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The Construction of Ryunosuke AKUTAGAWA's novel *Spinning Gears*

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This paper discusses the content of the novel *Spinning Gears* (JAPAN, 1927) by Ryunosuke AKUTAGAWA (1892-1927), one of the most famous Japanese novelists. Assessments of *Spinning Gears* are divided. Some researchers consider this work as “non-plotted novel”, but others claim that this work is consciously composed as a fictional literary production. We will point out four distinctions of the work in order to reconsider those assessments.

First, we will indicate that some symbolic motives in the work — in particular the raincoat, the husband of the protagonist's sister, the airship, the mole and semitransparent spinning gears — are calculated

to have the effects they do. AKUTAGAWA intentionally put them into his work. Second, we will verify that the protagonist of *Spinning Gears* has a unique subjective viewpoint. Seen by the protagonist, any motive in *Spinning Gears* loses its own meaning and comes to symbolize the protagonist's fear of death. Third, we will prove that any episode in the work has no relationship of cause and effect. The work consists of many literary fragments that are independent of one another. This independence is the character that the words "non-plotted novel" applies perfectly to. In conclusion, we should insist that *Spinning Gears* is composed to multiply the protagonist's fear.

As stated above, AKUTAGAWA married his excellent literary technique with the literary style of Naoya SHIGA(1883-1971) and Jules Renard(1864-1910). *Spinning Gears* is one of the greatest works that AKUTAGAWA managed to realize this marriage most successfully.