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Strangers on a Commuter Train

Female Students and the Salaryman Who Watched Them
in Tayama Katai's *Shojo byo*

In the early twentieth century, there were several transformations in Tokyo urban space and in the lives of its inhabitants. Many of these new social and spatial movements converged on the train. Throughout the Meiji period (1868-1912)¹, a growing number of people moved to Tokyo from the countryside, and, by the first decade of the twentieth century, the city population had exploded. However, in the years following Japan's 1905 military victory over Russia, many families moved from the city to its surrounding countryside, seeking nature and tranquillity away from the noise and crowds.² The residents of these suburbs included the salaryman (*sarariman*), a worker who earned a monthly salary and was a member of the new middle class which emerged with the financial growth and developing capitalist consumer economy at this time. Perhaps more in image than in reality, the salaryman, his wife, and at least two children lived alongside upper-class families of high-ranking government officials, whose daughters often attended school in the center of Tokyo and commuted there by the expanding network of modern mass transportation. From the Meiji 30s, the last decade of the nineteenth century, the number of female students increased, and the image of the schoolgirl dressed in *hakama*, wearing hair ribbons, and traversing Tokyo or its suburbs on bicycle or by train proliferated in popular literature and mass media.³ The rise of the suburbs, where the salarymen and female students resided, was facilitated by the development of Tokyo's modern mass transportation network, especially the new electric trains, which were cleaner and quieter than steam locomotives.

Trains increasingly became a part of modern everyday life and often epitomized the conjuncture of capitalist growth, state ideologies, and social transformations. Use of commuter trains was implicated in and characteristic of changing sensorial perceptions of urban crowds, shocks, and spectacles and was part of the psychological adjustments to the new systems of signs and practices in the city. Daily commutes also reflected the changed nature of *seeing* and altered the way people viewed the landscape and each other. Trains were Foucaultian »heterotopia«, temporary worlds in transit, which revealed and reflected the conditions of daily life in the

twentieth century.⁴ Different from earlier horse buses, electric trains were means of mass transportation, and sexes and classes mixed in passenger cars. Trains became instrumental for living, studying, and working in Tokyo but were often the sites of urban behaviors and seductions and therefore could be viewed as synecdoche for the rapidly modernizing city itself.

These trends were frequently depicted in Japanese fiction, journalism, and visual media in the first decades of the twentieth century, and it is important to investigate representations of new social roles, such as salarymen and female students, and modern transportation together in order to better understand the advances and contradictions in Japanese modernity. Tayama Katai's (1872-1930) short story *The Girl Watcher* (*Shojo byo*), published in the May 1907 issue of the influential journal *Taiyo* (The Sun), illustrated these themes and showed how the daily commute became a new space in which to seek catharsis from the pressures and frustrations of everyday life in Tokyo. This story also presented problems engendered by the extension of the gaze, mobility, and sexuality made possible by train travel.⁵

Told in omniscient third person narrative, Tayama Katai's *The Girl Watcher* is the story of a thirty-seven or thirty-eight year old man, whose habit of obsessively staring at schoolgirls and other young women during his daily train commutes causes him to fall from the crowded passenger car to his gory death on the tracks below. The protagonist is continually referred to in the story as »man« (*otoko*), and his pen name, Sugita Kojo, is not revealed until the third section and is only mentioned once. This man is dissatisfied with his domestic life in the Yoyogi District, a new suburban, residential area in the western part of Tokyo, and is tired of his banal editorial work at the *Seinensha* magazine house in Nishikicho in the central Kanda section of the city. The times of the man's morning and late afternoon commutes coincide with those of female students, and he fantasizes about starting a relationship with one of the alluring women he longingly gazes upon on the train and in stations. However, he is frustrated by both social and psychological constraints, and instead tries to satisfy his desires by just looking. The man also watches women to seek comfort from the frustrations and disappointments about leading a life he feels that he cannot improve. In addition, his gaze focuses upon women's physical appearances, clothing, and hair styles, and, subsequently, the popular fashions and customs of the female students of the times are colorfully depicted. This helps to locate the story in a certain historical time and place. But *The Girl Watcher* can perhaps also be read as an allegory of the average man who is unable to change the track of his everyday urban life.⁶

Classifying Space: Commuting Salarymen, Suburban Sprawl, and Electric Trains

The 1905 military victory over Russia demonstrated to the Japanese state that it had achieved its nineteenth century aspirations of »rich country, strong army« (*fu-*

koku kohei) and was becoming a first class nation equal to those of the West. As theorized by H.D. Harootunian and others, many political goals of the nineteenth century had been fulfilled, and, starting at this time, a general change of emphasis from »civilization« (*bunmei*) to »culture« (*bunka*) could be perceived among the populace. This involved greater attention to individual development, more open pursuit of private interests, and growth of consumer capitalism.⁷ Subsequently, daily life in Tokyo became increasingly cosmopolitan, and many youths, who once had aspired to work for the government, wanted to earn a salary and become part of the commercial empire.

The »salaryman«⁸ epitomized this new pursuit of personal success and was often depicted as a worker who commuted from his home in the suburbs to his office in the center of Tokyo and who supported his wife and children by his monthly salary. The salaryman was defined as performing thinking labor and as earning his own money and not relying on inherited status or fortune. Beginning in 1871, the Japanese government began paying workers monthly instead of annual salaries, and, subsequently, a new level of bureaucratic employees was created which was different from the high level officials who rode to work in horse buses or in carriages sent by the Emperor. The new workers could be distinguished by how they commuted to work and what they wore and ate. These businessmen were often referred to as *koshiben*, an abbreviation for *koshi bento*, a term from the late Tokugawa period, which preceded the Meiji Era, that signified lower level samurai who worked in locations outside their homes and often brought their lunch boxes (*bento*) to work. In the late Meiji years, these workers were also known as *getsukyo tori*, men earning a monthly salary, and *tsutomejin*, men who commuted to work by train. These men usually dressed in Western business attire and were frequently sighted walking to work or to the modern mass transportation vehicles which would take them there. In the first decade of the twentieth century, the term »Koshiben Road« (*Koshiben kaido*) was used to describe the morning and evening travels of this group.⁹ However, as Maida Hajime noted in his 1928 best-selling *The Story of the Salaryman* (*Sarariman no monogatari*), a handbook for aspiring modern boys (*mobo*), by the start of the Showa period no self-respecting businessman carried his lunch to work but instead ate out in restaurants.¹⁰

In the first decade of the twentieth century, there existed both a historical conjuncture of and interrelationship between the proliferation of salarymen, the development of mass transportation networks in Tokyo, and the growth of the suburbs. The rise of salaryman also exemplified the destruction of an older family system, in which several generations lived together in the same house in the countryside, and the creation of a new nuclear family unit, which often viewed the suburbs as an ideal place to raise children. At the time *The Girl Watcher* was written, there was a large population influx to the suburbs, which then reflected the changing class composition of Tokyo. In 1900, there were 129 new residential areas to the north, west, and northwest of Tokyo, including Sendagaya where the protagonist of *The*

Girl Watcher lived, and these sections had a total population of 1,497,565 people.¹¹ By 1908, the number of housing districts had increased by five percent, but their population had exploded by forty-five percent to number 2,168,151 residents.¹² The September 1904 issue of *School Girls' World (Jogakukai)* explained various new lifestyles in Tokyo and described these areas around the city as an extension of Yamanote, a name that connoted the place where the upper classes lived and which could be contrasted to the often dirtier and more congested Shitamachi downtown.¹³ In name, there was a social distinction made between Yamanote and Shitamachi, but in spatial reality, the true division seemed to be between the inner and outer city.

The suburban population increasingly relied on expanding public transportation networks to take them to work or play in the center of Tokyo. The suburbs grew, in part, because of the availability of trains, and despite the size and locations of suburban houses their residents were temporarily equal in the space of the passenger car. Yet, as shown in the literary works of Tayama Katai, Kunikida Doppo, and other early twentieth century Japanese writers, these relationships between classes were not always peaceful, and social transformations and technological advances often made the suburbs dangerous places to live. The suburbs and the train lines that connected them to the center of Tokyo experienced a growth spurt after many people lost their homes in the 1923 earthquake, and especially the private railways extended their routes in the latter half of the 1920s.

Notably, although equal in the space of the train car, socioeconomic distinctions between passengers were maintained through classes of tickets. Ticket discounts were offered before the morning rush hour, which started at 7:00 AM, and this was mostly for the benefit of laborers whose work day generally began earlier than that of office workers.¹⁴ Multiple-ride train passes were available for students after 1901, and other commuters purchased either red or green tickets.¹⁵ Red tickets were less expensive than green, and the protagonist of *The Girl Watcher* used a red ticket to board the Kofu Line train.¹⁶

The commuter train became a space for watching and for being watched and illustrated changes in the act of seeing in the modern city. As stated by Georg Simmel, partly due to the expansion of modern mass transportation, the sense of sight became increasingly more important in the metropolis. In addition, »Before the development of buses, roads, and trains in the nineteenth century [twentieth century Japan], people had never been in a position of having to look at one another for long minutes or even hours without speaking to one another.«¹⁷ The train car was perceived as a traveling universe, grouping unrelated people together for a brief moment, such as a ride from the suburbs.

In addition to being new spaces for social interactions, crowded trains, where passengers experienced close physical proximity to strangers, were becoming icons of modern Tokyo. Many early twentieth century songs celebrated trains and the scenery which could be seen from their windows. The famous *Railway Song (Tet-*

sudo shoka) by Owada Takeki was an unprecedented hit after it was released on May 10, 1900. This popular tune glorified the view from Japan's modern steam locomotive after it left from Shimbashi station, the main terminal station for Tokyo at that time, and traveled through the surrounding landscape. The popularity of this song continued into the beginning of the Taisho period, reaching the ears of almost half of the Japanese population and selling over 10,000,000 copies.¹⁸ *The Streetcar Song (Densha shoka)* was released in September 1905 and boasted of the sights seen from the window of a tram passing through the center of Tokyo. In the song, the streetcar began its route from Hibuya Park, located near the bustling Maranouchi business district, and traveled in the direction of Ueno. The sights seen from the window represented modern Tokyo, its technologies, and many popular entertainments.¹⁹ Both songs associated trains, modernity, and the allure of the city.

Popular songs also noted the disadvantages of using the expanding network of crowded trains. Beginning at this time, there were often not enough trains to comfortably transport Tokyo's rapidly growing population, and this lack worsened during succeeding prewar years. A verse in Soeda Satsuki's *Tokyo Song* playfully cursed, »Tokyo's famous packed trains (*manin densha*)/ Even though I seem to wait forever, I can't ride'm./ In order to get on, I have to fight for my life./ Ah, finally an empty train comes,/But the conductor waves his hand, ›No, No. It's not in service./The train doesn't stop but keeps on going./ Why, you damn trains!«²⁰

Moreover, the commuters themselves, especially salarymen and female students, often symbolized modern Tokyo and were seen as embodying its social problems in addition to its economic progress. The November 15, 1906 issue of the business magazine *Jigyo no Nihon* (Enterprising Japan) published an article entitled »On Observing People's Faces on the Train«, which advanced that, because the train was increasingly becoming part of the everyday routine in modern Tokyo, it represented a microcosm of Japanese society. Several social ills could be diagnosed by studying the tired and negative facial expressions of commuters, especially those of young salaryman (*tsutomejin*). The writer of the article stated that these tired and disappointed looks were signs of the fatigue these company employees felt as they commuted on crowded trains from their suburban homes to inner city offices. Their faces often revealed the poor conditions of their bodies and indicated stomach, lung, and blood disorders and psychological depression. The writer emphasized that the faces of salarymen silently shouted the need for better health care and awareness to protect the vitality, spirit, and well-being of youths.²¹

Overall, trains were new spaces for examining the actions and appearances of others. In analyzing these transformations, it is useful to consider the concept of the nineteenth century European *flaneur*, who, in short, was an urban wanderer who observed the people in the city around him, and how best to lead him from the Parisian arcades onto the trains of Meiji Japan. The *flaneur* watched others as he traversed the city on foot. However, train travel expanded the range of the walking *flaneur's* gaze, for it removed him from direct sensory contact of the streets and me-

diated between object and observer. Modern transportation also made it possible for anyone to be a *flaneur*, even those lacking leisure time and money, such as a salaryman. In other words, in Tokyo, modern public transportation helped to massify the *flaneurie*, or the wanderings of the *flaneur*. A *flaneurie* could be incorporated into a Tokyoite's everyday routine, and, through the gaze, even a dissatisfied salaryman could seek escape from the problems and pressures of his domestic and work lives. Such an attempt was depicted in Tayama Katai's *The Girl Watcher*.

A Close Look at the Girl Watcher

From the beginning of *The Girl Watcher*, a connection is made between the man and the train. The story opens with the simultaneous passing of the 7:20 AM Yamanote Line through Yoyogi Station and the walking of the protagonist from his home near Sendagaya.²² Both of these events occur regularly each morning, regardless of the weather, and reflect the routinization of modern urban life. Notably, the neighborhood residents adjust the course of their daily events, not to the train schedules, but to the passing of the man. For example, after sighting the man walking by her home, one woman wakes her husband »who is prone to sleep [in] on drowsy spring mornings«, fearing he would be late for work.²³

Similar to the *flaneur* described in nineteenth century European texts, the man's physical appearance and mannerisms distinguish him from the others who watch as he passes. He walks alone to the station in a »duck-like« fashion and wears a threadbare Scottish suit and a ragged Inverness cape, a tattered version of the Western attire of late Meiji salarymen.²⁴ He uses a walking stick with a dog's head handle and carries a bulky maroon bundle under his arm, which may have been his lunch.²⁵ Maroon was a color popular among school girls at that time, but the man's worn clothing can be juxtaposed to the clean, new styles of the women he watches and further delineates a class distinction between them. The man possesses an unusual countenance, for he has a »pug nose, protruding teeth, and tangled side burns«. ²⁶ His face is scary enough to frighten women even in daylight. However, his eyes are kind and gentle, and always seem to be intently gazing upon something, thus alluding to the importance of the modern sense of sight.

The first appearance of the man coincides with the development of the suburbs, a phenomenon in which the train played a large part, and the changing social and spatial composition of these areas around Tokyo is epitomized in a description of where the man lives. The suburban scenery is described in the rhythm and speed as if seen from the window of a moving train and includes the skyline of Sendagaya's new residential area, smoke stacks from the numerous factories in Tsunohazu (which often appeared in static shots in early Ozu Yajiro films), the tops of telegraph poles, pebbly lanes, and rice paddies. Class distinctions are also maintained. For example, the man most likely resides in one of the half dozen homes for rent

behind the trees or in the valleys below the mansions of government officials, military generals, and company executives.²⁷

On the train, the objects of the man's gaze are women, not the passing scenery. The protagonist devises a means of positioning himself on the train in order to best observe the female passengers without being noticed. He would sit on the seat diagonally opposite at an angle and, while pretending to look to the side, would shoot glances at the young women.

»The train left Yoyogi.

It was a pleasant spring morning. The sun shone gently overhead, and the air was exceptionally clear. Untidy rows of new houses in the low land of Sendagaya and the dark rows of charcoal oaks, topped by the beautiful form of Mount Fuji away in the distance, passed quickly by like a kaleidoscope. But our man, preferring the figure of a beautiful girl to the beauty of mute nature, was almost completely entranced with the faces and figures of two girls opposite him. Gazing upon human beings is more troublesome than gazing upon mute nature, and so, sensing he might be discovered if he stared too openly, he was pretending to look to the side, while flashing furtive sidelong glances at the girls. As someone once said, when it comes to girl watching on trains, it's too direct to watch them face-on, whereas from a distance it's too conspicuous and likely to arouse people's suspicions; therefore, the most convenient seat to occupy is the one diagonally opposite, or rather at an oblique angle. Being an obsessive girl watcher, [the man] did, of course, not have to be taught this secret and had naturally discovered the technique for himself, never wasting any suitable opportunity.«²⁸

The plot of *The Girl Watcher* encompasses one day of the man's morning and late afternoon commutes. His short journey to the center of the city starts from Yoyogi Station, and he hands his red multiple-ride ticket to the conductor and boards the Kofu Line (today JR Chuo Line) train, which he rides through Sendagaya, Shinanomachi (a place where few girls enter the passenger car), Ichigaya, Ushigome, and Idamachi (today Idabashi). He changes to the Sotobori line at Ochanomizu Station. He does this purposely to lengthen his time in the train car paradise (*gokurakukyo*). At that time, if traveling from Sendagaya to Kanda, it was most convenient and faster to change to the Sotobori Line at Yotsuya Station. In addition, the man's office was only one kilometer from Ochanomizu Station and he could have easily walked from there.²⁹

The time of the man's commutes coincided with those of female students, and during this so-called rush hour (*rashu awa*), the trains between the center of Tokyo and the outlying suburbs were often packed. Sexual offenses, petty crimes, and other misdemeanors were not rare on these very crowded trains. The train was an everyday space, but it was also a dangerous one. In 1928, Maida Hajime advocated that young women should not ride trains at this time: »A hand gets grabbed. A foot gets stepped on. Something that should not be touched gets touched. A wallet gets picked from inside a kimono sleeve in a momentary impulse. Abnormal psychology and the seduction of theft are there if we only turn our heads and look...Caring parents must not let their darling daughters ride the train during rush hour.«³⁰

A commuter train for women only introduced in 1912, five years after the *The Girl Watcher* was published.³¹ Nicknamed the »Flower Train« (*hana densha*) and distinguished by the large characters »For Women's Use Only« printed on its side, this vehicle first appeared in Kobe and later in Tokyo. »Flower train« was the signifier used at the time to connote open train cars that were decorated to commemorate occasions, such as the birthday of the Emperor or the opening of a department store, and also referred to the youthful beauty of the students. According to an article in the January 28, 1912 *Tokyo Asahi Shimbun* newspaper, the Flower Train was instituted to protect female students from having their »beautiful figures looked at and enjoyed« by misbehaving male students and other passengers. It is unclear whether the idea for the Flower Train was suggested by the female students themselves or was promulgated by municipal, railway, or other authorities to protect their feminine innocence and purity. Yet, women were portrayed as passive victims of such attempts, unable to protect themselves or even to perpetrate attacks. This was also the time when waiting rooms for women were available only at some train stations, perhaps at Yoyogi where the man spotted a familiar young woman.³²

Moreover, the sensorial perceptions which train travel engendered are also depicted in *The Girl Watcher*, and sensations of sight, smell, and sound figure prominently in the story. The physical appearances and the clothing of the young women the man watches are colorfully described, and, thus, the popular fashions and customs of the day can be seen. For example, the young student the man sighted in the Yoyogi Station waiting room is full-bodied, plump, and rosy-cheeked. She is dressed in a »bright, striped top and a maroon *hakuma* and carries a »slender parasol in her right hand and a bundle wrapped in purple cloth in her left.« She wears a white hair ribbon on that day.³³

In *The Girl Watcher*, much attention is given to female eyes and hair, female body parts which also symbolize the man's failure to obtain the objects of his gaze and to therefore change or even save his own life. For example, after the Kofu Line passenger car left Yoyogi Station, the man looks at the faces and figures of two women. »The expression of the elder girl's eyes was infinitely beautiful. Even the stars in the sky, he felt, lost their sparkle in comparison. Slender legs under that crepe kimono, a brilliant mauve hem, white-stockinged feet in fashionable high sandals, a beautifully white neck, beautiful breasts at the swelling of her chest – it was too much for him to bear.«³⁴ This is the second mention of female breasts in the story. Told as a flashback by the omniscient narrator, the man during his walk to the station on a certain morning, retrieved and directly handed a fallen aluminum hair pin to a female student he had often watched. He then noticed that she had large breasts.

The man savors the odors emitting from female hair. However, while he admires female hair, the man is reminded that he is too old to start a relationship with any of these alluring young women and has not experienced enough of the pleasures of the flesh as a youth. These thoughts torment him, cause him to feel that he has no

reason to be alive, and makes him want to tear out his own hair. Notably, the man often wonders if the girls he watches are engaged and sadly envisions their wedding days, but he does not think about his own wife or look at her hair. Although the man does not seem to notice, the omniscient third-person narrator describes his wife's hair as being tied in a rather old fashioned style and her striped apron parallels the striped *kimono* tops of the female students.³⁵

As a *flaneur*, the Girl Watcher gazes at female *passantes* (passengers), but he does not touch them. In the story, a distinction is made between looking and touching and between sense and reality. The man dreams that the embrace of one of these alluring women will give hope to his otherwise bleak daily life, and his failure to achieve a sense of touch is both metaphorical and real and facilitates his demise. On the day described in the plot, the Kofu Line train he rides from Ochanomizu is unusually crowded due to the Tokyo exhibition (another site that alludes to the modern importance of sight). In the crowded train car, the man spots an attractive woman whom he has seen before and who usually boards from Shinanomachi Station.³⁶ He begins to wonder how a woman so beautiful can exist in such a terrible world, agonizes over thoughts of the man who will hold her, and seeks to maintain a position on the train where he can continue to stare and fantasize about her.

As the passenger car becomes more crowded, the man struggles to keep his eyes on the young woman, but his hand can not maintain contact with the brass pole of the train car. He loses his balance, tumbles onto the tracks, and is run over by an oncoming train. As a further contrast to the brightly colored clothes and accessories of the young women, the man's body seems no longer human but instead becomes a black blob trailing a crimson train of blood.

Tayama Katai's prose also reflects the speed and rhythm of a moving train, which further shows the final triumph of this machine over the man. Notably, in this story that focuses on the gaze, the final mastery of the train is depicted in sound. In the last section, the phrases »better off dead« (*shinda ho ga ii*) and »loneliness« (*sabishisa*) are each repeated three times each in succession. In addition, the young woman from Shinanomachi has beautiful eyes, beautiful hands, and beautiful hair, alluding to the failures of sight and touch of the story. The rhyme between the Japanese words eyes (*me*) and hands (*te*) further mimic the tempo of the train. In the final one-sentence paragraph of the story, the sound of the emergency whistle of the train is heard.³⁷

In addition to being passive objects of the male gaze, during the first decade of the twentieth century, women also watched and even seduced men on Tokyo trains. On June 28, 1908, the presence of high class prostitutes soliciting on trains was reported. These streetriders could be easily distinguished by their gaudy Western style umbrellas, as contrasted to the slender parasols which female students often carried. According to the newspaper article, these prostitutes were most often seen during the spring of each year and were especially prevalent on the Sotobori Line, one of the trains that the protagonist of *The Girl Watcher* rode to work. However, be-

tween nine and ten o'clock at night, they were often spotted among passengers travelling from Kakurazaka and Akasaka Mitsuke, areas of Tokyo where there were several bars and restaurants. In general, they rode the train through all of its station stops and pretended to be absorbed in reading a newspaper. However, when the opportunity arose, they attracted men, primarily bankers and Chinese exchange students. These prostitutes were between eighteen and twenty-three years of age, a few years older than the female students who rode the train with the salaryman in *The Girl Watcher*.³⁸

Moreover, journalist Isomura Haurko wrote about the poor conduct of women on trains, which she attributed to a history of feminine reserve and diffidence and to feelings among modern women, especially students, that they deserved special treatment because they were female. Isomura illustrated her theories with examples from experience, especially her observations regarding how women sat on trains and how they often did not pay the full ticket prices. First, Isomura frequently saw married women from Yamanote, who literally belittled themselves and believed that they did not need much room, crammed themselves into areas which were too small for any person to sit comfortably. They, thus, caused problems for passengers seated next to them, and they reluctantly gave up their few inches of space only when asked by the conductor.

Because all passengers paid to ride urban mass transportation, Isomura scorned young women who expected men to give up their seats for them and retold an amusing anecdote about a train ride from the Yamanote area. A female student boarded the crowded train and stood before a seated soldier. After a short while, she asked the soldier why he did not relinquish his place for her. The soldier looked at her, got up, and silently gave her his seat. The student then sat down haughtily without saying thank you. The soldier was angry and raised his fist in defiance.³⁹ On another train ride, a young man did not observe the unspoken rules of public courtesy and refused to abandon his seat for the elderly, disabled, and women carrying infants. However, when he spotted a young woman »who reeked of whitening powder«, he quickly stood up so that she could sit down.⁴⁰ Isomura then lamented the mentalities among Japanese youths of her day.

Overall, Tayama Katai's 1907 short story *The Girl Watcher* depicted how the daily train commute shared by female students and salarymen both redefined gender and class relationships and illustrated many of the social and spatial transformations in Tokyo. An everyday train ride became a space in which to seek temporary escape from the pressures of modern life in the city. The fatale *flaneurie* of the salaryman protagonist further presented the problems caused by the changes in the sense of sight, physical and social mobility, and sexuality made possible by train travel. Although presumed to be innocent and pure, female students often embodied the corruptions and dangers of the modernizing city. In Japanese literature and mass media in the early twentieth century, the excitement, allure, and seduction of such modern women were often associated with the speed, spectacles, and dangers

of modern transportation.

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Anmerkungen

- ¹ The Meiji Period was named for the reign of the Meiji Emperor and was a time of rapid modernization and Westernization in Japan. For an introduction to the cultural history of this time, see Edward Seidensticker, *Low City, High City: Tokyo from Edo to the Earthquake*, Cambridge 1991.
- ² The Russo-Japanese War lasted for about two years and was a turning point in Japanese history, for it was the first time that an Asian country militarily defeated a Western power in modern times.
- ³ *Hakuma* is a long skirt worn over a kimono so that the top of the kimono is showing. They became the popular dress for female students in the last decade of the nineteenth century and, along with hair ribbons, became metonyms for the schoolgirls themselves. See Masuko Honda, *Jogakusei no keifu (Genealogy of the Schoolgirl)*, Tokyo 1990.
- ⁴ Michel Foucault, *Of Other Spaces*, in: *Diacritics* 16, Spring 1986, 22-27 and Lynne Kirby, *On Parallel Tracks: The Railroad and Silent Cinema*, Durham 1997.
- ⁵ Here I am borrowing Kenneth Henshall's English rendering of the title as *The Girl Watcher*, for I feel that this translation captures the essence of the story. Tayama Katai, *The Girl Watcher*, in *The Quilt and Other Stories by Tayama Katai*, Kenneth G. Henshall, trans., Tokyo, 1981.
- ⁶ Interesting similarities between the metaphorical use of trains, discontent with modern domestic and work lives, and death can be seen in King Vidor's 1928 American silent film *The Crowd*. In this melodrama, a young man becomes increasingly frustrated with his family life in a small apartment, his lack of financial and social success, and his inability to find and maintain a job that satisfies him. After he has married, has his first child, and is happy with his job, he is seen sitting by the window of his small apartment, strumming a mandolin, and gazing out at a passing train. He sings, »Inside life is heaven, but outside it is El.« Yet, in the climax of the film, the protagonist considers committing suicide by throwing himself upon the railroad tracks.
- ⁷ See H.D. Harootunian, *Introduction: A Sense of an Ending and the Problem of Taisho*, in: Bernard Silberman and H.D. Harootunian, eds., *Japan in Crisis: Essays on Taisho Democracy*, Princeton 1974.
- ⁸ Admittedly, I may be using the term salaryman anachronistically here. At the time of the writing and publication of *The Girl Watcher*, *koshiben* may have been the more common signifier for this new kind of urban worker. Notably, neither term is used in the story. Although the man was an editor, he fell into this new class of businesspeople.
- ⁹ Masuda Taijiro, *Chirashi koku ni miru Taisho no seso, fuzoku*, (Examining Taisho Period Social Conditions and Customs through Leaflets and Advertisements), Tokyo, 1981, 47-48. Ishihara Chiaki, *Togawa Nobusuke, et al, eds., Shojō byō o yomu (On Reading The Girl Watcher)*, Bungaku, July 1990, 169.
- ¹⁰ See Maida Hajime, *Sarariman no monogatari (Story of the Salaryman)*, Tokyo 1928, especially introduction. The image and actual social position of the salaryman changed over the early years of the twentieth century, especially after the Marunouchi Building and Tokyo Station, located across from each other, were opened by the beginning of the Taisho period. In the late

1920s and early 1930s, mass media publications for businessmen proliferated, such as the journal *Sarariman*, which included discussions of the latest clothing and hair styles, reports of popular entertainments, and advice on love, sex, and marriage. From the early 1930s, this magazine was called the »economic journal for the masses«, and this slogan was printed on each cover. By the end of the 1930s, this publication included essays and stories by Marxist literary writers, such as Takada Rintaro.

- ¹¹ Yogo Ikunobu, *Take no kido no kukan / Aratana Watsureenu hitobito no monogatari* (Space in Kunikida Doppo's Bamboo Wicket and A New Story of Unforgettable People, In: Taguchi Ritsuo, ed., *Toshi* (City), Tokyo 1995, 51.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, 51.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, 49. See also Seidensticker, *High City, Low City*, as in fn. 1.
- ¹⁴ See, for example, Matsuda Taijiro, as in fn. 9, 47-48.
- ¹⁵ Multiple-ride passes for students first went on sale on June 1, 1901. *Shukan Yearbook: Nichiroku 20 seki 1901* (Weekly Yearbook: Journal of the Twentieth Century, 1901), Tokyo 1998, 16.
- ¹⁶ This distinction is reflected today by the presence of Green Cars in Japan Railway (JR) trains used for long distances. The Green Car has reserved seating and requires an additional fare. In addition, weekly, monthly, and other train passes for the Japan Railway network are green-colored, while one-way tickets are reddish-brown.
- ¹⁷ Quoted in Walter Benjamin, *Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire*, in: Charles Baudelaire: *Lyric Poet in the Era of Late Capitalism*, Harry Zohn, trans., New York, 1973, 38.
- ¹⁸ *Shukan Yearbook: Nichiroku 20 seki--1900* (Weekly Yearbook: Journal of the Twentieth Century-1900), Tokyo 1998, 38. For the text of the song, see Owada Takeki, *Tetsudo shoka*, Tokyo 1900.
- ¹⁹ For a text of the *Densha shoka*, see Ishikawa Teizo, ed., *Basha tetsudo kara chikatetsu made* (From Horse Tramway to Subway), Tokyo 1963, 1.
- ²⁰ *Showa hayari uta shi* (The History of Popular Songs in the Showa Era), Tokyo 1985, 27. There are notable similarities between the verse of this late Meiji song and later popular tunes about Tokyo. The very popular 1918 (Taisho 7) *Pinopi Song* included a verse that was very similar with the exception a few word changes. These indeed may be the same song. For the lyrics of the *Pinopi Song*, see, for example, Ishikawa Teizo, as in fn. 18, 27.
- ²¹ Shiro Sei, *Densha nai nite mitaru hitobito no kao* (On Observing People's Faces on the Train), *Jigyo no Nihon*, November 15, 1906, 1816-1818. These early twentieth century observations are strikingly similar those described in the September 15, 1999 issue of the *New York Times* regarding the tired faces of commuters on the Long Island Railway. David M. Halbfinger, *I've Been Sleeping on the Rail Road: Long Island Commuter Run is Medical Researcher's Lab*, *New York Times*, September 15, 1999.
- ²² I have decided to use Kenneth G. Henshall's excellent translation of *The Girl Watcher*, as in fn. 5. Hereafter referred to as *TGW*. I have made slight modifications. For example, Henshall refers to the protagonist by his last name Sugita, instead of the unnamed signifier man. The Japanese edition used here is the text included in *Shojo byo o yomu*, as in fn. 9, and Tayama Katai, *Shojo byo*, in: *Tayama Katai shu* (Selected Works of Tayama Katai), *Nihon gendai bungaku zenshu* 21, Tokyo, 1962, 34-42. It is interesting to note the similarities in form and content between the first sentence of *The Girl Watcher* and that of Kunikida Doppo's short story *The Bamboo Wicket* (*Take no kido*), published in 1908, the following year. The first line of *The Bamboo Wicket* states, »Oba Shinzo, a company employee (*kaishain*), lives in a Tokyo suburb and commutes to his office in the Kyobashi section of the city; he walks a half mile (li) to the train station on foot every morning, but he claims this is good exercise. Kunikida Doppo, *Take no kido* (*The Bamboo Wicket*), in: *Teihon Kunikida Doppo zenshu*, vol. 4, Tokyo, 1967, 133. Henshall's translation of the first sentence of *The Girl Watcher* reads, »As the 7:20 AM Yamanote

Line train passes through Yoyogi Station on its way to the city, shaking the embankment, a man walks on his way between the paddies in nearby Sendagaya.« TGW, 167.

²³ TGW, 167.

²⁴ TGW, 167.

²⁵ TGW, 167-168.

²⁶ TGW, 168.

²⁷ TGW, 172. Such suburban space and the new social classes who resided in it are also alluded to in Nagai Kafu's short story *Kitsune*. See Maida Ai, *Toshi kukan no naka no bungaku* (Literature in Urban Space), Tokyo 1992.

²⁸ TGW, 175.

²⁹ Ishihara Chiaki, Togawa Nobusuke et al, eds., as in fn. 9, 184.

³⁰ Maida Hajime, as in fn. 9, 50.

³¹ A similar train for women was available in the United States in the first decades of the twentieth century.

³² At this time, a few female students commuted to school by bicycle. In 1905 it was reported that twelve or thirteen students from Tokyo Christian Women's University, and seven or eight students from the music conservatory (*Ongaku daigaku*) rode a bicycle to class. *Shukan Yearbook: Nichiroku 20 seki, 1905* (Weekly Yearbook: Journal of the Twentieth Century, 1905), Tokyo 1998, 30.

³³ TGW, 169.

³⁴ TGW, 175-176.

³⁵ TGW, 172. I am grateful to Angela Yiu for drawing to my attention this similarity between the clothes of the students and those of the man's wife.

³⁶ TGW, 180.

³⁷ Kenneth Henshall, Edward Fowler, and other scholars of Japanese literature have noted the similarities in the domestic lives, moral struggles, and literary frustrations between the protagonist of *The Girl Watcher* and Tayama Katai. See Henshall's introduction to his volume of translations and Edward Fowler, *The Rhetoric of Confession: Shishosetsu in Early Twentieth Century Japanese Fiction*, Berkeley 1988.

³⁸ Ishikawa, ed., as in fn. 18, 14-15.

³⁹ Isomura Haruko, *Densha no kyaku* (Passengers on the Train), in: *Ima no onna* (Today's Women) Tokyo 1984, 217.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 218.