

Abstract

The thesis presents an assumption that literature is inspired by reality (besides other factors), and that specific literary worlds may, to a certain extent, reflect the actual state of society. Historical events around the end of WWII and the consequent rapid social changes in Japan during late 1940s and 1950s had an indisputable impact on literary production at the time. The aim of this thesis is to affirm this assumption through an analysis of selected short stories and novels from the time concerned.

The analysis focuses on remarks and on references about the period of time when the prose was written, and also on behavioral and attitude changes of its characters - prototypes of the Japanese society. The direct impact of historical and social transition on literary work may also be traced in the works' themes, motifs and narrative.

We can thus, in many cases, follow the development of the Japanese postwar society from 1945 until the late 1950s, when the country started to prosper economically. The selection of the analysed pieces of literature includes two novels which did not only describe the time of their origination, but also had reverse effect on society. The impact hypothesis is thus confirmed and, what is more, we can see a mutual influence exercised by both, the society and art: The former affects the latter and vice versa, a literary art of work may have a reverse impact on society and social climate.

Key words: Japanese literature, Postwar literature, 1940s, 1950s, Fictional worlds