Posthumous Autobiographies: Suicide and Fiction in Yukio Mishima and Osamu Dazai

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My research focuses on suicide in twentieth-century Japanese literature as a reaction to the nation’s rapid modernization efforts as it quickly transitioned from a feudalist state to its current position as an ultra-modernist, technologically driven economic powerhouse in the post-World War II international arena. My research focuses on two novels, No Longer Human (1948) and Runaway Horses (1969), and attempts to trace the protagonists’ suicides within the larger context of grand societal and cultural changes, showcasing unique cases of individual alienation during a unique setting in world history.