Koizumi Magane on the roster of *Tane maku hito* supporters.

Komaki's next move after visiting Mushanokōji was to find employment, and he did this in March 1920 at the Foreign Ministry in Tokyo under the diplomat Matsuoka Yōsuke. The two men had known each other from their time together at Versailles, and Komaki was given a job scanning French periodicals for references to Japanese politics, economics, culture, etc., and reporting on them, as well as escorting any French journalists or dignitaries who happened to be visiting Japan. He would work at the Ministry until March 1923.⁴

Later that fall he met with one of his childhood classmates from Tsuchizaki, Kaneko Yōbun. Kaneko, an aspiring writer, had also found himself attracted to Mushanokōji's humanism,

² Watanabe Kazutami, "Kurarute to Tane maku hito" (*jō*), *Bungaku* 4, no. 2 (1993): 143.

³ Maya Mortimer, *Meeting the Sensei: The Role of the Master in Shirakaba Writers* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), x-xi.

⁴ Komaki Ōmi, *Aru gendaishi* (Tokyo: Hōsei Daigaku Shuppankyoku, 1965), 69. Matsuoka's career would be a busy one. He would soon quit diplomatic service to work for the South Manchurian Railway Company, eventually becoming its vice-president (he would also return as president from 1935-38). In 1933 he was Japan's delegate to the League of Nations, where his defiant speech on the Lytton Commission report criticizing Japan's expansion into Manchuria served as prelude to Japan's withdrawal from that body. As foreign minister, he was an enthusiastic proponent of the Triple Alliance, advocating war with the Soviet Union shortly after the Germans launched Operation Barbarossa in June 1941. He died in Sugamo prison in 1946 while awaiting a verdict in his trial as a Class A war criminal.

which he thought had shown Japan a way to break out of the deadlock of naturalism. This interest in humanism easily transferred to Clarté, and he immediately agreed to join. Discussing how best to advance the Japanese iteration of the Clarté movement, the two friends at last came up with the idea for a publication. Whittling down a list of potential names to two, *Entotsu* (The chimney) and *Tane maku hito* (The sower), they settled on the latter.⁵ They also agreed to bring in Imano Kenzō, a third schoolmate from Tsuchizaki who was at the time working as a *benshi* (silent film narrator) but, as serendipity would have it, had also recently become a pupil of Arishima Takeo. Their relationship had begun in July 1919 when Imano had sent Arishima a copy of a short story he had written. Arishima's reply, while critical of the quality of the work, was nevertheless encouraging enough for Imano to seek out an apprenticeship under the writer. Imano was brought on board for the launch of *Tane maku hito* as were several others, bringing the total number of people involved in the journal's founding to seven. These seven founding members were Komaki Ōmi, Kaneko Yōbun, Imano Kenzō, Ōmiya Yūji (Komaki's uncle), Hatayama Matsujirō (Komaki's cousin), Yamakawa Akira (a friend of Kaneko), and Yasuda Yōzō (a friend of Hatayama). The group worked on assembling the first issue throughout the late fall of 1920. The funding for the journal's launch was for the most part paid out of Komaki's salary; additionally, he undertook to have the journal censored by the Ministry of the Interior, as all publishers of periodicals were required to do. Komaki submitted the journal in his official capacity as a government employee, beginning a complicated relationship between himself, his superiors, and the journal and movement which it represented.⁶

⁵ Kaneko Yōbun, *Tane maku hito den* (Tokyo: Rōdō Daigaku, 1984), 45.

⁶ Hōjō, *Tane maku hito: Komaki Ōmi no seishun*, 191.

III. 1921: Debut of *Tane maku hito*

Tane maku hito debuted in February 1921; it was 18 pages in length and sold for twenty sen. Two hundred copies were printed, with fifty being sold in Tsuchizaki and the remainder sold in Tokyo. Since most of the production had been done in Tsuchizaki, this first iteration of the journal has come to be labeled as the Tsuchizaki-ban (Tsuchizaki Edition). The cover illustration was Jean-François Millet's 1851 painting *Le Semeur* (The sower), from which the journal took its name. The selection was made in a nod to the journal's Shirakaba-ha influence, as that group had been instrumental in introducing Western art to Japan through its own journal *Shirakaba*, which had dedicated several issues to Millet.⁷

The first issue contained a wide variety of articles. There was a critical article by Yasuda Yōzō on the nineteenth century debate over evolutionary ethics between Peter Kropotkin and E. H. Huxley, a partial translation by Kaneko of Anton Chekov's 1897 short story "Peasants," a short piece by Hatayama called "Binbōnin no namida" (Tears of the poor), and two poems, one from the late Ishikawa Takuboku and the other from French poet Marcel Martinet's 1916 *Tu vas te battre* (You're going to fight). Martinet's position in Clarté (he was one of its most prominent members) was an early indicator of the movement's influence, as were the Editor's Notes (*henshū kōki*) at the back of this first issue. In the mission statement, found at the head of this chapter, the editors explained that the journal had been born from a desire to take some form of direct action, as they were no longer able to bear living in an age full of lies and deception (*Itsuwari to giman ni michita gendai no seikatsu ni gaman shikirenaku natte*).⁸ This effort at

⁷ Inagaki Tatsurō, "Tane maku hito" (jō), *Bungaku* 26, No. 1 (1958): 106. The use of the Millet image also has bearing on how to render the title of the journal into English. Many variants have been used but it would seem that "The Sower," the literal translation of the painting's name, is the most appropriate.

⁸ *Tane maku hito* 1, no. 1 (February 1921): 18.

dispelling lies and propagating truth, which paralleled Clarté's focus on enlightening the individual, was to manifest itself initially as ideological practice, as the journal was to be primarily concerned with literature and the translation of political writings. The range of ideologies represented was to be broad, and these translations were to include selections from such figures as Kropotkin, Rolland, Trotsky, and Barbusse.

Among the original articles penned for the first issue, the most notable historically is Komaki's *On shirazu no kojiki* (Ungrateful beggars), which introduced to Japanese readers for the first time the existence of the Third International. Japan's contact with the Second International dated back to the early years of the century (and reached notoriety through the famous handshake between Katayama Sen and Georgi Plekhanov in Amsterdam during the Russo-Japanese War) and so readers would have been familiar with the organization; here they would have learned of *Tane maku hito*'s belief in the ascendancy of the Third International over the Second, as the obsolescence of the latter was declared apparent:

Nobody can deny that the Second International has exhibited disgraceful behavior. However, it cannot be believed that socialism is bankrupt just because of that. The Second International has as a matter of course arrived at the point it was destined to arrive at. Despite the fact that the Second International had in large part been influenced by the scientism of Marx, in the end it was unable to go any further than the utopian socialists of 1848, and the result was an impasse. Here, to those almost in despair, the Third International has appeared. People of conscience have at last discovered one another. And now that ideology is about to spread throughout the world.

何人も第二インターナショナルは明かに醜態を暴露したことを否めない。しかしそれを以て社会主義の破産とばかり信ぜられない。第二インターナショナルは当然歸着すべき点に歸着したのである。第二インターナショナルの多くはマルクスの科学主義に影響を受けしものの、遂に一八四八年の空想社会主義者に過ぎなかつたので、その結果行詰つたのである。ここに、殆んど絶望に近い人々の上に第三インターナショナルが出現した。良心ある人々は遂に互に見出したのである。今やその思想は世界の全土に擴がらうとしてゐる。⁹

⁹ Komaki Ōmi, "On shirazu no kojiki," *Tane maku hito*, February 1921, 10.

Subsequent issues devoted significant space to explaining the ongoing duel between the various Internationals, but throughout its run the journal was unwavering in its support of the Third International.

On shirazu no kojiki, in addition to introducing the Third International, also served as a surrogate introduction to the Clarté movement. More than that, however, it served as the *only* introduction, as throughout the first three issues that make up the Tsuchizaki-ban there exists not one direct reference to either Clarté or the Clarté movement. Komaki later explained the absence by saying that at the time he assumed the Third International and the Clarté movement to be of equal stature, and that commenting on one was much the same as commenting on the other.¹⁰ Although this reasoning sounds peculiar in light of subsequent events, the lack of distinction between the two organizations does accurately reflect the situation in Europe at the time of his departure in late 1919, when Barbusse himself and other members of the Clarté movement had assumed a similar stance. Early in their respective histories the two organizations were not considered incompatible, and Barbusse at one point had even entertained the possibility that the Third International might someday fall under the Clarté umbrella.¹¹ Whether he still believed this to be possible in February 1921 is more difficult to say, but it should be noted that, despite the lack of direct reference to the Clarté movement in *Tane maku hito*'s first three issues, its influence is readily apparent. For the reader acquainted with Barbusse and Clarté the vocabulary of the mission statement, especially its Paulin-esque resolution to combat the lies and deception of the present, would certainly have rung familiar, as would the poetry of Clarté figures such as

¹⁰ Hōjō Tsunehisa, *Tane maku hito kenkyū: Akita no dōjin o chūshin to shite* (Tokyo: Ōfūsha, 1992), 24. The first concrete reference to the Clarté movement in *Tane maku hito* came in the December 1921 issue.

¹¹ Nicole Racine, "The Clarté Movement in France, 1919-1921." *Journal of Contemporary History* 2, no. 2 (1967): 206.

Marcel Martinet. The planned issue for May 1921, which was to be dedicated to poetry, would have continued this trend, publishing further poems from Martinet as well as those of René Arcos, another Clarté affiliate.

In April 1921 the journal was forced to stop publication due to its inability to pay the government-mandated five hundred yen fee for the publication of newspapers and journals dealing with current events.¹² The bond had been part of a 1909 publication law that gave the Home Ministry the right to suspend a periodical, or terminate it altogether, until the fee was paid. For the fledgling Tanemakisha, *Tane maku hito*'s parent company, five hundred yen was an astronomical sum (as it was perhaps meant to be), and so the journal had no choice but to cease operations. After the shutdown Komaki, still working in Tokyo, made the rounds attending various events and petitioning organizations to try to secure funding to pay the bond and get the journal back into publication. The first opportunity presented itself at a memorial celebration of the French poet Paul Verlaine held on 18 June 1921, the 25th anniversary of his death. The event was organized by the Furansu Dōkōkai (French club), which Komaki had started in May with Yoshie Takamatsu, the latter having returned from his study in France in September 1920 to take up a professorship in the newly-formed Department of French Literature at Waseda University. The club, the result of their mutual interest in France, held regular meetings held in Kanda (in French), and staged events like the Verlaine gathering to promote France and French cultural figures. It also hosted any French dignitaries visiting Japan, such as the poet Paul Claudel, who was welcomed by the club in August 1921.¹³

It was at the Verlaine celebration that Komaki met Sasaki Takamaru (1898-1986), who was at the time an apprentice under the dramatist Akita Ujaku. The two talked about the

¹² About twelve thousand US dollars in 2017.

¹³ Claudel would serve as ambassador to Japan from September 1921 to February 1927.

stoppage of *Tane maku hito*, and Sasaki prodded Komaki to get the journal back up and running. They also began planning a joint translation of the novel *Clarté*. Komaki had discussed such a translation with Barbusse, who had encouraged him to proceed. Akita connected the two men to Asuke Sōichi, owner of the publishing house Sōbunkaku, who promptly paid an advance for a translation of the novel.¹⁴ The project was begun, and Sasaki also joined the staff of *Tane maku hito*.¹⁵

Further funding came through Sōma Aizō and his wife Kokkō (acquaintances of Sasaki) of the Nakamura Bakery in Shinjuku, who gave two hundred yen.¹⁶ The bakery, in addition to funding periodicals like *Tane maku hito*, was a hotbed of political activity at the time, attracting figures as diverse as the Christian leader Uchimura Kanzō and socialist Kinoshita Naoe while sheltering exiles like the Indian revolutionary Rash Behari Bose and the Russian anarchist and esperantist Vasili Eroshenko.¹⁷ Esperanto was to remain important both for *Tane maku hito* and the *Clarté* movement internationally and Barbusse, honorary president of the Sennacieca Asocio Tutmonda (The World Association of Those Without a Nationality), the international association of Esperantists founded in Prague in 1921, assumed a leading role in the global push for the language.¹⁸ Eroshenko's name would shortly find its way to the list of *Tane maku hito* supporters.

In addition to this financial support, Komaki received assistance from two established veterans of the Japanese labor movement, Sakai Toshihiko (1870-1933) and Yamakawa Hitoshi (1880-1958). Although both were at the time still ostensibly aligned with anarcho-syndicalism (along with Ōsugi Sakae), since the Russian Revolution they had shown an increasing interest in

¹⁴ It is worth noting here the possible influence of Arishima, who also had a close relationship with Asuke. His 1919 novel *Aru onna* (A certain woman) had been published by Sōbunkaku, and in 1922 Asuke would undertake the publication and editorship of Arishima's own journal *Izumi* (Fountain).

¹⁵ Hōjō, *Tane maku hito: Komaki Ōmi no seishun*, 213.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 216.

¹⁷ Watanabe Kazutami, "Kurarute to *Tane maku hito*" (*jō*), 144.

¹⁸ Forster, Peter G. *The Esperanto Movement* (New York: Mouton Publishers, 1982), 193.

and support for Bolshevism.¹⁹ More than offering ideological sympathy, however, they had been involved with the socialist *Heimin shinbun* (Commoner's newspaper) a decade earlier, and so they had considerable experience in newspaper and journal publication, including navigating the vagaries of the current publication laws. They were therefore the perfect figures to offer advice on how to get *Tane maku hito* back into sustained publication.

Komaki made several visits to Sakai and Yamakawa, but these carried with them considerable risk for a member of the Foreign Ministry, and Komaki eventually found himself targeted by the Tokubetsu Kōtō Keisatsu (Special Higher Police). Much safer was the visit he eventually paid to Arishima, who provided a final significant source of funding for the journal: he gave Komaki a painting by the Western-style artist Umehara Ryūsaburō that had been hanging in his office, telling him to sell it and keep the proceeds. Komaki, Kaneko and Imano took the painting to Kanda, where they were able to sell it for six hundred yen to a dealer who had spotted Arishima's name on the back of the frame.²⁰

With adequate funding secured *Tane maku hito* was relaunched in Tokyo in October 1921. This second incarnation, the Tokyo-ban (Tokyo edition), ran with limited interruption until the last regular issue was published in August 1923.²¹ The new version saw a significant increase in both size and content over the original, with issues now numbering well over a hundred pages supported by a vastly expanded contributor list.²² This massive influx of contributors was more

¹⁹ George M. Beckmann and Okubo Genji, *The Japanese Communist Party 1922-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 13.

²⁰ Komaki, *Aru gendaishi*, 79. An impressed Arishima recommended Komaki give up publishing and go into the art business.

²¹ Of the twenty issues of the Tokyo edition four would be banned. Inagaki Taturō, "Tane maku hito" (chū), *Bungaku* 26, no. 3 (1958): 112.

²² The journal's new list of contributors (displayed on the front page until the December 1921 issue) included Henri Barbusse, Anatole France, Edward Carpenter, Paul Gille, Christiaan Cornelissen, Vasili Eroshenko, Paul Reclus, Mushanokōji Saneatsu, Arishima Takeo, Yoshie Takamatsu, Ogawa Mimei, Hasegawa Nyozeikan, Baba Kochō, Eguchi Kan, Akita Ujaku, Yamakawa Kikue, Fukuda Masao, Hayashi Shizue, Ishikawa Sanshirō, Katō Kazuo,

than enough to offset the departure of two members of the Tsuchizaki-ban, Hatayama and Ōmiya Yūji, who had declined to follow the journal to Tokyo.²³ The journal's circulation increased as well, with the 3,000 copies printed in October dwarfing the 200 or so that had comprised each issue of the Tsuchizaki-ban. By comparison, in April 1922 *Clarté*'s circulation in France was 11,000.²⁴

One of the most salient aspects of the Tokyo-ban was its expansion into the political instance. This commitment to both the ideological and political, now emblazoned on each issue's cover in the form of the slogan *hihan to kōdō* (criticism and action), served as both an updated mission statement and an important differentiation from the Tsuchizaki-ban. It also set it apart from other leftist journals such as *Warera* (We ourselves), which ostensibly focused on ideological critique (*hihan*) only (*Warera* would in fact be renamed *Hihan* in 1930). This shift brought it into closer alignment with the French movement, as the latter had in December 1920 dropped its exclusive focus on the ideological sphere and entered the arena of political practice. Although *Tane maku hito*'s message was more subtle, it would maintain this emphasis on both practices until its end, although, as with the French incarnation, it would not do so without internal discord, for in both cases members were split between those who preferred that the journal continue its privileging of the ideological over the political, and those who were in favor of an enlarged role in the political instance.

For its ideological efforts the journal proudly announced the beginning of several translations to be published separately as books, including three novels by Barbusse: *Clarté*, *Le*

Miyachi Karoku, Momota Sōji, Tomita Saika, Fujimori Seikichi, Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke, Kamichika Ichiko, Kawaji Ryūkō, Miyajima Sukeo, Ōyama Ikuo, Fujii Masumi, and Koizumi Magane.

²³ Hōjō, *Tane maku hito kenkyū*, 31.

²⁴ Alvin Abish Novetsky, "Henri Barbusse: An Intellectual in the French Communist Party" (master's thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1966), 89.

Feu (by Sasaki), and *L'Enfer* (by Yoshie).²⁵ Additionally, the articles and creative writings from staff and contributors the journal had printed in Tsuchizaki would continue to appear, and to these were to be added several regular columns offering more in-depth commentary on various issues. The *Sekai-ran* (World column), for example, which was written mostly by Komaki, focused on international news, much of it related to events in Europe and Russia. Here was covered for example the 1921-22 Russian famine, the Bolsheviks' trial of the Socialist Revolutionaries in June 1922, the French occupation of the Ruhr in early 1923, correspondence between Barbusse and the Russian Communist Party, and the continuing activities of the Proletcult and the Third International. The section also carried regular reports on Esperanto, offering lessons in grammar and vocabulary as well as discussions of its ongoing rivalry with Ido.²⁶ The *Chihō-ran* (Regional column) was a space for contributors involved in frontline political action, and carried dispatches from social activists around the country, who reported on ongoing strikes and demonstrations that the journal supported.²⁷ Finally, the *Sobieto-ran* (a play on the verb *sobieru*, to rise or tower, chosen for its proximity to "Soviet") published poetry from readers. Other sporadic columns existed as well, such as the *Fujin-ran* (Women's column), which devoted space to creative writing by women. The columns were maintained for most of the journal's run until their consolidation toward its end into the *Sobieto-ran*.

On the political side the Tanemaki-sha was increasingly active outside the sphere of journal publication. Its staff held regular speaking meetings in Tokyo, became a fixture for the next several years at the May Day celebrations in Ueno, and frequently sent members on lecture trips around the country. It also held fundraising events to combat the famine in Russia, such as a

²⁵ It would seem that the translation of *L'Enfer* was eventually delegated to Komaki, who published it as *Jigoku* in 1929.

²⁶ Ido was a constructed language derived from Esperanto (hence its name, Esperanto for "offspring"), and had been created in 1907 in an attempt to answer criticisms directed at the latter.

²⁷ Hōjō, *Tane maku hito kenkyū*, 98.

series of performances by the soprano Miura Tamaki held at the Teikoku Gekijō (Imperial Theater) in July of 1922. Komaki had pitched the concert idea to the *Yomiuri shinbun*, which agreed to co-sponsor the event, and in the end the two shows were a success, with proceeds totaling more than four thousand yen.²⁸ Other agit-prop-style events were held as well, such as a performance of Rolland's 1900 play *Danton*, whose staging attempted to navigate the audience through Russia's tumultuous year of 1917, showing the differences between the governments of Kerensky and Lenin and illustrating the "correct" interpretation of the October Revolution. These events raised a considerable sum of money over the years, much of it channeled to Russia through groups such as the United States-based Friends of Soviet Russia.

III. *Ana-Boru Ronsō*: The Rolland-Barbusse Debate in Japan

No sooner had the festivities surrounding the journal's relaunch begun, however, than news reached Japan of the debate in Europe between Barbusse and Romain Rolland. The response required major theoretical formulations and clarifications on the part of Komaki and others, taking up much of the journal's collective time and space for most of the year 1922. Nor was this dispute strictly limited to *Tane maku hito*, as the rift in the Clarté movement and its fate was notable enough to warrant discussion in many of Japan's major daily newspapers. Although ostensibly concerned with the duties of the intellectual in a time of revolution, at its heart the debate pitted the growing Bolshevism of Barbusse against the humanism of Rolland, and was seen in its wider application as an argument over political and ideological practice. Barbusse's victory in the debate, while decisive, was pyrrhic, as the resulting schism in the movement led to its end as an effective European force. In Japan, however, the debate was instrumental in sharpening an understanding of the Clarté problematic, as its reflection during the debate allowed

²⁸ Komaki, *Aru gendaishi*, 91.

for the Japanese to undertake their symptomatic reading of the movement. This in turn impelled them to make adjustments to bring the movement into conformity with domestic conditions.

The process was swift. Komaki began his commentary on the controversy with an article in the June 9 *Yomiuri shinbun* titled *Mondai no kurarute undō to Nihon ni okeru bokura no tachiba* (The issue of the Clarté movement and our position in Japan).²⁹ While acknowledging the competing concepts of Rolland's liberty and Barbusse's equality as central to the debate, Komaki saw them not simply as indicative of a clash of personalities between the two but rather as part of a larger, global opposition between anarchism and communism, and he followed Barbusse in equating Rolland's liberty with anarchism and Barbusse's equality with communism. Both trends shared the same ultimate goal in libertarian communism, but in practice they were worlds apart; to illustrate this, Komaki referred readers to the deteriorating relationship between the Bolsheviks and the anarchists in Russia (although the two trends had been at each other's throats since the time of Marx and Bakunin). The Bolsheviks, while acknowledging the revolutionary potential of the anarchists, had always considered them misguided revolutionaries at best, and had been content simply to watch anarchist influence taper off into oblivion, which, in Russia at least following the October Revolution, it largely had.³⁰ While defending the position of Barbusse and the Bolsheviks in his article, Komaki declared that the actual terms of the debate were irrelevant, and whether one employed "anarchist" or "liberty" for one side and "communist" or "equality" for the other made little difference. What was important was that the two currents of thought ranged against each other were irreconcilable, and that the debate was

²⁹ Komaki had earlier published an article in May 1922 in the journal *Kaizō* entitled *Kurarute undō no shōrai* ("The Future of the Clarté Movement") in which he put forth an argument identical to what follows. However, large portions of the article were censored and so the *Yomiuri* article above was the first time readers had access to his views in full.

³⁰ E. J. Hobsbawm, *Revolutionaries: Contemporary Essays* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1973), 66.

forcing individuals to choose a side. Komaki warned that this opposition was not limited to Europe but would inevitably reach Japan as well.³¹

He did not have to wait long. Hardly a month later the conflict, as part of the larger *anabōron sōron* (Anarchist-Bolshevik controversy), began in earnest. Under Ōsugi Sakae, who had taken over as anarchism's chief theorist after the execution of Kōtoku Shūsui, anarcho-syndicalism had by 1921 come to enjoy a dominant position in the labor movement. Signs of a shift had begun, though, and anarchism had lost two of its key intellectual backers in Yamakawa and Sakai, who along with many others had defected to Bolshevism following the October Revolution. In July 1922 they took a central role in founding the Third International-backed Nihon Kyōsantō (Japanese Communist Party), after which the fight against the anarchists shifted to the factory floor. Communists joined with socialists in the country's biggest labor union, the Nihon Rōdō Sōdōmei (Japan Federation of Labor), and embarked on a campaign to eradicate anarchist influence once and for all.³² The struggle would continue until Ōsugi's death in 1923, and only then would the tide begin to shift inexorably toward communism.

For Komaki, however, this fight was premature. He warned against rushing headlong into such a splintering action and argued that, if anything, Japan needed to move in the opposite direction toward a consolidation of anarchist, socialist, and communist organizations. In other words, it needed to concentrate on establishing a united front of the three. It was one thing for the Clarté movement in Europe to pursue a course away from the united front, for there the tactic had already been tried. Japan, on the other hand, had yet to reach such a unity in the first place. He forecast that if efforts toward achieving the united front were abandoned the domestic movement would be set back irreparably: "We have to work a little more at bringing to fruition

³¹ *Yomiuri shinbun*, June 9, 1922.

³² Stephen S. Large, *Organized Workers and Socialist Politics in Interwar Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 49.

the united front,” he declared. “After that, if there is a dispute over liberty (anarchism) and equality (communism) then let us dispute it. If we do not do that then we have no right to argue over it” (*Bokura wa ima sukoshiku kyōdō sensen no jitsu o ageneba naranai. Sore kara ato, jiyū nari byōdō nari arasou mono nara arasowō. Sore mo shinai de, bokutachi ni made sonna ronsō o suru shikaku ga nai no da*).³³

In trying to explain the phenomenon rendering Clarté in Europe, Komaki cast the problem as one of definition. He noted that the movement’s vague platform and initial declarations were obviously inadequate in explaining the group’s makeup, to say nothing of its reason for existence. These concerns were of course not new, but had been dogging the movement since its inception. For Komaki, however, the solution to the problem was simple and obvious: Clarté must formally identify itself with the cause of international communism. Though this would seem a rather radical step, it would be acknowledging reality, as many Clarté members were already active in their respective communist parties anyway. Komaki admitted that the group’s founding declaration stated its intent to remain independent from political affiliation, but noted that this intention had been vitiated long ago by individual Clarté members who had from early on allied themselves with Bolshevism, joined the French Communist Party upon its founding, and had since then been resolutely championing the cause of world communism in the arena of political practice.

As a consequence, Komaki argued, the movement had outgrown Barbusse’s original proclamations, and if it was to maintain any relevance on the world stage, the overall political coloring of the group needed to be clarified. If this was not done, the movement would not only be guilty of the same failings Trotsky had outlined in his critique of Rolland, but it would also be little different from previous aesthetic and aristocratic movements that had failed to bring into

³³ *Yomiuri shinbun*, June 9, 1922.

agreement word and deed. Turning again to the argument between Barbusse and Rolland, Komaki declared the sanctity of thought championed by Rolland to be nothing more than a dead letter, and concluded that “in order to make Groupe Clarté a real movement you must declare it right now to be an artistic movement of world communism. There is no other way” (*Soko de gurūpu kurarute wo shite ikitaru genjitsu no undō ni suru tame ni wa, kono sai wa hakkiri, sekai kyōsanshugi no geijutsuteki undō de aru koto wo sengen suru koto da. Sore igai ni nai*).³⁴

In addition to addressing the political side of the debate, Komaki next published in the June issue of *Tane maku hito* the article “Geijutsu ni okeru kyōdō sensen” (The united front in art), where he applied his analysis of the debate to the ideological instance. He began by backing Barbusse’s insistence on artistic engagement and confirmed that the irreconcilability of Rolland’s liberty and Barbusse’s equality would essentially spell the end of the united front in the Clarté movement.³⁵ He made a concession to followers of Rolland, however, by noting that *Tane maku hito*, while recognizing the necessity of the artist to join others in the fight for social change, had never actually denied the validity of the artistic independence he defended. Indeed, there were situations in which this was to be encouraged. There were also, however, situations where artists had to shed their libertarian isolationism for the collective struggle.

The present was one of those situations. Komaki stated that, with the recent support of the proletariat by the Japanese *bundan* functioning as an embryonic united front, now was not the time for artistic withdrawal. The support Komaki indicated had been exemplified by recent publications such as Arishima’s *Sengen hitotsu* (A declaration), published in the January 1922 issue of the journal *Kaizō*, where Arishima had stated that if the intellectual class, by virtue of the disconnect it felt with the proletariat, could not contribute to the latter’s political and artistic

³⁴ *Yomiuri shinbun*, June 8, 1922.

³⁵ Komaki Ōmi, “Geijutsu ni okeru kyōdō sensen,” *Tane maku hito* 2, no. 9 (1922): 466.

struggles, then it could at the very least stand aside and offer support from the sidelines. For Komaki ignoring such a gesture, coinciding as it did with an art movement taking its first tentative steps toward the political engagement called for by Barbusse and Clarté, constituted little more than opportunism, and could only serve to hinder the communist movement.

To this domestic commentary was added a series of articles by the artist Tōgō Seiji (1897-1978), who dispatched several pieces from Paris in June 1922 for the *Yomiuri shinbun* under the rather peremptory title *Kurarute undō no bunretsu* (The breakup of the Clarté movement). He began by seizing on another ambiguous aspect of the movement, its emphasis on the figure of the intellectual. As he explained, not only was the concept of the intellectual itself difficult to pin down, but under such wording as existed in its initial proclamation the Clarté movement had ended up with intellectuals of two different types, which he classified as bourgeois intellectuals (*burujowateki chishiki kaikyū*) and proletarian intellectuals (*puroretariateki chishiki kaikyū*). Although, as he explained, the intellectual class had been historically subservient to the bourgeoisie, the rising proletariat had recently begun to fashion its own intellectual class, and both had ended up operating within the Clarté movement. This was an untenable situation, one that had forced Clarté to declare its support for proletarian intellectuals:

It is clear that the Clarté movement has already moved beyond the confines of the old, half-completed cultural revolution, and moved to the vanguard of constructing a proletarian class and a new social culture, clearly acknowledging itself as a destroyer of the foundation of the present social system and culture. This sudden change in the direction and goals of the Clarté movement soon made clear the divisions within the intellectual class, especially the artists, who had all been confined within vague, symbolic concepts and aesthetic rhetoric. In other words, this was a split between the communist artists and proletarian intellectuals led by Barbusse, and the artists and bourgeois intellectual class that had gathered around Rolland.

遂ひにクラルテ運動も、従来の不徹底な文化的革命の範を脱して、プロレタリア階級の建設及び新社會文化の建設の上に立つ、現代社會制度及び現代社會文化の根本的破壊者であることを、明らかに認め得るやうになった。此のクラルテ運動の方向及び目的の激變が、やがて茫漠たる徴象的概念或ひは美文的言辭の下に包括されてゐたところの知識階級、殊に藝術家の區劃を判然たらしめたのである。即ちアンリ・バルビュスによつて率ゐられた共産主義的藝術家及び無産知識階級に対するロマン・ロランを主とするロランデイスト的藝術家及びブルジョワ的知識階級の分裂である。³⁶

Turning to Barbusse's emphasis on the importance of construction after destruction, Tōgō explained that Barbusse and his Clarté adherents embraced a type of committed art dedicated to the destruction of bourgeois culture down to its roots through proletarian revolution, whereas Rolland and his followers proclaimed an autonomous art free of such commitment, a stance in line with their aversion to direct political action.

A problem for Tōgō, central to the movement and of increasing relevance to Japan, was the relationship between Clarté and the Communist Party. Like numerous commentators before him, Tōgō argued that, while the opening declaration of the movement had stressed Clarté's autonomy, this position had proved insufficient in light of the fact that many members of the movement were also connected to the Communist Party.³⁷ The statures enjoyed by both organizations were no longer equal, however, as Tōgō noted that many of the Clarté movement's functions in France had turned into little more than propaganda sessions for the Communist Party, thereby putting Clarté in a subordinated role. Clearly Barbusse's vision of Clarté as an umbrella organization had failed to materialize.

Tōgō's analysis was shrewd, but it must be surmised that his personal acquaintance with members of the Parisian section of Clarté such as Magdeleine Marx (chair of the French

³⁶ *Yomiuri shinbun*, June 3, 1922.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

committee) influenced his opinion on the matter. Much the same should be said for Komaki's relationship with Barbusse and its effect on *Tane maku hito*'s decision to take his side in the debate with Rolland. Moreover, both Komaki and Tōgō were taking developments in the French iteration of Clarté to be indicative of trends in the movement as a whole, but this was not necessarily the case: while the Communist Party was well-represented in the Clarté movement in France, and the debate between Barbusse and Rolland was pitting the Bolshevism of the former against the humanism of the latter, not all national sections were reacting to these developments in the same way (the English section, for example, would shortly break from the movement in protest at the outcome). And yet not once did Komaki or Tōgō draw on statements or declarations of any other sections; for them Clarté *was* the French iteration.

The Rolland-Barbusse debate in its entirety was translated and published in *Tane maku hito* in August 1922. An introductory article entitled “Jiyūshugi no dankai” (Stages of liberalism), most likely written by Komaki, parsed the relevant issues before coming down decisively on the side of Barbusse. With the same strained niceties that marked the termination of the debate in Europe, the article explained the necessity of abandoning Rolland to his independent fate, but also reiterated Komaki's assertion that, even if one were to agree with Rolland's position that personal liberty was paramount, the dispute itself in France was a product of a completely different situation (or conjuncture), one stemming from an overdeveloped liberalism in which the proletariat had a major voice in the development of society. Contrasted with a Japan still lacking universal suffrage (that barest necessity of liberalism), Rolland's arguments in favor of liberty were simply inapplicable, as his coveted liberty was something the Japanese proletariat knew nothing about. The only option, therefore, was for Japan to follow Barbusse.

“Jiyūshugi no dankai” returned to Komaki’s framework of the debate in the terms of an anarchist-communist opposition. Claiming that reconciliation with the reactionaries (the anarchists) might not be possible, the article conceded that domestic participation in the present debate (participation Komaki had warned against) might well result in the failure of the attempt to construct a united front in Japan. Although in June Komaki had still supported the united front, by August the situation had changed, and the article marked an important turning point, signaling an abandonment of the united front program that had been present at the time of Clarté’s founding. More than entertain the idea of abandoning the united front, however, the article stated that, were this to become a necessity, it should be done quickly and without remorse:

Anarchism only has meaning in opposition to communism. In the same way the dispute between Romain Rolland and Henri Barbusse is also the dispute of a particular stage. You cannot mix up these stages. For the reactionaries in Japan, which has not yet reached this stage, to pointlessly use Romain Rolland to justify their own position, sullies Rolland, and shows how little understanding they have of themselves. Rolland is much more than an art theorist for Japan’s “art.” In a similar way, even if you think of Barbusse as representing a constructive principle founded upon Rolland’s destructive principle, he certainly does not lack understanding like a certain type of class-based writer that exists in Japan. The united front is necessary. But we also have the execution of Ma Su as an example. And moreover there is no need for tears.

無政府主義は共産主義に對してのみ意味がある。同様にしてロマン・ロオラン對アンリ・バルビユスの論争も一段階中の論争である。この段階を混じてはならない。この段階にも達せざる日本の反動主義者がいたづらにロマン・ロオランをかついで自らを辯護するのは、ロオランを汚すものであり、また自らを知る明なきものである。ロオランは日本の「藝術」のための藝術論者以上である。同様にしてバルビユスはロオランの崩壊原理の基礎の上に立つところの建設原理は考へても、決して日本のある種の階級文學者のやうな無理解なものでない。共同戦線は必要である。しかし馬謖を斬つた例もある。しかも「泣く」必要もない。³⁸

The phrase *naite Ba Shoku wo kiru* (weeping while killing Ba Shoku) references an incident in episode 96 of the historical epic *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (C: *Sanguo yanyi*, J:

³⁸ *Tane maku hito* 3, no. 10/11 (1922): 1.

Sangoku engi) in which the talented commander Ma Su (J: Ba Shoku) commits a tactical blunder that results in the collapse of his superior Zhuge Liang's military campaign. He is hauled before Zhuge Liang who, although he had favored Ma Su and had a strong sense of affinity for him, sobbingly ordered him put to death for his mistake. Komaki, here posing as Zhuge, acknowledged the allure and ideal of the united front but contended that the unbridled pursuit of its attainment could result in the failure of the overall campaign. Thus, like the well-meaning but detrimental Ma Su, if the united front was going to be a source of failure then it should be discarded immediately and without tears.

Despite the overwhelming support Barbusse enjoyed in the debate as it played out in Japan, Rolland did find a sympathetic ear in Mushanokōji, who published his reaction in the *Yomiuri shinbun* in August after reading the translation of the debate in *Tane maku hito*. In his piece he explained that both Rolland and Barbusse were unclear on certain points, and that their differences were much more than those of personal opinion. The lack of a definition of terms (to say nothing of tolerance) had also clearly driven a wedge between the two, and when they argued respectively for liberty and equality, Mushanokōji was doubtful whether each party understood the term as it was being used by the other. As an example he cited a passage in which Rolland had written to Barbusse, "Your god, if I am not mistaken, is called Equality. Mine is Liberty," responding that, "I do not think Barbusse has a basic understanding of the deep love Rolland has for this liberty. And that is why I think their arguments do not match on important points" (*Kono jiyū ni taisuru Rōran no kyokudo no ai ga, Barubyusu wa konponteki ni wa wakatte inai to omoimasu. Sore ga ryōsha no giron ga daiji na tokoro de itchi shinai no da to omoimasu*).³⁹

Mushanokōji went on to consider several aspects of the debate, but in the end refused to endorse either side, wondering instead if their positions were not indeed irreconcilable. He

³⁹ *Yomiuri shinbun*, August 18, 1922.

agreed with Barbusse on the necessity of egalitarianism, but he also stated that personal growth needs a free environment, an argument put forth by Rolland. This liberty, he declared, was something that mankind would not stop demanding, and any society that interfered with its development would at some point inevitably come to ruin. He was bold enough to conclude, however, by envisioning an ideal society that managed to have both liberty and equality. “Rolland is a genius, he is a flame,” he said hopefully, “[and] Barbusse is a geometrist. We want to be both” (*Rōran wa tensaiteki de aru, honoo de aru, Barubyusu wa kikagakuteki de aru. Warera wa ryōhō de aritai*).⁴⁰

V. The Japanese Interpretation of the Debate

Komaki’s comments on the debate, scattered across several periodicals over several months, indicate an understanding of the movement different from that of its European participants, and his position outside of the location and terms of the debate was instrumental in allowing him to see several elements that escaped the notice of Barbusse and Rolland. Though the two were arguing in universal terms, they were never able to recognize their own location within the Clarté problematic. Nor were they alone in this, as the European sections of the movement as a whole were incapable of seeing the dependence of their arguments upon their specific conjuncture.

Broadly speaking, what the participants in the debate failed to see was that their dispute was a product of the ebb of the revolutionary tide and the turn to stability in Western Europe beginning in 1921. By that time the revolutionary energies of the proletariat, exhausted and demoralized by unsuccessful insurrections in almost every European country, had dissipated,

⁴⁰ *Yomiuri shinbun*, August 19, 1922. The reference to Barbusse as a “geometrist” comes from an insistence expressed in *Clarté* that “social science is geometry,” that is, a scientific process that should be devoid of the type of humanitarianism and sentimentalism that Rolland was apparently unable to extricate himself from.

leaving Soviet Russia as the only successful seizure of power. This was not lost on the Communist International (another outsider in the debate), for in March 1922 Trotsky began drafting a new policy for the organization, the so-called united front, as a response to the change in situation. This new direction acknowledged the slipping initiative and exhorted communist parties to turn to the masses to build up party membership for a long-term struggle, coordinating their actions with centrist and reformist organizations (such as Social Democratic parties) where necessary.⁴¹ Komaki's view of the situation through the terminology of the united front echoed these discussions in the Communist International, but he also realized their limited applicability to Japan.

In their appeal to the universal concepts of equality and liberty, neither Barbusse nor Rolland were able to see their argument as an outgrowth of local conditions. Barbusse especially could not see his support for increasingly violent methods as a symptom of the revolutionary moment slipping further and further away, nor could he identify his role in the debate as an attempt to escape theoretically from a situation he himself had created. This was not a simple oversight, but a fundamental problem of recognition: the Clarté movement failed to grasp that the problems it was encountering were those that it itself had produced and that had come into being through the very circumstances of its formation. Born in the electric atmosphere of 1919, the movement was ill-equipped for the stability of 1921, and in response to the decline of revolutionary fortunes Barbusse was forced to pursue methods which hewed closer to the conjuncture that had fostered the rise of his movement. The Clarté movement was in effect a victim of its own creation, and a realization of this would have told its members that the

⁴¹ During the early years of the Comintern the imminence of proletarian revolution had seemed assured, and so the organization saw little need to cooperate with other leftist elements, who would soon be swept either away or into communist parties.

problems they were trying to address and the solutions they were offering were simply not applicable in the changed circumstances.

While the participants fell back on their appeal to universals, those outside began to see the problematic in its entirety. The key was the united front, which had emerged as a major point of contention in Japan. Like Barbusse and most of the movement's members, Komaki saw Clarté as an attempt to form a united front, but he realized that both Barbusse and Rolland had taken the existence of the united front for granted as part of a common political and intellectual heritage. Despite the collapse of the Second International in 1914 and the establishment of the Third in 1919 a situation still seemed possible in which the socialists of the former might cooperate with the communists of the latter. This unification, though, if achieved, would merely be a step back in time to the existence of one international (the Second), in effect recapturing a unity that had been destroyed in 1914. Therefore, all participants in the debate had a common experience of unity that they could draw on or reference in their respective arguments.

Japan did not have such a luxury, for such a unity, enjoyed by Europe for roughly thirty years during the period of the Second International, had never existed there. Inducing a schism, therefore, was akin to skipping ahead (hence Komaki's emphasis that one could not mix up the stages). A schism needed a unity, and the historical existence of such a unity was taken for granted by the European participants in the debate, who were treating it as a lost object to be recovered. For Komaki, one could not recover what had never been lost, and so he emphasized the inapplicability of that aspect of the debate to Japan's present conjuncture.

In looking further, Komaki also realized that the united front as a historical stage, long since achieved by his European contemporaries, was by no means assured in Japan. Despite his admonition that one could not mix up historical stages, he was not so rigid in his thinking as to

concede that such a stage was inevitable. This understanding led him to surmise that Clarté in Japan might not necessarily follow in the footsteps of its European counterparts but could (or might have to) chart its own course: whereas in France the movement had moved from unity to schism, in Japan it would be the opposite, a movement from scattered elements to unity. His citation of the example of Ma Su from the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* reflected this realization (read resignation), as its claim that the united front approach did not work for Japan (and needed to be put to death) signaled the first step in a break between the Japanese and European incarnations of Clarté. This approach was tantamount to a rejection of the founding vision of Clarté as an umbrella formation housing all ideological trends in the struggle for socialism. For Komaki it was to be put in the sectarian service of Bolshevism, and from now on Clarté in Japan would indeed be firmly tied to communism. Although he had maintained throughout the debate that one could not mix up historical stages, he said nothing about creating a new one. And that is exactly what had been achieved: the problematic remained, but the overlying theory had been altered.

VI. Komaki's Understanding of Barbusse

By the end of 1922 the debate had receded, and the goals of Clarté had changed in accordance with the new theoretical orientation. In November Komaki published *Anri Barubyusu no geijutsu to shisō* (*The Art and Thought of Henri Barbusse*), a pamphlet that laid out the fundamentals of the Clarté movement, as well as his own interpretation of the novel *Clarté* and how its events were to tie into actual political practice – in other words, a blueprint for intellectual commitment. The pamphlet contained Komaki's critique of Barbusse's entire oeuvre

and is the best indicator of his understanding of Barbusse's philosophy and place as a producer of literary works.

Komaki began his assessment of Barbusse at the point of the latter's entry into the literary world with the poetry collection *Pleureuses* (Mourners, 1895) and novel *Les Suppliants* (The supplicants, 1903), positioning him at this beginning point in his career as a romantic. Against the backdrop of a French literary scene in great ferment, Komaki described the early Barbusse as an impressionable figure, with Baudelaire and Zola as early influences. They soon proved inadequate in a society wracked by the violent convulsions in morality and politics of the Dreyfus age, though, as Barbusse, tired of what he saw as the monotony and superficiality of the literary establishment and bitter over his inability to arrive at an art that was living and touched by real life, embraced nihilism, the depths of which he plumbed in his 1908 work *L'Enfer* (Hell). For Komaki, *L'Enfer* was to be seen as the first volume in a trilogy, followed by *Le Feu* (Under fire) in 1916 and finally *Clarté* in 1919, in what he described as the arc of Barbusse's development as a writer. Positioned thus at the beginning of Barbusse's arc, *L'Enfer* sits in this early period of nihilism and despair. However, Komaki noted that even in the overall tone of despair there was to be found a delicate spirit of optimism in the work, and that through this strange optimism Barbusse had tried to see into the interior of man. Consequently, through this first effort one could already see what would become his characteristic view of society.⁴² While he admitted that the subject matter of *L'Enfer* was not entirely new, and that writers had attempted to deal with similar problems before, he saw Barbusse's chief contribution in his realism, through which he was able to strip down this nihilistic despair to its essence and tackle it from a new angle. This realism would assume a grim dimension in *Le Feu*, the next installment in the trilogy.

⁴² Komaki Ōmi, *Anri Barbyusu no geijutsu to shisō* (Tokyo: Sekai Shichō Kenkyūkai, 1922), 10.

Le Feu was a powerful work that had resulted from Barbusse's experience at the front, and Komaki described it as having "gushed forth from Barbusse's breast like raw, frightening blood" (*Chōdo namanamashii, osoroshii chi no yō ni kare no mune kara wakideta no de aru*).⁴³ Though acknowledging the work as a product of its age, Komaki also proclaimed it a masterpiece of world literature, finding its main value to be its realism and Barbusse's efforts at objective description.⁴⁴ Although in describing the war and the people who fought it he did nothing more than to express what he saw as he saw it (*mita koto, sono mama o nobeteiru dake ni suginai*), the expression was important in that, for both Komaki and Barbusse, objectivity in representation was equated with truth. He therefore positioned *Le Feu* on Barbusse's philosophical arc at the point where the early despairing nihilism had given way to an enlightened awakening as Barbusse stopped searching for the truth and began to express it. As he demonstrated, though, this retreat from nihilism was not an entire about-face, as traces of both optimism and pessimism were found earlier in *L'Enfer*. However, for Komaki, Barbusse had to travel from the depths of nihilism in *L'Enfer*, which was really just an intellectual endeavor, to the very real depths of the trenches in order to discover the hope expressed at the end of *Le Feu*. This hope took its final, revolutionary turn in the third novel in the trilogy, *Clarté*.

Komaki's analysis of *Clarté* was centered on the figure of its protagonist Simon Paulin, whom he divided into prewar and postwar incarnations. Although describing both manifestations as essentially good and obedient (*junryō*), he distinguished between the forms of this characteristic as they applied to both eras. When looking at Paulin before the war Komaki posited that the goodness and obedience was wholly deployed in the service of the state. Paulin's love for capitalism at this point was unconditional: the capitalists were at the top of society for a

⁴³ Komaki, *Anri Barbyusu no geijutsu to shisō*, 15.

⁴⁴ He would later rechristen *Le Feu*'s realism as "humanistic realism" (*jindōtekina rearizumu*). Komaki Ōmi, "Anri Barbyusu yuku," *Kaizō* 17, no. 10 (1935): 399.

reason and their rules were to be accepted and followed, and anyone opposing them was dangerous. This was best displayed in a heated argument he had toward the beginning of the novel with the local blacksmith Brisbille, who in a drunken rage attempted to warn everyone that the coming war would only serve to enrich the capitalist class at the expense of the proletariat. Paulin, on the contrary, felt at this stage that sacrificing oneself for the state was an ultimate act of manly glory.⁴⁵

Paulin's acceptance of the status quo, so solid before the war, was destroyed through his experience on the Western Front. Komaki noted that through these experiences he was forced to confront the truth he had tried so hard to ignore. As the war raged around him Paulin began to notice that the dying and the dead of all sides were, like him, proletarians whose deaths had been hastened by the rhetoric fed them by their capitalist homelands. Facing death in no man's land Paulin saw the light, and came to believe that eventually a new truth, so desperately needed by humanity, would win out. For Paulin (and Barbusse), that truth was proletarian revolution.

From *Clarté* Komaki turned to the movement it had inspired, asserting that it was first and foremost "an international of thinkers, that is, workers of the mind" (*shisōka, tsumari seishin rōdōsha no intānashonaru de aru*).⁴⁶ The movement embraced all artists from all nations, regardless of creed, in the belief that once people possessing an internationalist spirit unified, the power of art could be used to build the new social system so urgently needed. This philosophy, laid out in the concluding chapters of *Clarté*, also meant, however, that artists could not be content with a Rolland-style spectatorship of wars that only served the interests of capitalists. If they were to wage a successful war against war they instead needed to get "out of the study and

⁴⁵ Komaki, *Anri Barbyusu no geijutsu to shisō*, 21.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 24.

into the street,” and they needed to embrace revolutionary pacifism.⁴⁷ For Barbusse at this point in time this would have meant Bolshevism, and indeed Komaki cited Barbusse’s support for the Third International as a model of the action needed, thus echoing his earlier call for the movement to align itself officially with world communism.⁴⁸

VII. The Clarté Problematic in Literature: Asō Hisashi’s “Shitai no hakkutsu,” Kaneko Yōbun’s “Sake”

Concurrent with the Japanese analysis of the debate and Komaki’s discussions of Barbusse was the appearance of Clarté-inspired literature in *Tane maku hito*, and one of the first to write fiction in this vein was Asō Hisashi (1891-1940). Born the son of farmers in Ōita Prefecture, Asō studied law at Tokyo University, where he became interested in socialism. After graduating he served briefly as a reporter before joining the Yūaikai (Friendly Society, the precursor to the Sōdōmei, the largest prewar labor organization) in 1919 as the head of its mining division; he would lead subsequent actions at the Ashio and Hitachi copper mines as well as at the Yūbari coal mine in Hokkaidō. The Yūaikai counted among its members both workers and intellectuals and as such Asō was just the kind of individual sought by Clarté: an intellectual with ties to working class organizations. He joined the staff of *Tane maku hito*, and his short piece “Shitai no hakkutsu” (Exhumed) was published in September 1922.

“Exhumed” captures the Clarté movement in transition. It is thoroughly grounded in the Clarté problematic, and all three elements of that problematic are represented. First, the story

⁴⁷ Komaki, *Anri Barbyusu no geijutsu to shisō*, 25. Although the difference between Rolland’s pacifism and the revolutionary pacifism of Barbusse would appear to be marginal (the end goal was the same), in practice the two doctrines were irreconcilable. For the revolutionary pacifist nonviolence and the abolishment of war remained a goal but it was acknowledged that a certain amount of violence would have to be sanctioned in order to achieve it. This was especially true in the case of revolution.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

itself is centered on that most industrial of the industrial proletariat, coal miners, and it should come as no surprise that Asō should have focused the work on this segment given his experience. Second, the revolutionary pacifist impulse is present, wherein the sanctioning of violence is limited to that used on behalf of class interest. Third is the expression of belief in humanist agency so important to the movement. At the same time, though, the piece is a product of the theoretical alterations begun as a result of the Rolland-Barbusse debate. In fact, as will be seen, the most important theoretical result of the debate is reflected in the story, as by its end the humanist agency so originally prized by Clarté has been ceded to a political organization, a reflection of the movement's shift toward collective political struggle through such organizations.

The story opens in Hokkaidō in late autumn, in a community centered around the “U” coal mine.⁴⁹ A methane gas explosion collapses K pit, burying hundreds of miners. The pit, with a frenetic production rate, has been long overdue for such a disaster, and repeated visits by safety inspectors have resulted, not in the closure of the pit, but in their silence concerning the looming danger, as they hustle off with bundles of money. The miners, bracing for the worst and with little alternative, continue to descend into the pit until one evening the anticipated explosion arrives, its blast sending panicked families out of their homes and shopkeepers into the streets. The community, once recovered from its initial bewilderment, is in no doubt as to who to blame, and shortly after the explosion a tattered flag is raised above a local household. From a distance, it appears to be a simple white flag:

It was at this point that a large white flag was suddenly raised on the roof of a row house in T ward, which was located on a hillside close to K mine. In the gathering darkness the flag fluttered. From a distance, it only looked white. However, those close saw that the words “Bury the murderous company” were written in blood-red color. The red of the letters flowed frightfully down the flag as if it were the

⁴⁹ The “U” coal mine could conceivably be a veiled reference to the Hokutan Yūbari mining complex, one of Hokkaidō's largest and a place Asō was intimately familiar with. The mine saw several deadly explosions throughout the Taishō period.

dripping of human blood. Along with the hoisting of that flag, from somewhere the cry “Long live the workers!” echoed throughout the forest as if the miners’—nay!—as if humanity’s soul itself was bursting forth. The despair again became hope.

此時突如として K 坑の近くの山腹にある T 區長屋の或る屋根の上に白い大きな旗が揚げられた。其旗は暮れて行く薄闇の中に生き生きと翻へつた。遠くからは唯白い色のみが見えた。だが近くの者は其旗の中に赤色の血の如き色を以て「殺人會社を葬れ」と書いてあるのを見た。文字の赤色は恰かも人間の血潮のひたゝるが如く其端は流れて物凄ごくにじんてみた。その旗が揚げられると共に何處からともなく、坑夫の否人間の靈魂其ものが破裂した如くに「労働者萬歳」の叫喚が起きつて森林にこだました。死にかけての絶望が再び希望に向かつて呼吸を吹き返した如く思はれた。⁵⁰

In tandem with this, spontaneous cries of “long live the workers” (*rōdōsha banzai*) go up from the community. The cry is not yet collective but scattered, as many are still busy running around trying to ascertain the status of loved ones. However, the anger is palpable among workers who have long held that negligence on the part of the company would be responsible in the event of any disaster.

About a week after the explosion the recovery of the charred bodies begins as they are brought out and laid on straw mats for family members to identify, something not always possible considering their state. One is recognized by a woman as her husband, and she sobbingly clings to the corpse, her dazed children in tow. Each successive wail from her charges the already-electric atmosphere and the crowd’s anger increases, the name of the company prominent on their lips. The exchanges, though, are still unfocused: as nervous police attempt to keep the peace, some demand the destruction of the company, while others call for dynamite. It is at this moment, as the spontaneous energy of the crowd threatens to scatter in all directions, that another flag appears, the official flag of the workers’ union. The standard and its representatives serve to focus this anger onto a concrete, unified objective as they hoist the dead

⁵⁰ Asō Hisashi, “Shitai no hakkutsu,” *Tane maku hito* 3, no. 12 (1922), 112.

miner onto a board and exhort the crowd to carry it toward the mining office. The widow, initially skeptical of the union's motives, is also lifted onto the board along with her children, and the story concludes with the procession moving toward their destination under a shining moon.

“Exhumed” is a short piece (some six pages in the original), and at first glance has much in common with the proletarian literature of subsequent years. So much the more reason to read it with caution, for proletarian literature as a label was at this point still in its infancy (its first appearance denoting a genre had been earlier that year), and despite the familiar subject matter the story does not serve the same ends that the genre would later cater to (namely, the Marxist-Leninist problematic). The first and largest absence is obviously that of the communist party, which at the time the story was published had only been in existence in Japan for two months. Additionally, the union here is unnamed, and is referred to simply as *kumiai*, and the stress of the story lies not in the entry of the union itself, but in the deferring of the workers to its guidance.

This appearance of an organization to unify scattered elements of proletarian discontent, which would later be the exclusive domain of the Communist Party, here should be read as a reflection of the evolution of Clarté in Japan. As mentioned, all three elements of the problematic are present: the industrial proletariat, revolutionary pacifism, and humanism. At the same time, however, the story illustrates the developing tension between the humanism of Clarté and the Bolshevik-style focus on the class struggle that was a result of the debate as it played out in the movement in Japan, and ultimately the story gives way to the latter. In fact, this transition is rather abrupt, as the humanist agency of the crowd (which had achieved nothing) and the wife is quickly replaced by collective action. Asō, as both union leader and creative writer, has penned

not only the struggle of capital against labor, but an argument for the necessity of an enlightened organization like Clarté in leading that struggle.

The initial flirtation with humanism in “Exhumed” comes with the first actions of the miners following the blast. Anger is duly directed toward the company for its negligence, but the solitary demand raised by a household to bury the company and its leadership are not initially echoed, illustrating a fragmented response; the blast does not encourage the formation of a subjectivity along class lines. The community is not yet in agreement about how to proceed, and each household has a unique reaction: some members are ready to fight on their own, others urge caution. Whether the former or latter, however, the subjectivity remains individual: each household (whatever its course) is only concerned with itself, and unified and collective action is nowhere mentioned.

As more and more bodies are exhumed, this individual consciousness on the part of the miners gives way to collective action, and this is solidified with the appearance of the union. The union leaders, much like Asō himself, attempt to focus this uncontrolled energy in the direction of the company, as they demand one of the bodies be carried and deposited in front of the door of the company office. This authority is not completely submitted to at first though, as the wife of one of the dead miners questions the union’s actions, seemingly refusing to let them move her husband. She eventually relents, but as she and her children are lifted onto the board to be carried to the company office it is the union flag that is hoisted, not the homemade flag from earlier. The transition from the crude, blood-stained flag initially flown by the workers to the official flag of the union mirrors the submission of the workers to union leadership and the transition from individual agency to class-based struggle.

It is this struggle that provides the final element of Clarté's problematic, the revolutionary pacifism inherent in the workers, who with each body unearthed take one step closer to revolt. The sanctioned violence in this case is in the pursuit of the class war, for only with an identified capitalist representative (the company) does the crowd sanction possible violence; earlier calls for dynamite, for example, had gone unheeded in the absence of a valid target. Further, signposts erected throughout the narrative also serve to justify the crowd's demands for class-based violence: the danger of an explosion long feared by workers, the corruption of safety officials, the delay of a week in exhuming the bodies by the authorities, all contribute to the sense of futility prevalent in the community, as their own collective explosion has been prefigured by the earlier gas explosion. Finally the class-based consciousness prevails:

“Put his old lady up there, too!” somebody yelled.

“Yeah, and the kids.”

With wife and kids clinging to him, the plank upon which the burnt miner lay was raised onto the shoulders of several miners. The union flag was raised in front.

A violent wave of emotion swept through the crowd.

“Long live the workers! Bury the murderous company! Tear it down!” So crying, the crowd put the plank bearing the flag, corpse, wife and kids at their head and began to move in the direction of the company office. Hovering above the forest the moon shone down brightly upon the sad, sorrowful crowd.

「嬢も一緒にのせて行け」

と又誰かが叫んだ

「さうだ 子供も一緒にのっけろ」

黒くこげた坑夫の死骸とそれに取りすがる女房と子供をのせた戸板が數十人の坑夫に依つて肩の上に擔ぎ上げられた。組合旗が其前に立つた。

言ふべからざるとよめきの感激の波が群集に傳はつた。

「労働者萬歳殺人會社を葬れたゝきこはせ」群集は旗と死骸と女房と子供とを載せて戸板を眞先きにして事務所の方へ動き出した。森林の上にかゝつてゐる月が此憐れな悲痛な群集の上を明るく照らした。⁵¹

Through its illustration of individual agency and revolutionary pacifism, and the importance of an organization to lead those things on the part of the industrial proletariat,

⁵¹ Asō, “Shitai no hakkutsu,” 115.

“Exhumed” displays its basis in the Clarté problematic. At the same time, though, with the appearance of the union the story illustrates the growing influence of Bolshevik-style anti-humanism into the overall consciousness of the workers’ movement and its fictional representations. At the time of the story’s publication Asō himself was at the forefront of such a change, as the Yūaikai had for years been transitioning from an organization favoring a harmonious relationship between capital and labor to one emphasizing radicalism and collective strike action.⁵² And by doing so the story ultimately shows that even within *Tane maku hito* the Clarté influence was already waning.

Despite the evolving relationship between *Tane maku hito* and the Clarté movement, the Clarté problematic continued to manifest itself through much of the fiction published in the journal. In fact, even pieces found at the end of the journal’s run still show the influence, with another example being Kaneko Yōbun’s “Sake” (Liquor), published in the June 1923 issue. Kaneko has already been introduced as a founding member of *Tane maku hito*, and as one of the first to consider the implementation of Clarté in Japan he was one of those most familiar with its tenets. And indeed, this comes through in “Liquor,” as the story contains all the elements of the Clarté problematic.

“Liquor” concerns a teacher, Kikuchi Kinji, and the merriment surrounding the anniversary of the founding of the elementary school where he works. The day begins with the male teachers stealing surreptitious glances at their female counterparts, who have applied makeup on this rare occasion. Nobody is drinking; all are focused mechanically and individually on their jobs. When the day’s classes are over the teachers congregate upstairs, and it is here that the alcohol begins to flow. The effect of the drink on the staff is described by the unnamed

⁵² Janet Hunter, *Concise Dictionary of Modern Japanese History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 253.

narrator as liberating; first and foremost, Kinji notices that the usual (and obligatory) state-centered talk of loyalty, patriotism, and filial duty that permeates daily conversation is nowhere to be found. As he surveys the line of teachers facing him, Kinji has occasion to reflect on how the freedom afforded by the liquor affects their individual personalities, sometimes for the better, most times for the worse. And although he himself does not partake initially, after an embarrassing incident puts him on the spot, Kinji succumbs to the pressure, and through his drunkenness arrives at an enlightened understanding of society.

Most of “Liquor” is told through observations of Kinji’s colleagues (who for him serve as stand-ins for society) and their reaction to alcohol. This allows all involved to wax poetic on the role alcohol has as a liberating element for a social structure they all see as strait-jacketed by increasingly irrational restrictions. Perhaps cognizant of the drink’s reputation as something of a truth serum, Kinji is able to compare the attitudes of the teachers both before and after they drink, drawing conclusions on the implications of their behavior as representative of a potential liberation visited upon society. He also sees how those in control of the means of enlightenment harbor it (here by distributing the alcohol), as he watches as those already drunk attempt to selectively “enlighten” the others, either through gentle persuasion or brute force.

The process begins with one of the senior teachers, Iwasaki, whose comments lay out the basic nature of the story’s view of society, and give detailed attention to the constricted nature of education and scholarship in Japan, elements in the darkness that he argues need to be enlightened. He commences his tirade by casting the Japanese education system as a machine, its cogs (of which he himself is one) grinding the independence out of children and turning them into loyal and obedient subjects. As he has it, this machine is for the most part effective, but its arbitrariness evokes resistance, as people rebel against its meaningless regulations, echoing

Paulin's attitude on the cultural barriers erected within French society. Illustrating how these barriers elicit resistance, he uses an example from the United States:

They teach Washington's confession, but they only expound upon his honesty, they forget such things as the fact that he chopped down the tree and the question of *why* he had to chop down the tree. It is the spirit of rebellion against preservation that children have. It is the feeling of wishing for the storm. From that feeling was born the great war for the liberation of the slaves (here he was confusing Washington and Lincoln).

彼等はワシントンの告白を教へる、けれ共、彼等はワシントンの正直のみを説いて、彼が木を切つたことや、何故木を切らねばならなかつたかを忘れてゐる。あれは子供が持つてゐる、保存に對する反逆心なのだ。暴風を望んでゐる心なのだ。この心から、偉大な奴隷解放の戦が生れてきたのだ。(彼はここでワシントンとリンコルンとを間違ひて言つてしまふ)⁵³

Despite Iwasaki's presidential mix-up, his comments represent an application of Clarté concerns to the educational makeup of society, a claim furthered when he comments that the intellectuals (in this case teachers) are complicit, serving as integral parts in the manufacture of submissive state-centered subjects. Again, a parallel could be drawn with Paulin and his attitude after he returns from the war to see how impressive the state machinery was that funneled him (and millions like him) into the trenches. In either case the objective is the constitution of the industrial proletariat, here represented by the students, into a disposable appendage of the state.

The processing of proletarian children into potential cannon fodder is not a foregone conclusion, however, and Iwasaki's diatribe is notable for his assertion of the essentialist (and individual) nature of rebellion. For him this bodes well for the future, although he manages to shrug off the implications that he should rebel by stating that he is in no position to challenge the status quo, as he has a reputation to consider and a family to feed. Instead, the responsibility falls to Kinji, who represents a figure capable of bringing the light; this potential role is known to both students and community alike, a fact attested to by his two nicknames. To his students he is

⁵³ Kaneko Yōbun, "Sake," *Tane maku hito* 4, no. 19 (1923), 390.

known as Jean Valjean; to the members of the town assembly, he is the socialist. The first moniker is obviously meant as a compliment, the second as a damnation. Iwasaki's behest is for Kinji (whom he now addresses as Jean Valjean) to bring the children to a collective understanding of their essential, rebellious instinct.

Needless to say, Iwasaki's comments are distilled through an abundance of liquor, and as Kinji parts company and returns to the merrymaking he finds another, darker aspect of alcohol on display in instructors such as the repulsive (*buotoko*) Tashiro. He finds the latter, a disagreeable liar, emboldened by his drink and pushing alcohol on the female instructors, who flee one by one in disgust. Unlike Iwasaki, who arrived through alcohol at an understanding of the class-based constraints of society, the drunken Tashiro uses alcohol for personal gain, and his ways of spreading the libation are heavy-handed and brutal, as he gropes and chases the women, eventually vanishing downstairs in pursuit of them.

Soon the party reaches its raucous peak and another instructor, Sugase, jumps up and declares that the leftover food made by the female teachers should be offered to the single, young male instructors. As he grabs the plates and staggers down the table, the impending chaos leads Kinji to remark on the circus-like, liberated atmosphere of the room:

Kinji felt a bitter smile and irony at the appearance of this unexpected new game. These people with loud voices yelling, shouting, clapping, and tapping their feet, when he thought are not these the same people who everyday seriously talk of loyalty and patriotism, duty, etiquette, and training, it was all very interesting. Then he thought how blissful it would be if people could be liberated all the time and live freely like when they are drunk.

欣治は、不意に起こったこの新しい遊戯に、苦笑と皮肉を感じた。この大声でわめいたり、叫んだり、手を拍ったり、靴をならしたりしてゐる人達が、毎日のやうに真面目くさつて、忠君愛国だ、孝行だ、禮儀だ、訓練だと言つてゐるのかと思ふと、全く面白かつた。そして、人間がいつでも酒に酔つた

時のやうに解放されて、自由に生きることが出来たら、どんなに幸福だらうと思つた。⁵⁴

It is at this point that Tashiro, fresh off his failure with the women, reappears upstairs, and threatens to disrupt the proceedings. The other teachers, who had contented themselves to watch events unfold, suddenly unite in hostility toward him, alternatively hurling insults at him and telling him to be quiet. Their unity, targeted specifically against Tashiro's attempt to spread disorder through their ranks, is suggestive of revolutionary pacifism's targeted sanctioning of violence. Indeed, nowhere else in the story is such a unity even remotely replicated.

They need not have worried, however. Tashiro grabs a plate and puts it down in front of Kinji, with the supposed compliments (and kisses) of the female teachers. The room erupts in an anticipatory applause and, desperate to stave off the awkwardness, Kinji reaches for his first drink. Running out of the room in embarrassment, he goes downstairs to the school watch-room where he finds the group of women who had previously escaped the advances of the lecherous Tashiro. Enjoying themselves through their attempt to play the violin, they are waiting for someone to get them back into the party, and it is the newly-enlightened Kinji (this is the first time he has been inebriated) that they turn to for guidance, asking him to alleviate their hunger with some red apples and stave off their boredom. They are unable to act but must be instructed externally. Fully inebriated, Kinji dashes off one glib suggestion after another (such as offering them red "apples" in the form of his inflamed cheeks) as he leads them to their own enlightenment.

Choosing to stay in the watch-room, Kinji focuses on increasing their enjoyment there. Soon, though, the unexpected happens: as he is instructing one of them in the violin, a violent fit of passion takes hold of him and he is forced to run out of the room. Flopping down on a chair in

⁵⁴ Kaneko, "Sake," 395.

the music room and ruminating over what has just happened, he begins to wonder why abstract concepts such as holiness, chastity, and abstinence hold him back:

神聖とは何んだ。
貞操とは何んだ。
それはことごとく夢ではないか。
俺は裸にならなければならない。
一切の夢を棄てることだ。
過去を棄てることだ。
新しい生活は彼方にあるのだ。⁵⁵

What is divinity?
What is chastity?
Are they not all dreams?
I need to strip to the skin.
To throw away all dreams.
To throw away the past.
A new life is on the other side.

As his inebriation wears off and he finds himself in the music room he begins to cry, after which he jumps to his feet with new resolve, declaring that love is a battlefield and there is only one winner.

Apart from the overt references to socialism and focus on romantic love at its conclusion, “Liquor” has a strong undercurrent of Clarté themes. First and foremost, the titular liquor, taken here to represent enlightenment, reflects the Clarté stance on the current status of society: true knowledge is in the hands of those using it for personal gain, such as Tashiro, and the majority of the population, such as the female teachers, are denied access unless it behooves those in control to offer it. Iwasaki understands this fact but does not act because he cannot bring himself to brave the difficulties such a venture must entail (similar to Paulin’s resigning himself to ostracization following his determination to spread his truth). In the end it is Kinji who is deemed capable of leading the children (here the industrial proletariat), much as he does the

⁵⁵ Kaneko, “Sake,” 399.

women hiding from Tashiro, and his last exhortation to himself is that he will do just that. Thus is reaffirmed Clarté's faith in the subject-centered approach to revolution. To this humanism and views of the importance of the industrial proletariat is added an example of revolutionary pacifism, as the teachers close ranks and threaten violence on Tashiro, who by threatening to put a stop to the party represents a barrier to collective enlightenment through drunkenness.

VIII. The Publication of *Kurarute*

The earlier release of *The Art and Thought of Henri Barbusse* can be seen in part as Komaki's attempt to answer some of the questions lingering from the debate about the composition and goals of the Clarté movement. Optimism was nevertheless high within the movement, and was buoyed further with the release of *Clarté*, the novel that had served as its theoretical cornerstone. Komaki and Sasaki had received an advance from the publishing house Sōbunkaku for a translation of *Clarté* in mid-1921, and after two years of work the book was published in May 1923. A publication party (*shuppan kinen kōenkai*) was held in Kanda on 7 May, which included speeches by Arishima Takeo, Yoshie Takamatsu, Fujimori Seikichi, and Akita Ujaku.⁵⁶ The following day a discussion meeting (*konwakai*) was held at the same venue to discuss the book. The gathering numbered over fifty, and participants included Akita Ujaku, Fujimori Seikichi, Sakai Toshihiko, Hasegawa Nyozeikan, Ogawa Mimei, Chiba Kameo, Yoshie Takamatsu, Nii Itaru, Chūjō (later Miyamoto) Yuriko and Mitsugi Teiko. At the conclusion of the meeting the party sent a telegram to Barbusse before spilling out onto the street singing *L'Internationale*. Both events were sponsored by an organization known as the Kurarute no kai,

⁵⁶ Arishima's speech was entitled "The Materialist View of History and Art" (*Yuibutsu shikan to geijutsu*), Yoshie offered his "Impressions of Meeting Barbusse in Paris" (*Pari de atta Barubyusu no inshō*), and Akita spoke of "Miscellaneous Impressions" (*Zakkan*). For the official report of both meetings see *Tane maku hito* 5, no. 1 (1923): 59.

which might have constituted an auspicious development for the movement if not for the fact that nothing was ever heard from it again.⁵⁷

The technical aspects of the book's translation were explained in its introduction, which was reprinted in the June 1923 issue of *Tane maku hito*. Detailing the process by which the work was completed, the introduction noted that the translation was based on the first edition (*shohanbon*) of *Clarté* that Komaki had received directly from Barbusse at their meeting in France in 1919. Significant portions of that edition had been censored, however, but the translators were able to reinsert these censored portions through use of a 1921 edition. The completed product was then checked by Okuda Yoshiharu against Fitzwater Wray's uncensored English translation, published in the United States in 1919 by E. P. Dutton and Company.⁵⁸

The critical reception of *Kurarute* was positive. Building on Komaki's earlier discussions of the novel in *The Art and Thought of Henri Barbusse*, Yoshie Takamatsu's article *Kurarute no shimei* (The mission of *Clarté*), published in the *Asahi shinbun* in early June 1923, posited truth as its main merit. Paulin was to be considered a harbinger of a new dawn of understanding, but his obsession with truth was important to Yoshie because it coincided with what the latter considered to be an innate characteristic of the Japanese: a ceaseless desire to search for the truth. In fact, as Yoshie would have it, *Clarté* was a perfect fit for Japanese readers precisely because it matched this form of internationalist essentialism (a characteristic that had gone unacknowledged by Komaki), and this meant that domestic readers could only be ashamed if they did not take well to the book. Luckily, though, Japanese readers were in an especially advantageous position to join Paulin in this search for truth because, according to Yoshie, the

⁵⁷ Honda Shūgo, *Enbō kinshi: oniishi yato kara* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1970), 145-6. The fact that the *Kurarute no kai* was never heard from again is understandable when one considers the fact that the speaking tours Komaki and Sasaki made following the book's publication throughout that summer were followed by Arishima's death in August, which in turn was followed by the Great Kantō Earthquake on 1 September.

⁵⁸ *Tane maku hito* 4, no. 19 (1923): 357.

skill of the translators ensured that the Japanese version alone succeeded in fully reproducing the essence of Barbusse's work:

It would be a shame if this was not a book that the Japanese, of whom it is said are habitually demanding the truth and constantly craving newness, love above all others . . . There can be thought none more appropriate to translate Barbusse into Japanese than Mr. Komaki and Mr. Sasaki, an excellent translator with any number of titles, and their joint translation of *Clarté* should have even more readers than any other book in today's Japan . . . More than a translation into any other language, this Japanese-language translation of *Clarté* most completely reproduces the author's soul.

常に眞利を求めてやまず、いつも清新を渴望するといはるゝ日本人が、若しこの「クラルテ」を何よりも愛好する書物たらしめ得ないとするならば、恥ず可きだ。。。バルビュスを日本語に翻譯するとしては他に適當者は決してないと思はるゝ小牧君と、既に幾つかの翻譯に於て練達してゐる佐々木君とのこの共譯の日本語の「クラルテ」は、現在の日本に於て、如何なる書物よりも一層多數の讀者を持つ可きである。。。如何なる他の國語に譯されたものよりも、この日本語譯の「クラルテ」は最も完全に原作者の生命を再現してゐるのである。⁵⁹

Yoshie summed up the book's offerings as truth and "light" (*kurarute*), tenets toward which he implored readers to turn.

Similar remarks were published by Arishima that same month in his journal *Izumi*.⁶⁰

Arishima praised the distinctive qualities of Barbusse, as well as the special place he occupied in the world of letters. He promised characters and objects wonderfully drawn, assuring the reader that if they were to bear through the dense, confused description that marked the first part of the novel they would eventually warm up to the author's vision. In this they would find an individual with hopes, desires, and tendencies similar to their own. He emphasized the humanistic lesson to be found in Paulin's journey, as despite his unremarkable birth and talents he was able to progress from a position of mediocrity to one of enlightenment through the trials and tribulations

⁵⁹ Yoshie Takamatsu, "Kurarute no shimei (ge)," *Asahi shinbun*, June 8, 1923.

⁶⁰ Arishima Takeo, "Barubyusu no *Kurarute* no yakubun o yomite," orig. pub.1923; repr. in vol. 7 of *Arishima Takeo zenshū*, Shinchōsha, 1929.

of what Arishima described as a “the random detritus of a warped culture” (*kikai na bunka no zatsuzen taru taiseiki*). This was more than a simple intellectual epiphany, though, and Arishima admitted that its description was anything but simple. He exhorted readers to persevere, however, and labeled the book a must read for the Japanese reading public.

The Marxist critic Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke, who joined *Tane maku hito* in February 1922, expressed his thoughts in the article *Shinri no kishu Barubyusu: Kurarute o yomite* (The standardbearer of truth Barbusse: on reading *Clarté*). He began at the point of the novel’s construction, explaining how exactly the planning and execution of the work went against current ideas of novelistic construction in Japan:

Traditional elements constituting the old arts like the science of art, aesthetics, literary debate and novelistic etiquette are rolling about at the writer’s feet like so much scrap metal. In the interests of the search for truth, the writer is unsparing in his sacrifice of everything but those. And he raises his voice and yells the truth, as loudly as if he were one of those novelists caught in the strict bias that exists in Japan today who would raise their own voices to object that “if one does that the novel is ruined.” He literally shouts it. Doing it as if he is a person who knows that not screaming truth in the middle of this fallacy is the same as affirming it. Against this bold undertaking, which ignores the idea of the novel...we who at times confine ourselves to the small palace of fine arts should be ashamed.

藝術學や、美學や、文藝議論や小説作法のやうな、舊藝術を構成してゐる傳統的要素は金屑のやうに作者の脚下にころげている。眞理の探究のために、作者はそれ以外の凡てのものを犠牲にして惜しまない。そして、今日の日本のきゆうくつな偏見に囚はれた小説家だつたら「そんなことをしたら小説は臺なしになる」と叫ぶだらう程の大聲をあげて、彼は眞理を絶叫してゐる。文字通り「絶叫」してゐる。誤謬の中で眞理を叫ばないのは誤謬を肯定すると同じだといふ事を知つてゐる者のせねばならぬやうに。小説の概念を無視し。。。此の大膽な企圖に對して、ともすれば小さい藝術宮に閉ぢこもらうとする吾々は恥ぢはなければならない。⁶¹

He characterized the novel’s function as a critique of the present and an expression of belief in the future, and argued that in conveying these two aspects Barbusse was not to be

⁶¹ Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke, “Shinri no kishu Barubyusu: Kurarute o yomite (*jō*),” *Yomiuri shinbun*, May 31, 1923.

thought of as an artist or critic, much less storyteller or rhetorician, but simply a pursuer and propagandist for truth. For Hirabayashi, *Clarté*'s contribution was to show the way to a new art that eschewed novelistic concerns in favor of the pursuit of truth. He posited that writing in this capacity is what made Barbusse successful, and to this he offered a biting contrast with writers in Japan who he claimed abused truth in favor of novelistic concerns:

Those who think the novelist's sole duty is to squeeze out "humanity" from the "reality" of eating food, strolling the Ginza, talking with friends, and flirting with women, might look [at the concluding portions of *Clarté*] and exclaim "this is not a novel." However, I think we can believe that Barbusse did not concoct this story in order to write a novel, but instead wrote the novel in order to investigate and express truth. For him "truth" is the problem, not "the novel." It is only for truth that individual artistic products can be made tools. And that does not mean the corruption or loss of independence of the work of art. Science and art are the servants of truth. There are those among us who think the opposite. They think that it is acceptable to use truth as a tool for the novel. This is the true nature, stripped of rhetoric, of the artistic theories of the false purveyors of art for art's sake, these scum of society, these lackeys of the ruling class. And by this meaning *Clarté* is something that concretely teaches the ABCs of art.

飯を食つたり、銀座を歩いたり、友人と話したり、女をからかつたりする「現実」の中から「人間性」をにじみ出させる事が小説家の唯一の本分だと思つてゐる人々は、この絶叫を見て「これは小説ではない」と叫ぶかも知れぬ。併しバルビュスは小説を書くためにこの物語をこしらへたのではなくて、眞理を探究し表現するためにこの小説を書いたのだといふことを信じて私はいと思ふ。彼にとっては「眞理」が問題であつて「小説」などは問題ではないのだ。眞理のためにのみ個々の文藝作品は其道具とされ得る。それは文藝作品の墮落や獨立の消失ではない。科学も藝術も眞理への奉仕者である。吾々の中にはこれを逆に考へてゐる人がある。小説のためには眞理を道具にしてもよいと。これが誤つた藝術至上主義者、人間の屑、支配階級追隨者の藝術論から修辭を取り去つた正體である。そしてこの意味で「クラルテ」は藝術論のABCを具體的に教へるものである。⁶²

Hirabayashi explained further by bestowing upon *Clarté* an ideological function on par with Dante's *Divine Comedy*, saying that, where Dante's work functioned as the ideological bridge between the Middle Ages and the modern period, *Clarté* was the ideological bridge

⁶² Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke, "Shinri no kishu Barubyusu: Kurarute o yomite (ge)," *Yomiuri shinbun*, June 1, 1923.

between the present and the future. He closed by observing that, “[as] Dante’s *Paradiso* ends in the praise of God’s glory, *Clarté* ends with a solitary god, the god of truth,” and that, “as Dante is led by Beatrice into the halls of Heaven, Simon Paulin is led by Marie, her hands firmly in his own, until he stands face to face with truth” (*Dante no Tengoku ga kami no kōei no sanbi ni owatte iru yō ni Kurarute wa yuiitsu no kami, shinri to iu kami no kyōchō ni owatte iru. Dante ga Beatorichie ni michibikarete tengoku no dōmon ni haitta yō ni, Shimon Pōran wa Marī no soba ni yorisotte ryōte de shikkari kanojo no te o nigitte shinri ni chokumen shita*).⁶³

The effect of *Kurarute*’s publication was considerable, and it is here that a significant part of the legacy of the *Clarté* movement in Japan lies. Through its reception in subsequent reviews and discussions, the terminology of *Kurarute*, repeated and codified, was extended to literature at large, as Paulin’s search for truth in the form of social revolution became not only the goal for which socially committed novelists would strive, but also provided a normative model of what a successful work of literature looked like. The *Clarté* movement’s international efforts in favor of a revolutionary art were taken up by many writers in Japan, and in the ensuing years, with the emergence of proletarian literature as a genre, a novel’s successful appropriation of this truth would become indicative of its merit.

VIII. The End of *Tane maku hito*

Hirabayashi’s support of the *Clarté* translation, understandable given his membership in the *Tane maku hito* coterie, belied the complexity of his overall relation to the *Clarté* movement and the journal specifically. His addition to the staff had brought with it a strong element of Bolshevik-style Marxism, and his efforts to turn the journal in a more radical direction were helped a year later with the addition to the board of the literary critic Aono Suekichi (1890-1961).

⁶³ Hirabayashi, “Shinri no kishu Barubyusu (*ge*).” Marie is his wife.

In the last stages of the journal the two served as its theoretical pillars, helped in June 1923 by the arrival of Nakanishi Inosuke (1887-1958). This shift in support of Marxism resulted in an increasing ideological rigidity, paralleling the experiences of the French Clarté movement.

It was the inclusion of these three that effectively signaled the end of the journal's ideological diversity. *Tane maku hito*'s relationship with various anarchist organizations had been strained following the Rolland-Barbusse debate, and with the founding of the Japanese Communist Party in July 1922 an influx of committed communists to the journal's board was accompanied by a corresponding exodus of anarchists, and contributions from anarchists had virtually disappeared from the journal's table of contents by mid-1923.⁶⁴ As with the Clarté movement elsewhere, the establishment of a Communist Party had exposed the fragility of the journal's ideological unity, beginning a process that would purify it of non-Marxist elements. Aono had even pressed Komaki to join the Japanese Communist Party at the time of its founding but Komaki had refused, claiming (in a rather odd echoing of Rolland) that he did not want to descend into party politics. Nevertheless, Komaki could have had no reservations about the direction the movement was taking, especially in light of his earlier call for Clarté to pursue a Bolshevik course, a call that undoubtedly emboldened the more radical members within the movement.

In June 1923 the journal was rocked by the deaths of Arishima Takeo and Hatano Akiko. The two, who had decided to commit suicide after their affair had been discovered by Hatano's husband, had hung themselves at Arishima's summer home in Karuizawa. Arishima had been a valued and much admired benefactor to the Tanemaki-sha, and although he had never written any articles for *Tane maku hito* directly, his influence over its course was evident from the start. In addition to donating the Umehara painting that helped pay for *Tane maku hito*'s launch in

⁶⁴ Watanabe Kazutami, "Kurarute" to "Tane maku hito" (*ge*), *Bungaku* 4, no. 3 (1993): 165.

Tokyo, he had rented many of the venues in which the Tanemaki-sha's public events had been held, and his financial support had been crucial throughout the journal's existence. The August 1923 issue of *Tane maku hito*, the last regular issue, carried several pieces mourning his death.

Arishima's suicide came at the moment *Tane maku hito* was turning increased attention to the growing division within the staff over whether to focus on ideological or political practice. Although the journal had prided itself on its concern with both, the latter was becoming increasingly difficult. Many provincial vendors of the journal, suffering from police harassment, had stopped or were threatening to stop selling it, and the Tanemaki-sha's own public events, though drawing large crowds, were unable to turn a profit with the incessant police presence, which was discouraging donors.⁶⁵ In September the journal was finally to release a long-planned issue centered on Korea, and the proofs had just been submitted to the printing office when they were destroyed (along with the office) in the Great Kantō Earthquake, which struck at 11:58 on the morning of Saturday, 1 September.

The damage done by the earthquake was extensive, but its effect on *Tane maku hito* in particular was fatal. The journal's offices were incinerated in the ensuing fires, and the martial law declared on 2 September greatly restricted the movement of its members, as vigilante groups threw up roadblocks throughout the city and the police began rounding up radicals with any perceived history of anti-government activities. In two separate incidents the police conducted savage attacks against radicals. In the first, called the Kameido Incident after the district in which it took place, police shot and decapitated a group of labor organizers in the district jail yard on 4 September.⁶⁶ In the second, more famous Amakasu Incident (named after Amakasu Masahiko, the officer in charge of the detachment of military police), Ōsugi Sakae was murdered in prison

⁶⁵ Aono Suekichi, "Bungei sensen izen: Tanemaki-sha kaisan zengo," *Bungei sensen* 1, no. 1 (1924): 6.

⁶⁶ Andrew Gordon, *Labor and Imperial Democracy in Prewar Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 179.

along with his common-law wife Itō Noe and American nephew on 16 September. Their bodies were found in a well several days later.

Komaki, who at the time was working on a translation of Barbusse's *L'Enfer* at home in Kanagawa Prefecture, was immediately visited by the local chief of police, who issued a thinly veiled ultimatum for him to leave town. He took his family to the home of his parents in Tokyo, where he found the offices of *Tane maku hito* destroyed and the journal's staff members scattered, many having returned to the countryside. Several months later, in December, Komaki, Nakanishi, Aono, Maedakō, Matsumoto Kōji, Hirabayashi, and Kaneko, the only members left in Tokyo, met to try to agree on a course of action. Publication was extremely difficult, if not impossible, under martial law, all the more so due to the fact that Komaki had quit working for the Foreign Ministry in June and so was no longer a protected government employee. Consequently, the only offering from the journal in the period immediately following the earthquake was *Teito shinsai gōgai* (Capital earthquake special edition), a small October pamphlet issued by Imano from the distant safety of Tsuchizaki, which provided a *Kyūkan no ji* (Suspension of publication notice) as well as updates on the whereabouts of the journal's members.⁶⁷

The meeting in Tokyo was tense, and its outcome signaled the end of the movement's political activity. Hirabayashi, who along with Nakanishi and Aono had been instrumental in leading the journal in a Marxist direction, stunned everyone when he declared that the coterie needed to step away from the communist and labor movements (that is, political practice) and make a fresh start from a basis in the liberal movement. Such a reformist turn would have meant a rejection of the Bolshevik and Clarté goal of revolution and a return to parliamentarianism, in effect placing the movement squarely on the side of Rolland. Komaki and Kaneko, who had been

⁶⁷ Komaki, *Aru gendaishi*, 104.

edging closer to Hirabayashi's Marxist position themselves, were shocked with this sudden ideological reversal, and after an icy silence Nakanishi and others issued violent protests. Ultimately, however, agreement eluded them: deadlocked, the meeting, and with it *Tane maku hito*, was dissolved.⁶⁸ Mired in insolvency, hounded by White Terror, and on the brink of collapse, the Tanemaki-sha delivered its Parthian shot in the form of a pamphlet entitled *Tanemaki zakki* (Random sower notes) on 20 January 1924, the day of Lenin's death. Compiled by Kaneko, it condemned the Kameido Incident, offering several short pieces on the massacre as well as a protest against the slaughter of Koreans.

Tane maku hito's demise marked the end of the Clarté movement in Japan. Although many members, such as Aono, Nakanishi, Imano, Maedakō, and Kaneko, would go on to launch the journal *Bungei sensen* (*Literary Front*) in June 1924, key theoretical differences between the two entities preclude any attempt to link them ideologically. In the inaugural issue of *Bungei sensen* Aono cited three main reasons for the breakup of *Tane maku hito*: ideological deadlock among the central body (the Bolshevik and Clarté side versus the liberal humanist side), financial and legal problems following the earthquake, and continuing disagreements on whether to focus energies on the political (*kōdō no hōmen*) or ideological/artistic instance (*bungei hōmen*).⁶⁹ The third reason, unresolved by the time of *Bungei sensen*'s launch, was dispatched with by the second plank of its platform, which stated simply that "each person (member) is free in their thoughts and actions when it comes to the movement to liberate the proletariat" (*musan kaikyū kaihō undō ni okeru kaku kojīn no shisō oyobi kōdō wa jiyū de aru*). This effectively freed

⁶⁸ Yuchi Asao, *Nappu izen no puroretaria bungaku undō* (Tokyo: Ogawamachi Kikaku, 1997), 72.

⁶⁹ Aono, "Bungei sensen izen," *Bungei sensen* 1, no. 1 (1924): 6.

members of the new journal from any obligation vis-à-vis political practice, giving them free rein to approach the journal's development as they saw fit.⁷⁰

This solution to the problem of whether to concentrate on art or politics was reflected in the new journal's name, which promised an exclusive focus on the literary arts (*bungei*). Hirabayashi's efforts, backed by Aono, to restart publication of *Tane maku hito* from a standpoint of political non-engagement ended up enshrined as the first plank of the new journal's platform, which stressed that the efforts of the members would be confined to "the artistic united front in the movement to liberate the proletariat" (*Warera wa musan kaikyū kaihō undō ni okeru geijutsujō no kyōdō sensen ni tatsu*).⁷¹ With the new journal thus divesting itself of any interest in or conduct of political activity, the Clarté movement and *Tane maku hito* mantra of *hihan to kōdō* was dropped in favor of *hihan* only, making the new journal essentially just another *Warera*, which *Tane maku hito* had earlier criticized for its lack of direct action.

Komaki's own comments concerning the launch of *Bungei sensen* are sparse. He did not have much to do with its founding, and the project was maintained with minimal involvement from him.⁷² In April 1924 he went to Geneva with the labor leader Suzuki Bunji as his translator for the sixth conference of the International Labor Organization, and by the time he returned to Japan in September 1924 *Bungei sensen* had been launched under the direction of the newly-reconciled pair of Aono and Nakanishi, the latter of whom had full editorial control over the journal, serving as its editor, publisher, and printer. Komaki would contribute occasionally, but his presence overall was marginal. He was involved with another, Kyoto-based journal, *Kurarute*, founded in April 1924 under the editorship of Sumiya Etsuji, which attempted to return to the

⁷⁰ Asukai Masamichi, *Nihon puroretaria bungaku shiron* (Tokyo: Yagi Shoten, 1982), 46.

⁷¹ *Bungei sensen* 1, no. 1 (1924): 11. My italics.

⁷² Komaki, *Aru gendaishi*, 121.

earlier united front lineage of both *Tane maku hito* and Clarté by including writers from a wide range of ideologies. The journal was short-lived, lasting until April 1925.⁷³

Though Clarté as a movement had formally ended in Japan, its influence continued to spread. In April 1924 yet another journal was launched under the name *Kurarute*, this one based in Akita and begun by a recent graduate of the Otaru Commercial School named Kobayashi Takiji. Kobayashi, who would eventually become the premier writer of proletarian literature in Japan, had been familiar with Barbusse's writings while at school, where he had translated two of his stories, *Fate? (Fatalité?)* and *The Presence (La Présence)*, from English into Japanese.⁷⁴ Kobayashi's *Kurarute* totaled five issues, published sporadically in April, July, and September of 1924, February 1925, and March 1926. The influence of the Clarté movement is apparent from the title (which was Kobayashi's idea) although the journal members followed relatively independent agendas, leading to a mixture of entries reminiscent of the early days of *Tane maku hito*.⁷⁵ However, the journal provided Kobayashi with an early venue for publication, and several of his celebrated later works, such as *Fuzai jinushi* (The absentee landlord), were refashioned from earlier *Kurarute* contributions.

X. Conclusion

In France the Clarté movement as a political and theoretical force was gone by the end of 1921.⁷⁶ The reasons for its failure are legion, but Barbusse's increasing support for revolutionary (specifically Bolshevik) violence must be counted as chief among them, as this support,

⁷³ Hōjō Tsunehisa, "Tane maku hito to *Kurarute undō*," *Seirei Joshi Tanki Daigaku kiyō* 19 (1991): 108.

⁷⁴ His text was a 1918 collection of Barbusse's short works entitled *We Others*, which was an English translation by Fitzwater Wray of the 1914 *Nous autres*. The translation was published by E. P. Dutton & Company.

⁷⁵ Kurahara Korehito and Nakano Shigeharu, eds., *Kobayashi Takiji kenkyū* (Tokyo: Kaihōsha, 1949), 11. The journal was started with ten members: Hirasawa Tetsuo, Kataoka Ryōichi, Kobayashi, Makita Eiichi, Saitō Jirō, Shimada Shōsaku, Shingū Masatatsu, Takeda Susumu, Tozuka Shintarō, and Uno Chōsaku.

⁷⁶ Racine, "The Clarté Movement in France," 208.

expressed at length in his debate with Rolland, alienated many Clarté members who had been attracted initially by a moderate program promising humanistic ideals and intellectual independence. Barbusse's final submission to the Communist Party in 1923 symbolized the end of both, as well as the cessation of efforts on behalf of the united front. This radicalization of Barbusse was symptomatic of his effort to recapture the atmosphere that had given birth to his movement in 1919.

In the case of Japan, the splintering debate did not presage the end of the movement but rather allowed its members to glimpse key aspects of the Clarté problematic before embarking on their own way forward. One part of this was a realization of the futility of adopting Rolland's reformist arguments in favor of liberalism. For the Japanese members of Clarté, following such a course was incomprehensible in a society still fighting for universal suffrage, and this made it all the easier to embrace radical elements committed to extra-parliamentary struggle. Komaki had explained as much earlier in the article *Jiyūshugi no dankai*:

Today there is a struggle between the Seiyūkai and the Kenseikai. And inasmuch as this fight is one carried out on the same horizon, the political dispute has no connection to the proletariat of Japan. Universal suffrage, the number one goal of liberalism, is a big issue between the Kenseikai and the Seiyūkai but has nothing to do with the general proletariat, and this liberalism as well has limits.

今日政友會と憲政會と相争ふ。しかもその争ひが同一水平線上の争である限り、その政争は日本の無産者に何の關することでない。その自由主義の目標としての普通選挙は憲政會と政友會との間にあつては大問題となるが、一般の無産者の與り知るところでない、この自由主義もその限界を有してゐる。⁷⁷

⁷⁷ *Tane maku hito* 3, no. 10/11 (1922): 1. The Seiyūkai and the Kenseikai were the two biggest political parties in the Diet in 1922, and although the nuances were significant the Kenseikai was at least nominally in favor of universal suffrage and the Seiyūkai opposed.

Having rejected the parliamentary option, Clarté in Japan had begun to move beyond the movement's preoccupation with the united front that emerged during the debate between Barbusse and Rolland and to concentrate on the extra-parliamentary struggle.

One of the more complex factors in Clarté's handling of the united front was the appearance in July 1922 of the Japanese Communist Party. In both Europe and Japan Comintern-backed Communist Parties steered the movement away from its pursuit of the united front. In Japan, however, while the Party did complicate efforts at unity, long-term influence was mitigated by the fact that its first tentative incarnation had been wiped out completely by June 1923.⁷⁸ By this time, though, Komaki had (through the *Romance*-inspired analogy with Ma Su) already argued for the futility of seeking a united front, and this left the movement free to concentrate on other concerns of Clarté, specifically the pursuit of truth. This was applied to the domain of literature through the translation of *Clarté*, and succeeded in leaving by the time of the movement's demise a blueprint for artistic and intellectual engagement. And so while the Rolland-Barbusse debate in Japan (as the *ana-boru ronsō*) did result in the loss of the anarchists, the Clarté movement endured, and enjoyed an expansion that lasted right up to the earthquake toward the end of 1923.

Repressive conditions in 1924 meant that, even had it wanted to, *Bungei sensen* could not fully take up Clarté's revolutionary mantle, preferring instead to confine its activity to its own pages. Others would continue the Clarté project, though, particularly Kim Ki-jin, a Korean student in Tokyo and reader of *Tane maku hito*. Kim was instrumental in bringing the movement

⁷⁸ The assault on the communists by the government in June 1923 coincided with the arrival in Japan of Soviet emissary Adolf Joffe, who was attempting to normalize relations between the USSR and Japan. Although the Bolsheviks insisted on differentiating between the activities of the Communist International and those of the Soviet government proper, other countries (Japan included) were less clear on the difference, and the arrests were probably meant to serve as a safety precaution as well as a warning. "The Meiji Restoration: A Bourgeois Non-Democratic Revolution," *Spartacist*, no. 58 (2004): 33.

to Korea when he returned home in the summer of 1923, and did so at the behest of Asō, whom he had met with and who had first recommended that he read Barbusse. More broadly, though, Clarté's vision was adopted by a generation of Japanese writers, whose concern for its brand of truth and its representation would become the benchmark by which novels that aspired to transform society would be judged, so that by the time of its demise the legacy of the Clarté movement in Japan was inscribed in the very terrain it had altered. As a convenient summation of Clarté in Japan one might quote the words of Barbusse, originally directed against Rolland, but perhaps more appropriately applied to the Japanese iteration of the movement he was soon to abandon: "What you have said—what you have done—will always remain sacred and precious to us, and in spite of you, we will use them to go further than you."⁷⁹ By the end of 1923 this had been achieved.

⁷⁹ Henri Barbusse, "Réponse de Henri Barbusse," *Clarté* 10 (1922), quoted in David James Fisher, *Romain Rolland and the Politics of Intellectual Engagement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 99.

CHAPTER FOUR:
CLARTÉ IN KOREA

So, again, what are we asking for? Truth. Light. *Clarté*.
– Kim Ki-jin, “Promeneade Sentimental” (1923)

I. Introduction

The Clarté movement in Korea was acted out exclusively in the ideological instance. It never constituted a political practice. This makeup differentiates it from the French and Japanese sections, which took the form of both political and ideological practices. There are several reasons for this particular adaptation, the effect of an attempt to keep the movement current with developments within the French iteration while at the same time tailoring it to the Korean conjuncture. This application to a colonial social formation was of course something that the movement had neither theoretically anticipated nor prepared for. Nevertheless, the Clarté movement not only adjusted to these new conditions, it was able to make a lasting contribution to the ideological instance, where its opposition to humanist and aesthetic modes of writing helped weaken the hold these had on the literary world. This opposition, coupled with a redefined concept of the proletariat, began a process that would lead to a marginalization of these elements and the subsequent laying of the groundwork in Korea for what would be known as proletarian literature.

The Clarté movement arrived on the Korean peninsula in the latter half of 1923, and this chapter will explore attempts to propagate the movement from this period until early 1925, when a variety of factors made conditions no longer conducive for growth. It will examine the interaction between the Clarté movement and the peculiarities of colonial Korea as reflected

through critical articles and fiction, which taken as a whole enable one to chart the course of the movement as it adapted to the local environment. In surveying the overall evolution of the Clarté movement and the form that it took in Korea, the present chapter will concern itself with three questions specifically: why did the movement limit itself to ideological practice? How effective was it in that area? How does knowledge of this iteration contribute to an understanding of the movement's viability as a whole? In the concluding section an argument will be made for the existence of a considerable legacy of the movement, particularly its role in the emergence of proletarian literature as a genre.

II. Korean Literature 1894 – 1920

As the overall state of Korean literature at the time of the movement's beginning was obviously different from that of France or Japan, it is necessary to review the development of Korean prose fiction from the late nineteenth century up until the time of Clarté's appearance, in order to situate historically many of the movement's subsequent arguments and to provide an initial framework for explaining why the Clarté movement took the course that it did. In particular, this look will illustrate the hold that humanist, aesthetic, and didactic modes of writing had on Korean writers of the time—modes of writing the movement would seek to undermine in preference for a literature of engagement.

The modern era in Korean literature began during the time of the 1894 Kabo Reforms (*Kabo kaehyŏk*), a series of sweeping social changes that were made in an effort to modernize the country. The reforms were undertaken in the midst of the Sino-Japanese war and largely influenced by the changes in social structure Japan had made following the Meiji Restoration. Among them were efforts to forge a national literature based on vernacular speech, as opposed to

literary Chinese. This was undertaken early in such works as Yu Kil-chun's *Sōyu kyōnmun* (Observations on a journey to the West, 1895), a work mixing literary Chinese with the vernacular that combined the author's observations while in Japan and the United States with elements from Fukuzawa Yukichi's *Seiyō jijō* (Conditions in the West, 1866-70).¹ These initial steps toward a national literature were furthered in 1907 with the establishment of the Kungmun Yōn'guso (National Script Research Institute), which argued for the primacy of the Korean script, *Han'gŭl*, over Chinese.

With new writing came new ideas, and the tone was set by the early journal *Youth* (Sonyōn) and poetry by Ch'oe Nam-sōn. Ch'oe's advances broke with the mixed style of Yu and applied the vernacular to literature.² In the field of prose, soon the so-called new fiction (*sin sosŏl*), imported to Korea from Japan, came to prominence. This new fiction, influenced by the Meiji era political novels (*seiji shōsetsu*) of several decades earlier, introduced educational ideas such as elevating the status of women, studying abroad, and freedom of thought.³ Although the new fiction still contained a significant amount of didacticism (a Confucian holdover), it continued the modernization project formally through its extensive use of vernacular speech. It also appealed to the general reader by devoting stories to popular amusements and pastimes, and through this new type of literature the reach of vernacular writing expanded to encompass a mass readership.⁴

It was in 1917 that the first modern novel appeared, Yi Kwang-Su's *Mujōng* (Heartless). The work, centered on the lives of four young people and their struggles within a modernizing Korea, marks a shift away from didacticism toward an exploration of subjectivity and the

¹ Kim Donguk, *History of Korean Literature*, trans. Leon Hurvitz (Tokyo: Tokyo Press Co., Ltd., 1980), 231. The work also has the distinction of being the first to use the term *munhak* in reference to purely creative literature.

² Kim, *History of Korean Literature*, 240.

³ *Ibid.*, 237.

⁴ Peter H. Lee, ed., *A History of Korean Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 393.

relationship between the individual and society.⁵ Yi had received an education in Japan at Meiji Gakuin and Waseda Universities, and so had significant experience with the emerging problem of the individuated self in modern society as a major theme with which Japanese writers had been preoccupied for some time. However, the work was unable to completely give up the didacticism still prevalent in fiction, as the conclusion has the main characters reject the egoism characteristic of modern subjectivity for a collective message of advancement and enlightenment.⁶

The goals of advancement and enlightenment became even more urgent following Korea's annexation by Japan in 1910. Simmering through a decade of military rule (*budan seiji*) under Governor General Terauchi Masatake, the peninsula exploded in 1919 with the March First Movement (Sam-il undong), as Koreans took to the streets to demand independence from Japan. Although the uprising was a failure, the aftermath saw a gradual change from military rule to an era of cultural rule (*bunka seiji*) under new colonial governor Saitō Makoto. The change included a lessening of government publication controls, and this resulted in a proliferation of new Korean-language periodicals in both Korea and Japan, and the literary world began to coalesce around these coterie magazines. The first of these was the journal *Ch'angjo* (Creation), founded in Tokyo in 1919 around an interest in romanticism, a trend it introduced to Korea.⁷ In 1920 the journal *P'yehō* (The ruins) was launched, concerning itself with the pursuit of aestheticism and the ideal of art for art's sake. Other journals of note included the 1921 journal *Changmich'on* (Roseville), launched by Pak Yōng-Hūi (1901-1950), a future collaborator of the Clarté movement, with a focus on romantic poetry and French fin-de-siècle decadence, and the

⁵ Kim Yoon-Shik, "Phases of Development of Proletarian Literature in Korea," *Korea Journal* 27, no. 1 (1987): 35.

⁶ Kim, *History of Korean Literature*, 242.

⁷ Jae-Yon Lee, "Magazines and the Collective Rise of Literary Writers in Korea, 1919-1927" (PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 2012), 40.

1922 journal *Paekcho* (White tide), founded by Yi Kwang-Su (the author of *Mujǒng*), which contained both poetry and prose.

A common thread linking these journals was their shared disdain for political concerns, and throughout their existence they maintained a strict emphasis on artistic autonomy.⁸ However, such ideals declined in popularity after the failed 1919 uprising, when the reading public lost interest in an artistic isolationism unaffected by social conditions.⁹ This momentary setback for aestheticism provided an opening for journals such as *Kaebyoǔk* (Beginning), which was launched as a general interest magazine in 1920 by adherents to the Ch'ǒndogyo (Heavenly Way), a religious organization with diverse roots stretching back to the 1890s. *Kaebyoǔk* was open to a variety of viewpoints, and did not shy away from dealing with a wide range of political and social issues.¹⁰ It was this journal that would eventually become a vehicle for the propagation of Clarté ideals.

The existence of these coterie journals and their concerns set the terms for the Clarté movement's expansion in Korea. Specifically, the entrenched positions of aestheticism and decadence presented the first obstacles for the movement to overcome if it was to establish itself in the ideological instance. An additional obstacle was humanism, and this presented a different situation from that faced by the movement in either France or Japan. For while writers professing allegiance to humanism had been actively recruited by the movements in those countries (Rolland in France and Mushanokōji in Japan, for example), after the 1922 debate between Barbusse and Rolland they were no longer seen as integral. Because the Clarté project in Korea was begun after this rejection of humanism, the creed was to function not as a help but a hindrance to its development, and the task of managing this difference fell chiefly to Kim Ki-jin,

⁸ Lee, "Magazines and the Collective Rise of Literary Writers in Korea," 10.

⁹ Brian Myers, *Han Sōrya and North Korean Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 16.

¹⁰ Lee, "Magazines and the Collective Rise of Literary Writers in Korea," 85.

who saw early on that an increasingly limited pool of potential Clarté members meant that those professing allegiance to humanism, aestheticism, and decadence could not be so easily discarded, but instead needed to be engaged directly.

III. Kim Ki-jin

The consolidation of the Clarté movement in Korea happened in large part through the efforts of Kim Ki-jin (1903-1985). Born in the city of Ch'ŏngju, Kim had been in Seoul at the time of the uprising in 1919, during which he was briefly jailed.¹¹ After his release he followed the advice of a relative studying at Waseda University and crossed over to Japan where, while working a paper delivery route for the newspaper *Jiji shinpō* and attending night classes at the Athénée Français, a French language school in Tokyo, he began studying for university entrance examinations.¹² In the spring of 1921 he enrolled in the department of English Literature at Rikkyō University, where he was to study until 1923.

While in Japan Kim became associated with both *Tane maku hito* and several of its members, one of whom was “Exhumed” author Asō Hisashi. It was on Asō’s recommendation that Kim read the debate between Barbusse and Rolland, which spurred in him an avid interest in Barbusse, and he began reading as many works as he could find. This had an important effect on his thought, for after reading Barbusse Kim’s interest shifted from symbolism and aestheticism to socialism and historical materialism.¹³ Asō also recommended he read the works of Ivan

¹¹ I Sūgyon, *Kindai Kankoku no chishikijin to kokusai heiwa undō: Kim Kijin, Komaki Ōmi, soshite Anri Barubyusu* (Tokyo: Akashi shoten, 2003), 39.

¹² Kim’s attendance at the Athénée Français becomes relevant later when looking at his translation of the Rolland-Barbusse debate. Some have speculated that he translated the debate into Korean from the original French. According to Yi Su-gyong, however, the roster contemporaneous with Kim’s attendance no longer exists, but neither is his name recorded on any graduation roster. Yi posits that he might have withdrawn before graduation, making it likely that the translation was made from the Japanese. I Sūgyon, *Kindai Kankoku no chishikijin to kokusai heiwa undō*, 58.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 43.

Turgenev, significant because Asō believed there to be many similarities between the Russia of Turgenev's *Virgin Soil* and contemporary Korea.¹⁴ Absorbing much of Barbusse and Turgenev during his time in Japan, therefore, Kim returned to Korea with the two writers as the twin pillars of his thought, and at their last meeting in May 1923 Asō implored Kim to take the ideas of these two writers and use them to sow the seeds of social revolution in the virgin soil of Chosŏn.¹⁵

Although Kim intended to return to Tokyo and take up his studies again in the fall of 1923, the Kantō earthquake in September and its aftermath caused him to reconsider. Back in Korea for good, therefore, Kim turned his energies toward fulfilling Asō's directive by first joining *Paekcho*, one of several journals in circulation that he believed could serve as a possible avenue for the diffusion of the Clarté movement. However, he soon found the *Paekcho* coterie's politics too lukewarm for his tastes and shifted attention to the Ch'ōndogyo's periodical, *Kaebyoŏk*. It was here that he took the first step in advertising Clarté to Korea through a series of articles outlining the movement.

III: Ideological Practice: Clarté-related Articles in the Journal *Kaebyoŏk*

The articles on the Clarté movement written by Kim in the periodical *Kaebyoŏk* span about a five-month period, from July to November 1923. Taken as a whole they function as an index to his understanding of the movement, providing an accurate picture of Clarté as he intended to introduce it. As will be seen, this differed at points from the movement's French and Japanese iterations. Moreover, Kim's successive formulations give an idea of the challenges the Clarté movement faced in its efforts to find support in Korea, as they show that sowing the seeds of social revolution, as Asō had entreated, was not going to be easy, and this forced Kim to evolve

¹⁴ I Sūgyon, *Kindai Kankoku no chishikijin to kokusai heiwa undō*, 44.

¹⁵ Yi Sūng-hŭi, "Tane maku hito wa *Kaebyoŏk* e kwan han sogo," *Hanguk Ilbonŏ munhakhoe 2005 nyōndo punkwa haksul palp'yo taehoe Proceedings* (2005), 108.

fundamental elements of the movement in order to better suit it to local conditions. By the end of 1923 it became apparent that the Korean Clarté movement was going to differ from that of France or Japan, as the result was a reworked theory of Clarté tailored specifically to the colonial Korean conjuncture.

Kim's first article on Clarté, "Promeneade [*sic*] Sentimental" (Sentimental stroll), published in July 1923, begins with an account of the contemporary state of art in Korea.¹⁶ It is an appeal for intellectual engagement, although it is backed by a considerable amount of skepticism regarding the capabilities of the local artistic intelligentsia to whom, in accordance with the original plan of Clarté, it is directed. The overall influence of Barbusse and Turgenev is evident in the article, which poses the question of the intelligentsia's place in society as framed in *Virgin Soil* before providing the answer in the form of Barbusse's discussion of the intelligentsia and artistic engagement in *Clarté*.

"Promeneade Sentimental" likens Kim's return home to that of *Virgin Soil's* protagonist Alexey Nezhdanov, who returned to his own small village after a prolonged absence in the metropolis of St. Petersburg to find, depressingly, that very little had changed. The sentiment Kim feels after his return from Tokyo to Korea is identical, and his descriptions of the similarities between his own society and the Russia of Turgenev's novel show that he is clearly in agreement with Asō on the pressing need for social change. And yet he is also just as pessimistic about the possibility for such a change. Like Nezhdanov's Russia, Kim considers Korea to have fallen metaphorically into a deep sleep of pride and arrogance, and as he looks upon the landscape of Seoul (symbolic of the entire peninsula) Kim blends the political prognosis of Nezhdanov with the artistic concerns of Clarté: under the present social formation

¹⁶ The title was written in the Roman alphabet.

artistic production was firmly in the hands of the bourgeois intellectuals, and barring a radical reform and reorganization of society from the ground up, such a situation was unlikely to change. Furthermore, in the case of a colonial entity like Korea, even these intellectuals did not enjoy complete artistic freedom, prompting Kim to ask:

So what does the present intelligentsia have to do? What is it that people of letters have to do? Is it even possible to give birth to literature in response to real life under the present living conditions? What is there other than literature of servility, submission, compromise, delusion, escape, and despair? There is no need for that kind of literature.

그러면 지금의 知識階級者들은 무엇을 하여야 하겠느냐? 글을 쓴다는 文學者들은 무엇을 하여야 하겠느냐. 果然 우리의 現下生活狀態에서 「生의 本然한 要求」의 文學이 出生될 수 있겠느냐? 卑屈과 忍從과 妥協과 欺瞞과 逃避과 絶望의 文學以外の 무엇이 있겠느냐. 그러한 文字는 必要치 아니하다.¹⁷

For Kim, the biggest stumbling block to artistic progress lay precisely with the producers of this servile literature. Although firmly ensconced within society, the intellectual class in Korea was cut off from the masses, and this was problematic for several reasons: first, since its inception the Clarté movement had concerned itself with targeting intellectuals. Second, and providing the impetus for the first, intellectuals were supposed to be the vanguard of the masses, and so needed to be in tune with the desires, passions, and hopes of the latter if they wanted to maintain their relevance. As an example, Kim brings up the Russian intellectual class and their reaction to the revolution of 1917. For him, the decision of those like the poet Alexander Blok to throw their weight behind the revolution is evidence of the “correct” behavior; the isolation of intellectuals in Korea, however, prevented them from assuming a position of not only forerunners but fellow travelers as well.

Asking the intelligentsia to emulate their Russian counterparts may seem reasonable, but

¹⁷ Kim Ki-jin, “Promeneade Sentimentale,” *Kaebiyōk* 37 (1923): 97.

in reality the demands are fundamentally different. Kim here is asking his own intelligentsia to take the initiative in the production of what he calls a “literature of life’s basic demands” (*saeng ŭi ponyŏn han yogu ŭi munhak*), which for him means a new art free of colonial or capitalist influence.¹⁸ The Russian intelligentsia, however, simply needed to react to developments on the ground. Rather than exhort intellectuals to prepare themselves for the role of potential fellow travelers like Blok, Kim wants them to take the initiative and produce a literature appropriate to a class in tune with revolutionary changes. Moreover, he wants them to produce it as if these changes have already happened. This was easier said than done, for fellow travelers like Blok had an established line to follow, whereas for Kim’s intelligentsia no such program existed. Nevertheless, Kim claims it to be possible, and in a metaphor of cultivation that could almost be applied to *Tane maku hito* he exhorts them to begin churning the literary soil in Korea:

The literature of life’s basic demands—this is what is necessary. A literature of life is necessary. So, to our friends who regard themselves as pioneers, you must cultivate the vast “virgin soil” with your hands. Behind you with your “scythes” must come those with “seeds,” and behind them must come those who “harvest.” Finding conclusions should take time; do not be in a hurry.

生의本然한要求의文學—이것이必要하다. 生命있는文學이必要하다. 그러면時代の先驅로自任하는동모야荒漠한「處女地」는너희들의손으로갈아붙여놓지않으면안될것이다.너희들이「갈」고너희들이뒤에오는사람이「뿌리」고그뒤에오는사람이「거두」어야한다.結論을찾기를급히하지말아야한다.¹⁹

As for the question of how Kim’s audience is to accomplish this cultivation of a new literature, the answer is of course political practice, and in this he agrees with the fundamental Clarté tenet that the first step toward a truly free art is the revolutionary reorganization of society from the bottom, i.e., proletarian revolution. His contention that a literature of the new social formation could only appear after this shows his attempt to reconcile two different stages of

¹⁸ Kim, “Promeneade Sentimentale,” 97.

¹⁹ Ibid.

Clarté theory:

What is necessary for the majority? Art? Literature? No. These are not what is necessary. What is necessary is to reform the base of the root of art and literature. Reforming the organization of life from the basis of the lower stratum is what is urgent. After that art and literature, etc., will spring up naturally even if told not to.

최대 다수에게 무엇이 필요하냐? 예술이냐? 아니다. 그것은 필요하지 이니하다. 예술이나 문학의 뿌리를 근거로부터 개혁하는 것이 그네들에게는 필요한 것이다. 생활 조직의 맨 아래 층부터 근본부터 개혁하는 것이 급한 일이다. 미술이나 문학이나 하는 것은 그 후에 이르르면 저절로 나오지 말래도 생겨나는 것이다.²⁰

Kim's insistence here on the primacy of political practice reflects Barbusse's post-debate shift, and the Clarté movement at the moment it was introduced to Korea was thus in conformity with the contemporaneous French model; it would not remain so for long, however, as Kim quickly saw the need to adapt the message, arguing shortly for the privileging of ideological over political practice (in effect reverting to the movement's initial emphasis). His comments also underscore the problem of his demands toward the intelligentsia: for Barbusse literature was supposed to be used in support of social upheaval, which was the main goal. Kim agrees, but by holding up figures such as Alexander Blok, a figure writing from the far side of a successful revolution, as a model for enlightening the masses, he is asking for writers to write as if the upheaval has already happened. In this he has left a crucial question unanswered: was artistic production predicated upon a successful social revolution but still grounded in a capitalist social formation even capable of accurately reflecting life in a post-revolutionary society with its own reorganized base? Or, to put it another way, was the art of a proletarian dictatorship even possible in a capitalist (to say nothing of colonial) society?

Such a question was at this point an old one, and the potential for proletarian literature in

²⁰ *Kim P'albong munhak chŏnjip*, ed. Hong Chŏngsŏn, vol. 1, *Iron kwa bip'yŏng* (Seoul: Munhak kwa Chisŏngsa, 1988), 412.

a society that had not undergone a socialist revolution had long been a contentious issue. With the establishment of the proletarian cultural-educational organizations (Proletcult) in Revolutionary Russia and their export internationally, the creation of a proletarian culture in a capitalist society was not seen as impossible.²¹ However, Kim faced a different situation from that of other, predominantly European, proletarian cultural organizations, in that he was not asking the proletariat to make proletarian literature (though he would shortly do this), he was asking for the help of the intellectual class in its creation. This went beyond the demands of most other Proletcult sections, which were focused on creating a culture of the proletariat by the proletariat in order to lay the foundations for social revolution. Additionally, most of these groups were in agreement that the intellectual class was either incapable of contributing to the creation of proletarian culture, or should be acting in the capacity of cultural stewards, instructing the proletariat in existing bourgeois culture.

Although the intellectual class's potential for contribution was in doubt, its existence was not. Much more problematic for Kim was the concept of the proletariat. The absence in Korea of a proletariat traditionally defined impelled Kim to turn to the intellectual class for help in the production of proletarian literature, and it was their ultimate refusal to help that would later force him into a complete redefinition of the proletariat. As he concluded his sentimental stroll, Kim argued that the way the proletariat (however one defined it) was to move forward was through the dual institutions of Clarté and Proletcult. As the epigraph to this chapter indicates, what was needed, both for society and the intelligentsia, was Barbusse's truth, the necessity of social engagement on the part of the artist in preparation for revolution. Kim's identification with the fictional Nezhdanov is therefore particularly appropriate in light of subsequent events, as the

²¹ This question will be taken up at length in Chapter Five.

latter was in the main concerned with trying to enlighten the peasantry, not the industrial proletariat, and it was precisely this mass of people that would make up the bulk of Kim's proletariat in his new definition. Another appropriate literary comparison would be *Clarté's* Simon Paulin, who in confronting a population mired in jingoism and religious torpor faced much the same problems as Kim and Nezhdanov. Through Paulin Barbusse had emphasized that a change in social relations was a precondition for the final liberation of man and art, and this appeal to the materialist conception of history (reflecting Barbusse's post-debate shift) is echoed by Kim in his concluding assertion that consciousness is dictated by the conditions of life.²²

Kim's next article was "K'ŭllarŭt'e undongŭi segyehwa" (The globalization of the Clarté movement), which served as an introduction to the Korean translation of the debate between Barbusse and Rolland. For Kim the contest was one between idealism (*chŏngshinchuŭi*) and pragmatism (*shilchechuŭi*), and this opposition allowed him to return to some of the issues he had faced in "Promeneade Sentimental" through the lens of the debate. He began by again emphasizing the passivity and detachment of professional writers in Korea (now labeled "Rollandists") who he claimed had forgotten the social function of art. This was due to their insistence on maintaining a sense of liberty and removal from society in order to focus on the production of beauty.²³ For Kim, as for Barbusse, liberty was an ill-defined concept that, when applied to the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, took on a different meaning for each, and he brought a new aspect into the argument by asserting that in colonial Korea both bourgeoisie and proletariat were subjugated classes deprived of liberty.²⁴ In that both classes were in turn oppressed, this led them to a different sense of the concept, for the liberty supported by the bourgeoisie was not the same as the class-based liberty envisioned by the proletariat. This

²² Kim Ki-jin, "Promeneade Sentimental," 86.

²³ Kim Ki-jin, "K'ŭllarŭt'e undongŭi segyehwa" *Kaebŏk* 39 (1923): 19-20.

²⁴ Ibid.

difference fostered competing ideas of beauty, and the disconnect in meaning of these central terms between France and Korea gave Kim cause to wonder whether it was even necessary to introduce the Barbusse-Rolland debate to a Korean audience, and whether it even had implications for Korea. The same question had been posed by Komaki in June of 1922, where in the interest of maintaining the artistic united front the response had been negative, as Komaki had explained that it would be premature to introduce such a splintering argument at the time. In Korea of course any danger was mitigated by the simple fact that the debate had ended over a year ago, but Kim explained that the issues raised therein would inevitably become relevant in Korea in the near future and so there was benefit in discussing them, even at this early stage.

Introducing the argument to Korea and advocating the implementation of its conclusions were two different things, however. The latter was going to be difficult and required a fundamental change from the debate as it was acted out in France and Japan. The sticking point was again the notion of the proletariat, the definition of which had been understood as a given by all participants in the debate up until this point. And yet, for Kim this definition was inapplicable to local conditions, as such a proletariat was virtually nonexistent. This forced him to argue for a proletarian makeup radically different from that understood at the time, which he did by claiming that “everyone in the world who takes abuse is, like us, part of the proletariat” (*On segyeŭi modŭn hakdae patnŭn ingudŭlŭn uriwa kat’i p’ŭrollet’aria ta*).²⁵ With this new definition Kim achieved two things: first, he extended an olive branch to the intellectuals he had criticized in his previous article, for as he noted, in the end they are not as isolated from the masses as they might appear (or think) to be, but are in fact just as oppressed as everyone else. Second, he was also offering the new definition out of necessity: the proletariat in contemporary Western or Japanese

²⁵ Kim, “Kŭlarŭte undongŭi segyehwa,” 20.

terminology meant the industrial proletariat, which at the time in Korea formed at best an insignificant portion of the population. Therefore, it was in recognition of the Clarté problematic that Kim advanced this notion, necessary if the movement was to have any followers to attract.

On the surface, this seems like a radical break with the classical definition of the proletariat. However, when carefully considered, Kim's new proletariat did retain several important features, not least of which was a continued understanding of the proletariat as a 'universal class' with the same advantage in consciousness as that outlined by Marx and Engels in *The German Ideology*. As they had explain, one of the defining features of the proletariat was a proximity to the production of material goods that gave it the ability to see through bourgeois humanist ideology to an understanding of the fundamentally exploitative nature of the capitalist system.²⁶ Kim's proletariat is in a similar situation, for as a subjugated, colonized class, they too are in prime position to look beyond the self-supporting humanist declarations of their colonizers to a true understanding of the realities of society. And if the events of 1919 had been any indication, they had already shown this. For this reason Kim's newly-fashioned proletariat, along with his insistence that the intellectual class was responsible for taking that proletariat from its phase of revolutionary spontaneity to an enlightened understanding of the class struggle (that is, bringing it to the requisite level of class consciousness), also agreed with the role of proletariat and intelligentsia outlined not only by Lenin in his 1902 *What is to Be Done?* but by the Marxists of the Second International and even Marx himself.²⁷

After establishing this new concept of a proletariat Kim returned to the problem of the production of beauty by such a class. Insofar as this was even possible, he labeled it a miracle

²⁶ William S. Lewis, *Louis Althusser and the Traditions of French Marxism*, (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2005), 60.

²⁷ Lenin's reformulation of the proletariat as in need of outside guidance was challenged by Rosa Luxemburg as antithetical to Marx's original concept, which had stressed the proletariat's revolutionary spontaneity. Balibar, *The Philosophy of Marx*, 111.

because in the present colonial society the proletariat was under a double system of bourgeois rule (Japanese and Korean), rendering the soil through which artistic expression must sprout twice as thick:

The fact that the sound of literature and beauty comes to the lips of the proletariat of the ruled classes is a sort of miracle; at the same time, it is also a pointless phenomenon. To be thinking of the earth they step on, to think of the passage of time, all while having their necks twisted and their faces trampled, from the tips of the tongue to speak of something like the arts, is it not something rare to see?

被支配 階級の 無産 階級者들의 입에서 文學이니 美니 하는 소리가 일어난다는 것은 一種의 奇蹟인 同時에 無意味한 現像의 하나일 것이다. 디디고 서 있는 땅덩이를 생각하고 흘러 지나가는 타임을 생각할 때에 모가지를 비틀리면서, 얼굴을 짓밟히면서 藝術이라는 말이 헛바닥 위로 부터 궁그러내려온다면 그것은 地上의 奇觀이 아니냐.²⁸

At the same time, however, this artistic expression was pointless, and any such endeavors on the part of the proletariat were in vain unless geared toward the creation of a new, proletarian, society:

If you ask something like what kind of literature is necessary in Chosŏn (and the same would go for Japan and China), Proletcult literature is necessary. A lot of educational literature is necessary. Therefore, even if I don't say how urgent it is to show literature to friends out in remote farm villages, you still know that it is. On whichever point you look Proletcult literature is a pressing problem. The idea of real revolution, which came from a change in era and misery of life and the violence of the existing classes and idea of the sadness of reality, needs to come and cover the world like a fireball and unite it. Intentionally forgetting the present exposed sorrow, avoiding it in the present, until in the end affirming the present, this is the foundation of worldly mindedness, and you should smash it with the iron bat of reality.

朝鮮에 있어서 어떠한 文學이 必要하냐 할 것 같으면 (日本도 그렇고, 中國도 그러할 터이지만) 프롤레트 컬트의 文學이 必要한 것이다. 多大數의 敎化 文學이 必要한 것이다. 따라서 農村 僻地의 文盲의 동무들에게 國文을 가르치는 것이 얼마나 급한 일인지는 말하지 아니하여도 다 아는 일일 것이다. 어떠한 點으로 보든지 프롤레트 컬트의 文學은 모든 것 中에서 그 中 緊急한 問題다. 時代의 轉還과

²⁸ Kim, "Kūlarūte undongūi segyehwa," 20.

生活의 悲慘과 既成階級の 暴惡과 現實의 悲哀에서 決定된 現實 革命의 思想이 불덩어리같이 世界를 홑싸서 한뭉치가 되지 않으면 안 될 것이다. 현실 폭로의 비애를 억지로 잊어버리고서 현실에서 회피하여가며 끝에 가서는 현실 긍정까지 이르게 되는 속정주의의 근거를 현실의 쇠망으로 당장에 부숴버려라.²⁹

This argument served as prelude to Kim's entry into a contemporary debate raging within the international proletarian cultural movement: how was the proletariat to treat bourgeois culture? Should it attempt to bypass the use of bourgeois culture and create a proletarian culture from the ground up? Or, alternatively, should it use bourgeois culture as a springboard to the creation of a distinctly proletarian culture? The question was related to the earlier issue of the possibility of proletarian culture in a capitalist society and, like the former, was still unsettled in 1923. The question had been taken up by Clarté, and Barbusse, for his part, had never completely rejected bourgeois culture. Neither, incidentally, had Lenin, who had actually stressed the importance of cultural heritage as a basis for the creation of a proletarian culture.³⁰

“K'üllerüt'e undongüi segyehwa” provided half of the Rolland-Barbusse debate in translation; the following month the debate, as well as Kim's comments, were concluded in the article “Pparüppyusü tae Romaen Roran kanüi chaengnon: K'üllerüt'e undongüi segyehwa kküt” (The debate between Barbusse and Rolland: the globalization of the Clarté movement continued), in which he announced as imminent the arrival of both the Clarté and Proletcult movements in Korea.³¹ He also provided analysis of the debate from two prominent sources, Tōgō Seiji and Marcel Martinet. Kim then offered his own conclusion by saying that, although there were many Rollandists in Korea who balked in the face of their historical duty to engage, preferring instead to shut themselves up in the ivory tower inhabited by Rolland, such activity would ultimately

²⁹ Kim, “Kūlarüte undongüi segyehwa,” 21.

³⁰ Henri Arvon, *Marxist Aesthetics*, trans. Helen Lane (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973), 58.

³¹ Kim Kijin, “Pparüppyusü tae Romaen Roran kan üi chaengnon: K'üllerüt'e undongüi segyehwa kküt,” *Kaebŏk* 40 (1923): 201-229.

lead to a dead end for both them and their art. For Kim, change was only going to come through artistic engagement, and no amount of aestheticism could compensate for its lack: “no matter how much [artists] have of Demosthenes’ eloquence,” he said, quoting Barbusse, “if it does not at the same time express a new order, it is just a type of foolish language” (*Che amuri temosūtenesū ūi pyōnsōl ūl nollinda hatōrato manil kūkōsi tongsie sinjilsō nūl p’yosiha nūn kōsi anil kōt kat’ūmyōn kūkōsūn taman ilgae ūi ōrisōkūn mare chinachi mothanūn kōsida*).³²

Kim returned to the debate one last time in November 1923 with “Ttodasi K’ūllarūt’e e taehaesō: Pparūppyusū yōnguūi ilp’yōn” (Once again on the Clarté movement: a fragment of study on Barbusse). Here he expanded upon the notion of why one needed to engage in both political and ideological practice, specifically by explaining that Barbusse’s concept of equality, which crystallized during his debate with Rolland, would only be achieved through an overthrow of the present social formation. Arguing for the genesis of inequality in the surplus value of labor, Kim traced its growth through the capitalist system, locating its contemporary manifestations in two institutions little-discussed by Clarté sections up to now: inheritance and imperialism.³³ With inequality so thoroughly ingrained in the system, he asserted, it was obviously of great necessity to participate in the movement for its removal. Not only that; the removal of capitalism could *only* come through political practice:

The path of an artistic movement, which is the highest understanding of speculation about the future and the search for an eternal beauty—is release from the current social system and economic organization and a liberation of art as the essence of life. In agreement with this is the social movement which destroys at the root the present social system with its unequal distribution of profit and the irrational privilege of ownership. Today we stand at the first stage of the social movement. The art we desire will only be found at its conclusion.

³² Kim Ki-jin, “Pparūppyusū tae Romaen Roran kanūi nonjaeng: kūlarūte undongūi segyehwa kkūt,” *Kaebiyōk* 40 (1923): 51.

³³ Kim Ki-jin, “Ttodasi ‘K’ūllarūt’e’ e taehaesō: Pparūppyusū yōn’gu ūi ilp’yōn,” *Kaebiyōk* 41 (1923): 47-55. His acknowledged reference in these passages is Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, although there were many discussions of inheritance to be found in *Clarté* as well.

예술 운동, 그것은 미래 추측의 고원한 오성과 미의 영구를 탐색하는
길이 현재 사회 제도—경제 조직을 풀어버리고서 예술을 생의 본연한
길로 해방시키고자 하는 운동 이것과, 부정당한 이익의 분배와,
불합리한 특권의 소유를 가진 현시 사회 제도를 근거로부터 파괴하고자
하는 사회 운동과의 일치를 보게 되는 것이다. 그러므로 금일은 사회
운동의 일계단 위에 섰다. 우리들이 갈망하는 예술이라는 것은 결론일
뿐이다.³⁴

As Kim had stressed earlier in “Promeneade Sentimental,” the relationship between political and ideological practice was an unequal one, as a reorganization of the former was requisite for any change in the latter. That being said, there was still no reason to neglect ideological practice, and the importance and lure of the Clarté movement was that it was at the same time both political and ideological. Moreover, it had the added benefit of being a movement in cooperation with the proletariat, the class understood as attempting to overthrow capitalism.

What Kim achieved in these articles on Clarté was to publicize the movement as a viable tool for a reorganization of society and, by extension, a liberation of art. Through his discussion on the origins and development of imperialism, Kim showed how this goal of the movement was particularly applicable to colonial Korea. Furthermore, he emphasized that Clarté was a movement active both politically and ideologically, and as such necessitated participation in both instances. Inasmuch as the intelligentsia, the preferred propagator of Clarté, was either unwilling or unable to take action in these instances, Kim was forced to look elsewhere for support, and by the end of 1923 he had offered a new definition of a proletariat that, on paper at least, encompassed almost all Koreans living on the peninsula. Having therefore set the objects and methods for their attainment in addition to having given the movement an almost inexhaustible supply of potential members, Kim optimistically declared the colonial birth of Clarté.

³⁴ *Kim P'albong munhak chōnjip* vol. 1, 478.

V: Kim's Understanding of Barbusse

Kim's articles on Clarté in *Kaebyoŏk* were chiefly concerned with creating a suitable message for colonial Korea, and his understanding of Barbusse himself and his place within the French literary scene was only implicitly stated. And yet, knowledge of this understanding is fundamental in explaining how the movement played out in Korea, specifically with regard to its influence on literary developments. It is also important in that the elements of Barbusse's thought that Kim chose to highlight (hostility toward Christianity, for example) show the branching path the movement was taking, as many of these elements had only been of peripheral interest to other national sections of Clarté. To the articles discussed above therefore should be added several more that, while not focused exclusively on the Clarté movement, nevertheless contain discussions of Barbusse, which allow for a clarification of his place in Kim's thought at the time.

One of the earlier assessments Kim gave of Barbusse was in February 1924 in a multi-author article entitled "Hyūndae mundanŭi segye chŏk kyŏnhyang" (Global trends of the current literary world), in which he contributed the section on French literature, "Hanchabon hiaegukchŏkin chŏnhyŏi Pullansŏ munhak" (French postwar literature: anti-capital, anti-chauvinist).³⁵ Here Kim concentrates his analysis on the theoretical impact of the transition from *L'Enfer* to *Clarté*. For him this transition was important in that it was symbolic of French writers emerging from fin-de-siècle decadence to a new literature of purpose, with the goal of a revolutionary restructuring of society. This is a different view from that offered by Komaki in his 1922 work *The Art and Thought of Henri Barbusse*, where he had traced a progression in Barbusse's thinking from its beginnings in *L'Enfer* (1908) through *Le Feu* (1916) and finally to *Clarté* (1919), placing special emphasis on the purgatorial influence of *Le Feu*.

³⁵ Kim Ki-jin, "Hanchabon hiaegukchŏkin chŏnhyŏi Pullansŏ munhak," *Kaebyoŏk* 44 (1924): 79.

As he begins his reading Kim sets his analysis in terms of a static Barbusse character appearing in both works (though he is only given a name, Simon Paulin, in *Clarté*). In *L'Enfer*, the representative product of Barbusse's period of despair, the voyeuristic activities of the nameless outsider (the position itself symbolic of decadence) are narrated as he sees the world as a virtual hell, its characters mired in fraud, theft, adultery, disease, exploitation, incest, and greed, all of which in the end reinforced Barbusse's nihilistic arguments. As Kim has it, the story depicts humanity in its lower depths, seeking nothing from life but rather passing through it aimlessly by virtue of sheer will. For him this nameless protagonist encapsulated perfectly the state of French literature at the turn of the century.³⁶

This decadence was broken in *Clarté* through Paulin's enlightenment, where he turns from his pessimism and despair toward a life of hope, representing a newly-awakened humanity. This new outlook on life is not Barbusse's alone, however, but is shared by French literature as a whole. Obvious differences between the two works aside, the driving force of the humanity expressed in *Clarté* is also that of the movement which shares its name, and both aim to enlighten mankind to the necessity of the destruction of present society in order to liberate both art and life. For Kim it is this goal that has knocked French writers from their egocentric ennui and united them in their endeavor to rescue literature from capitalism. The value of *Clarté* the novel, therefore, lay in its illustration of this path from despair to hope; the value of the movement was the application of this path to real life.³⁷

Nor did this exhaust the implications of *Clarté*. Looking back much later (in 1958) Kim posited that an added effect of the novel had been to highlight the importance of a writer's use of

³⁶ Kim, "Hanchabon hiaegukchökin chönhuüi Pullansö munhak," 81.

³⁷ Ibid.

the historical materialist viewpoint; this, he said, represented the conscience of the writer.³⁸ He argued for the existence of this viewpoint in *L'Enfer* as well, claiming that Barbusse's method of exploring reality in both works was essentially the same. The difference, however, was that while *L'Enfer* simply explored a reality that was irrational and filled with lies, *Clarté* went one step further in grounding this irrationality in the capitalist system and its institutions of Christianity and inheritance. Establishing the culpability of these two material institutions, *Clarté* insisted that they must be jettisoned, and it was the duty of the writer to join in the struggle for this:

As it were, [*Clarté*] insists that the duty of the writer is not to calmly gaze and contemplate but it is his important duty to actively participate in social change. Hatred for Christianity, filled with the lies of merciless capitalists, and inheritance law, the irrational womb of present society, is truly the backbone of the thought of *Clarté*.

말하자면 그는 고요히 凝視하고 觀照하는 것만이 作家의 임무가 아니고 사회의 變革에 적극적으로 참가하는 것이 중요한 임무라고 주장하였던 것이다. 무자비한 자본가들이 허위에 가득찬 「基督主義」와 온갖 不合理的 현상의 母胎가 되는 「相續法」, 이 두가지에 대한 憎惡는 진실로 「클라르테」 思想의 脊柱骨이다.³⁹

As Kim further argued, it was the historical materialist understanding of this system that led to Barbusse's indictment of both institutions and this was, crucially, responsible for the abandonment of his humanism, which cleared the path for his alignment with the French Communist Party.⁴⁰

Although Kim's analysis does not represent a completely new (or indigenized) understanding of Barbusse, it is notable that he chose to highlight a hostility toward Christianity and inheritance law as the chief theoretical concerns of *Clarté*. For one, neither of these had been

³⁸ Kim Ki-jin, "Turūkenep'ūwa Pparūppyusū," *Sasanggye* (1958): 39.

³⁹ Ibid. Regarding the role of inheritance in capitalism Barbusse (through Paulin) had the following to say: "Inheritance, which is the concrete and palpable form of tradition, defends itself by the tradition of origins and of beliefs—abuses defended by abuses, to infinity—and it is by reason of that integral succession that here, on earth, we see a few men holding the multitude of men in their hands." Barbusse, *Light*, 261.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

major issues for the movement in Japan. A possible answer to the question of why he focused on these two elements might be found by looking at the Clarté movement as it was concretely acted out in the arena of ideological practice, when Kim took the concept of historical materialism and applied it to his own fiction. Prior to that, however, it will be useful to examine the relationship between Clarté in Korea and the Communist Party, as it provided another major departure from the movements in France and Japan.

VI: Clarté and the Korean Communist Parties

As was made clear in the debate between Barbusse and Rolland and further supported by Barbusse's activities in 1923, for the Clarté movement active support and engagement on the part of the writer was achieved through a relationship with the Communist Party. Conditions in Korea in 1923, however, made activity in the political instance difficult at best. Unlike in France, where a Communist Party had emerged from a preexisting socialist party in 1920, or in Japan, where one had been founded in July 1922, potential adherents to a party on the Korean peninsula in the years 1923-4 were left wanting, for one would not be established until 1925. If one looked outside of Korea they would find two parties competing for their loyalty: the Korean Socialist Party, which had been launched in July of 1918 in Khabarovsk but had moved to Shanghai in 1919 and renamed itself the Korean Communist Party, and the All-Russia Korean Communist Party, based in the Soviet Union.⁴¹ Both parties claimed legitimacy, a situation further complicated in 1925 with the appearance of a third Communist Party in Seoul.

With several to choose from, therefore, it is noteworthy that Kim never joined a Communist Party, and his refusal to enter the political instance via the Party appears, on the

⁴¹ Peter H. Lee, *Sourcebook of Korean Civilization, Volume 2: From the Seventeenth Century to the Modern Period* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 456-7.

surface at least, to be a step away from his continuous insistence on direct participation. He had expended much energy arguing for the importance of both politics and art but had made clear the inequality of the two, declaring as far back as in “Promeneade Sentimental” that any change in the ideological instance was contingent upon activity in the political instance. Having excoriated intellectuals in Korea for their ivory tower isolationism and thrown himself fully on the side of Barbusse and his insistence on engagement, it may seem curious that he eschewed such engagement himself. The parallel with Komaki in Japan is also notable, and the circumstances surrounding the decisions of these two coupled with that of Barbusse offer an illuminating comparison of Clarté members operating in three distinct conjunctures, one of whom joined the Communist Party and two who, although able and pressured to do so, did not.

The origins of their decisions, of course, must be located in their corresponding conjunctures. The French Communist Party Barbusse joined had only come into existence in 1920, but the country had a much longer revolutionary tradition and active engagement was a term almost synonymous with political engagement, in which literary figures had long been involved. Additionally, the revolutionary wave as it appeared in France following the Great War was not the same as the March First Movement in Korea, as the latter could not claim the former’s scope or longevity. For Barbusse, the ongoing situation in Europe provided a continuous stream of opportunities for political practice leading well into 1923, making it much easier to subordinate the literary front to the political front.

In Japan the Clarté movement and its insistence on the writer’s active engagement faced a different situation. The ephemeral nature of the Japanese Communist Party precluded it as a political option, leaving Komaki no choice but to pursue other avenues for active engagement. This he did, and the coterie of *Tane maku hito* was very much involved in the political instance in

the form of lectures, May Day rallies, etc. These activities were not easy, and the difficulties became even more pronounced after the earthquake in 1923, when repressive conditions forced a corresponding reorientation of the concept of engagement, a reorientation which led *Bungei sensen*, the spiritual (but not ideological) successor to *Tane maku hito*, to abstain from any direct engagement and declare itself entirely unconcerned with political practice. Kim's options in Korea in 1923-4 were even more circumscribed. Supporting either of the Communist Parties outside of Korea would seem a needless risk, and despite the loosened restrictions bestowed on Koreans during the era of cultural rule, political meetings, May Day rallies, and the fomenting of strikes were all out of the question at the time. Unlike Komaki or Barbusse, therefore, the nonexistence of Kim's options vis-à-vis political practice forced him to abandon that arena early on and focus his energies on ideological practice.

VII: Clarté Fiction in Korea: "Pulgŭn Chwi"

One of the results of this literary turn was Kim's short piece "Pulgŭn chwi" (Red rat), published in *Kaebŏk* in November 1924. The story was, and has continued to be, grouped with the emerging New Tendency Literature (*Sin kyŏngnyang munhak*) of the time, a genre outlined by Kim's associate Pak Yŏng-hŭi in his December 1925 article "Sin Kyŏngnyangp'aui munhakkwa kŭ mundanjŏk chiwi" (New tendency literature and its status in the literary world).⁴² And indeed, on its surface "Pulgŭn chwi" appears to share many traits of the genre, such as the representation of poverty, a rejection of urban culture, and rebellion against authority.⁴³ However, according to Kim the story was written under the influence of Barbusse, and while the ideological dispositions supporting New Tendency Literature have much in common with

⁴² Pak Yŏnghŭi, "Sin Kyŏngnyangp'aui munhakkwa kŭ mundanjŏk chiwi," *Kaebŏk* 64 (1925): 325.

⁴³ For a detailed discussion of New Tendency Literature see Sunyoung Park, *The Proletarian Wave: Literature and Leftist Culture in Colonial Korea 1910-1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 127-133.

Barbusse, there are several important differences. The story shows not only several major departures from norms categorizing the New Tendency Literature of the time, but it also brings to the fore the historical materialist critique of society and enlightenment motifs central to the literature of Clarté, displaying its basis within the Clarté problematic.

“Pulgŭn chwi” opens in late autumn and introduces Pak Hyŭng-Jun, one of many tenants crammed into a large dwelling that had formerly been the house of an aristocrat, or *yangban*. Educated and cynical, Pak passes his time arguing with fellow tenants about the problems facing society. The time available for this is limitless for, like almost everyone in the house, he is unemployed. However, unlike some of the others with whom he shares conversation, he is not an activist, as his apathy begrudges anything more than a cursory nod of the head at his comrades’ mention of injustice. He shows no interest in the challenges facing Korea, instead continuously asserting that everything would be all right if he could just go to sleep for fifty years.

The problems under discussion by the other tenants are soon made evident. Although much of the story was censored (three out of eighteen pages were excised), two key elements are highlighted by the tenants during their dialogue. The first is the recognition that revolutionary change in Korea is currently impossible, but instead must come through the colonial system and on the terms of the colonizers. As one tenant argues, the first step in this is to make effective use of the Japanese language. The Korean language is no longer a valid medium for change, and Japanese is the only way to get through to the Japanese people. In effect, the marginalization of the Korean language represents a loss of sovereignty, as the colonized can now only discuss terms with the colonizer in the latter’s language.

The second issue brought up has to do with the constitution of colonial subjectivity, and concerns the effectiveness of the current system in creating its subjects, masking the realities of

imperialism and therefore rendering itself palatable to the very people it exploits. The problem appears as a tenant, known only as “C,” asks:

“Do you know what song the primary school kids are singing as they walk down the street? Do you have any idea what school girls are singing as they frolic through the garden after supper? How are you going to cure the school children who put their hair up tightly, wear clogs and swag their shoulders as they walk singing *Koko wa okuni no nanbyakuri hanarete tōki Manshū no?* With what medicine can you fix these elementary school children? ‘V Narod’ indeed!”

행길로 다니는 보통학교 아이들이 부른 노래를 하는지 자네는 아나?
저녁밥 먹고 마당에서 뛰노는 보통학교 계집애들이 무슨 노래를 부르고
있는지 자네가 아는가? 머리를 찢끈 동이고 나막신 신고서 걸음걸는
채로 어깨를 으쓱으쓱하고 걸으면서 ‘코코하 오크니노 난비야くり
ハナレテ トホキマンシュウノ...’ 하는 보통학교 아이들을 자네는 무슨
약으로 고쳐 볼 텐가? ‘브나로드’ 좋은 말이지!⁴⁴

The song in question is “Sen’yū” (Comrades in Arms), a war song (*gunka*) produced in 1905 during the Russo-Japanese War. The question “C” poses is valid: what hope is there in the younger generation that sings the songs (presumably learned in school) celebrating the victory of their colonial overlords in a war fought to enslave them? His answer is equally skeptical: “V Narod” (Russian for “to the people”) was a slogan of the Russian Narodniks, revolutionaries of the nineteenth century, exemplified by *Virgin Soil*’s Nezhdanov, whose strategy involved going straight to the people (mainly peasants) in an attempt to incite them to rebellion. For “C” the strategies of both sides are detrimental to Korea, for in a colony freely singing the songs of metropolitan conquest, no amount of going “to the people” will be effective.

As the story continues, the Clarté influence comes to the fore. Pak wanders the city streets convinced that the world he lives in is not reality but instead a type of darkness, overrun with thieves and lies. Ordinary people, unaware of the true nature of things, stumble through life at the mercy of those in control, eking out an existence that can barely be described as human:

⁴⁴ Kim Ki-jin, “Pulgŭn chwi,” *Kaebŷōk* 53 (1924): 134.

[The] world he lived in could not be considered beautiful, could not be considered clean, could not be considered honest. It was filled with lies. It was filthy. Wherever one went there were thieves. Rich-looking thieves. Wherever one went there were pitiful people being trampled underfoot by well-mannered thieves. Packs of wolves in human masks were dancing on top of them. Everywhere one looked, everywhere one went, everywhere was the sight of people's necks being twisted. No, these were not people. They were insects. They were dogs. Yes, they were no more than dogs.

그러나, 그가 살고 있는 이 세상은 너무도 아름답지 못하고, 너무도 깨끗하지 못하고, 너무도 반듯하지 못하다. 거짓투성이다. 때투성이다. 어디를 가든지 도적놈이 있었다. 행세하고 다니는 신수 좋은 도적놈이 있었다. 어디를 가든지 점잖은 도적놈의 발 아래에 짓밟히는 불쌍한 사람이 있었다. 사람의 탈을 쓴 이리의 무리가떼를 지어 가자고 그 위에서 춤을 추고 있다. 곳곳마다, 사람의 모가지가 비틀리는 광경뿐이다. 아니다, 사람이 아니다. 버러지다. 강아지다. 그렇다, 강아지에 지니지 못한다.⁴⁵

This awareness of the existence of a truth guarded and obscured by those in control of society, and of the importance of seizing this truth and delivering it to the masses, was earlier expressed by Paulin in *Clarté*, and echoes the very founding statements of the Clarté movement. And like Paulin before him, Pak is conscious of the difficulty involved in breaking through this darkness to the truth. He understands the realities of colonial civilization, and he is aware that unmasking this civilization for what it is is going to be difficult.

The Barbusse influence continues when Pak considers what exactly is to be done. He recognizes that the present civilization is not something eternal, but sprang from a previous organization of society; as such, it too is destined eventually to evolve into something else. This positioning of capitalism as one step in an evolutionary cycle of social formations expresses an understanding of his situation based on the historical materialist conception of history:

However, however, people build civilization naturally, and they also have to grow within the civilization. This is not some plot somebody came up with on purpose, it is something that came naturally from the times in which people have lived. As

⁴⁵ Kim, "Pulgŭn chwi," 137.

for whether or not it can continue as is, it cannot.

그러나, 그러나 사람들은 이 문명을 지극히 자연으로 이루어 놓았던 것이며, 또한 이 문명 속에서 커나아가지 않으면 안 되는 것이다. 누가, 일부러 이와 같은 획책을 뜻하고 꾸미어 놓은 일이 아니고, 사람이 살아나오는 동안에 저절로 이와 같이 되어 나온 일이다. 그렇다고 이것이 이대로 계속해 나가면 될 수 있겠느냐 하면, 그것은 될 수 없다.⁴⁶

This understanding became prominent, if not necessary, following Barbusse's (and the movement's) shift toward a Marxist standpoint, and after arriving at this truth, portrayed as a virtual enlightenment in the story, Pak decides that living is his right, one he will take control of no matter what the cost.

It is then, as he rises from the bench he was sitting on, that he steps on a dead rat. As he stares down at the bloody, eponymous rat, his thoughts shift to rats in general and then to humans, whose behavior he equates with that of their rodent friends, as both will do whatever it takes to survive. The solution then becomes obvious: in a society run by thieves, the best response is thievery. His first act, therefore, is to go into a grocery store and steal some bread, after which he goes next door to a jeweler's, taking a watch and some rings. As he flees from the scene he is pursued by the proprietors of both stores. He continues to run pell-mell onto a main street where he is hit by a fire truck, and his body is sent flying through the air. He comes down, dead, and the story concludes with a crowd descending upon him like rats to loot his body.

The implications of "Pulgŭn chwi" were quickly understood by others. An early reviewer of the story was Yi Ik-sang, an associate of Kim, who discussed it in the weekly literary column of the *Chosŏn ilbo* shortly after its publication.⁴⁷ Yi began by stating the obvious: much of the story had been censored, and a large amount of dialogue which seemed integral to the

⁴⁶ Kim, "Pulgŭn chwi," 140.

⁴⁷ Sŏng-hoe (Yi Ik-sang), "Shibilwol ch'angjak kaep'yŏng," *Chosŏn ilbo*, November 10, 1924.

development of the narrative was missing. And while his positioning of the story against the implied existence of another, complete version formed the basis for much of his critique, what remained was nevertheless enough for him to be representative of Kim's thought, and was sufficient for him to assert: "We know that the author cares more for subjectivity in the expressionist style than anything else. I know that the meaning of the author is in this expressionist style of subjectivity."⁴⁸

This reading of the text is worth indulging in momentarily, if only to shift Yi's emphasis on the writer as constitutive of the characters' internal subjectivity to the historical materialist influence. For example, for Yi the debate between the tenants is indicative of the intellectual class's (e.g., the author's) difficulties in adjusting to colonial reality; it is only a short step further, however, to stake a claim for the influence of their social conditions on this outlook. "C"'s concern with the ceding of influence by the Korean language to Japanese and the construction of colonial subjectivity among Korean youth shows an awareness of the emergence of a new set of social relations, and is less an expression of the author than a symptom of concern with the ideological practices inherent in this new social formation. Put simply, "C"'s comments focus on the inexorable advance of colonial subjectivity, and in the future whether these intellectuals have adjusted to the realities of colonial life or not will be of little consequence in the face of an entire "Sen'yū"-singing generation that has.

Yi then moves to Pak, whose own subjectivity changes with his situation. His enlightenment to the historical materialist viewpoint in the passage above is an important element linking the story to the ideology of Barbusse and the Clarté movement, but this insight is not his alone, as the residents of the house, while railing against society, quickly learn how

⁴⁸ Sǒng-hoe, "Shibilwol ch'angjak kaep'yǒng."

dependent they actually are on it. The contempt “C” has for Korean youth and their infatuation with war songs, for example, is offset by his neighbor’s obsession with finding a job as a maid in a Japanese household, her last chance at employment. As he asks himself what one should do in the face of this futility, Pak arrives at the aforementioned decision that one must simply live, and that if such basics as food and shelter are to be denied him, he will take them by force. Much like a rat that instinctively persists in its efforts at existence in the face of a range of hostile elements trying to eliminate it, he will have no choice but to do what is necessary to survive.

The irony of Pak’s descent into robbery is evident, for after spending most of the narrative criticizing the thieving acts of those running society, his final recourse is simply to join them. He is not, however, to be successfully initiated into their number, for his act of theft results in a gruesome death. This is followed by the final insult, as his body is scavenged by the proverbial rats, a ravenous crowd with whom he had identified only several moments prior, and who will undoubtedly follow him down his path at some point in the not-too-distant future. In the final passage the power of the present society is reaffirmed in almost self-referential fashion, as the reader learns that the colonial censorship of newspapers covered up the implications of Pak’s actions with slander, much as Kim’s story itself was heavily censored.

Although claimed by the New Tendency Literature, “Pulgŭn chwi” owes its ideological outlook to the Clarté problematic. It contains a number of thematic issues Kim had extracted from the works of Barbusse, the most prominent being that people living in society are denied the truth, content to serve as potential cannon fodder for their overlords who lurch from one social catastrophe to the next. This theme is revealed in the form of a realization presented as an enlightenment, in this case one experienced by both Pak and Paulin. Both characters, through their use of the materialist dialectic, eventually come to understand the realities of their situation.

The difficulty then lies in extending this understanding to the masses, and this is where the two diverge, for rather than affirming confidence in the enlightenment project, Kim's story serves as a statement against the revolutionary possibilities of Koreans, showing how hard it will be to achieve Clarté's truth. Both Pak and Paulin share a disappointment with the apparently unshakable position of the ruling class of their society, and this leads them both into revolutionary action. The difference is that, by the end of *Clarté*, Paulin is alive and full of hope in the eventual triumph of revolutionary consciousness, whereas at the end of "Pulgŭn chwi," Pak is dead.

Pak's demise also shows the alterations Clarté theory had undergone in Korea, alterations stemming from the necessary rejection of humanism. The characters' interrogation of the social conditions through the materialist dialectic segues into a discussion of their powerlessness and spurning of the possibilities of agency in the beginning of the story; this is followed later by the actions of Pak, which are not to be interpreted as an attempt at a recovery of a humanist agency so much as an indication of its impossibility. With *Clarté*, Paulin's enlightenment was a prelude to his attempts to spread the truth to the masses, whereas in "Pulgŭn chwi" Pak's enlightenment is wasted, his death but a prelude to his body being ravaged by the real-life rats of his Korean compatriots. An additional testament to the impossibility of humanist agency, fictional or real, goes back to the colonial social formation itself, as the circumstances of Pak's death may have even been extra-textual: he may have been killed in order to appease the censors, which was common at the time.⁴⁹ A further reasoning could be found in a lingering Confucian moralizing or didactic punishing of his transgressions. Either way, the story shows an evolved relationship with Clarté, for while it hews close to the movement theoretically with its presentation of an

⁴⁹ Myers, *Han Sŏrya and North Korean Literature*, 19.

enlightenment arrived at through use of the materialist dialectic, it breaks from it at the most important moment with its denial of the value of humanism and the revolutionary potential of the proletariat.

“Pulgŭn chwi” thus finds in itself a microcosm of the Clarté movement’s dilemma in Korea: for Barbusse the new order was to be created by the proletariat, and yet Kim’s story shows how difficult it will be for the Korean proletariat (even if one takes Kim’s expanded definition) to fulfill its historical duty. On the contrary, if the future of the proletariat is the children and they have already been successfully brought under the control of their colonial masters, then the outlook for independence on the peninsula is bleak (that is, unless Pak’s successors are able to fulfill his wish to sleep for half a century, by which time the social formation may have evolved into one more accommodating of their sentiments). In expressing this, the story also serves as a transitional one between the Clarté and later Marxist-Leninist problematics, the latter of which would, within its own materialist dialectical framework, also express a pessimism toward humanism and the proletariat.

VIII: Further Activities

In November of 1923 Kim joined Pak Yŏng-hŭi, Yi Ik-sang and others in the formation of the leftist cultural organization PASKYULA. The group took Kim’s “Promeneade Sentimentale” demand, art for life, in other words a committed art, as one of its slogans. In the beginning of 1925 the group merged with the Yŏmgunsa (Spark Society), an organization launched in 1922 by another group of returning students from Japan, that had taken as its goal the founding of a specifically proletarian culture. The result of this merger was the Chosŏn P’ŭrollet’aria Yesulga Tongmaeng (Korean Proletarian Artist Federation), an organization which would figure

prominently in the cultural development of the next decade. Kim, however, had misgivings about the union. Having by this time committed himself to enlightening the masses through ideological practice, he felt that the Yōmgunsa's propensity for seditious activities would bring unwanted attention to the group.⁵⁰ This fear marks his final break from Barbusse's insistence on artistic engagement. Conversely, his activities within the organization were to be crucial in the establishment of a proletarian literature based on the doctrine of Marxism-Leninism, the doctrine whose arrival would signal the end of Clarté influence in East Asia.

⁵⁰ I Sūgyon, *Kindai Kankoku no chishikijin to kokusai heiwa undō*, 53.

CHAPTER FIVE:
FROM CLARTÉ TO “PROLETARIAN LITERATURE”

The struggle of the epigones for power . . . was not merely a struggle of personalities; it represented a new Political chapter – the reaction against October, and the preparation of the Thermidor. – Leon Trotsky, *My Life* (1930)

I. Introduction

By 1925 it had become apparent that Clarté’s postwar dream of bringing the worker internationals together in the pursuit of socialism had failed. Not that it mattered much at this point, for the organizations over which Barbusse and company had intended to serve as an umbrella had either vanished completely or faded into irrelevance, plagued by factional disputes and doctrinal splintering. There was, in fact, only one International left with any repute, the Third, and that entity itself had entered a period of transition, soon to suffer the outbreak of its own internal turmoil. Clarté did still cling to a measure of prestige, but its faltering existence in the ideological instance was about to end: the failure of the postwar revolutionary wave in Western Europe had forced the Third International to begin considering other avenues to revolution in addition to the political instance, and as it began to turn its attention to the ideological instance it would come into conflict with organizations like Clarté that had hitherto enjoyed significant positions of influence. And with the codification of proletarian literature based on a new, Third International-sponsored problematic, these positions would crumble.

The question of why Clarté was unable to thrive in this period, which saw the formation of proletarian cultural organizations in Korea, Japan and elsewhere, forms the basis for the present chapter. In searching for an answer it is necessary to investigate the issue of why Clarté and the emerging proletarian cultural organizations were incompatible, despite the fact that many

members of the latter had previously been affiliated in one sense or another with Clarté and still ostensibly shared the same goal. It also ties into the larger question of how the Third International was able to consolidate, and in many instances create, a wide array of cultural organizations under its sole banner and bring into conformity a variety of currents of thought that had previously had little to do with one another, a goal Clarté had been unable to achieve.

The answer lay in the introduction of the new problematic “Marxism-Leninism.” Appearing first in the political instance as a byproduct of the struggle for supremacy in the Soviet Union (the Soviet Thermidor alluded to by Trotsky above), the advent of Marxism-Leninism initiated a period of transition between the literature of movements like Clarté and its own version of proletarian literature that resulted in the replacement of these prior problematics with itself. The Marxist-Leninist problematic and proletarian literature were to have a close relationship, and the foundations laid by the former served as the new problematic for the latter worldwide. This development would lead to the end of rival problematics and concepts of leftist literature such as that of Clarté, while at the same time sparking the creation of new proletarian cultural organizations such as the Chosŏn P’ŭrollet’aria Yesulga Tongmaeng (Korean Proletarian Artist Federation, or KAPF) in Korea and the Nihon Puroretaria Bungei Renmei (The Japan Proletarian Literary Arts League, or JPLAL) in Japan.

II. The International Background

The ascendance of the Marxist-Leninist problematic took place from roughly September 1923 to the end of 1925. It occurred against a tumultuous backdrop of both international and local events in Japan and Korea, necessitating a return to the global stage where this study began, for an examination of the international conjuncture in which the transition took place sets the

scene for a look at events that transpired within the Japanese empire, revealing how the international and local interacted to affect changes in Clarté, changes that took a different course in France, Japan and Korea.

The arrival of Marxism-Leninism and its theory of proletarian literature was the result of three developments in the international arena. The first was the end of the postwar revolutionary wave in Europe. This was signified by the collapse of the German Revolution, the climax of which came in October 1923, when several hundred members of the *Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands* (German Communist Party, or KPD) stormed police precincts in the city of Hamburg, declaring a Soviet Republic and calling on communists nationwide to join in a general uprising. The would-be revolutionaries had almost no support, and succeeded in doing little more than taking over a number of police stations.¹ The failure of this “German October” marked the definitive end of immediate revolutionary possibilities in Europe, a situation which forced radicals everywhere to face the possibility that the continent was entering a prolonged period of stability and that the cataclysm they had been pinning their hopes on was to be relegated to the distant future. This forced the Communist International to abandon world revolution as an immediate goal and consider a long-term strategy, and as it explored alternate means of exporting its revolutionary agenda it expanded from the political to the ideological instance.

The second blow to the international communist movement came in January 1924 with the death of Lenin. As the leader of the only party to stage a victorious revolution Lenin’s influence had been indisputable, and his death plunged communist movements everywhere into disarray. No sooner had Lenin’s body been entombed below Red Square than Bolshevik infighting, which had begun the previous year, intensified openly with the emergence of

¹ Julius Braunthal, *History of the International Volume II: 1914-1943*, trans. John Clark (New York, Frederick A. Praeger, 1967), 282.

numerous pretenders to his throne. The onset of this counterrevolution under Stalin was announced by the concerted effort to remove Trotsky from a position of military and political influence. While initially limited to the political instance, the struggle quickly expanded into the ideological instance as well.²

A third factor in the emergence of Marxism-Leninism was the decline of the Proletcult, the main competitor with Marxism-Leninism for influence in the ideological instance. The Proletcult (short for Proletarian Cultural Organization) had been one of the first organizations to theorize culture as an important area of struggle for the proletariat, labelling it a “third front” alongside the so-called first and second fronts, which represented the arenas of political and economic struggle.³ In the early years of the revolution it had advocated the creation of an international proletarian culture independent of the state and had forged ahead with efforts to create this new, socialist culture to replace the inherited bourgeois one. This goal of an independent proletarian culture was made global following the establishment of an International Proletcult Bureau in August 1920, after which organizations sprang up in many countries of Europe, calling for the creation of a proletarian culture as one means to the socialist revolution.

The Proletcult took up a number of questions throughout its existence, and in many cases the outcomes of these were to influence the development of the Marxist-Leninist conception of proletarian culture. One of the most fundamental issues had been whether or not to make use of existing bourgeois culture.⁴ Many Proletcult members (such as founder Alexander Bogdanov) rejected bourgeois culture in its entirety, insisting that proletarian culture was something that had

² Edward Hallett Carr, *A History of Soviet Russia Volume 6: Socialism in One Country 1924-1926* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1960), 76.

³ Lynn Mally, *Culture of the Future: The Proletkult Movement in Revolutionary Russia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), xviii.

⁴ Mally, *Culture of the Future*, 30.

to be built anew, from the ground up.⁵ Opposed to this idea were Bolshevik leaders such as Anatoly Lunacharsky, Lenin, and Trotsky, who, for their own separate reasons, rejected attempts to completely jettison the cultural legacy of the past. Lunacharsky conceded that the creation of a distinctly proletarian culture was possible, but only with the absorption of prior cultural achievements.⁶ Lenin argued that the creation of a proletarian culture independent of the bourgeois legacy ran counter to the spirit of Marxism itself.⁷ For him, proletarian culture was something that could be created, but only as an evolutionary product stemming from the collective culture of prior epochs, and (in an important caveat) only from a Marxist viewpoint. Trotsky was in agreement with Lenin, explaining that, as the Bolsheviks had appropriated bourgeois achievements in the political instance by having the Red Army use former Tsarist officers to train itself during the Civil War, they should do the same in the ideological instance by utilizing the artistic achievements of prior periods in the creation of any future culture. However, he was emphatically opposed to any concept of a specifically *proletarian* culture, claiming that its creation was impossible because the proletarian regime was by definition transitory, and that any subsequent culture to emerge in the post-revolutionary age would by definition not be representative of any one group but would instead be classless.⁸ These ideas triumphed and the Proletcult was defeated, subordinated to the People's Commissariat of Enlightenment under Lunacharsky. However, the differences between the positions of Lenin and Trotsky, insignificant during their dispute with the Proletcult, were shortly to be magnified and ranged against each

⁵ Mally, *Culture of the Future*, 64.

⁶ Eden Paul and Cedar Paul, *Proletcult* (London: Leonard Parsons, Ltd., 1921), 91.

⁷ "Marxism has won its historic significance as the ideology of the revolutionary proletariat because, far from rejecting the most valuable achievements of the bourgeois epoch, it has, on the contrary, assimilated and refashioned everything of value in the more than two thousand years of the development of human thought and culture. Only further work on this basis and in this direction . . . can be recognized as the development of a genuine proletarian culture." V. I. Lenin, "On Proletarian Culture." In *Collected Works Volume 31* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1966), 317.

⁸ Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution*, trans. Rose Strunsky (New York: International Publishers, 1925), 185.

other as oppositional ideologies.

In 1923 the cultural debates among Bolsheviks were swept up into the political struggle between Trotsky and Stalin, and throughout 1924 and 1925 Trotsky's arguments on political and cultural matters were consolidated by his opposition into the ideology known as "Trotskyism."⁹ Stalin and company trumpeted Lenin's apparent support (now posthumous) for the possibility of creating a genuine proletarian culture, and this "approval" provided crucial backing for the creation of Marxism-Leninism, which made its first appearance as both theory and problematic in early 1924.¹⁰ The initial battleground was the political instance, where Stalin began to outline the differences between Trotsky and Lenin and argue for the applicability of the latter's thought and methods outside of Russia. The step began the process by which Lenin's name was to be irrevocably fused to that of Marx, not as the application of Marx to Russia, as he had heretofore been seen, but as the next step in the evolution of Marxist thought entirely.¹¹

The process peaked in June-July 1924 at the Fifth Congress of the Communist International. It was here that Stalin put forth both his concept of Marxism-Leninism as well as his theory of socialism in one country, disentangling the achievement of socialism in the Soviet Union from a successful worldwide revolution. To observers, this was a thinly disguised attack on Trotsky's well-known advocacy of "permanent revolution," and the congress, which saw the

⁹ Stalin was joined at this early point by Grigory Zinoviev and Lev Kamenev, both of whom later admitted to the artificial construction of the two political lines Trotskyism and Marxism-Leninism. For their comments on the creation of "Trotskyism," as well as for Trotsky's own discussion of the matter, see Trotsky, *The Stalin School of Falsification*, 89-99.

¹⁰ Jan Rehmann, *Theories of Ideology: The Powers of Alienation and Subjection* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 70.

¹¹ Barbusse would later signal his acceptance of this development as well, writing in 1935 that "Leninism is synonymous with Marxism. It is a new chapter in Marxism, *it is not an amendment, an adaptation of Marxism to a given situation.*" Henri Barbusse, *Stalin: A New World Seen Through One Man*, trans. Vyvyan Holland (New York: International Publishers, 1935), 30. Italics mine. It is perhaps worth noting that Lenin would have disagreed with both Barbusse and Stalin, for in 1899 he had written that "We think that an *independent* elaboration of Marx's theory is especially essential for Russian socialists; for [Marxism] provides only general *guiding* principles, which, *in particular*, are applied in England differently than in France, in France differently than in Germany, and in Germany differently than in Russia." Lenin's italics. V. I. Lenin, "Our Programme," quoted in Louis Althusser, "Theory, Theoretical Practice, and Theoretical Formation: Ideology and the Ideological Struggle," trans. James H. Kavanagh, in *Philosophy and the Spontaneous Philosophy of the Scientists*, ed. Gregory Eliot (London: Verso, 2011), 18.

battle over Lenin's legacy move into the international sphere, signaled a shift in global communist politics. Affecting a structural change in communist parties everywhere, the Congress brought them into conformity with Bolshevik models and control, thus marking an important step in the dissemination of Marxism-Leninism. The undertaking was contentious, and many resisted this new hyphenation of Marx and Lenin.¹² The tide was inexorable, though, and as one national contingent after another aligned with Stalin, Trotsky was defeated and the new problematic took root. Its results would be far-reaching, and as Jan Rehmann has observed, rather than simply contributing to the political defeat of Trotsky, "Marxism-Leninism' was the result of a canonization process designed to establish a new state-philosophy, which was in turn an integral part of the fusion of a centralized Communist Party and a despotic-autocratic state-apparatus."¹³

After establishing itself in the political instance as a weapon against Trotsky, Marxism-Leninism soon moved to the ideological instance with its theory concerning the production of proletarian culture, and by 1925 a brand of proletarian culture based on it had taken shape in Russia (now the Soviet Union). This new intent was officially announced in January 1925 when the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) released the resolution "On Party Policy in the Area of Literary Fiction." Though still ostensibly fostering variety in the domestic field of literature, the decree declared the hegemony of Marxist-Leninist proletarian literature to be the ultimate goal, and exhorted the Soviet government to render assistance to writers working under the doctrine so that they might claim their rightful position at the top of the literary field.¹⁴ It warned against the production of factory-centered proletarian literature and

¹² Rehman, *Theories of Ideology*, 70. One of those who resisted was Zinoviev himself, then president of the Communist International.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 69.

¹⁴ Murphy, *The Proletarian Moment*, 26. Writing a decade later, Trotsky would look back on the emergence of

the wholesale rejection of fellow travelers (both of these sentiments being directed against the Proletcult) and continued the solidification of the link between dialectical materialism and Marxism-Leninism that had begun immediately following Lenin's death.¹⁵ Once joined, the two were proclaimed together as the new foundation of proletarian artistic literature.

The tenets of the new literature were not all new. In fact, some of its most basic elements were held in common with other theories of proletarian literature. One of the most salient aspects of Marxism-Leninism, for example, was the centrality of class and the class struggle to its world view, a position taken earlier by the Proletcult and even some members of Clarté. But other, equally important aspects of the problematic were new, specifically an abandonment of world revolution, anti-humanism, and a commitment to dialectical materialism. Beginning with the Soviet Union, the problematic was applied to proletarian literature worldwide, eliminating internationally an entire field of proletarian cultural theories other than Marxism-Leninism, and leaving a single image of proletarian culture, dictated and controlled from Moscow.

Subsumed in the process along with the Proletcult was Clarté, which at this point either aligned with Trotsky, as happened in France, or was pulled into the Marxist-Leninist sphere, as happened in Korea and Japan. The allegiance to the Third International declared by such figures as Aono Suekichi in Japan and Kim Ki-jin in Korea set a course for the adherence and

proletarian culture, noting its irrevocable ties to the Marxist-Leninist problematic: "Simultaneously with the theory of 'socialism in one country,' the previously frowned-on theory of "proletarian culture" received official recognition. The opponents of this theory [i.e., Trotsky himself] pointed out that the regime of proletarian dictatorship has a strictly transitional character, that in distinction from the bourgeoisie the proletariat does not intend to dominate throughout a series of historical epochs, that the task of the present generation of the new ruling class reduces itself primarily to an assimilation of all that is valuable in bourgeois culture, that the longer the proletariat remains a proletariat . . . the less is it capable of rising above the historic heritage of the past, and that the possibilities of new creation will really open themselves only to the extent that the proletariat dissolves itself in a socialist society. All this means, in other words, that the bourgeois culture should be replaced by a socialist, not a proletarian, culture." Leon Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed: What is the Soviet Union and Where is it Going?* (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1937), 178.

¹⁵ Étienne Balibar, *The Philosophy of Marx*, trans. Chris Turner (London: Verso, 1995), 111. The establishment of dialectical materialism as the philosophy of Marxism-Leninism was finalized by way of a 1931 decree issued by Stalin officially linking the two. Balibar, *The Philosophy of Marx*, 3.

subsequent development of proletarian literature throughout the Japanese empire based on the Marxist-Leninist problematic. From this point forward, whatever theoretical turns the proletarian arts would take locally, they would all be united in their dependence on this underlying problematic.

As the Marxist-Leninist problematic was consolidated throughout the years 1924-1925, rival concepts of proletarian culture were either dispersed or ranged as oppositional ideologies to its own theory of culture and literature. The Proletcult was acknowledged as an early but misguided beginning of proletarian literature, Trotskyism was institutionalized in the role of binary foil, and Clarté suffered extinction. Importantly, though, it was through these oppositional theories that the new problematic's views on literature developed, a fact attested to by the somewhat contradictory nature of its advances. For while consciously concocted, Marxism-Leninism was to proceed in a reactionary fashion, adjusting to each new theoretical challenge through a series of quote-laden diktats and reformulations of a perennially confusing party line.

There remained the need to ensure international adherence to these developments, and the seeds had already been sown with a Comintern appeal six months earlier entitled "To the Revolutionary Proletarian Writers of All Countries," which had called for the creation of an international organization of writers to be based in Moscow, under Comintern guidance. Less a coherent program than a contradictory mixture of lingering Proletcult influence and selected passages from Lenin, the appeal attempted to keep its proposals in line with the latter's stated views on proletarian culture, in particular stressing the importance of a Marxist (read Marxist-Leninist) outlook and loyalty to the Communist Party. Omitted completely was the fact that Lenin's support for proletarian culture had been conditional upon a specific Russian conjuncture, for he had insisted that the creation of proletarian culture was something to be undertaken with

the participation of the Soviet authorities and Communist Party as part of the tasks *of the proletarian dictatorship*.¹⁶ By ignoring this stipulation the appeal was able to take his “support” for the creation of proletarian culture generally and fuse it with the Proletcult’s arguments that such a culture could be created globally in the remaining capitalist societies. Having brought the two sides into agreement, the new Lenin and Proletcult-approved proletarian literature was forwarded to organizations worldwide through the offices of the newly-established Liaison Bureau of Relations of Proletarian Literature.¹⁷

As the Communist International was the preferred method of disseminating information to affiliated Marxist parties, most of its decrees were released by its various congresses and then distributed to national outlets. Without an active Communist Party in Japan, though (the latest incarnation had been dissolved in March 1924), the job fell to *Bungei sensen*, which published a translation of the appeal in January 1925, the first call in Japan for an international affiliation of proletarian literature.¹⁸ The call would be answered, first in Korea with KAPF in August 1925, and then in Japan proper with the JPLAL in December 1925.

III. The East Asian Background: Japan and Korea

While the power struggle in the Communist International was paving the way for the arrival of the Marxist-Leninist problematic internationally, Japan had entered its own transitional period in 1923 with the Great Kantō Earthquake. The disaster had ended the so-called first period in the development of proletarian culture in Japan, one centered on *Tane maku hito* that, as

¹⁶ Vladimir Lenin, “On Proletarian Culture,” *Collected Works* Volume 31 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1966), 317. My italics.

¹⁷ Ludmila Stern, *Western Intellectuals and the Soviet Union*, 49. In 1926 the Bureau would be renamed the International Bureau of Revolutionary Literature.

¹⁸ George Tyson Shea, *Leftwing Literature in Japan: A Brief History of the Proletarian Movement* (Tokyo: Hosei University Press, 1964), 131.

discussed earlier, had concerned itself largely with defining the relationship between the artistic and political instances.¹⁹ The transition would last until the autumn of 1926, by which time Japan (through the JPLAL) had adopted the Marxist-Leninist problematic as the new foundation of proletarian literature.

Of course, theoretical formulations of proletarian culture in Japan had existed prior to the appearance of Marxism-Leninism. In early 1923, under the influence of Aono Suekichi, Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke, and Nakanishi Inosuke, *Tane maku hito* had begun edging away from a position of humanism toward one sympathetic to Bolshevism and the class struggle, and throughout that year had explored a variety of possible avenues with which to pursue proletarian literature, devoting significant coverage to Russian developments.²⁰ Aono took an early step in February 1923 with an article entitled “The Class Struggle and the Art Movement” (*Kaikyū tōsō to geijutsu undō*), where he declared for the supremacy of class consciousness in the production of proletarian literature.²¹ With this shift toward class and party, the early Clarté humanism began to give way to an emphasis which would form one of the hallmarks of proletarian literature.

Korea faced a similar situation. The humanist problematic of the Clarté movement had proven untenable following its introduction there, and this had led to Kim Ki-jin’s decision to break with the tenet altogether in order to garner support for the movement. Although in the end this proved unsuccessful, the shift in terrain stuck, and his alterations of Clarté theory, particularly his reconstituted definition of the proletariat, formed a basis for not only his own

¹⁹ Aono Suekichi, *Marukusu-shugi bungaku tōsō* (Tokyo: Kamiya Shoten, 1929), 170.

²⁰ For instance, it was aware of the decline of the Proletcult as well as of the rise of rival factions such as the so-called October Group, which advocated a proletarian culture Marxist in orientation with the Communist Party in a leading role. For a discussion of the latter see James F. Murphy, *The Proletarian Moment: The Controversy over Leftism in Literature* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 25.

²¹ Aono Suekichi, “*Kaikyū tōsō to geijutsu undō*,” *Tane maku hito* 3, no. 4 (1923): 120-123. Aono’s ideas would be further expanded in his 1926 article “*Shizen seichō to mokuteki ishiki*” (Natural growth and purposeful consciousness).

attempts at creative writing but for the emerging New Tendency Literature as well. It was precisely this New Tendency Literature that would play an important role in laying the foundations of proletarian literature.²² Part of this included moving away from any lingering humanist pretense to an emphasis on class. Despite this apparent theoretical evolution in Korea and Japan from humanism to class, as they entered the transition period writers of newly-arrived “proletarian literature” had still not agreed on a unified definition of what it was.²³ The codification of what would be called proletarian literature was going to take time, but had already been set into motion by the process that began on the international stage and would take several years to be disseminated worldwide through the agency of the Communist International in the form of the Marxist-Leninist problematic.

III. The Marxist-Leninist Problematic in Korea: Chosŏn P’ŭrollet’aria Yesulga Tongmaeng, Kim Ki-jin’s “Mollak”

The formation of the Korean Proletarian Artist Federation was declared in Seoul on 23 August 1925. Present at its founding were several former Clarté supporters, such as Kim Ki-jin and Pak Yŏng-hŭi. Its creation was a consolidation of two smaller groups, PASKYULA and the Yŏmgunsa. The breadth and scope of the organization was much larger than its limited membership would indicate, however, and the goals enumerated in its central platform, “to establish a proletarian culture on the eve of the light” and “to unite and establish a third front, a proletarian cultural movement,” signaled the intent of the organization to join the emerging web of international groups dedicated to the creation of proletarian culture.²⁴ Such efforts to found a

²² Samuel Perry, *Recasting Red Culture in Proletarian Japan: Childhood, Korea, and the Historical Avant-garde* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2014), 157.

²³ Even as late as 1927 the question had not been settled. See Aono, *Marukusu-shugi bungaku tōsō*, 80.

²⁴ Yu Mun-sŏn, “K’ap’ŭ kyŏlsŏng hyŏnjangŭi mosŭpŭl yŏtponda: ilche chŏngbo pogosŏe kich’o hayŏ.” *Munhak*

proletarian culture in Korea were a continuation of earlier ones (the Yōmgunsa had declared it the object of study two years earlier in its 1923 platform), although the attempt to create a proletarian culture as a “third front” on the “eve of the light,” as stated in KAPF’s platform, showed an agreement with the Proletcult argument that proletarian culture could and should be fostered in societies still on the near side of a proletarian revolution.

Though existing nominally under the aegis of the Comintern, KAPF at its beginning functioned in a similar way to Clarté in that it attempted to accommodate a variety of ideological viewpoints. This lasted until September 1927, when the organization released a new platform declaring itself to be specifically Marxist, a policy in line with its ostensible purpose of encouraging the development of proletarian arts in Korea under the informal guidance of the Communist Party.²⁵ As a result, and in a way that paralleled what had happened at *Tane maku hito* following the Rolland-Barbusse debate, anarchist elements were expelled from the organization.²⁶ KAPF would go on to be the longest lasting and most influential socialist cultural organization in Korea during the colonial period, and it would from 1927 do so exclusively under the Marxist-Leninist banner.

The appearance of Marxism-Leninism in literature, however, had already begun by the beginning of 1926, and can be seen in a short story by Kim Ki-jin titled “Mollak” (Ruin), which appeared in *Kaebŏk* that January. Exploring the abandonment of liberal humanist ideals in favor of a burgeoning class consciousness by a young intellectual of the former aristocracy, the story exemplifies the transition from Clarté-inspired literature to Marxist-Leninist proletarian literature

tongne 30 (2002), 397.

²⁵ In fact, guidance from the Korean Communist Party could hardly have been anything but informal. Though several attempts had been made from 1925 to launch the Party inside Korea, each had been defeated in turn by the Japanese authorities, and its presence on the peninsula remained largely symbolic. See Lee, Peter H. Lee, *Sourcebook of Korean Civilization, Volume 2: From the Seventeenth Century to the Modern Period* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 457.

²⁶ Park, *The Proletarian Wave*, 62.

proper. It also contains additional characteristics of that emerging literature in its consideration of dialectical materialism (which Kim had earlier explored in “Pulgŭn chwi”) as well as a hostility to intellectuals, both of which appear in the self-tortured consciousness of its intellectual representative, the dissolute Sŏng-ch’il.

“Mollak” opens with a sick middle-aged woman’s dilemma on how to raise her granddaughter. The woman, referred to throughout simply as “Puin” (wife), is beset by a terminal illness. Nevertheless, she is determined to remain alive so that she may raise her granddaughter P’il-sun in the absence of the latter’s parents (the mother died shortly after childbirth and the father is currently jailed). She does this in the absence of any material help: her husband has remained in the countryside after sending her to Seoul and can barely support himself, her son-in-law has been jailed for debauchery, and her son Sŏng-ch’il, the sole remaining family member with the capacity to work, has abandoned P’il-sun, his mother and even his wife, the last of whom he has forsaken with particular prejudice, ejecting her physically from the household.

This misfortune of the woman is a continuation of years of steady loss. Though her husband claims *yangban*, or aristocratic, blood, their life together was anything but prosperous, as fiscal mismanagement and a succession of ill-advised land sales over several years led to an increasingly small harvest for them on their countryside farm. Teetering on the brink of insolvency, her husband persuades her to move out as he clings to his concubine, his sole remaining semblance of class privilege. Now in Seoul, she considers the reduction of her situation not as a personal affront but rather as a product of the decline of her husband’s class, as she tries to come to terms with the social upheavals that have reduced this former aristocracy (and her with it) to itinerant beggars. Although she initially assumes a Confucian moral failing as the reason for *yangban* decline, she compares the rampant corruption of other *yangban* with her

husband, who was apparently immune to bribery and other forms of graft, and notes that he nevertheless shared their fate. She concludes that not only is it pointless to adhere to an antiquated moral code, but the maintenance of morality itself is no longer sufficient in justifying class division. She resolves to cast off any obligations to the *yangban* and raise her granddaughter by any means necessary.

Such a task is made exceedingly difficult by her affliction, which forces her at present to rely on her son Sŏng-ch'il for support. However, her appeals to him to bear the burden of the household are to no avail, and as it turns out, supporting her is the least of his worries. Expectations for him to perform his filial duty are not unreasonable; in fact, not only is he more than capable, he is active in one of the advanced sectors of the empire, having studied finance in Japan (at considerable cost to his parents), and returning to Korea to take up a position in a bank. He was soon fired, however, and he now spends his time reading "bad books" (*nappŭn ch'aek*) and spouting their attendant, but unnamed, ideology "like a madman" (*silsŏnghaŋ saram moyangŭro*).²⁷ Serving as an external catalyst, these books have awakened him to his predicament, giving him a convenient way out of his obligations, and providing him with the cognizance that, although he considers himself a failure, he can now tie his failure to his class position. By the end of the story he will come to realize that class constitutes the very essence of his identity.

It is through Sŏng-ch'il and this psychological dilemma that "Mollak" begins to explore the effects of growing class consciousness in colonial Korean society through a Marxist-Leninist lens. Though painfully conscious throughout the narrative of his *yangban* lineage and its demands, Sŏng-ch'il has up to this point in his life tenaciously clung to an identity based on a

²⁷ Kim Ki-jin, "Mollak," *Kaebŏk* 65 (1926): 27.

liberal humanist sense of self. His refusal to settle into a support role for his family and his attachment to romantic love are both products of this outlook, and both are the cause of considerable resentment toward his parents, who he blames for forcing him into his present situation. Further disrupting the household is his desire to assert his liberal agency by kicking out his wife, for whom he professes no feelings. His mother's successive attempts to plead with him mirror the evolution of his own consciousness: she begins on Confucian moral grounds, pointing out that his wife has not provided him with any of the traditional seven causes of divorce.²⁸ She then suggests he indulge in his physical and romantic inclinations by taking a concubine (or several) instead of sending his wife back to her parents in humiliating fashion. Failing in these arguments she moves on to economic reasoning, asking him to consider her and the fact that she cannot even sew to make ends meet. He nevertheless remains defiant, and after again rebuking his mother for forcing him into the marriage, forcibly drags his wife from the house and stuffs her into a rickshaw.

This violent outburst of liberal humanist agency is Söng-ch'il's last. Finally, his mother is able to elicit a response on class grounds, and he begins to recast the failures of his life, not as consequences of his inability to assert a liberal sense of self, but in the context of the declining *yangban* class. Torn between a sense of class solidarity and the desire to detach himself from the stigma of *yangban* association, Söng-ch'il's dilemma is one shared by the entirety of a class slipping inexorably into oblivion. He realizes that both the choices he has made and those that have been made for him, far from stemming from individual desire, have been dictated by class all along, and as he storms out of the house he addresses his mother one last time:

“Now I understand! This pitiful life of a dying class! What should I do with this miserable life in which there is forever no recovery? Can I rejoin my wife?”

²⁸ The seven causes (ch'ilgö chiak) are: disobeying one's in-laws, inability to bear children (read a son), garrulity, theft, adultery, jealousy, and the existence of a hereditary disease.

Absolutely not. Then, can I forsake myself and go join my mother? Absolutely not. So I will leave it as it is. This is a fate shouldered by history!”

“아---하! 이 불쌍한 인생 망해가는 계급의 불쌍한 인생. 영원히 다시 살아나지 못할 가련한 인생을 어떻게 하면 좋은가? 같이 합할 수 있느냐? 도저히 되지 못한다. 그러면 내가 나를 버리고 어머니에게 합하여 들어갈 수 있느냐? 도저히 되지 못한다. 그러면 내버려두자. 이것이 역사가 짊어지워놓은 운명이다!”²⁹

As she soothes her wailing granddaughter, the mother too considers the situation from a class viewpoint, continuing her earlier reminiscence about her declining countryside marriage with her husband. As the narrative sends off one ill-starred member of the *yangban* class in Söng-ch'il and the wife of another in the Puin, the crumbling stature of the *yangban* as a whole is placed in dialectical opposition with a new, ascendant proletariat as the mother realizes that the social upheaval she is struggling to comprehend is the result of a realignment of class relationships:

That the proletariat refuses to recognize *yangban* status is a fact that has been known for a long time, and though her view of class responsibility had paralyzed her, she now views this as normal; the Five Relationships and Three Bonds have gradually vanished without a trace, and every time she sees this she cannot help but feel how pathetic the whole situation is.

상놈이 양반을 업수히 보고 이기고 나는 것은 이미 오래 전부터 눈이 시도록 보아내려온 사실이므로 거지반 계급적 도덕에 대한 부인의 신경은 마비되어서 지금은 예사의 일로 생각하게 되었으나 그외의 소위 오륜삼강이 점점 자취를 끊게 되는 것에 대하여는 그러한 사실을 볼 때마다 한심한 느낌을 금하지 못하는 것이었다.³⁰

With Söng-ch'il's withdraw into his own world and no other help forthcoming, her final decision is to seek help from the church, an organization openly hostile to the *yangban*. There she might find a solace denied to Söng-ch'il, whose newly-awakened sense of class consciousness is all the more bitter because he knows that he is trapped, for while the mother might find acceptance and

²⁹ Kim, “Mollak,” *Kaebyoŏk* 65 (1926): 38.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 34.

equality in the church, Sōng-ch'il has no place to go. His disappointment in his status, and the story's negative interpretation of intellectuals as a whole, mirrors contemporary Comintern mistrust of these fellow travelers, and as he faces the reality of the dissolution of the *yangban* in the face of a nascent proletariat, "Mollak" orients the shift away from a lingering liberal humanism toward a class-based approach to an understanding of a changing society, paving the way for the new proletarian literature.

V. The Marxist Leninist Problematic in Japan: Nihon Puroretaria Bungei Renmei, Maedakō Hiroichirō's "Umi no karuwaza"

In December 1925, several months after the formation of KAPF, the first proletarian literary writers organization was launched in Japan, the Nihon Puroretaria Bungei Renmei. As with KAPF, its formation too was a direct response to the Comintern appeal.³¹ Many former members of *Tane maku hito* were involved such as Aono, Imano, Nakanishi (who had been present at KAPF's founding in Seoul), Yanagi, and Yamada. Sasaki Takamaru, co-translator of *Clarté* with Komaki Ōmi, was selected chair of the organization.³² In the founding platform of the JPLAL was manifested not only the influence of Proletcult but also KAPF, as it declared in now-familiar terminology its determination to "establish a fighting proletarian culture of the dawn" (*reimeiki ni okeru musan kaikyū tōsō bunka no juritsu o ki su*) in opposition to the dominant bourgeois culture.³³

The proletarian literature adopted by the JPLAL, supported and propagated through *Bungei sensen*, indicated an acceptance of the Comintern's definition of the function of literature,

³¹ Yamada Seizaburō, *Puroretaria bungakushi*, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Rironsha, 1954), 100.

³² Shea, *Leftwing Literature in Japan*, 135.

³³ "Nihon Puroretaria Bungei Renmei kitei shūsei sōan," *Bungei sensen* 2 no. 8 (December 1924): 60. The original draft program of the JPLAL had been written in July, with revisions made at a meeting on 14 October. Shea, *Leftwing Literature*, 133.

grounding it in the Marxist-Leninist problematic. The Japanese were still, however, uneasy about the political consequences of adopting the new problematic, and seemed unwilling to accept the new doctrine's hostility to Trotsky, whose own views on the creation of proletarian literature had been well-received; in fact, as Trotsky's struggle with Stalin climaxed in 1925 his *Literature and Revolution* was being translated and published in *Bungei sensen*.³⁴ This temperance did not last long, however, and the decisive blow to Trotsky's influence among proletarian writers in Japan finally came with the reconstitution in December 1926 of the Japanese Communist Party, to which the JPLAL quickly subordinated itself.³⁵ The existence of the Party was by now officially indispensable to the development of proletarian literature, and both organizations ostensibly operated under Comintern control, representing it in both the political and ideological instances. The Marxist-Leninist-led understanding of proletarian culture was furthered by Aono in a September 1926 article in *Bungei sensen* titled "Shizen seichō to mokuteki ishiki" (Natural growth and purposeful consciousness), where he argued that the development of proletarian literature could not be left to its own devices but rather needed to be guided. While the idea of the spontaneous creation of a literature of the proletariat (by themselves or otherwise) could be traced back to the Naturalists, it did not constitute a movement, and Aono was at pains to stress that the establishment of a proper movement could only be achieved through a consciousness of the proletariat's objectives in its struggle for revolution. It was the task of the writer to instill such a consciousness:

Even without a particular movement, the literature of the proletariat develops and grows naturally. There is nothing one can do to stop it. Moreover, it is because of this characteristic of natural growth that the rise of a movement becomes inevitable. However, natural growth is in the end only natural growth, and in order to effect a qualitative change to purposeful consciousness, there must be a

³⁴ Perry, *Recasting Red Culture in Japan*, 81.

³⁵ Yuchi Asao, *Nappu izen no puroretaria bungaku undō: "Tane maku hito" "Bungei sensen" no jidai* (Tokyo: Ogawamachi Kikaku, 1997), 81.

craft that leads this natural growth and raises it upward. That is a movement. In this case, it is the proletarian literary *movement*.

特殊な運動がなくとも、プロレタリアの文学は、自然に発生し、生長する。それは何ものをもつても抑へることが出来ない。また、その自然成長性があればこそ、運動が成り立ち、それが必然となるのである。しかし自然生長は、飽までも自然生長であつて、それが目的意識にまで質的变化をするためには、その自然生長を導き、引上げる^{クラフト}力がなければならぬ。それが運動である。この場合、プロレタリア文学運動である。³⁶

This distinction between a naturally occurring literature of the proletariat and a consciously led movement echoed the Comintern's own analysis, as did its call for Party-led artistic, socialist guidance toward a narrow, socialist literature.³⁷ And while Aono would later maintain that the concept of purposeful consciousness had no direct relation to Russian literary developments or the Russian Communist Party's decrees on literature, his claim that it evolved out of the Japanese conjuncture masks the fact that that conjuncture itself was at the time already dependent on the Marxist-Leninist problematic, a fact he had signaled earlier in his statement of support for the Third International's brand of proletarian literature. It is true, in other words, that Russian and Japanese developments were affected by their conjunctures, but in their adherence to the same problematic these conjunctures were if anything separate branches of the same tree.

Aono's search for a "purposeful consciousness" in literature need not have looked any further than the pages of *Bungei sensen*, where as part of the Marxist-Leninist problematic it had

³⁶ Aono Suekichi, "Shizen seichō to mokuteki ishiki," in *Hennentai Taishō bungaku zenshū* vol. 15, ed. Suzuki Sadami (Tokyo: Yumani Shobō, 2003), 499.

³⁷ There is a reason for this. At the time Aono was translating Lenin's *What is to be Done?* and there has been speculation (largely confirmed) that this was his application of that pamphlet's arguments to the artistic field. While lending theoretical weight, therefore, Aono has drawn from the same well as the Comintern, whose own demands for a shepherded literature went back to the same authority. This also helps explain Aono's gloss of the English word "craft" (*kurafuto*) for "power" (*chikara*) in the passage above: one of the key argument's in *What is to be Done?* (and one Lenin takes from Karl Kautsky, who in turn invokes the authority of Marx and Engels) is that the proletariat is incapable of leading itself to emancipation, requiring outside help from the bourgeois intelligentsia. This help from without is the craft/power Aono is calling for. For the pertinent passage in Lenin see Vladimir Lenin, *What is to be Done? Burning Questions of Our Movement, Collected Works Volume 5* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1961), 383-4.

already begun to appear in literature. An early example is Maedakō Hiroichirō's short piece "Umi no karuwaza" (Acrobatics at sea), published in January 1926. It might be remembered that Maedakō had been one of *Tane maku hito*'s staff that went on to *Bungei sensen*, but his support for the Clarté movement had been shown by his translation of a work of one of its more famous members, Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*. Maedakō had earlier been credited with introducing to Japan a variety of leftist literature akin to Sinclair's, and he had also been supportive of a brand of socialist literature different from that of the Marxist-Leninist variety during his tenure at *Tane maku hito*. With "Umi no karuwaza," however, he shows a firm commitment to the new problematic.

"Umi no karuwaza" takes place on a passenger ship sailing for Hawaii. The narrator, occupying the third-class cabin below deck, begins by detailing a daily ritual in which the third-class passengers surround the opulent first-class dining hall, their faces pressed against the glass windows, to watch the first-class passengers eat; this is followed by them regarding with disgust the Chinese wait staff as the latter throws the leftover food into the sea. Jostling for space in the squalid living quarters below deck, sandwiched between the deafening engine and rudder rooms, are Japanese heading to Hawaii looking for work, a group of Russians out of Vladivostok, Chinese coolies serving as ship and wait staff, and a small troupe of Japanese acrobats heading for the United States. This troupe of six provides one of the only escapes from the monotony of the voyage, and their practice sessions are watched by nearly everyone in third class, particularly when they involve training the female acrobats.

The class divide on the ship is clear, and constantly manifested in the narrative through the existence of walls and curtains. The divide is broken one night, though, by a first-class passenger who descends below deck to enjoy a training session of the acrobats. His brief

appearance fosters a rumor that a common concert is being planned, which does in fact begin the following day. The entire ship's population assembles on deck (at different levels), and after speeches and a prayer (both given in English) test the patience of the third-class passengers, there is an operetta by a Western woman, a knife display by the Chinese, and an acrobatic performance by the troupe. All goes well with the acrobatics until one of the younger female performers becomes sick and vomits on the troupe leader. As he springs up from the ground in panic his uniform tears from his buttocks up to his shoulders, and his mounting fury is matched by the crowd's mirth as they show sympathy for the girl.

"Umi no karuwaza" illustrates the arrival of the Marxist-Leninist problematic through several facets. It displays an obsessive focus on class, and echoes the pessimism inherent in the international communist movement following the collapse of the world revolution. As it struggles to find answers in the age of this new problematic, the reader soon sees that the optimism of Clarté is no longer to be found. The role of Clarté, or even leftist literature as a whole, as unifier has also been replaced by a combative focus on fragmentation and disarray.

The story displays a considerable hostility to bourgeois liberal humanism, a hostility mostly directed at the acrobats. The narrator mentions that performers in general are normally scorned, but the passengers in this case regard the acrobats with a sense of ambivalence. Though the acrobats as well come from the lower classes, their desire for upward mobility shines in their gold teeth, painfully contrived speech, and ostentatious livery. Additionally, they are given preferential treatment by the ship itself: they have their own living quarters, and rather than dine with the other third-class passengers, they get their pick of the first-class leftovers each night before the Chinese servants dispose of them. Their upward mobility, though, is brought to a crashing end in the story's denouement as class distinctions are reinforced biologically through

the vomiting up of the first-class food, which literally disagrees with their third-class bodies. Nor can they expect any solidarity with the classes above deck; they may have been given a semblance of privilege as a sop, but they are quickly abandoned by their first-class “allies,” who greet the disastrous performance with silence. This could have been expected, and was portended earlier by the adventurous first-class flâneur, who had only risked a visit in secret, being led down after dark by the Chinese.

The story’s focus on inter-class relations is not limited to the acrobats, and it has much to say about relations between those represented on the ship. The first- and third-class passengers are kept at a distance, separated by either glass or curtains, with the ability to cross this divide enjoyed solely by the passengers in first class. The second-class passengers are scarcely mentioned, appearing only briefly on deck during the final performance. Far more important for the narrator and those below deck is the relationship between the various third-class passengers. In addition to the Japanese and Chinese crammed below are the Russians, who spend their time smoking and talking amongst themselves, and the interaction among the groups consists mainly of frequent fights between the Japanese and Chinese, intra-class violence that is a far cry from that of the miners in Asō’s “Exhumed” which, in true revolutionary pacifist fashion, was only sanctioned once it was directed toward a common class enemy.

The relationship between these contingents is also prefigured along ethnic lines. The Chinese are despised as dogs (*chinkoro*), and the Russians are given special scorn in the form of several scatological references: the smoke emanating from their tobacco is yellow, and the tea they sit sipping is described as “urine-colored” (*shōben-iro*).³⁸ There is no love lost between the sides, and the narrator is supportive of the separation. Neither are the Westerners in first class

³⁸ Maedakō Hiroichirō, “Umi no karuwaza,” *Bungei sensen* 3, no. 1 (1926), 4.

immune from the slander, as during the performance sexual innuendos are thrown about by the Japanese with regard to the foreign girls, who are referred to as “daughters of hairy barbarians” (*ketō no musume*).³⁹ Moreover, the boat is a veritable Babel, and even were they so inclined, none of the groups would be able to communicate with each other. The chatter of the Russians is likened to the bleating of goats, the English speech preceding the concert is alternatively confused for a sermon (some confused Japanese even begin reciting the *nenbutsu* in response) and a congratulatory talk, and the admonitions of the Chinese are only halfway understood through a Japanese passenger who has a smattering of Chinese background.

To this denial of humanism, overwhelming class emphasis, and complete lack of international solidarity, is added the most important facet of Marxism-Leninism, dialectical materialism, and “Umi no karuwaza” shows its underlying basis in the new problematic again through the acrobats. Their failure to claw their way up the social ladder is a statement against liberal humanist aspirations for advancement, with the girl’s act of vomiting demonstrating the incompatibility of class on a fundamental, culinary level; their folly lies in their ignorance, as those who respected the class divide (including the narrator) emerge from the story unscathed, whereas characters who lack or reject objective class boundaries suffer the consequences. This message brings the story into agreement with Aono’s insistence on the importance of class consciousness, and as such, encourages the labelling of “Umi no karuwaza” as proletarian literature. The solidarity and united front inherent in literature based on the Clarté problematic, exemplified in stories such as Asō’s “Exhumed,” has given way to a bitter, fractured cluster of classes. As an ideological problematic underlying a certain genre of literature it had seen its day.

³⁹ Maedakō, “Umi no karuwaza,” 8.

VI. The End of Clarté

The epistemological foundation of the Clarté movement was fundamentally irreconcilable with that of the later proletarian literature based on the Marxist-Leninist problematic. As political and ideological practices, both the questions posed and the solutions offered were incompatible with each other on every level. The Marxism-Leninism adopted by proletarian authors was not the same Marxism adhered to earlier by the Clarté movements in France, Japan, and Korea, nor was the Marxist direction toward which the Clarté movements in those social formations turned following the shift in the humanist basis of their problematics to be confused with the Marxist-Leninist origins of later proletarian literature.

As the Clarté movement was in fact several, so Marxism in these transitional years, before the establishment of the Marxist-Leninist hegemony, had also been several. And, as shown above, the achievement of this hegemony did not go unchallenged. Many had already understood the vast distance separating the thought of the two figures of its namesake, realizing that while it was certainly possible to argue over its relative size, this gulf of opposition between Marx's thought and Lenin's could not be reconciled through a simple joining of their names. And yet this is exactly what was accomplished in the summer of 1924, and what subsequently formed the ideological basis for the next decade of proletarian literature.

However, whether juxtaposed to the doctrine of a hyphenated Marxism-Leninism or to Marx or Lenin individually, the deep-rooted differences between the three and Clarté stemmed from the formers' hostility to the very humanism upon which the Clarté movement had been based. As Barbusse attempted to forge a new knowledge of mankind he founded his movement precisely on the humanist assumptions criticized by both of those figures: first, that there is a universal essence of man, and second, that this essence can be found in each individual. This in

part explains the folly of Barbusse's efforts to link his movement with Bolshevism through a fusion of the former's humanism and the latter's Marxism, for he was never able to understand the fundamental theoretical differences between the two.

With the consolidation of proletarian literature under the Marxist-Leninist problematic, the Clarté movement was one of many to be subsumed. An external viewer could have been forgiven for assuming theoretical continuity, however, as the participation of high profile figures such as Barbusse provided a deceptively simple take on the transition. Barbusse's place in all of this was complex; on one hand, the tenets of the new literature appear to be worlds apart from those he had propagated while at the head of the Clarté movement. On the other, Barbusse's support for, or at least tacit consent to, the Thermidorean conjuncture which gave birth to the Marxist-Leninist problematic (i.e., the political victory of Stalin) appears contiguous with his stance in the debate with Rolland in 1921 over the sanctioning of revolutionary violence, so contiguous that some have argued for a consistency in Barbusse's views throughout.⁴⁰ If the elimination of the Socialist Revolutionaries in the early 1920s at the hands of the Bolsheviks (the original catalyst for his debate with Rolland) was an acceptable step in the consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat, then there was no reason to assume that the later assault on Trotskyism should have been any less acceptable if viewed as a direct challenge to what he considered legitimate Bolshevik rule.

Barbusse, who had quit his own movement in 1924 because of its increasing ideological rigidity, would become an active participant in the forging of this new problematic, throwing his energies into promulgating a concept of proletarian culture that in effect administered the final blow to what was left of the Clarté movement. His role came at the behest of Zinoviev, president

⁴⁰ Weems, "Intellectual Odyssey of Henri Barbusse," 5.

of the Communist International, who in recognition of his literary authority had written to him in 1922 asking him for his support.⁴¹ The endeavor apparently caused no dilemma for Barbusse, and by 1925 he had taken a leading role as an ambassador of a literature that demanded adherence to an anti-humanist conception of the class struggle and complete ideological subordination to the Party. The esteem remained, though, and for former Clarté enthusiasts in Japan who had moved on to *Bungei sensen* Barbusse was still seen as a prominent figure, and his involvement in efforts to develop a proletarian literature served as an additional impetus for his followers to join him in its creation.⁴²

The debates that had plagued the Clarté movement throughout its existence, in all societies in which it operated, were resolved by the passage of time, though this in itself was hardly a boon for the movement. Forged in the revolutionary instability of the early postwar period, the Clarté movement was ill-equipped to deal with a return to normality.⁴³ The movement's liberal humanism was never going to be compatible with the new definition of proletarian literature, which left little room for the individual in a literature demanding loyalty to the Communist Party. Still other elements of the movement, such as its revolutionary pacifism, were also left out in a literature willing to tolerate intra-proletarian violence regardless of whether or not it led to socialist revolution. Also, the question of what to do with intellectual fellow travelers was to remain unsolved, although it was no longer a question so much as following the official Comintern line, which would zigzag many times on the issue in the ensuing years. Lastly, the consolidation of proletarian cultural groups under the umbrella of the Comintern indicated the failure of Barbusse's hopes for a similar role for his own movement, and

⁴¹ Stern, *Western Intellectuals and the Soviet Union*, 46.

⁴² Anzai Ikurō and I Sūgyon, eds., *Kurarute undō to "Tane maku hito": hansen undō "Kurarute" no Nihon to Chōsen de no tenkai* (Tokyo: Ochanomizu Shobō, 2000), 64.

⁴³ Alvin Abish Novetsky, "Henri Barbusse: An Intellectual in the French Communist Party" (master's thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1966), 94.

the end of any measure of authority for Clarté was a steep comedown for an association which had been one of the premier postwar organizations of cultural figures.⁴⁴

Individually, Barbusse fared little better. Much as he had earlier lost control of the Clarté movement, so too did the development of proletarian literature overtake him. He would continue to write, turning out one apologetic piece on the Soviet Union after another, but by this time the moment had passed. The great search for truth and light was over, and as an appropriate epitaph to his career one could turn first to the comments of Victor Serge describing his later years. Serge had been a close confidant of Barbusse and an early member of the Clarté movement as well until his affiliation with Trotsky and opposition to Stalin caused Barbusse to end their friendship. Serge visited Barbusse at the latter's home in Moscow in 1927, shortly after Trotsky's expulsion from the Communist Party, and found a writer struggling to make sense of the historical events which had passed him by:

Barbusse had a large, thin, pliant body, topped by a small, wax-like and concave head, with the thin lips of a man who has known suffering. Right from the first I saw him as a quite different kind of person; concerned above all not to be involved, not to see anything that could involve him against his will, concerned above all to disguise opinions he could no longer express openly, sliding past any direct questioning, scurrying off along all conceivable tangents, his eyes vague, his slender hands circumscribing curves in the air around obscure words like 'immensity,' 'profundities,' 'exaltation'—and all with the real aim of making himself the accomplice of the winning side! Since it was not yet known whether the struggle had been definitively settled, he had just dedicated a book, at great length, to Trotsky, who he did not dare to visit for fear of compromising himself. When I told him about the persecution [of the Oppositionists], he pretended to have a headache, or not to hear, or to be rising to stupendous heights: 'Tragic destiny of revolutions, immensities, profundities, yes . . . yes. . . . Ah, my friend!' My jaws shuddered as I realized that I was face to face with hypocrisy itself.⁴⁵

Serge was of course not a disinterested witness, and a more removed assessment was offered upon Barbusse's death in 1935 by Komaki, who looked back at the writer and the overall effect

⁴⁴ Michael Denning, *Culture in the Age of Three Worlds* (London: Verso, 2004), 57.

⁴⁵ Victor Serge, *Memoirs of a Revolutionary 1901-1941*, trans. Peter Sedgwick (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 238.

his movement had on the world of Japanese letters:

You could say that the day Barbusse's thought entered Japan was the day the sun of internationalism shone upon Japan's cultural movements. You could also say that the inevitable concentration of proletarian artists, the majority scattered and nameless, and the fact that they were able to progress to the level of forming a united front with other liberation movements, was a direct or indirect result of the Clarté movement. . . The splendid inauguration of *Tane maku hito* was also an additional benefit of *Clarté*. . . Therefore, for Japan, Henri Barbusse was a sower who cannot be forgotten.

バルビュスの思想が日本に入つて來た日は日本の文化運動にインターナシヨナリズムの陽がさしこんだ日だつたといへる。また、分散し、その大部分が無名の士にすぎなかつた一握りのプロレタリア文藝家が必然的に集結し、他の解放運動と協同戦線を張るまでの水準に進めたのも直接間接クラルテ運動の流れだつたといへる。。。「種蒔く人」華々しく發足したのも「クラルテ」の餘得である。。。だから、日本にとって、アンリ・バルビュスこそ忘れることの出來ぬ種蒔く人だつた。⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Komaki Ōmi, "Anri Barubyusu yuku," *Kaizō* 17, no. 10 (1935): 400-1.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine Clarté as a series of movements active in the ideological and political instances of France, Japan and Korea in the years immediately following the Great War. As argued in the introduction, rather than as one monolithic movement, Clarté should be seen as a composite of several movements, all held together by the Clarté problematic. While based on the problematic, these movements were subject to the changing international conjuncture as well as their individual regional conjunctures, where they operated in their own social formations. In analyzing the evolution of each manifestation separately, elements inherent in both the international and local conjunctures were considered.

As the undercurrent linking the movements, the Clarté problematic was composed of three main elements: humanism, a dependence on an industrial proletariat, and a willingness to sanction violence in the cause of world revolution (revolutionary pacifism). These elements formed the scaffolding of the theory of the movements circa 1919, and their relation to this theory evolved both with the passage of time and the change in location. Additionally, while Clarté theory was tailored toward each social formation, the French iteration of the movement acted in the capacity of a determinant in the last instance, as all other branches were forced to react in one way or another to its development.

“Clarté” in Japan meant the French incarnation of the movement as it existed at its founding in 1919. Its launch was facilitated by Komaki Ōmi in early 1921, and through its main outlet *Tane maku hito*, it enjoyed a success (though not a membership) commensurate with its European counterpart mainly because conditions in the Japanese political and ideological instances at the time of its importation were similar enough to be conducive to the reception of

the problematic. The liberal atmosphere of the Taishō period allowed for the Japanese iteration of Clarté a certain amount of engagement in the political instance, and the movement took advantage of this through activities such as support for strikes, speaking tours, and participation in political events such as May Day celebrations. In the ideological instance works such as Mushanokōji Saneatsu's 1916 drama *Aru seinen no yume* showed that the component elements of the problematic already existed in Japan, and it appeared in its entirety with fictional works like Asō Hisashi's "Shitai no hakkutsu" and Kaneko Yōbun's "Sake." This focus on activity in both instances lasted until the pressure the Tanemakisha came under following the Kantō earthquake signaled the end of the movement as a viable political and ideological entity.

By the time Clarté arrived in Korea in the summer of 1923 its theoretical overlay had been altered. By that time the French movement had abandoned humanism and subordinated itself to the Communist Party. In Japan, the humanist element of the problematic survived but faced competition following the shift toward a Marxist viewpoint, and signs of *Tane maku hito* moving away from humanism toward a class-based Marxist literature had begun to appear in works such as Maedakō Hiroichirō's "Umi no karuwaza." Acknowledging these developments, Kim Ki-jin filtered his message not only through the lens of events in France leading up to 1923 but also the evolution within the Japanese incarnation. As such, he refused to recruit humanist writers, who at the time constituted a large segment of the literary establishment in Korea. This rejection was costly in terms of potential membership, but would have been endorsed by French Clartists, as it reflected the trend in both the Clarté and the international communist movements, where hostility to humanism would become even more pronounced in the coming years after the adoption of Marxism-Leninism, when humanists (and intellectual fellow-travelers at large) were declared unwelcome among the ranks of the proletariat.

The relationship between Clarté and the Communist Party was decisive in all areas in which the former operated. In France, Clarté quickly went from potential umbrella of all the worker internationals to front group for the French Communist Party, and due to its membership composition it was in close coordination with the Party throughout its existence. In Japan, the ephemeral nature of the Japanese Communist Party ensured that its influence remained minimal. Komaki made an appeal for Clarté to align itself with international communism in 1922, but by the time communists had gained control of the Tanemakisha in the summer of 1923 the Japanese Communist Party had been wiped out. The movement in Korea afforded a glance at a third possibility of development, one that occurred in the context of competing, yet peripheral and largely ineffectual, communist parties. In this case it was the marginal nature of the parties themselves that forced the movement to operate without them; failing to offer a viable avenue for political practice, they were simply unable to exert any noticeable influence.

Although Clarté did support the various communist parties, the period in which they struggled to gain a foothold coincided with the movement's apex, which came before the arrival of the Marxist-Leninist problematic in 1924. The differences inherent in the Clarté and Marxist-Leninist problematics were marked, but the chief irreconcilability lay in their attitudes toward humanism, embraced by the former but spurned by the latter, whose stance saw not the individual but the class struggle as the motor of history. Further constituting the Marxist-Leninist problematic was an abandonment of the goal of world revolution (though a continuance of ostensible support), a revolving relationship with intellectuals, and the centrality of dialectical materialism. Dialectical materialism, despite its importance to Marxism-Leninism, was not originally under the latter's sole purview. Barbusse had shown interest in dialectical materialism following the 1921 debate with Rolland, and its appearance in works such as "Pulgŭn chwi" and

“Umi no karuwaza” can be considered as something of a bridge between Clarté and Marxism-Leninism.

Finally, of great effect upon the development of Clarté was its relationship to the domestic and international domains of literature. In that literature in France, Japan, and Korea had arrived at its present location along a different route, the interplay between it and the movement of necessity also took a different course in the three social formations. In Japan, the humanist concerns of *bundan* writers such as Arishima Takeo and Mushanokōji facilitated the initial reception of Clarté, and their support proved instrumental in its expansion via *Tane maku hito*. In Korea, the interest writers had in aestheticism, decadence, and didacticism after 1919 mirrored the situation of French literature around the turn of the century. And yet, as Kim and Komaki’s assessments showed, the Great War and its aftermath had largely dispelled this influence, and the failure of the March 1919 Independence movement had the opposite effect of encouraging the expansion of such decadence. To these domestic developments in the ideological instance was added the international emergence of Comintern-orientated Marxist-Leninist literature. The competing versions of “proletarian literature” promoted by Clarté and Marxism-Leninism were based on their own problematics, and shared little other than support for proletarian revolution. But with the increasing political and ideological dominance of the Comintern a proletarian literature codified and rigidly defined as that adhering to Marxism-Leninism was canonized as the sole literature of the proletariat. By 1925 Clarté’s moment had passed.

Marxism-Leninism’s coupling of the political and ideological instance was not new, and one aspect of Clarté’s legacy is its activity in both instances. *Tane maku hito* differentiated itself from other journals (and their supporters) by emphasizing *hihan* and *kōdō*; similarly in Korea,

the Barbusse-Rolland debate allowed Kim to formulate the issue of the proletariat in the political instance (*kōdō*), which led to a distinctly proletarian literature in the ideological instance (*hihan*). It also helped him establish who was capable of contributing to such literature, as his original exhortations to the Korean intelligentsia gave way to a sharpened focus on the proletariat as the only social class able to create change through a revolutionary art. Thus, it was his engagement with Clarté that allowed him to reformulate his concept of the proletariat targeted for the next decade by KAPF.

Frustration with the intelligentsia was an issue for Clarté throughout most of its history, as its very existence as a movement was dependent on a readily available network of intellectuals whose support it tried to solicit. This explains both Barbusse's attempts to widen his own intellectual network as well as Komaki's courting of figures such as Mushanokōji, Arishima, Sakai and Yamakawa. The lack of a preexisting group of potential converts explains Kim's approach, for upon his return to Korea from Japan he took one look at the artistic scene and quickly realized that the extant intellectual pool was incapable of creating a revolutionary art. This then led him to the conclusion that the proletariat (or at least his newly-offered definition of it) was on its own, a decision which brought him in line with the Clarté ideal of an independent proletarian culture.

It might be pertinent to return one last time to Nicole Racine's contention (mentioned in Chapter One) that the Clarté movement never progressed beyond the planning stage.¹ This works best when applied to the French iteration (as Racine intended), but technically the movement survived for many years. Internationally it went much further than plans, and its influence was felt until it was subsumed by the proletarian literature that was to dominate the next decade. It is

¹ Racine, "The Clarté Movement in France," 208.

apparent, however, that the transition between the two periods was really no transition at all but a complete break from a humanism which took its inspiration from the early Marx (when it tried to draw a link to Marx at all) to a Marxism-Leninism whose doctrine had little to do with either of the figures from which it took its name. In this sense it is difficult to see Clarté-inspired literature as continuous with later literature written under the proletarian literary label.

APPENDIX:

KIM KI-JIN'S "RED RAT" (*KAEBYÖK*, 11/1924)

1

It was almost winter. Winter preparations were hurriedly being made. Even when the clock struck twelve the sky did not clear but remained very overcast.

In the room the people's energy had vanished from continuous conversation, and they were all sitting against the wall in anguish, mouths shut. The tobacco smoke made the air in the room heavier and heavier, stale enough as to render it almost intolerable. The endless chatter, having started, had somehow broken off, and now everyone sat with their mouths closed, sunk deep in the pool of their own thoughts. They had no energy. In their arms, in their faces, around the corners of their mouths—all their energy had disappeared because of the constant exchange of chatter all this time, and their whole bodies lay all around like lifeless lumps of flesh.

If you were to survey the room, you would find it as dirty as a shoemaker's room somewhere in the countryside. Facing the garden was a closed door with the broken glass patched up by newspaper; in the window, through the filthy cloud of smoke and dust you could see the dirty sky, while the window facing the street had fallen out of use long ago and, even if you tried to open it, you would not be able to. Crumbling walls, peeling linoleum, and on the walls here and there the black traces of the blood of bedbugs. On the walls between the bedbug blood was crammed writing in clumsy letters listing people's names, addresses, and dates, as of the comings and goings of many people living there for many years. This also served as testimony to the fact that, after the first people who rented the room had left, not once had the walls been papered (on first thought the house was probably a magnificent one built for a

yangban, but after it was sold the new owners probably rented out every nook and cranny).

In this house, which was built as a servants' quarters of the main house, people were crammed in, living in every room. Renting the side room was a young couple and their two young kids, who it seemed had come up from Ch'ungch'ōng Province. In the next room lived an elderly couple with a young man (probably their grandchild) who worked at a tobacco company. It was the same with the next room, and the room after that, with a family living in each room.

Though the people in the room were in the depths of exhaustion, they listened with bowed heads to every sound coming from the outside—the jabbering in the next room, the sounds of hawkers' jumbled shouting as they made their way down the alley behind the servants' quarters, the loud sounds of far-off streets, and all the idle talk of preparation for winter which took place under the hazy sky.

Just what sounds were there? There was the sound of cartwheels grating against the ground. The never-ending sound of people's soles smacking on the ground. In an adjacent room was the occasional sound of recitation, mixed with sighs, from somebody studying. For these people, whose minds and lips were tired from the endless talking, they were grumbling sounds that if anything pressed heavily on their heads.

“What is living? My life is like a bug's... I'm told to eat and live but how can I?”

One could hear the voice of what appeared to be the wife. It was the voice of the young wife from Ch'ungch'ōng Province.

“Perfect! Why was I born into this wonderful society... Are there no letters from the countryside? Your brother was going to recommend you to a Japanese person's house...”

This was the voice of a young man, probably a relative of the wife.

“What about the letter! My husband saw him on the street fifteen days ago... He stayed

somewhere in Sajik-gol and left, he made it all the way here and left without looking for me, his only living sister. He told me he was going to help me work in a Japanese person's house looking after a child, but then he didn't say a thing, and just ignored it. He lent me some grain last year and now he is bawling me out, so I told him I would pay him back if he helped me get work in a Japanese household. Since then I haven't heard anything from him, so he wants to break off relations with me. My husband has no work and is just loafing around. Now I'm pregnant and I can't even eat at all. It's already been three days since I've eaten. I could sew but there is no work... Aah, I am living but this is not a real life. I'm flopping around like a bug, I don't know when and how I will die."

Mixed with sighs, the gloomy voice was out of breath, and while breaking off at places it continued on. Now the people in the room, not knowing how to escape their deep pool of sadness, sat in the room, black with hanging smoke like the inside of a chimney, and listened to the voices in the next room.

"There is no other way but to send a letter telling him that it will be the last, and that he needs to come and see the situation for himself. I will try asking him about the job at the Japanese person's house and tell him that I haven't eaten anything and now I'm going to die away from home, and that my husband doesn't have any work and we haven't seen a penny, whew! If he feels sorry for his only living sibling he will come. If not, he will probably think it's good that I died."

Some time later there was a rustling sound, the sound of the door opening in the next room, the sound of dragging shoes, and the sound of a feeble cough in front of the door, and the door opened and a swollen-faced head of a middle-aged woman appeared.

"Is Mr. Pak here?" Asked the woman.

Pak Hyöng-Jun removed the cigarette he had in his mouth and asked, “What is it?”

“Um, I know it might be difficult, but could you write something on the envelope?

Please have a look at what’s written here...”

The woman, still taking labored breaths, took out a crumpled, old envelope as well as a new envelope, setting them both down in front of Hyöng-Jun. Without asking Hyöng-Jun picked them up, put them on the desk and started writing. From outside the woman’s eldest son, who looked to be around five years old, came in, his face covered in dry tears. He grabbed onto his mother’s skirt and started whining. The mother said,

“You went off and played with those kids again and got hit, didn’t you? Stupid...!”

Seemingly indignant but also sympathetic, she looked down at the child’s filthy face.

Hyöng-Jun knew well the woman’s hardship, and he also knew well the reason for her suffering. So while he addressed the envelope he did not take his eyes off it but simply said, “Turtle, you have to grow up quick and get a lot of money and become a great man! You have to be rich. A great person with a lot of money...”

While saying “a great rich person” he thought to himself it was funny, and even though he did not think it necessary to chuckle to himself at that moment it was as if he could not keep himself in check, and so he let out a hollow forced laugh. However, right after that he figured it was best to think that if one had a lot of money one could be great and realized how useless it was for him to laugh, an act which had made the corners of his mouth droop, and so he clenched his teeth.

The woman took the addressed letter and her son Turtle back with her to her room.

Hyöng-Jun shut the glass window the woman had left open, which faced the garden. At this time the people who had been sitting in the room began to stir slightly. Hyöng-Jun put his cigarette

back in his mouth and lit it, taking a deep drag and exhaling. The late autumn sky was like the cigarette smoke winding its way in front of the glass window.

“If I could only go to sleep and wake up after fifty years!”

Hyōng-Jun’s current feeling was like the cigarette smoke flowing from his mouth as well as the cloudy sky he could see through the glass. The wings of a blackbird, which are like heavy lead, covered the top of his mind. It was suffocating. He wanted to remove the wings but it was not possible. If he closed his eyes the whole world was pitch black. If he opened them his body and spirit were heavy. What was to be done? There was nothing he could do. The flow of his mind sank down like dregs of vinegar, hard as the rotten soil of Sabuk stream; it was also like dirty water, and there was nothing he could do to make it any better.

“If I could only go to sleep and wake up after fifty years!”

“You think going to sleep’s gonna make it easier? How are you gonna to deal with the problem at hand?” Said C angrily as he put his cigarette out in the ashtray.

(XXX)

“...what good is it to write in our language and tell the story in our language? It’s too late! I don’t know how it was before. But what good is it now? Nobody knows! We have to smash and penetrate into the Japanese people by writing directly in Japanese...”

Before A had finished C interrupted him and droned on for a while like this. Hyōng-Jun sat motionless and listened carefully. They had been talking about this since a long while ago and even before today it had been a topic that tired them to the core.

C continued.

“Do you know what song the primary school kids are singing as they walk down the street? Do you have any idea what school girls are singing as they frolic through the garden after supper? How are you going to cure the school children who put their hair up tightly, wear clogs and swag their shoulders as they walk singing “kokowa okuni no nanbyakuri hanarete tōki Manshū no?” With what medicine can you fix these elementary school children? “V Narod” indeed!

(XXX)

(XXX)

Hyōng-Jun, A, and C all thought the same as this and felt the same agony.

“There is nothing for us to do. We are people who will not be able to do anything.”

With this all three men mumbled. In front of them was only a deep pool of despair.

2

Hyōng-Jun was excited. As for his pace, more than walking it would be appropriate to say that he was almost crawling, and he was stooped over with both hands thrust in his coat pockets, walking along limply.

All manner of thoughts—truly an incalculably great number of thoughts--swiftly rose in his head which made him a different person, not like the people living on this earth. Hyōng-Jun’s head—and not just his head, but his whole physical body as well as his mind—from this point on could not at all live in this manner.

(XXX)

If it were possible, Hyōng-Jun would like to move the equator to where he lived now.

The equator. Right. The equator was something Hyōng-Jun had been yearning for for a long time. Sultry heat, burning breath belched from the floor, the stink of the animals, trees, and grasses—these are the things Hyōng-Jun had been yearning for from long ago. And so the equator Hyōng-Jun had been longing for was right now in his innermost heart. His whole breast turned into nothing but a fireball. Quite often, not only his breast but the entirety of his body was transformed into a fireball.

However, for what reason had people living in this world, this peapod in a small corner

of the Orient, made Hyöng-Jun into a fireball? But that is not something I am willing to go into at length, suffice it to say that as he was born on this earth and grew up in this society, whether it was for better or for worse, without dreaming of the equator he would not have been able to pass the time.

As he wandered the streets, Hyöng-Jun's dream, this truly pitiful dream, became more wonderful, lovely, and brilliant. So, while not having anything to do everyday, Hyöng-Jun followed the streetcar lines to their end. The grating sound of revolving streetcar wheels, the barking sound of automobile horns, bicycle bell sounds, sounds of people's footsteps, noisy sounds of carts—amid all of these jumbled sounds that were mixed together, Hyöng-Jun fished for his happy dream.

A dream—for Hyöng-Jun this was not a dream. Or at least, what was in his head could not appropriately be labeled a “dream” in the sense that people of the world speak of “dreams.” If anything, for him reality seemed to be a dream or a dark shadow, and the phenomenon that arose inside his head was probably more real. So Hyöng-Jun planted, reared, and stretched himself in the world he constructed in his mind.

Why? For what reason did he think of reality as a shadow, and the activity arising in his head as more real? But the world he lived in could not be considered beautiful, could not be considered clean, could not be considered straight. It was filled with lies. It was filthy. Wherever one went there were thieves. Pompous, rich-looking thieves. Wherever one went there were pitiful people being trampled underfoot by refined thieves. Wolves wearing human masks grouped together into packs and were dancing on top of them. Everywhere one looked, everywhere one went, everywhere was the sight of people's necks being twisted. No, these were not people. They were insects. They were puppies. Yes, they were nothing but puppies. So he had

to get excited. That's why he was here wandering the train tracks with his stooped back.

Therefore, for Hyōng-Jun this mass of earth was thought of as limitlessly small. No matter where he looked around, he did not have a vast feeling like a child would who has gone all around and returns to its mother's bosom. He thought that the east was a dead end and the west was a dead end road. In reality the earth is large. Living on its crust were 1.6 billion or more people. However, why in Hyōng-Jun's mind was it not more than a small clump of earth? And for Hyōng-Jun why was it small, narrow and confined like a crumpled up piece of waste paper that had been thrown away, when in reality it was not?

People's children have lost a place to stand. The road they have walked until now, its objective was mistaken and so it went pitifully to ruin. Come to think of it, in this world, right here and now, surely there is no way to move forward. Hyōng-Jun often thought this way. He knew well what people of this land had done in the past. He also knew what people in the future would do. On this earth people pile mountains of skulls. Piles and piles of carcasses show future people what their road will be. The soil is constantly dug by people's hands. It is like taking over the labor of the earthworm.

However, people dug a shallow hole into the earth but they could not discover the truth. The truth is not something that is grasped this easily. They piled countless mountains of skulls and dug up a few holes a few times, but truth was not easily found. It was as if truth was something that disappeared like smoke.

Hyōng-Jun himself was the last child of people who had lived in this manner in this tired age.

Exactly, a tired age. A tired life. People were tired. This is by no means an exaggeration. Wherever you go are these not the children of the defeated lingering around? Are their sagging

arms and legs not burying the whole world? The faces of those who are waiting for something look spiritlessly drained, with only their eyes wide open. This lump of desperation and screaming covers the surface of the earth and surges like a flood tide of the sea.

“How I wish people could go back to their primitive age...”

Hyōng-Jun had occasionally had thoughts like this. However, every time he thought this, he shook his head from side to side and would mutter the answer to himself, “there is no way people can go against the present century. It is because modern civilization does not allow people to return to their primitive times and to a life of instinct. If people want to return to a life of instinct, they would have to take off the brilliant clothes of this modern civilization. However, can people take off fully the brilliant clothes of civilization? No! There is no way people’s children would take off the brilliant clothes of modern civilization.”

Hyōng-Jun thought like this. The only solution to the problems of his life was to go back to a life of instinct. However, for that there was a huge obstacle. In other words, the obstacle of civilization. He lowered his head and dragged his heavy legs toward D park.

A streetcar came rumbling by from the west, and stopped for a minute in front of the park as if it felt the heavy weight of its legs, before continuing its sluggish forward movement. Right after the dirty, worn-out junk-like streetcar had passed, an automobile, even more beat-up than the streetcar that had passed, dashed by. A bicycle passed. After that a rickshaw passed. And then, people’s faces covered in dust, more faces, faces...

The sky pressed down heavily on his head. The sky, which became full with a combination of dust and smoke, seemed to come down to the roof top of a home with a steeple.¹ The sun was not seen, but it was dusk.

He lumbered heavily into the park, and sat down on a bench.

¹ A catholic church.

“How long can things keep going like this?” Hyōng-Jun thought. He thought deeply of this unendurable, disgusting daily life that he could not stand as well as his clumsy character, which even he was put-off by. The circumstances of every flowing day and the idiotic people of today with no energy, no courage, until when could they carry on with this phenomenon as it was? He suddenly became hopeless. The happiness of the people he was thinking about, when would it be fulfilled, and from the beginning was there even hope or not? The civilization of today—capitalist civilization—was to people something like sodium hydroxide (caustic soda, lye), or toxin. If you just ate it, the poison would spread through your whole body, and would ooze out from the face, limbs, and skin pores, from everywhere. It was a poisonous liquid that searches for openings in the skin, and lets the blood and the liquid from the internal organs flood out. If the current civilization was to continue like this, it would be extremely deplorable. But, but, people have just built civilization naturally, and they also have to grow within the civilization. This is not some plot somebody came up with on purpose, it is something that came naturally from the time in which people have lived. As for whether or not this thing can continue as is, it cannot. Formerly, civilization made people’s lives happy. Having come to today, though, an advance of less than a few hundred years, it tortures people by twisting their legs, tying them up, and twisting their necks. To put it another way, in the net they have made their bodies are firmly coiled by the strings they had made and can’t move, they can only wriggle. It’s pitiful. It’s pitiful beyond measure. Wherever you look you see food-poisoned patients of civilization, unable to lift their heads and leaning backward weakly.

All of the calamities modern man suffers stem from this disease of civilization.

Everyone is surfeited. Solidly surfeited. Yes, the ill effects of immoderate gluttony and binge eating swarm on all the faces of the surfeited people. And furthermore, aside from the stuffed people, there are people who, rickety from malnutrition, are wriggling—what is the reason for this contradiction?

Yes, what is the cause for this? What is the reason for their malnutrition? This is the distinct characteristic of capitalist civilization. It is simply the cursed result of commercialism and collectivism. Is there a person who claims that mass production and colonial policy do not originate from capitalism? It is because of this that the world fell into disgrace.

But, is there any solution to human life in the future? Is there a program that definitely promises a solution to life's problems? What sort of preparation is there? What sort of doctrine? Religion? Utopia? The strategy of socialism? A mystical revelation from a manmade God? A sorcerer's golden wand? A spell from a fortune teller? Something other than these?

No, none of these. At the same time, everything is incomprehensible. There's no knowledge, and everything is unknown. It's simply that what is eternally unchanging is that in the end people who live will die. It was the same even a thousand years ago, and will be the same from now on; it was the same yesterday, is the same today, and will be the same tomorrow. Death—that is all that there is.

Yes, people will live once and die once. Where is something as certain as this? What is valuable? What is great? It is that people live and die! Everything else is almost the same. There is nothing big, there is nothing small. Living is present. Even if you live like this, it is living, and even if you live like that, it is living. If you just survive in the present, that is best. What should you do with this civilization? What should you do with this matter that has no answers?

“I do not know! It's impossible to know!”

After thinking for a long time, Hyöng-Jun mumbled this to himself. There was no limit to the dirtiness of heaven and earth. They were clouded over without limit. In front of him was only pitch-black darkness drawing near. More than the question of what there was to be done, right now he did not even know what was to be thought. His mind was only a blank, void, everything was emptiness and nothingness! This thought that flowed in the back of his head like smoke, the word “nothingness” was fully etched. While nothing became comprehensible to him, he had also forgotten anything and everything. For a long time he sat vacantly. On the street the electric lamps lit up.

In Hyöng-Jun’s head thoughts began to come up again. The fact that he was hungry stabbed at his head. And now he had a chance to examine his life these days.

He looked back on himself, having passed the time starving and eating. He looked back on himself, being hounded every day to pay the rent. Is it alright for people to go through life against their will starving and just living, while there are others who spend money like water as they do not know what to do with the food left on their plate?

Before thinking everything through to the end, a shout against the awful reality arose in his mind. The feeling that he had experienced a couple of days ago, when he was sitting with his buddies and said “If only I could go to sleep and wake up after fifty years!” has completely disappeared. This everyday pressure and menace, this lashing dreadful menace of life, he could no longer put up with it. He wondered whether he had enough money in his pocket to buy a rice cake but came up empty.

“Right. There is no reason to continue living like this. The reality is absolutely violent, immoral, and brutal. But I have to live a little bit longer. Living is my right. If you guys are going to steal, then I will steal. If you refuse me a single bowl of rice, then I will steal your bowl of

rice! I stand above you. I stand above you, trampling you underfoot. I trample you, the reality, underfoot and stand above you...”

Hyōng-Jun muttered in this manner. After all this time, there remained no longer any of the following in his head: grand ideals, noble aspirations, the happiness of mankind, relief measures for Chosŏn, orders of battle, or theories of edification. In front of him the faces of people passing on the street, the sooty houses lining the street, the carts, and streetcars were all jumbled together and everything looked like it was going around in circles in front of him, like the ceaselessly revolving belt of a factory or like *yeot* (taffy) being yanked on both sides. He forgot himself and picked himself up off of the bench. With eyes open wide, he took a step forward. Before he took five steps, he felt something moving under the sole of his foot.

Feeling goosebumps, he faltered. What had he stepped on? He stepped back and looked under his foot. Stretched out on the ground was a bloody rat.

A rat fallen flat on its back on the ground? Again it gave him a shudder. It seemed like his hair bristled up into the skin. Was he frightened? No, he was not. He was just surprised. There was a rat, having died somehow and somewhere, and then been thrown here, and now again had been trampled by his foot, its guts were sticking out and the neck lay flatly with its whole body gushing red-hot blood, and this corpse of a nameless small animal shocked him to the core.

In his head appeared the figures of all rats. Rats as big as puppies, who suddenly stick out heads unnoticed from sewer drains, black eyes blinking, and the small mouse who one night had scurried about noisily in the ceiling before falling through a hole and into Hyōng-Jun’s blanket while he was asleep. All sorts of memories about rats rose in his mind: those that live in the recesses of the shed, around the rice bag, the corners of the sauce-crock platform, inside the doghouse, through holes in the floor, going to the places wherever people live, appearing at

unexpected places at unexpected moments and then disappearing, eating meat and eggs, snatching fish, picking at the tofu, eating chestnuts, pecking at straw bags, boring holes in the wall, leaving their droppings in the closets, and casually giving birth inside boxes. He thought quietly about this big thieving rat that had probably been doing something in somebody's house when it was caught by a big person's hand, and hit with a bat before being thrown out here. The activity of a rat sacrificing its life in the people's house is an awesome thing. Imagine, when a rat comes out of the shed, how careful it is not to make a sound and crawls out: at the first sound of people's footsteps, how quickly it gets out of sight. They sacrifice their lives when they go around looking for food. In order to capture it people keep cats, set mousetraps, and even make rat poison. However, such action by men may be fearful to the rats, but it does not have any authority over them to make them abandon their activity. For the sake of the life they cannot throw away, if anything rats cannot stop their activities, even if risking their lives—this is the rat's philosophy of life.

Just like this, people carry on activities for their life, even risking their lives. Yes. People—beasts, love life just the same. People do not know when or where they may die, much the same as this bleeding red rat with its guts spilled out; but poor people cannot but live going around like rats. Look at the people who go around zealously from morning to night, and from night to morning. How are they any different from this bloody rat that died on the street? Human beings peek at other's *yeot* like rats, watch for other's unguarded moment and wait for it like rats, steal in secret like rats, slander like rats pecking at something, quarrel among themselves like rats, hit other's houses like rats, and cheat each other like rats. Man, who is supposed to be the lord of creation.

Hyōng-Jun thought this over, while keeping his two hands deep in the pockets of his old

suit, and began to move his foot again. In front of his eyes the experiences and thoughts that had been accumulating for more than twenty years became a bundle, separated but connected, and appeared and disappeared from beginning to end in an instant like lightning. He came out of the park. This was the time when there were the most people on the streets. Young people, old people, children, adults, women, men, they all scurried about busily. While moving his tired arms and legs, Hyōng-Jun lifted his sallow face, sick with malnourishment, and at the back of his pupils clicked a picture of the people passing in front of him. He started walking, taking large strides. He set out in the middle of the street, crossing the streetcar track. And he muttered to himself.

“Rats, rats! Stinking rats! Stinking rats!”

He unconsciously walked to the edge of the streetcar track. “Rats! Stupid rats!” He continued to mutter to himself.

He suddenly realized he was hungry. At that moment, he sensed a strange excitement. After taking a couple of steps forward, he suddenly turned back as if he had remembered something. At the streetcar crossing were standing two policemen and a streetcar inspector.

Without hesitation he continued on and abruptly lumbered into a grocery store by the side of the road. Without waiting for anyone to guide him, he opened the glass show box, grabbed some cream bread and a small cloth, and, stuffing them into his trouser pockets, went out again.

He continued to plod along, and went into the jeweler’s next to the grocer’s shop; opening the door as before and taking whatever he could grab, stole watches and rings and pocketed them. Heading back out onto the street, he turned into an alley on his right, and behind him he could hear the sound of people running.

He broke into a run. Several times the tip of the fingers of his right hand scratched the hard metal objects in his pockets. And then suddenly he turned around and fired a shot. For a while the rushing sound of people's footsteps could not be heard. He ran randomly. At the alley corner two people cocked their eyes at him as they passed by. While muttering, "They're rats! Rats! Rats!" he ran. Behind him again he began to hear the footsteps and shouts of people following him closely, and in front of them, not far from him, were two police officers.

Hyōng-Jun turned back slightly, and, as if aware of his danger, he dashed at full speed. Waving around the pistol in his right hand recklessly he took shots indiscriminately while fleeing. The street bent to the left and a wide avenue could be seen. The dark night stood silently under the electric lights like a ghost. Streetcars went by and automobiles went by. Without looking around, he ran onto the main street. But he only made it so far. Behind him he could not see the car of the fire brigade, which was coming like the wind, while loudly clanging a bell. While running on the track, he was almost run over by a streetcar that came in front of him ringing a bell; he suddenly pulled his body out of the way, and made to go down the cart street on his left. But then he was hit by the fire brigade car that came behind him like the wind as if something big had happened. He flew for almost twenty feet before coming down loudly in front of a tobacco shop. It seems like his world ended here. His skull was smashed, one of his legs was broken, the skin of his lower belly was shredded and his guts were hanging out. Here and there lots of dark red blood splashed.

When the police and spectators, who had been following behind, surrounded Hyōng-Jun's body, it was already too late. He was bleeding from his mouth and nose, his pupils, which were hanging out, dropped to the ground, and his tongue was sagging out between his teeth. The fire truck remained for a while, and then, blasting its bell, disappeared again like the wind. The

police tried to disperse the crowd of swarming spectators that were trying to collect the watch, rings, bread and cookies that had fallen from Hyōng-Jun's body.

The following day, three youths were apprehended by Japanese police as suspects connected with the pistol Hyōng-Jun had carried, and were brought to the police station. And the newspapers in Seoul printed huge, bogus articles about this event.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adamson, Walter L. *Hegemony and Revolution: A Study of Antonio Gramsci's Political and Cultural Theory*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980.
- Aono Suekichi. "Bungei sensen izen: Tanemaki-sha kaisan zengo." *Bungei sensen* 1, no. 1 (1924): 5-7.
- . "Shizen seichō to mokuteki ishiki." In *Hennentai Taishō bungaku zenshū* vol. 15, ed. Suzuki Sadami. Tokyo: Yumani Shobō, 2003.
- . *Marukusu-shugi bungaku tōsō*. Tokyo: Kamiya Shoten, 1929.
- Althusser, Louis. *For Marx*. Translated by Ben Brewster. London: Verso, 2005.
- . *Philosophy and the Spontaneous Philosophy of the Scientists*. London: Verso, 1990.
- Althusser, Louis and Étienne Balibar. *Reading Capital*. Translated by Ben Brewster. London: Verso, 2009.
- Anzai Ikurō and I Sūgyon (Yi Su-gyong), eds. *Kurarute undō to "Tane maku hito": hansen bungaku undō "Kurarute" no Nihon to Chōsen de no tenkai*. Tokyo: Ochanomizu Shobō, 2000.
- Arishima Takeo. *Barubyusu no "Kurarute" no yakubun wo yomite*. In vol. 7 of *Arishima Takeo zenshū*. Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1929.
- Arvon, Henri. *Marxist Esthetics*. Translated by Helen Lane. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973.
- Asō Hisashi. "Shitai no hakkutsu." *Tane maku hito* 3, no. 12 (1922): 110-115.
- Asukai Masamichi. *Nihon puroretaria bungaku shiron*. Tokyo: Yagi Shoten, 1982.
- Balibar, Etienne. *The Philosophy of Marx*. Translated by Chris Turner. London: Verso, 1995.
- Barbusse, Henri. *Under Fire: The Story of a Squad*. Translated by Fitzwater Wray. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1917.
- . *Light*. Translated by Fitzwater Wray. London: J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1919.

- . *One Looks at Russia*. Translated by Warre B. Wells. London: J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1931.
- . *Stalin: A New World Seen Through One Man*. Translated by Vyvyan Holland. New York: International Publishers, 1935.
- Beckmann, George M., and Okubo Genji. *The Japanese Communist Party 1922-1945*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969.
- Bowen-Struyk, Heather. "Rethinking Japanese Proletarian Literature." PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2001, UMI (3000927).
- Braunthal, Julius. *History of the International Volume II: 1914-1943*. Translated by John Clark. New York, Frederick A. Praeger, 1967.
- Brooks, Barbara J. *Japan's Imperial Diplomacy: Consuls, Treaty Ports, and War in China 1895-1938*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000.
- Carr, Edward Hallett. *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923*, Vol. 3. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1953.
- . *A History of Soviet Russia*. Vol. 6, *Socialism in One Country 1924-1926*. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1960.
- Carlile, Lonny E. "Zaikai and Taishō Demokurashii." In *Japan's Competing Modernities: Issues in Culture and Democracy 1900-1930*, ed. Sharon A. Minichiello, 288-311. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998.
- Chapman, Rosemary. *Henry Poulaille and Proletarian Literature 1920-1939*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1992.
- Denning, Michael. *Culture in the Age of Three Worlds*. London: Verso, 2004.
- Eastman, Max. "The Clarté Movement." *The Liberator* 3, no. 4 (1920): 40-42.
- Field, Frank. *Three French Writers and the Great War: Studies in the Rise of Communism and Fascism*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1975.
- . *British and French Writers of the First World War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University

- Press, 1991.
- Fisher, David James. *Romain Rolland and the Politics of Intellectual Engagement*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.
- Forster, Peter G. *The Esperanto Movement*. New York: Mouton Publishers, 1982.
- Fowler, Edward. *The Rhetoric of Confession*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.
- Gordon, Andrew. *Labor and Imperial Democracy in Prewar Japan*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.
- Hall, Michael M. and Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro. "The Clarté Group in Brazil." *Le Mouvement Social* 111: 217-234.
- Halliday, Jon. *A Political History of Japanese Capitalism*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975.
- Hobsbawm, Eric J. *Revolutionaries: Contemporary Essays*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1973.
- Hōjō Tsunehisa. "*Tane maku hito*" *kenkyū: Akita no dōjin o chūshin to shite*. Tokyo: Ōfūsha, 1992.
- . *Tane maku hito: Komaki Ōmi no seishun*. Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1995.
- Honda Shūgo. *Enbō kinshi: oniishi yato kara*. Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1970.
- Hong, Chōngsōn, ed. *Kim P'albong munhak chōnjip*. 6 vols. Seoul: Munhak kwa Chisōngsa, 1988.
- Hoston, Germaine A. *Marxism and the Crisis of Development in Prewar Japan*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986.
- Hunter, Janet. *Concise Dictionary of Modern Japanese History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.
- I Sūgyon (Yi Su-gyong). *Kindai Kankoku no chishikijin to kokusai heiwa undō: Kim Ki-jin, Komaki Ōmi, soshite Anri Barubyusu*. Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 2003.
- Inagaki Tatsurō. "*Tane maku hito* (jō)." *Bungaku* 26, no. 1 (1958): 106-111.

———. “*Tane maku hito* (chū).” *Bungaku* 26, no. 3 (1958): 111-117.

Jansen, Marc. *A Show Trial Under Lenin: The Trial of the Socialist Revolutionaries, Moscow 1922*. Translated by Jean Sanders. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1982.

Kaneko Yōbun. *Tane maku hito den*. Tokyo: Rōdō Daigaku, 1984.

Kim, Donguk. *History of Korean Literature*. Translated by Leon Hurvitz. Tokyo: Tokyo Press Co., Ltd., 1980.

Kim Ki-jin. “Promeneade [*sic*] Sentimental.” *Kaebiyōk* 37 (1923): 82-100.

———. “K’ūllarūt’e undong ūi segyehwa.” *Kaebiyōk* 39 (1923): 11-32.

———. “Pparūppyusū tae Romaen Roran kan ūi jaengron: K’ūllarūt’e undong ūi segyehwa.” *Kaebiyōk* 40 (1923): 23-51.

———. “Ttodasi ‘K’ūllarūt’e’ e taehaesō: Pparūppyusū yōn’gu ūi ilp’yōn.” *Kaebiyōk* 41 (1923): 47-55.

———. “Hanchabon hiaegukchōkin chōnhuūi Pullansō munhak.” *Kaebiyōk* 44 (1924): 79.

———. “Pulgūn chwi.” *Kaebiyōk* 53 (1924): 129-146.

———. “Mollak.” *Kaebiyōk* 65 (1926): 24-39.

———. “Turūkenep’ū wa Pparūppyusū.” *Sasangye* (1958): 38-42.

Kim Yoon-shik. “Phases of Development in Proletarian Literature in Korea.” *Korea Journal* 27, no. 1 (1987): 31-36.

Komaki Ōmi. “On shirazu kojiki.” *Tane maku hito* 1, no. 1 (1921): 8-10.

———. “Kurarute undō no shōrai.” *Kaizō* 4, no. 5 (1922): 112-115.

———. “Geijutsu ni okeru kyōdō sensen.” *Tane maku hito* 2, no. 9 (1922): 466.

———. *Anri Barubyusu no geijutsu to shisō*. Tokyo: Sekai Shichō Kenkyūkai, 1922.

- . “Anri Barubyusu ni tsuite,” in volume 32 of *Sekai bungaku zenshū*, 6. Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1929.
- . “Anri Barubyusu yuku.” *Kaizō* 17, no. 10 (1935): 398-401.
- . “Jigoku kara kurarute e: Barubyusu to no kaiken kara.” *Nihon Hyōron* 26 (1951): 158.
- . “*Jan Kurisutofu to watashi.*” *Roman Roran Kenkyū* 7 (1952): 172.
- . *Aru gendaishi: “Tane maku hito” zengo.* Tokyo: Hōsei Daigaku Shuppan Kyoku, 1965.
- Kurahara Korehito and Nakano Shigeharu, eds. *Kobayashi Takiji kenkyū.* Tokyo: Kaihōsha, 1949.
- Large, Stephen S. *Organized Workers and Socialist Politics in Interwar Japan.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.
- Lee, Jae-yon. “Magazines and the Collective Rise of Literary Writers in Korea, 1919-1927.” PhD diss. University of Chicago, 2012. ProQuest (UMI 3526559)
- Lee, Ki-baek. *A New History of Korea.* Translated by Edward W. Wagner. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984.
- Lee, Peter H., ed. *A History of Korean Literature.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- . *Sourcebook of Korean Civilization, Volume 2: From the Seventeenth Century to the Modern Period.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.
- Lenin, V. I. *Collected Works.* 45 vols. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1966.
- Lewis, William S. *Louis Althusser and the Traditions of French Marxism.* New York: Lexington Books, 2005.
- MacMillan, Margaret. *Paris 1919: Six Months that Changed the World.* New York: Random House, 2001.
- Maedakō Hiroichirō. “Umi no karuwaza.” *Bungei sensen* 3, no. 1 (1926): 2-10.
- March, Harold. *Romain Rolland.* New York: Twayne Publishers, 1971.

- Mally, Lynn. *Culture of the Future: The Proletkult Movement in Revolutionary Russia*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.
- Mortimer, Maya. *Meeting the Sensei: The Role of the Master in Shirakaba Writers*. Leiden: Brill, 2000.
- Murphy, James F. *The Proletarian Moment: The Controversy over Leftism in Literature*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991.
- Mushanokōji Saneatsu. *Aru seinen no yume*. In *Mushanokōji Saneatsu zenshū* vol. 2, ed. Inagaki Tatsurō et al., 499-606. Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1988.
- Myers, Brian. *Han Sorya and North Korean Literature: The Failure of Socialist Realism in the DPRK*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994.
- Nobuchi Bin, and Amamiya Shōe. “*Tane maku hito*” *no keisei to mondaisei*. Akita-shi: Akita Bungakusha, 1967.
- Normand, Guessler. 1976. “Henri Barbusse and His Monde (1928-35): Progeny of the Clarté Movement and the Review *Clarté*.” *Journal of Contemporary History* 11 (2/3): 173-197.
- Novetsky, Alvin A. “Henri Barbusse: An Intellectual in the French Communist Party.” MA Thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1966.
- Paizis, George. *Marcel Martinet: Poet of the Revolution*. London: Francis Boutle, 2007.
- Pak Yōnghŭi. “Sin Kyōnghyangp’aŭi munhakkwa kŭ mundanjök chiwi.” *Kaebŷōk* 64 (1925): 325.
- Park, Sunyoung. *The Proletarian Wave: Literature and Leftist Culture in Colonial Korea 1910-1945*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015.
- Paul, Eden and Cedar Paul. *Proletcult*. London: Leonard Parsons, Ltd., 1921.
- Perry, Samuel. *Recasting Red Culture in Proletarian Japan: Childhood, Korea, and the Historical Avant-garde*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2014.
- Popkin, Debra, and Michael Popkin, eds. *Modern French Literature: A Library of Literary Criticism*. New York: Ungar, 1977.
- Racine, Nicole. “The Clarté Movement in France, 1919-1921.” *Journal of Contemporary History*

2, no. 2 (1967): 195-208.

Read, Anthony. *The World on Fire: 1919 and the Battle with Bolshevism*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2008.

Rehmann, Jan. *Theories of Ideology: The Powers of Alienation and Subjection*. Leiden: Brill, 2013.

Rolland, Romain. *Above the Battle*. Translated by C. K. Ogden. Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1916.

Russell, Bertrand. *The Practice and Theory of Bolshevism*. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1920.

Serge, Victor. *Memoirs of a Revolutionary 1901-1941*. Translated by Peter Sedgwick. London: Oxford University Press, 1963.

Shea, George Tyson. *Leftwing Literature in Japan: A Brief History of the Proletarian Movement*. Tokyo: Hosei University Press, 1964.

Smith, Leonard V. "Masculinity, Memory, and the French World War I Novel: Henri Barbusse and Roland Dorgeles." In *Authority, Identity and the Social History of the Great War*, edited by Frans Coetzee and Marily Shevin-Coetzee. Providence, RI: Berghahn Books, 1995.

———. *The Embattled Self: French Soldiers' Testimony of the Great War*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007.

Smith, Leonard V., Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, and Annette Becker. *France and the Great War, 1914-1918*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Starr, William Thomas. *Romain Rolland and a World at War*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1956.

Stern, Ludmila. *Western Intellectuals and the Soviet Union, 1920-1940: from Red Square to the Left Bank*. London: Routledge, 2007.

Sturrock, John. *The Word from Paris: Essays on Modern French Thinkers and Writers*. London: Verso, 1998.

- Trotsky, Leon. *Literature and Revolution*. Translated by Rose Strunsky. New York: International Publishers, 1925.
- . *The Revolution Betrayed: What is the Soviet Union and Where is it Going?* Translated by Max Eastman. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., 1937.
- . *The Stalin School of Falsification*. New York: Pathfinder Press, 1972.
- . *The First 5 Years of the Communist International, Volume 1*. New York: Monad Press, 1972.
- Tucker, Spencer, and Priscilla Mary Roberts. *World War I: Encyclopedia*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2005.
- Watanabe Kazutami. “Kurarute to Tane maku hito” (jō). *Bungaku* 4, no. 2 (1993): 133-148.
- . “Kurarute to Tane maku hito” (ge). *Bungaku* 4, no. 3 (1993): 159-169.
- Weems, Constance Dulles. “The Intellectual Odyssey of Henri Barbusse (1873-1935).” PhD diss., McGill University, 1980. ProQuest (NK 52180).
- Wohl, Robert. *French Communism in the Making, 1914-1924*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966.
- Yamada Seizaburō. *Puroretaria bungakushi*. 2 vols. Tokyo: Rironsha, 1954.
- Yi Sŭng-hŭi. “Tane maku hito wa Kaebyōk e kwan han sogo.” *Hanguk Ilbonŏ munhakhoe 2005 nyōndo punkwa haksul palp’yo taehoe* Proceedings (2005): 105-108.
- Yoshie Takamatsu. *Kindai bunmei to geijutsu*. Tokyo: Kaizōsha, 1924.
- Yu Mun-sŏn. “K’ap’ū kyōlsōng hyōnjangūi mosūpūl yōtponda: ilche chōngbo pogosōe kich’o hayō.” *Munhak tongne* 30 (2002): 385-404.
- Yuchi Asao *Nappu izen no puroretaria bungaku undō: “Tane maku hito” “Bungei sensen” no jidai*. Tokyo: Ogawamachi Kikaku, 1997.