

Master's Thesis Abstract

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Title

Rereading Osamu Dazai's "Ningen Shikkaku": Focusing on Private Fiction and Humanism

After the war, Osamu Dazai was called the New Caricature School and the Muyo School, and in addition to his writing activities, he is widely known for his own disturbed personal life. For his creative activities, he used a variety of methods, interviewing classical literature and diary letters of his own fans, as well as underlining many of his own experiences. Due to the fact that Dazai committed suicide in his heart, "Ningen Shikkaku" has been discussed in relation to Dazai himself the most among these works. It can be said that such an attitude has become the default in the reading of "Ningen Shikkaku." Next, I will explain the structure of this essay. At the same time, I will outline the relationship between the two keywords of "private fiction" and "humanism" and the reading of the book.

In the first chapter, I will examine the factors that led to the emergence of the "private novel" reading. Three points must be mentioned regarding this issue: the structure of the text, the overlap and difference between the creative content and the biographical facts, and the great influence of the media propaganda about Dazai's private life triggered by his death. In Chapter 2, I will argue that it is not appropriate to read the novel as a "private novel." As a premise, I will discuss the problems with the term "private novel." In addition, looking at the relationship between the viewpoint character, Oba Hazō, the real novelist, Osamu Dazai, and the "I" of the novelist in the novel, "Ningen Shikkaku" does not conform to the characteristics of a private novel, which unifies the viewpoints of the viewpoint character, the real novelist, and the novelist in the novel. Finally, I found that the evaluations of Hazō by both women and men in the text form a dichotomy, so I could read the artificiality of the text from this aspect as well. In Chapter 3, I will explore the possibility of a new reading of "Ningen Shikkaku," focusing on "ningen" as an important symbol in the work. In this work, the "Preface" and "Afterword" are placed before and after the three memoirs, which are the central part of the work. Through the discussion of Hazō's view of "human beings" in the memoirs and the role of the frames, I found that "Ningen Shikkaku" is a work in which Dazai's own attitude or value judgment toward the life of Hazō is not apparent, but rather a work that emphasizes the existence of the reader. In Chapter 4, based on the results of the discussion on "human beings," I will try to make a new meaning of "Ningen Shikkaku" from the angle of humanism. First, I will examine the changes in the internal reality of humanism during the Showa period. I will also examine the attitude of the literary world toward humanism and the evaluation of "Ningen Shikkaku" immediately after its publication. Finally, I extract the elements that can be called humanism in the text and discuss the necessity of paying attention to humanism as a keyword for reading.

As described above, this paper discusses "Ningen Shikkaku" with a focus on the two genealogies of "private fiction" and "humanism" in the form of questioning existing readings (Chapters 1 and 2) and exploring new readings (Chapters 3 and 4). Through this work, I have obtained the following three research results.

First, by referring to Dazai's life, touching on postwar media and literary circles, and paying attention to the history of the Showa period in which Dazai was active, I believe that I have achieved to some extent a cross-disciplinary examination of Dazai's research by referring to the knowledge of history, including the history of ideas and social history, rather than only a close reading of his literary works. I believe that this has been achieved to some extent. Second, in the section that discussed humanism, I pointed out the influence of trends in the world of thought on literature, based on previous studies, whether it was humanism that was the basis for the birth of the Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere ideology to carry out the war or humanism that was the premise for postwar democracy. Thirdly, I made sense of "Human Disappointment" from the perspective of the new evaluation of humanism and the emphasis on the existence of readers inside and outside the work in the text, as opposed to established readings.