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On the Identity of Nameless Characters in Abe Kobo`s Novels

This paper focuses on characters without names who are confused and struggling with their collective identity in the fictions of Japanese post-war writer Abe Kobo. He not only creates protagonists without names or with initials, but also reflects on groupism and individual existence in post-war Japan by depriving characters of names, as in "The Wall – The Crime of Mr. Karma" where the protagonist loses his name and thus everything, or by having them renamed, as in "Dendrocacalia Crepidifolia" where the transformed "Mr. common" is named a plant by the representative of state power and in "Secret Rendezvous" where "I" accepts the codename M-73F to give up the name and self to a monitoring system. These works are rooted in the 1950s, when there was no possibility of free development and self-affirmation in a political climate of disillusionment and repression, and in the period of rapid economic growth and modernization after the 1960s, when lonely and powerless people longed to escape from urban life but without a hometown to return to. And "The Red Cocoon" and "The Flood" warn that the lack of individual identity will lead to the rebellion of the crowds and the collapse of society. The reflections on names and identity reflects the influence of Abe's ideological shifts from existentialism to surrealism and then to communism on his pioneering works.