

Donors of the Floating World: The Dystopian Livelihoods of Ishiguro's Clones and Yoshiwara Courtesans

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ABSTRACT

The text Never Let Me Go envisions dystopianism through the eyes of a group that is simultaneously subjugated and compensated by class structures. Due to the synchronous glorification and euphemization of their oppression, the fate of these characters ties historical threads to the livelihoods of Yoshiwara courtesans in Edo Japan. These parallels are drawn from historical and sociological lenses, inspired by scholars Cecilia Segawa Seigle and Kelly Rich on courtesan life and environmental influence. This dichotomy between perception and reality is born from the subjective nature of what it means to be educated and cultured. The relativity of privilege is then is weaponized by those in power, who ensure that both marginalized groups internalize their class and grow complicit in their own exploitation. In light of these parallels, the fluidity between utopian and dystopian livelihoods manifests, and therein seeps beyond the literary realm.

It is almost instinctual to think of utopian and dystopian societies dichotomously; the conditions for anyone affiliated with the government is Elysian while everyone else is either subject to dehumanization or brainwashing. Note the subjugation of individuals in canonical dystopian works such as *1984*, *Brave New World*, and *The Handmaid's Tale*. The degree to which a group is exposed to the beneficial or noxious aspects of their society is dictated by class. While it would be counterintuitive to assert that the lower classes would not be subjugated to the worst of a society's dystopian conditions, it is too simplistic to think that a certain class will always be influenced in the same way, or that those of the lower classes necessarily perceive their bondage as dystopian. Kazuo Ishiguro ponders this disjunctive relationship between the perception and reality of oppressed groups in dystopian and utopian societies in his seminal work *Never Let Me Go*. This story details the life of Kathy H., who embodies how a group internalizes being contained, nurtured, and compensated by class structures, which are subsumed within a dystopian framework.

Kathy H. has neither a last name nor parents because she is a clone. Due to the method of her birth, her destiny is dictated by her obligations as a second-class citizen. In her early twenties, Kathy must become a "carer," someone who eases the physical and psychological pain of "donors," clones who are set to die within a few years. Carers tend to donors during rounds of "donations," the surgical removal of organs. The health of the donors declines until their third or fourth donation. Then the donors die, or more euphemistically, "complete." The cycle repeats as droves of clones are raised in isolated institutions and brought, willingly, to donation centers.

Recoiling at the notion of anyone agreeing to organ removal is expected, but disregarding the clones' rationale is missing Ishiguro's commentary on class. Although current discourse and criticism of *Never Let Me Go* often focuses on the ethics of cloning or the importance of memory, what is paramount to the novel is the psychosocial factors that bind the clones together to form their sense of social class. The socialization and collectivist culture that is impressed upon the clones within their contained environment explains why the clones not only submit to their suicidal trajectory, but also later enforce the stipulations imposed on them. Consequently, it is a small wonder that Kathy's perspective portrays the seemingly positive effects of the system; Kathy's childhood is utopian in comparison to the upbringing of other clone groups.

As imaginative as Ishiguro is for constructing a convincing perspective of the educated, cultured slave, there is an equally intriguing historical figure that embodies utopian and dystopian conditions within slave systems: the Edo courtesan. Within the grounds of Yoshiwara, the licensed red-light district of Edo Japan (1603-1868), indentured prostitution was not only legalized, but a keystone of ukiyo (floating world) culture. The floating world was a district immortalized for its ribald theater and pleasure quarters: a utopia for the upper echelons of society. When one thinks of the floating world, the elegant and fashionable courtesan comes to mind as seen in ukiyo-e (woodblock prints). The splendor of a courtesan's intricate kimono and pristine makeup thus obscures the reality of her servitude.

In order to understand the psychosocial factors influencing the clones and the courtesans, a historical and sociological approach is needed to examine the physical and sociocultural environment that influences and perpetuates such exploitative systems. Delving into the headspace of the ostensibly content groups in both narratives not only mitigates the reader's horror, but also illuminates the subjectivity of utopian and dystopian conditions in the context of an oppressed group's limited history. Therefore, while the two groups might initially seem disparate, the forced prostitution system in Yoshiwara parallels the lives of the clones in *Never Let Me Go* closely, almost blurring the distinction between reality and fiction. Both narratives demonstrate not only the fluidity between utopian and dystopian livelihoods, but also how class structures can enmesh individuals within both extremes.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF YOSHIWARA

After years of civil unrest, the unification of Japan under the Tokugawa administration, the last dynasty of feudal Japan, ushered in an era of peace. Beginning in the order of highest prestige, the shogunate enforced the stratification of society into the following classes: samurai, farmer, artisan, and merchant. This rigid social system was also steeped in Neo-Confucian ideals, characterized by moralism and an adherence to traditional social roles, which were tools for securing political hegemony. A key example of government incentivization for adhering to class-based norms was the promotion of the *Official Records of Filial Piety* by the shogunate. Essentially, the record

“documented monetary rewards issued by the shogunate and the *daimyo* (feudal lords) to low-ranking warriors and commoners who had shown exemplary virtuous conduct and could thus serve as role models for their fellow commoners” (Ambros 105). This methodology was effective because it inflated lower classes with an artificial sense of superiority; it provided people whose lives were submitted to backbreaking work in rice fields “with an ideological rationale for enduring their own hardships” (Fukushima 91). As will be demonstrated later, this incentivization for adhering to ideological systems imposed by higher institutions influences the clones in multiple ways.

Considering that the hedonistic zeitgeist of the Edo period is almost diametrically opposed to such social stringency imposed by the shogunate, it is apparent that Ieyasu’s administrative controls had weaknesses. Samurai, so valued during the warring years, became displaced in a society that was steering away from militarism. Additionally, as Japan’s rice-based economy shifted to mercantilism, merchants became among the wealthiest members of society, despite their lack of social prestige. Samurai and the nouveau riche merchants became privy to literary and artistic circles, which broadened the market for the world’s oldest profession. Once they acquired licensing, bordello operators were able to advertise the services of courtesans within the context of the already glamorous and sybaritic Yoshiwara.

Now that Yoshiwara history has been established, it can be made apparent how the courtesans’ experience reflected that of Ishiguro’s clones.

CLASS DIVISIONS

Kathy H. is a product of the Hailsham estate, an isolated institution in the English countryside that echoes a boarding school. Hailsham students cannot leave the premises, but because there have been stories manufactured that students who leave the Hailsham gates never return, the students are not apt to run away. This geographic restriction is ignored in light of how idyllic their childhood seems otherwise. Some Hailsham privileges include the following: each week the students are monitored by nurses to ensure optimal health, there is a sports pavilion in which to exercise, no student ever goes hungry, and the teachers, referred to as “guardians,” provide a humanities education. In this alternative English society, Hailsham students do not have a conception of how comfortable their

upbringing is in comparison to non-Hailsham clones. Of course, Hailsham students pay for this picturesque childhood at the cost of their lives.

While Kathy and her classmates are imbued with their own sense of privilege throughout their lives, one can detect the cracks in Hailsham's utopian mirror beginning in Kathy's childhood. One of Kathy's earliest memories of developing a sense of class with her fellow clones is when she and her classmates walk past Madame, a woman who visits the Hailsham estate to take the students' best artwork and add it to her Gallery. To the students' surprise, when they walk alongside her, Madame is repulsed by them. When reflecting on that experience, Kathy states that in life there comes "the moment when you realize that you really are different from them," meaning original humans (Ishiguro 36). Kathy says this in her characteristically prosaic voice, which indicates both her internalization as a second-class citizen, and her normalization of such treatment.

This sense of being different from people in the outside world is also communicated through various aspects of Hailsham education and culture. For example, the lessons that students receive about sex education is a clear indication for them to stay within their class, since Kathy speaks about the world outside as if the people in it are from a culture far removed. This division between herself and original humans is made particularly apparent by her continuous reference to original humans as "them" and clones as "us." In regard to assimilating to the norms of original humans, Kathy explains to the reader, "we had to behave like them. We had to respect the rules and treat sex as something pretty special" (63). Clone assimilation also manifests itself in the classes the clones have to take, one of which is referred to as Culture Briefing. The sessions involve students role playing various professions in the outside world, such as servers or police, so that they understand how to interact with people in roles they will never fill themselves.

Another keystone of Hailsham culture is the Sales, which is a place where students exchange tokens for items they want, often the artwork of classmates. This miniature economy is part of the reason that the other students bully Tommy, one of Kathy's best friends, and later her lover, so harshly. Since Tommy is not good at art, he cannot contribute to the Sales and is like a waste on the clone bartering system; it is a troubling utilitarian philosophy for the children to develop at such a young age. Granted, being primed to give away their art and function within an economic system

primes the clones to give away their organs later in life.

One of the most chilling moments in the novel is when the guardian Miss Lucy, who seems to be having a crisis of conscience, tells the students that their destinies are predetermined as donors. None of the students raise any objection in response because they have already accepted their roles in life. Oddly enough, Tommy finds it more distressing for Miss Lucy to rescind her claim that he need not be good at art than to tell him that his life is controlled by a system that she operates within and benefits from. Of course, Tommy's distress over being a poor artist is intimately linked with his feeling of being unable to perform properly in society. Tommy's later remorse over not having anything in Madame's Gallery aptly reveals how difficult it has been for him to try to fit within a certain sphere (i.e. art), which in turn serves as a microcosm of the pain the clones, estranged from greater English society, experience by committing themselves to the donation system.

In her essay comparing the text to the film adaptation of *Never Let Me Go*, Hatice Yurttas cites Ishiguro, stating that “the reason for the clones’ willing submission to the system is the social codes and their sense of belonging to a class” (Yurttas 10). Indeed, the clones place their social codes before their own agency. When Kathy takes Ruth, her other childhood friend who ails from a poor donation, and Tommy to see an abandoned ship, Ruth reinforces her identity as a clone by insisting that her purpose in life is to donate. She says to Tommy, “After all, it’s what we’re supposed to be doing, isn't it?” as an indication of her complete acceptance of the system that has already physically entrenched her within its clutches (Ishiguro 223).

Once separated from wider society, the clones divide themselves further via arbitrary differences, which are embedded in the mythologies of the Hailsham privilege. For example, Ruth’s distress over not being able to find her “possible,” the human that she is grafted from, in the town of Norfolk unearths tension between Kathy’s friend group and the couple Chrissie and Rodney, who are non-Hailsham graduates. The two groups experience an emotional distance as the couple seems to disingenuously console Ruth, who believes that her “possible” is the key to her identity. While reliving that moment, Kathy concludes that the couple was in fact “relieved that things had turned out the way they had” to avoid grappling with “this notion of theirs that there were all kinds of possibilities that were open to us Hailsham students that weren’t open to them” (163). It crystallizes in that moment

that the search for Ruth's "possible" is just a way for Chrissie and Rodney to get information about "deferrals," which are rumored postponements, apparently exclusive to Hailsham students, to becoming a carer for couples who are properly in love.

This internalization of class, while leading the clones to assist with their subjugation in the system by becoming carers, becomes even more toxic when they adopt the mentality of their oppressors. For example, Kathy looks down on carers who are not as successful as she is, such as when she refers to one carer as "a waste of space" (3). She finds comfort in the praise of guardians and hospital staff. Additionally, her complacency is strengthened by the clone equivalent of a promotion at work, which is being able to choose her own donors. Kathy quickly explains to readers, who she believes are non-Hailsham students, that "it's only for the last six years they've let me choose" to quell potential resentment and dispel the assumption that her choice in donors is derived from her Hailsham roots (4). The clones never acknowledge that these small acts of favoritism segregate them from one another socially, which is part of what prevents them from rebelling.

Within the confines of Yoshiwara, the courtesans developed their own sense of belonging to a class as well. As a world of its own, Yoshiwara had its own customs, language, and traditions that served to solidify the connections between its inhabitants. For example, the brothels were clearly influenced by imperial traditions; Yoshiwara was referred to as 'arinsu-koku' (country of the arinsu language) because the courtesan's dialect had a "distinctive sentence-ending" (Segawa 9).

The hierarchical system of the courtesans was also complex, and orchestrated as such in order for "its denizens [to be] self-complacent with their value system" (Segawa 7). At the top of the social order was the seasoned and most esteemed courtesan: the *tayū*. The *tayū* of Yoshiwara were like Hailsham students: the most ostensibly privileged class. More accurately, the *tayū* suffered fewer indignities than the average courtesan. A distinct benefit of being a *tayū* was that she did not have to sit in a lattice parlor during the day and be ogled by passerby through a screen in order to acquire clients (Fig. 1). The structure that separated courtesans from men walking the streets resembled the bars of animal cages, which fit the lens in which clients viewed them. A *tayū* could also reject clients by refusing a cup of sake at their initial meeting.

The opportunity to accept or reject clients, like Kathy's opportunity to select donors, might

initially incline one to diminish the harsh realities of the *tayū*'s life. However, such a status was not concrete. Courtesans had to visit the *ageya* (house of assignation) each day to meet with a client, and if no one showed, she would be at risk for demotion. This situation was known euphemistically as "grinding tea," which required her to pay out of her own funds on a clientless day (Segawa 80). Additionally, similarly to a Hailsham student, becoming a *tayū* was like winning a genetic lottery. A *kamuro* (teenager) would debut as a *tayu* upon becoming a full-fledged courtesan, and there was little chance for mobility for those who were not chosen. In addition to those hurdles, the *tayū* had to climb her way up the ranks for years in order to choose her own clients.

It was also well-known that many of the courtesans came from impoverished peasant families, who sold them in order to pay off debts to a *daimyo* (feudal lord). Thus, daughters might enter the bordellos as young as six years old, starting as attendants to sister courtesans, in order to learn their craft. The child's contract entailed ten years of indentured servitude, but due to the debt policies of Yoshiwara, most contracts carried on for many years afterward, and in some rare but tragic cases there were courtesans who were indebted for their entire lives. Additionally, it should be noted that courtesans had to pay part of their debt every single day and double on holidays known as *monbi*. A courtesan had to pay out of her own funds for her retinue and clothing as well. In essence, Yoshiwara women were irrevocably affected by the class in which they were born.

PANOPTICISM

While thinking about her early days at the Cottages, the transitional space between Hailsham and donation centers, Kathy testifies to her isolated and confined upbringing by commenting, "if you'd told me that within a year, I'd not only develop a habit of taking long solitary walks, but that I'd start learning to drive a car, I'd have thought you were mad" (Ishiguro 116). That sentiment should strike most readers as odd, considering that most people do such activities as adolescents and certainly find nothing radical about the experience. Additionally, when recounting the experience of Madame finding her alone in her room at Hailsham, Kathy comments as an aside, "it was a sort of rule we couldn't close dorm doors completely except when we were sleeping," indicating that surveillance is embedded in her conscientiousness as a backdrop to everyday life (71).

In regard to how the repetition of environment fosters normalization, Kelly Rich frames the influence of Hailsham on its graduates as its “poetics of space,” which is essentially the physical and psychological infrastructure of Hailsham itself (638). Hailsham’s infrastructure is defined by the guardians’ strategic divulgence of information to students over time, the parental role the guardians assume to prevent the clones from distressing over their origins, the superficially comforting boarding school environment, an apparent advocacy of the arts, and encouragement to minimize contact with the outside world. These qualities thus form Kathy’s “infrastructural consciousness,” or overall perception of Hailsham (Rich 634). Rich also argues for the potency of Hailsham’s marketing, claiming that “Hailsham’s emphasis on a kind, beautiful environment plays an even stronger role in [the clones’] repression than the euphemistic language” (633). This sentiment rings true in light of the fact that Kathy still considers herself to have been lucky as a Hailsham student after she has lost both Ruth and Tommy to donations.

Similarly, there was an infrastructural consciousness embedded in the everyday lives of Yoshiwara courtesans. By virtue of making their appointments at *ageyas* and entertaining high clientele, courtesans were already considered more privileged than the cheaper, unlicensed prostitutes. Additionally, in some cases, *tayū* had a one-room “suite,” an artificial display of prestige that inevitably invoked jealousy and competitiveness from lower-ranking courtesans. That is not to imply that the courtesans, particularly the *kamuro*, did not at times look to each other for support, since like the clones they had to forge familial ties with each other. Nevertheless, the system was inherently designed to create divisions that would incentivize each woman to work as hard as she could to climb the bordello ladder.

Yoshiwara courtesans and Hailsham students also parallel each other in terms of their long-term connections to their roots. A primary method through which the Yoshiwara recycled its workers was by former courtesans becoming *yarite* (retired courtesan). Essentially, *yarite* worked in conjunction with the operators in teahouses to supervise current courtesans. They were like carers with a guardian’s mindset. *Yarite* instructed the most promising *kamuro*, inculcating in her the social codes of Yoshiwara by teaching her in ways of deception and advising her against falling in love (Segawa 43). The *yarite* possessed a room at the top of the staircase where she could monitor the

activity below, which was quite a panoptical arrangement. Admittedly, the courtesans were accustomed to that heightened sense of surveillance in between their proprietors knowing all of their business and being merchandised to clients and passerby on a daily basis.

As a testament to the courtesans' sense of isolation, the Yoshiwara district was surrounded by a moat and could only be accessed via the "Bridge of Hesitation," which came to be known as such because potential clients would wait at the entrance, contemplating whether or not they wanted to spend hundreds of dollars for one night in the pleasure districts. Courtesans were also not allowed to leave the premises without accompaniment, which enforced their sense of belonging to the bordellos. While the courtesans arguably had a greater desire to leave their spaces than the clones, most of them became resigned to their fate, just as Tommy quelled his childhood outbursts.

THE CULTURED SLAVE

A significant talking point for Miss Emily, the former headmistress of Hailsham, in justifying the plight of the clones is that the clones have been able to produce art and learn about the literary canon, albeit they can never apply their knowledge outside of their circles. During Kathy and Tommy's visit to Miss Emily and Madame for a deferral request, Miss Emily insists, "You've had good lives. You're cultured" as condolence and encouragement (Ishiguro 256). Yet is being cultured enough to justify whether one's life is good or bad, especially when "cultured" is subjective? Another key element of Rich's essay is that Ishiguro's work is a "deliberation over the meaning-making potential of state infrastructures and whether their promises of cultural value actually sustain those whose lives are thoroughly instrumentalized" (633). Indeed, the pseudo-comfort that the English state aims to produce with its art initiative is certainly a failure in terms of emotional fulfillment for the clones past their childhoods.

The argument of an arts education has also been used in an attempt to glamorize courtesan livelihoods. The *tayū* were renowned for their adroitness in various art forms, including calligraphy, poetry, painting, music, and tea rituals. However, the courtesans learned these arts as a means to accentuate their charms and further appeal to clientele. The bordellos were not teaching these crafts because of a proto-feminist initiative to educate women, by any means. Additionally, within the realm

of Yoshiwara, the literary and artistic genres of *sharebon* (humorous stories), *senryū* (human haiku), and *kibyōshi* (picture-books) flourished among the literati. These works were born from men in artistic circles drinking sake and amusing themselves with music and other forms of entertainment. None of these art forms were a direct result of courtesan involvement, although a large portion of Edo works would later feature the courtesans. When education is a byproduct rather than a goal, it becomes even more difficult to justify the plight of both parties.

PUBLIC CONSCIOUSNESS

Miss Emily's rationale to Kathy about the acquiescence of English society to this clone-slave system is that "however uncomfortable people were about your existence, their overwhelming concern was for their own children" (258). Thus, the clones do not have proper representation in English society because they have been pushed to the back of public consciousness. This sentiment also suggests an inverse relationship between compassion and proximity in terms of human empathy. Karl Shaddox argues that the empathy Kathy cultivates through her direct address to the reader is a state that must be achieved individually, and he goes on to suggest that such a reason is why the guardians' attempt to evoke public sympathy has failed (14). This claim applies to Madame's revulsion at the sight of the clones, and her concession to Kathy that "we're all afraid of you," (264). This confession indicates that despite her sympathetic, humanitarian actions, Madame views the clones collectively rather than resonating with them on an intimate, personal level. Moreover, Madame's discrimination, which is initially softened by her activism, also leads the reader to question her and Miss Emily's intentions. Since Kathy and Tommy only receive information through the filter of the guardians' supposed goodwill, perhaps Miss Emily and Madame were never interested in having the clones be treated as equal to English citizens but rather less harshly than in their current state.

If English society othered the clones in such a way, then what was the public's consciousness in regard to Yoshiwara? One mode in which to consider this question is the *ukiyo-e* (woodblock print), championed by renowned commercial artist Kitagawa Utamaro. The Yoshiwara was rife with directories providing advertisements of courtesans, which would include a woodblock print along with a description of each woman. These prints detailed each courtesan's skillset and also made the viewer

privity to a bit of her personality as well.

Although it would be exhaustive to detail each series of *bijinga* (pictures of beautiful women), Utamaro contributed heavily to the floating world heritage. A notable series that he created was *Five Shades of Ink in the Northern Quarter*, which includes women from the whole spectrum of the sex industry using clothing, hairstyle, and expression to denote their rank (Nelson 40). The women are stereotyped in form; the highest-ranking courtesan studies as a means to communicate her intelligence and refinement. Her eyes are intent, her hair flows down her back, and she is fully clothed (Fig. 2). In contrast, the lowest-ranking *teppō* (moatside) prostitute looks nonchalantly at the ground with her breasts exposed (Fig. 3). The *teppō* would have had at least a few clients a night in comparison to the *tayu*'s one, and her services were much cheaper. Additionally, *teppō* were believed to be much more likely than *tayu* to harbor venereal diseases.

While the physiognomic representations might be considered reductive and misleading to the modern viewer, David Bell argues that “[w]hile Utamaro’s representations of the women of the Yoshiwara seem idealized, and perhaps rather sanitized, they are consistent with what he would have encountered there” (277). Considering that Utamaro was among the literati, he benefited from the illusion of Yoshiwara. As a visitor, he was paying for the ritualized glamour of the bordellos. Consequently, neither he nor his fellow artists were obligated to rip any seams as courtesans were reduced to sex objects within the fabric of Edo culture.

CONCLUSION: DONATIONS TO THE RED-LIGHT DISTRICT

The literary and historical examples of romanticized slavery serve as a microcosm for how oppressive systems can be reinforced and perpetuated in the modern day. In *Never Let Me Go*, the privileged ones are English citizens, refusing to slack their grip on their advantage. This reluctance to alter the system then devolves into trying to justify the subjugation of other groups, as illustrated by how the Hailsham clones had a physically comfortable upbringing, and the courtesans in their cultural prestige had objectively nicer living quarters than that of the impoverished family that sold them. The cost of these perceived advantages, orchestrated lives, was of course much too high, but these factors do muddle the division between utopian and dystopian livelihoods. Similar to how the

the clones repress their dread over their impending doom through making art, the artists of the floating world found a respite from the mundanity and social conservatism of everyday life by obscuring the darkness of forced prostitution through alluring prints.

As demonstrated here, the relativity of privilege and freedom can inadvertently strengthen oppressive systems, such as the Hailsham graduates internalizing themselves as lucky for their upbringing, and former courtesans often becoming *yarite*. The use of incentives can be weaponized to quell public objection as well, as noted by the guardians' self-satisfaction with providing Hailsham students with an education, and the glorification of courtesan beauties in Edo works. The perceptions of each group's situation are also subsumed within a lattice of social and cultural norms, and in the case of the courtesans, politics and economics as well. All of those aforementioned factors, while serving to normalize the plight of each group, thus become pillars for the exploitative systems that entrap each party.

When considering that dystopianism is a continuous preoccupation for the advantaged and a reality for the disadvantaged, readers will find modern donors operating within the ideological systems that they contribute to, or worse, benefit from. Even in the wake of technological advancement, society will likely continue to harbor its feudalistic tendency to segregate and subjugate some groups for the benefit of others. The propensity for slavery to move fluidly between physical and psychological states, exacerbated by class divisions, makes it difficult to peel back its veneer of beauty and cultivation when such a form arises. In light of this, utopianism and dystopianism should not be viewed through dichotomous lenses, but rather as multidimensional entities working in tandem with one another through the lives of those they encompass past, present, and future.

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APPENDIX



Fig. 1. Utamaro, Kitagawa. *Yoshiwara Picture Book: Annual Events*. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, mfa.org/collections/object/seir%C3%B4-ehon-nenj%C3%BB-gy%C3%B4ji-yoshiwara-picture-book-annual-events-4989781800, Museo del Prado, Madrid.



Fig. 2. Utamaro, Kitagawa. *High-Ranked Courtesan*, from the series *Five Shades of Ink in the Northern Quarter (Hokkoku goshiki-zumi) (Oiran)* 1789–1800. Art Institute of Chicago. artic.edu/artworks/89354/high-ranked-courtesan-from-the-series-five-shades-of-ink-in-the-northern-quarter-hokkoku-goshiki-zumi-oiran.



Fig. 3. Utamaro, Kitagawa. *A Low-Class Prostitute (Gun [teppo])*, from the series “Five Shades of Ink in the Northern Quarter” (“Hokkoku goshiki-zumi”). 1789–1800. Art Institute of Chicago. artic.edu/artworks/89356/a-low-class-prostitute-gun-teppo-from-the-series-five-shades-of-ink-in-the-northern-quarter-hokkoku-goshiki-zumi.