

The Arbitrariness of Script Censorship in Provinces During the Pre-War Showa Era: On the Case of Kansai Proletarian Theater

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Takashi WADA

This paper examines the actual state of script censorship in regional areas by analyzing scripts censored around 1930 by proletarian theater groups in Kansai. Under the censorship system during the pre-war Showa period, the Home Ministry handled censorship of publications and films, while the Metropolitan or Prefectural Police handled censorship of theatrical scripts. Consequently, theater groups had to undergo censorship anew each time they changed their performance location. Numerous testimonies indicate that censorship in Kansai was stricter than in Tokyo. While censored content maintained a certain degree of consistency across regions, differences also existed. Furthermore, since scripts and films fell under different censorship jurisdictions, innovative staging incorporating movies had to be abandoned. This paper thus clarifies how variations in censorship arose due to changes in the censorship authority, such as regional and jurisdiction differences.