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Modernity and Mortality: The Cinematic Eschatology of Inagaki Taruho

Abstract:

The focus of this paper is "Miroku," the 1946 quasi-autobiography by the Japanese modernist poet Inagaki Taruho, and the film theory which that work develops. Building on the historically situated futurism formulated in his cinematic writings of the 1920s and 1930s, in which he sees the death of cinema in the succumbing of early trick films to narrative trends, Taruho here in his "life story" dwells on the complex temporality of these defunct moving pictures of his youth which offered a glimpse into a future cosmology already "bled through" with its own apocalypse even as it came into being. Taruho's cinematic eschatology, I argue, offers a unique counterpart to more recent elegies for cinema's digital death.

CV:

Ryan Cook is a graduate student in the joint PhD program in Film Studies and East Asian Languages and Literatures at Yale University. His primary research interests are in Japanese cinema and Japanese modern literature, film theory, and transnational cinema.