



Decadent Literature in Twentieth-Century Japan

Ikuho Amano

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Decadence is a concept that designates a given historical moment as a phase of decay and valorizes the past as an irretrievable golden age. The literary theme and motif has survived through the history of literary and cultural discourses in Japan since antiquity to the present and holds a key to understand the wide range of social consciousnesses that cannot be always molded by a given social mainstream. Here, Ikuho Amano offers an innovative examination of a century of Japanese fiction through the analytical prism of decadence. Drawing on the economic issues prevalent in twentieth-century fictions, the book argues that non-productive labor plays an integral part of modern society and culture while accommodating the entropic excess of modern society. Through deviant dealings of resources, including waste, squandering, wagering, and excessive generosity, the decadent individuals negotiate with modern utilitarian ideologies of society based on labor and production, showcasing their desire and dream outside the circle of diligence and productivity.

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