

SEA CHANGE:
JAPAN'S NEW WAVE OF FEMALE FILM DIRECTORS

by
COLLEEN A. LAIRD

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Department of East Asian
Languages and Literatures
and the Graduate School of the University of Oregon
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

December 2012

DISSERTATION APPROVAL PAGE

Student: Colleen Allison Laird

Title: Sea Change: Japan's New Wave of Female Film Directors

This dissertation has been accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in the Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures by:

Steven Brown	Chair
Daisuke Miyao	Member
Kaori Idemaru	Member
Michael Aronson	Member
Kathleen Karlyn	Outside Member

and

Kimberly Andrews Espy	Vice President for Research and Innovation Dean of the Graduate School
-----------------------	---

Original approval signatures are on file with the University of Oregon Graduate School.

Degree awarded December 2012

© 2012 Colleen Allison Laird

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Colleen Allison Laird

Doctor of Philosophy

Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures

December 2012

Title: Sea Change: Japan's New Wave of Female Film Directors

Since the mid-2000s, there has been a significant increase in female directors in Japan.

Organized around the central feature of this emerging wave, this dissertation is a multifaceted project that combines historical research with reception studies, industry studies, gender studies, and formal analysis of films and marketing paratexts. In exploring the connections between film production, reception, exhibition, and auteur personas, I argue that the recent emergence of women into commercial cinema is fueled by gendered marketing tactics that seek to target contemporary female consumers. This focused gendering of auteur, product, exhibition space, and presumed spectator is changing the landscape of cinema in Japan, a process some refer to as “feminization.” My dissertation rethinks the history of Japanese cinema with regards to the relationship between filmmakers as gendered bodies, distribution companies and marketing as patriarchal power structures, and the capital wielding demographic of female spectators as influential, but often neglected, consumers.

CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME OF AUTHOR: Colleen Allison Laird

GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOLS ATTENDED:

University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, U.S.A.
Tsukuba University, Tsukuba, Japan
Inter-University Center for Japanese Language Studies, Yokohama, Japan
Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan
Macalester College, St. Paul, Minnesota, U.S.A.

DEGREES AWARDED:

Doctor of Philosophy, East Asian Languages and Literatures, 2012, University of Oregon
Master of Arts, East Asian Languages and Literatures, 2006, University of Oregon
Bachelor of Arts, Biology and Asian Studies, 2002, Macalester College

AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST:

Japanese Cinema
Auteur studies; industry, reception, and exhibition studies; genre studies.
Film Studies
History; distribution, exhibition, production, marketing; formal analysis; paratextual analysis.
Feminist Criticism and Gender Studies
Female film directors, female spectators, women in industry; feminist film analysis; gendered demographics in film markets.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Lecturer of Japanese Studies, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2011-present
Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures
Graduate Teaching Assistant, University of Oregon, 2009-2010
Department of English: Film Studies
Graduate Teaching Assistant, University of Oregon, 2005-2007; 2008-2009

Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures

GRANTS, AWARDS, AND HONORS:

Norman Brown Graduate Fellowship, College of Arts and Sciences, University of Oregon, 2011-2012

Monbukagakusho Research Student Scholarship, Ministry of Education, Japan, 2010-2011

Graduate Teaching Fellowship, English, Film Studies, University of Oregon, 2009-2010

Japan American Friendship Fund Award, East Asian Languages and Literatures, University of Oregon, 2009-2010

Graduate Teaching Fellowship, East Asian Languages and Literatures, University of Oregon, 2005-2006; 2007; 2008-2009

Center for Pacific and Asian Studies Small Professional Grant, University of Oregon, 2006; 2007; 2009

East Asian Languages and Literatures Department Travel Award, University of Oregon, 2009; 2007

U.S. Department of Education Tuition Scholarship, Inter-University Center for Japanese Language Studies, Yokohama, Japan

Foreign Language and Area Studies Award, University of Oregon, 2006-2007; 2007-2008

Bruce M. Abrams Graduate Award for Best Paper in LGBTQ Studies, Women's and Gender Studies Program, University of Oregon, 2007

Alan Wolfe Memorial Scholarship, University of Oregon, 2005-2006; 2007

Beale Scholarship, Comparative Literature, University of Oregon, 2004-2005

Graduate Research Fellowship, Comparative Literature, University of Oregon, 2004-2005

PUBLICATIONS:

Laird, Colleen (2013). "Directors Served à la Carte: The Gendered Promotion Campaigns of Trendy Production Company Paradise Café." *Frames*.

Laird, Colleen (2012). "Kawase Naomi's Mogari no Mori." *The World Directory of Cinema: Japan, 2nd Edition*. John Berra. Intellect Ltd.

Laird, Colleen (2012). "Nishikawa Miwa's Dear Doctor." *The World Directory of Cinema: Japan, 2nd Edition*. John Berra. Intellect Ltd.

Laird, Colleen (2012). "Nishikawa Miwa's Yureru." *The World Directory of Cinema: Japan, 2nd Edition*. John Berra. Intellect Ltd.

Laird, Colleen (2012). "Oigami Naoko." *The World Directory of Cinema: Japan, 2nd Edition*. John Berra. Intellect Ltd.

Laird, Colleen (2011). "Star gazing: Sight lines and studio brands in post-war Japanese film posters." *The Journal of Japanese and Korean Cinema*. 3(2): 95-115.

Laird, Colleen (2010). "Japanese Cinema and the Classroom." *Jump Cut*. (52, Summer)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is with the deepest humility and the greatest gratitude that I would like to thank the people who made this project possible. Kaori Idemaru provided a tremendous service to me by being a part of this dissertation. Kathleen Karlyn taught me the very foundations of applied film theory and sequence analysis. Her work on film feminisms and post-feminisms has been a model for my own thoughts, albeit on a cinema from a very different part of the world—thank you for years of enthusiasm, grace, and guidance. Without Mike Aronson I would have never looked at exhibition spaces, exhibition practices, or spectatorship, and I certainly wouldn't have known what to do with them. Daisuke Miyao teaches his students to look at cinema in context, encouraging historical, industrial, economic, cultural, and technical perspectives into the study of film. I cannot thank him enough for his training and perpetual kindness. It was my absolute privilege to work with Steven Brown who unflinchingly believed in me and my ideas from the very beginning. He is a mentor, a font of wisdom, and an invaluable source of strength and patience. I could not have been more fortunate.

This dissertation would not have been tenable without the financial support I received from the UO Center for Asian and Pacific Studies, both from their small professional grants and two years of the Foreign Language and Area Studies grant. Many thanks to Lori O'Halloran who makes that happen. I received support from my home department, EALL, both in the form of grants and awards as well as several years of remunerated teaching experience. Most of my research abroad was funded by the Monbukagakusho Research Student Scholarship and was conducted in the excellent

libraries of Tsukuba University, Waseda University, Tokyo University, and the National Film Center as well as at the Tokyo Metropolitan Library. I am grateful to Yamazaki Momoko, director of the Dear Woman program at the Nihon Eiga Senmon Channel who not only took the time to answer my questions in a personal interview, but gave me transcripts of director interviews and copies of the station's marketing materials.

The Inter-University Center for Advanced Japanese Studies played a pivotal role in my ability to conduct research in Japanese. I am eternally grateful to Aoki Soichi for his excellent tutelage at IUC, warm heart, and seemingly endless patience. I researched and wrote most of the dissertation while away from the University of Oregon. Leah Foy deserves special thanks for making that a functional reality.

I am indebted to my family and friends. Thank you to my parents who gave me opportunities they never had and taught me the value of thinking differently. Sean McKelvey and Koki Okabe are my home away from home and deep in my heart. Gordon Hage, Jesse Morris, and Uriah McKinney are the most generous friends an impoverished graduate student could have. Brendan Culleton, Mark Retzlaf, Leslie Rutberg, Katherine Barton, Irina Shport, Miwako Okigami, Rosie Meindl, Drew Beard, and Patrick Terry all put in very late nights. Anne Helen Peterson came through the light of the Internet in the darkest hours. Lindsay Rebecca Nelson will always be my comrade-in-gender-arms. Lori Morimoto is a true source of friendship, wisdom, and collaboration. Sarah Pradt started it all. Finally, I have oceans of love and thanks for my partner, Josh Fisher. He is my very best friend, a model scholar, and my favorite feminist. He listened to every word I wrote. Many times.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION: ONE STEP FORWARD AND TWO STEPS BACK	1
A Discipline and Its Canon.....	5
A New Generation.....	16
Chapter Descriptions	21
Notes.....	25
II. THE PIONEERS	26
Sakane Tazuko—Japan's First Female Film Director—1936.....	29
Tanaka Kinuyo—Japan's First Female Film Director, Again—1953	43
Takano Etsuko—Japan's First Female Theater Manager—1974.....	60
Haneda Sumiko and the Documentarists: On the Margins of a Men's Monopoly.....	67
Mind the Gap	77
Notes.....	81
III. GENRES, GENDERS, AND GOING TO THE MOVIES	85
Asakusa Was For Everybody: A Case Study.....	90
The Josei Eiga.....	103
Whither the Josei Kankyaku?	115
Judging a Book by Its Cover.....	130
I Can't See You If You Can't See Me.....	161
Notes	167
IV. WHAT A GIRL WANTS: SEA CHANGE AND THE GIRL'S STYLE CINEMA.....	170

Chapter	Page
Some Restrictions Apply. Please See Participating Theater for Details	174
Let's Go Shopping: The Feminization of Film Exhibition	196
The F1-Sou and Girl's Style Cinema: The Feminization of Film Content	226
Thinking Pink.....	246
Notes.....	252
V. A NEW WAVE.....	254
Introducing a New Generation.....	255
Nishikawa Miwa	256
Ogigami Naoko	262
Tanada Yuki.....	268
Ninagawa Mika	278
Iguchi Nami	289
Selling a Female Filmmaker: The Opposing Director Texts of Nishikawa Miwa and Ogigami Naoko.....	299
Japanese Cinema: Strong Enough for a Man, pH Balanced for Working Women.....	334
Notes.....	344
VI. IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER.....	346
Looking Across Space and Time	349
Through the Looking Glass	360
Woman as Mise-en-scene, Fixed in Post.....	374
Kita	384
Notes.....	386

Chapter	Page
APPENDICES:	387
A. NISHIKAWA MIWA DIRECTOR FILMOGRAPHY	387
B. OGIGAMI NAOKO DIRECTOR FILMOGRAPHY	388
C. TANADA YUKI DIRECTOR FILMOGRAPHY.....	389
D. NINAGAWA MIKA DIRECTOR FILMOGRAPHY	391
E. IGUCHI NAMI DIRECTOR FILMOGRAPHY.....	392
REFERENCES CITED	393

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Frame grab from Tanaka Kinuyo's film <i>Koibumi (Love Letter, 1953)</i>	1
2. Frame grab from Tanaka Kinuyo's film <i>Koibumi (Love Letter, 1953)</i>	4
3. Sakane Tazuko.	30
4. Tanaka Kinuyo.	44
5. Takano Etsuko.	61
6. Haneda Sumiko.	70
7. Artist's rendition of Asakusa at the end of the Meiji period.	94
8. Approach to Senso-ji in Asakusa at the end of the Taisho period.	94
9. Photograph of the Asakusa Rokku.	95
10. Photograph of the Asakusa Rokku.	95
11. Photograph of the Asakusa Broadway in 2010.	102
12. Photograph of the Asakusa Broadway in 2010.	102
13. An elderly man peruses film promo stills outside a small theater.	120
14. In 1955 male spectators outnumbered female spectators in every age group.	124
15. Between 1955 and 1957 male spectators outnumbered female spectators.	125
16. Beginning in 1958, the percentage of female spectators steadily decreased.	125
17. American film posters from the 1950s and 1960s.	136
18. Poster for <i>Tokyo monogatari (Tokyo Story, 1953)</i>	139
19. Images of trading card pack sets of AKB48.	142
20. Poster for <i>Yukiguni (Snow Country, 1965)</i>	145

Figure	Page
21. Shōchiku film posters from the 1950s.....	154
22. Shōchiku film posters from the 1960s.....	155
23. Nikkatsu film posters from the 1950s and 1960s.....	156
24. Tōei film posters from the 1950s and 1960s.....	156
25. Shin-Tōhō film posters from the 1950s.....	157
26. Daiei film posters from the 1950s and 1960s	157
27. Photographs of women in 1959 and 1960	162
28. Typical Girl's Style display case in a small Tsutaya branch store	174
29. Number of cinema screens in Japan by year from 1955 to 2010.....	183
30. Images of prominent <i>meigaza</i>	186
31. Iwanami Hall.....	190
32. Images of prominent mini-theaters	195
33. The Ebisu Garden Place as seen from the Tokyo Tower	198
34. The Ebisu Garden Place area map.....	199
35. Photographs of the Ebisu Garden Place	203
36. Photographs of the Ebisu Garden Cinema.....	206
37. Number of Cinema Screens in Japan from 2000-2010	211
38. Number of tickets sold in Japanese theaters between 1955-2010 and 1990-2010.....	213
39. Interiors of the Warner Mycal Theater in Shinyurigaoka, Kanagawa Prefecture.....	216
40. Interior and exterior photographs of Shōchiku's Shinjuku Picadilly Theater.	219
41. Various advertisements for Ladies' Day specials	223

Figure	Page
42. Sample of the Shinjuku Picadilly's online film calendar	224
43. Survey of women between the ages of 20 and 34 and “Ladies’ Day” discounts ...	224
44. Advertisement for the Shinjuku Picadilly's Autumn Special Present Campaign	225
45. Survey results of expenditures by women between 20 and 34	228
46. Percentages of males who go to the movies from 2000-2005	228
47. Percentages of females who go to the movies from 2000-2005	229
48. Posters for films targeting the F1-sou	233
49. The cover of the December 2006 issue of FRAU magazine	246
50. Biographical data and promotional photo of director Nishikawa Miwa	257
51. Marketing <i>chirashi</i> for Ninagawa Mika's films	262
52. Director Oigami Naoko holding the script to her 2010 film <i>Toiretto</i>	263
53. Marketing <i>chirashi</i> for Oigami Naoko's films	268
54. Director Tanada Yuki on the set of <i>Oretachi ni asu wa naissu</i>	269
55. Paratexts for Tanada Yuki’s films	277
56. Self portrait of photographer and filmmaker Ninagawa Mika	278
57. Marketing <i>chirashi</i> for Ninagawa Mika's films	289
58. Iguchi Nami discusses her films and career	290
59. Marketing <i>chirashi</i> for Iguchi Nami's films	298
60. Advert card for Oigami Naoko's film <i>Megane (Glasses, 2007)</i>	308
61. Advert card for Oigami Naoko's film <i>Megane (Glasses, 2007)</i>	308
62. Examples of <i>chirashi</i> , front and back.....	309

Figure	Page
63. <i>Panfu</i>	310
64. Poster and <i>chirashi</i> images for Ogigami films	317
65. Poster designs for <i>Koi wa go shichi go (Love is 5-7-5)</i> and <i>Swing Girls</i>	319
66. A variety of paratexts selling the Ogigami brand	321
67. A variety of paratexts selling the Ogigami brand	325
68. Paratexts for the Ogigami brand	327
69. Paratextual images promoting Ogigami's film <i>Toiretto (Toilet)</i>	328
70. Poster designs for <i>Tokyo Oasis</i> and <i>Shiawase no pan (Happiness Bread)</i>	329
71. Images of director Nishikawa Miwa in <i>Shinekon Monthly</i>	337
72. Screen shot of the website for Dear Woman: Women Who Make Film series	337
73. Images used to promote Japanese female film directors	342
74. Frame grabs from Ninagawa Mika's film <i>Sakuran (2007)</i>	354
75. Frame grabs from Ninagawa Mika's film <i>Sakuran (2007)</i>	355
76. Frame grabs from Iguchi Nami's film <i>Inuneko (2004)</i>	370
77. Frame grabs from Ogigami Naoko's film <i>Megane (Glasses, 2007)</i>	380

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: ONE STEP FORWARD AND TWO STEPS BACK

Central to any definition of women's cinema is recognition of the complex nature of film viewing, and of the woman viewer as, in Rich's words, the 'ultimate dialectician.' Such recognition is particularly imperative for feminist film criticism. Women's cinema and feminist criticism: The work of the filmmaker and the work of the critic are substantially different, and 'women's' and 'feminist' do not mean the same thing, even though feminism is the attempt to theorize female experience into modes of resistance and action. It is the work of criticism to make connections: between the different contexts that define film—production, exhibition, reception; and between cinema and the socio-historical context in which it is produced and received.

Judith Mayne (40)

We have seen this moment countless times before (see Figure 1). Many have lived it. Two lovers face each other on a station platform and a train is getting ready to



Figure 1. Frame grab from Tanaka Kinuyo's film *Koibumi* (*Love Letter*, 1953). Characters Reikichi (left) and Michiko (right) reunite on a train platform after five years of separation.

leave, but they saw each other just in time. The year is 1953 and the color palette is black and white.

This scene from Tanaka Kinuyo's first directed film *Koibumi* (*Love Letter*, 1953) begins with one of melodrama's staples: a chase. Reikichi (played by Mori Masayuki) works with his friend Naoto (Uno Jukichi) in a small ad hoc shop set in post-war Shibuya, Tokyo. The two are Japanese/English translators; they eek out a living by the "strange business" of translating love letters between Tokyo's postwar *pan pan* girls and American GIs.¹ The occupation and its context, facilitating relationships between young Japanese women and members of the American military, is a considerable sore spot for bachelors Reikichi and Naoto, but they do what they must in order to get by (not unlike the *pan pan* girls around them). Reikichi in particular is troubled by these international liaisons that seem to mock his own unrequited longing for childhood friend Michiko, who he has not seen in five years. Due to the chaos of war and its aftermath, he doesn't even know if she is still alive.

While brooding in the shop's back room one afternoon, Reikichi overhears a conversation between Naoto and a customer who has come to pick up a translated letter. After she leaves, Reikichi puzzles over the exchange and realizes that the woman must have been Michiko. He rushes out into the street to look for her, but she is already gone. After inquiring briefly for details from Naoto, he rushes down the street, bolstered by orchestral strings that strike a pensive undertone of foreboding: will he find her before she is gone again, possibly for good? The camera follows Reikichi as he runs through the Shibuya's busy thoroughfares and back alleys, all the way to the station. He joins the rush-hour flow, making his way through a sea of people out onto the train platform. The train is about to leave, but he calls out Michiko's name. Already on-board, she looks out the window, sees Reikichi, and struggles to make her way out the train door against more

than a dozen passengers still pushing their way inside. Despite the current of people, they force their way upstream toward each other. Finally they meet face to face, standing before the camera in profile, bathed in bright light. The orchestra strikes a sweet chord before yielding to the soothing strains of a single harp. Reunited at long last.

Then a curious thing happens. We linger on the couple as they look deep into each other's eyes for a moment before the train door shuts in front of us (see Figure 2). We can still see the couple through the window, but it is now apparent that we are not on the platform with the couple. Rather, the camera is in the train. The train begins to move, and us with it, camera fixed in a static shot straight ahead. The two pass out of sight. As the train moves forward, the narrative then turns backward; the scene dissolves to a series of key scenes in Michiko's (mostly pre-war) life, events of the past retold from her glamour lit and overtly feminized personal history. In a moment, the film's narrative turns on its head; we are transported out of the thus far male-dominated plot, in which we have sympathized with war veteran Reikichi, and into the life history of the male protagonist's object of desire, war victim Michiko. In a manner of speaking, the train transports us to *her* subjectivity.

Much of the narrative of *Koibumi* falls within the familiar patterns, bordering on clichés, of the post-war Japanese melodrama. The screenplay, after all, was written by Kinoshita Keisuke, a master of melodramatic imagination: e.g. *Nijūshi no hitomi* (24 Eyes), *Yorokobi mo kanashimi mo ikutoshitsuki* (Times of Joy and Sorrow), *Futari de aruita iku haru aki* (The Seasons We Walked Together). As was *en vogue* at the time, the trials of the war and the toll it took on the people of Japan is told in *Koibumi* through the framework of women's projected suffering. Michiko loses moral, social, and economic

status as a direct result of the war, and the film is not shy in finger pointing that the decisions of men as responsible. And yet, despite the melodrama formula and its telltale social moralizing, there are unusual and special moments in the film, as in the scene described above. Moreover, the film holds a special place in film history—it is the earliest extant work by a commercial female filmmaker. However, you will find little on the works or experiences of director Tanaka Kinuyo, who also holds rank as one of Japan’s most beloved film stars, in scholarship on Japanese cinema. Rather, she, and other women directors like her, have until now been roundly written out of history.



Figure 2. Frame grab from Tanaka Kinuyo’s film *Koibumi* (*Love Letter*, 1953). The train door has shut in front of the camera and we are about to travel back in time.

Sea Change: Japan’s New Wave of Female Film Directors addresses this precise scholarly lacuna. In order to do so, we must we must begin by going back in time. We must position our lens in new and unusual places. We must board a train that takes us backward in narrative in order to deliver us forward in time so that we may start to see things from a different perspective.

A Discipline and Its Canon

Both Darrel William Davis (*Reigniting Japanese Tradition with Hana-Bi*) and Yoshimoto Mitsuhiro (*The Difficulty of Being Radical; Kurosawa*) have problematized the trajectory of Japanese cinema scholarship and criticism in the West as largely shaped by the work of three foundingfathers: Donald Richie, Noël Burch, and David Bordwell.

Donald Richie is perhaps the most cited critic and authorial voice on Japanese film, as well as the most prolific. He co-wrote the seminal book *The Japanese Film* in collaboration with Joseph Anderson. Richie's writings feature his concepts of presentational (cinema that portrays imaginary ideal settings and social structures that emphasize stylization) and representational (cinema that reflects reality) styles in Japanese film. According to Richie, Japanese filmmakers have very little concern for realism and prefer to express themselves through the presentational mode, constructing the world around them as they would like it to be, rather than as it is (*A Hundred Years of Japanese Cinema* 11). As such, Richie, drawing from a humanist standpoint, argues that elements of the Japanese national character can be found in the aesthetics of Japanese cinema because the presentational style plays on attributes of the Japanese cultural ideal. Richie's legacy in Japanese film scholarship builds on this humanist perspective, leading to the assessment of Japanese cultural products as reflective of a homogenous collectivist Japanese society. Yoshimoto argues that this field of inquiry problematically led to general claims regarding the "Japanese Mind" (*Kurosawa* 10). As a result, Japanese films became an object of study because, as humanist scholar David Desser argues, "of what they reveal of the Japanese character" (11). Though Richie has recently reversed the

position laid out earlier in his career by his recent argument that “there was...no Japanese essence awaiting liberation by a few individual filmmakers” (*A Hundred Years of Japanese Cinema*,11), he still views cinema as reflective of cultural value and characteristics, albeit acknowledging that those might be constructed rather than intrinsically determined. Davis describes Richie’s work as “reflectionist,” due to “the assumption that film reflects preexisting cultures” and “culture determines artistic expressions like cinema” (62).

Seeing what he perceived to be the decline of original or innovative cinema in the West, Noël Burch’s goal in *To the Distant Observer: Form and Meaning in the Japanese Cinema* was to identify the “essential difference between the dominant modes of Western and Japanese cinema” (11). The main project in *To the Distant Observer* is to identify and categorize Western filmmaking structures, particularly the Classical Hollywood Cinema system, through constructive comparison with Japanese cinema as an aesthetic Other. As a result, Burch’s work set up a dichotomous relationship between East and West in cinema studies. Davis argues that for Burch, “Japanese cinema is special...because it relates in arresting ways to Western cinema. Japanese cinema is diametrically opposed to Western film because Japanese signifying practices pose a material critique of Western logic, logocentrism, and aesthetics” (63). Burch set the stage for further applications of film theory in the study of Japanese cinema (as opposed to the more historical approach of Richie), but with his oppositional approach also set the standard for the study of Japanese film in perpetual reference to Hollywood cinema. Yoshimoto cites the poststructuralist approach Burch takes in *The Distant Observer* as the

origin of two types of film study: scholars who criticize Burch's decontextualized fantasies regarding Japanese traditions and culture as a act of Orientalism tend to eschew theory in favor of historical context, and scholars who defend Burch's approach disregard context in favor of cross-cultural analysis (*Kurosawa* 23) .

David Bordwell, most well known in film studies for his groundbreaking work on Classical Hollywood Cinema, approached Japanese cinema study from a neo-formalist perspective. Like Burch, he also set about analyzing Japanese film in contradistinction to Hollywood cinema, using what Davis calls a "dialogic framework" or "cinema as interaction" (Davis 63). Unlike Burch, he saw Japanese cinema as constructed by trends in the present, rather than via tradition. For example, in his auteur study of Ozu Yasujirō, *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*, Bordwell defines Ozu as both a modernist and the "most Japanese" director because his works stands in greatest contrast to the techniques of Classical Hollywood Cinema. As such, he must be both politically resisting the Classical Hollywood style and decidedly not American. While in his many works on Japanese cinema Bordwell is concerned with cultural context, the context of his own work is in relation to a comparative approach stemming from his thorough analysis of Classical Hollywood form. As such, Japanese cinema, in a dialectical relationship with American cinema, is studied in relation to a presumed dominant cinema, rather than on its own terms.

These three scholars, Richie from the 1960s onward, Burch in the 1970s, and Bordwell in the 1980s, have been tremendously influential in constructing the field of Japanese cinema studies in the West. Though they are at times at odds with one another,

between them they facilitated methods of interpretation and analysis that formed the foundation of the discipline. Their contribution is invaluable, but not unproblematic. Their texts also, at times, encourage essentialism of Japanese cinema as representative of a unique but homogenous aesthetic of artistic expression reflective of national character (as argued by Davis and Yoshimoto). Additionally, the framework of their very studies structured a method of inquiry that positions Japanese cinema as an object of study bound by its status as alternative to Hollywood. Moreover, the works do not consider Japanese cinema in context and largely ignore the importance of industry operations, historical conditions, spectator demographics and response, the economic nuts and bolts of making and selling films, and the important role that gender plays in each.

In recent years, there has emerged rigorous scholarship in the field by academics who are writing extensively, both to revise and broaden established history and theory. Since the foundational texts have been the subject of much debate, there seems to be a movement now to approach Japanese film *in its own right* and not as a ‘cinema as mirror’ (as Davis puts it) or with a Hollywood alternative use value.² Scholars writing in English in the field have turned back to early Japanese film history and are producing substantial texts that deconstruct, rework, and open the canon from beyond its foundations (e.g. Standish; Miyao; Wada-Marciano; High; Gerow; Nygren; Baskett). Many of them, in addition to a host of others, have also extended a hand into criticism of contemporary film, generally from the approach of auteur and genre studies. Indeed, throughout the 1990s and the early 2000s, scholars and critics alike began to discuss with increasing frequency the idea of a “New Japanese Cinema” backed by the emergence of a

new generation hailing primarily from the V-cinema industry.³ And yet it was in consideration of the “new” Japanese cinema that the canon of the “old” Japanese cinema began to show considerable signs of instability.

The phrase “new Japanese Cinema” (sometimes “new Japanese film”) has been in use since at least the 1960s to publicize relatively recently released films making the rounds of international festivals, art houses, and retail markets.⁴ However, New Japanese Cinema with a capital “N” surfaced to designate a grouping of films that perhaps shared something more than just being “recent.” The application of this term is problematic because, as I will discuss, it has an amorphous definition and slippery meaning among journalists, critics, scholars, and publicists alike. To wit, there is not yet a consensus in terms of dates, content, or style. “New Japanese Cinema” as a term is also historically confusing. Its predecessor, the Japanese New Wave (*nuberu bagu*), is clearly used to designate a movement by a collective of studio-trained, indie filmmakers from the 1950s to the 1970s including Oshima Nagisa, Imamura Shohei, and Suzuki Seijun. Indeed, aware of this, some have even resorted to using the phrases “Japan’s New New Wave” and the “New Japanese New Wave” (Stevens; Ko; Bingham; Leung).

High profile film critics Tom Mes and Jasper Sharp, co-editors of the Japanese cinema website www.midnighteye.com, take the auteur approach in their book *The Midnight Eye Guide to New Japanese Film* (Mes and Sharp). Mes and Sharp claim the book is “an attempt to give contemporary Japanese film its due as well as an attempt to fill a gap” (resultant from the end of the New Wave) by featuring a “new generation of filmmakers” emerging in the 1990s. Aside from the last half of the book (which is

comprised of reviews of individual films collectively entitled “The Other Players”), each chapter is constructed around directors and their respective works, combining historical information with insightful reviews and interpretive analysis. Structuring their book in this way, however, Mes and Sharp do not attempt to define New Japanese Film in any theoretical sense (or even by shared characteristics) as there is no effort to connect the directors and their work to one another. The main feature of this version of New Japanese Cinema, then, is purely temporal. And yet, even in this sense, there is an added element of confusion within the grouping. The book begins with chapters on Suzuki Seijun and Imamura Shōhei (two New Wave directors) followed by Fukasaku Kinji (perhaps most celebrated for his film *Jigi naki tataikai* (*Battles Without Honor and Humanity*, 1973)). Although these directors have made films in the past two decades, their inclusion in this auteur-structured collective, along with other directors who have actively been making films since the 1970s, may constitute a kind of continuous narrative of Japanese film direction. However, this structure ultimately undermines the attempt to distinguish a cohesive “new generation of filmmakers.” Moreover, as Mes and Sharp as much admit, their selection of articles and directors seems to be predicated on personal taste.

Film scholar Aaron Gerow also writes specifically on this new generation of filmmakers in New Japanese Cinema, but reworks them into what he calls a “Festival Generation” (“Recognizing “Others” In a New Japanese Cinema”). Gerow gives us more than a temporal classification and illustrates the industry constraints that these filmmakers face, noting that this new generation is “still at a disadvantage in a domestic

market dominated by major studios, [and] have come to look on foreign film events as a crucial means of gaining prestige and publicity at home” (1). I am in favor of an industry (production, exhibition, *and* marketing) context to think about Japanese cinema regardless of time period. As Gerow points out in his own piece, international film festivals do have an enormous effect on domestic reception of prize-winning films. However, the important function that international film festivals play in exposing and supporting the Japanese industry is not unprecedented. The reception (and inception of Japanese film studies in the West) of Japanese cinema begins with the well-known “discovery” of Kurosawa at Venice in 1951. This link between *international* film festival exhibition and Japanese cinema studies should prompt us to ask the following question: on what basis of criteria are films from Japan selected for international competition? Or for that matter, on what basis of criteria are they selected for exhibition and distribution? If films are still selected because they are seen as representative of outstanding *Japanese* cinema bearing the characteristics of a perceived *national* cinema, it may behoove us to avoid using the perspective of international film festivals as in some way demonstrative of a contemporary generation. Such a tactic may not relieve us of the pitfalls of previous generations that Davis and Yoshimoto articulate in their own work and Gerow himself describes:

Japanese motion pictures of the 1950s and 1960s earned praise abroad because they were defined as art cinema (as opposed to popular cinema) and because, in a bipolar fashion, they verified universal values of humanism while also confirming impressions of Japan as exotic and unique. (1)

Instead, the role that *domestic* film reception plays in the Japanese industry is equally, if not more, worthy of serious theoretical attention and may provide an “out” in terms of

potential critiques of Orientalism and the problems of film accessibility that so often formulate the defense of scholarly selectivity.

Like Mes and Sharp, Gerow also pinpoints a cadre of directorial talent (based on international preference determined by festival success rather than personal preference), most of whom overlap with those featured in *The Midnight Eye Guide*. Unlike Mes and Sharp, Gerow is less interested in discussing these directors as auteurs and is more invested in analytically approaching the directors' accumulative body of work as sharing thematic and representational similarities. According to Gerow, filmmakers of this new generation are interested in "a rejoining of the 'how' and 'what' of cinema" ("Recognizing "Others" In a New Japanese Cinema" 2), meaning that emphasis on form and content have previously been fractured and, at times, differently valued. While unifying these two components of film, the new generation challenges the perception that Japan is a unified, homogenous nation with a clearly identifiable national cinema. Their films trouble a cohesive Japanese identity "by focusing on *zainichi* Koreans, foreign workers from Asia, and others among the variety of peoples, languages, and cultures that inhabit the archipelago" (2). This troubling of identity (the "what") through the depiction of a series of "others" Gerow discusses—racial, national, familial, generational, interpersonal, psychological—is substantiated formally (the "how") through the use of a shared "anti-humanist and detached" style (5). Significant characteristics of this style, what Gerow later complicates in regards to the work of Miike as a "homelessness of style" ("Homelessness of Style and the Problems of Studying Miike Takashi"), are preferential use of long shots, long takes, and the absence (or scarcity) of

POVs characteristics that, as Gerow admits, *are not* definitive of a break with the past (Ozu, Mizoguchi, et al), but due to the new generation's rejection of the former's emphasis on portrayals of humanism and are meant to be read/seen/interpreted differently. While a compelling read of his selected directors, what seems to be a glaring elision in terms of troubling homogenous identity is a discussion of gender, particularly of women and their increasing involvement and work in the cinema industry from the early 2000s. For example, how would they articulate the idea of "home?"

Isolde Standish's revisionary text *A New History of Japanese Cinema* ends with a brief look at (then) recent filmmakers or, in her terms, the "post-moral" generation (332). Similar to Mes and Sharp, she tends to conflate contemporary filmmakers with filmmakers of the New Wave and, inline with Gerow, she categorizes them as sharing similar thematic content and style. However, unlike Gerow's contention that these directors are producing work that is highly socially politicized, Standish argues the contrary. To set a historical precedence, Standish characterizes Japanese film style of the 1960s and early 1970s as avant-garde articulations denotive of a generational preoccupation with rebellion against state and structure. In their attack on capitalist enterprise and a perceived institutionalized return to pre-Occupation conservative social constructs, these political films transgressed social mores through almost hyperreal expressions of violence and spectacle. However, their attempts to invoke political awareness, agency, or even civil disquiet were undermined by the growth of Japan as an advanced capitalist society. The avant-garde foray into seemingly limitless excess echoed and indeed nourished capitalist dependency on "myth and fantasy, fictional

wealth, exoticism and hyperbole, rhetoric, virtual reality and sheer appearance” (332). Efforts to resist the normative power matrix consisted of envelope-pushing tactics and snowballing expressions of spectacle—especially visualizations of violence and sex—that were subsumed as a matter of course into consumer culture, thereby negating the subversive intent. Standish argues that the following generation inherited the fallout of these politically fruitless and degenerative mechanics.

This generation, which Standish has labeled ‘post-moral’ (*jingi naki*) after Fukasaku Kinji’s celebrated *Yakuza Papers* series, similarly thematizes transgressive hyperbole. However, she argues, as they are the product of and operate within advanced consumer capitalism, the films of this ‘post-moral’ generation are postmodernist disengagements from the political and critical agency of their cinematic forebears. They include similar thematic tropes, discourse, and visual decadence found in the preceding generation of films, but removed from the historical context of resistance they are rendered meaningless exploits of spectacle. Drawing particularly from her own readings of select films by directors Miike Takashi, Kitano Takeshi, and Fukasaku Kinji, Standish notes that throughout the course of these ‘post-moral’ narratives “no one is saved and no apparent heroes exist; all are damaged individuals existing as global drifters lacking any geographical or emotional sense of connectedness” (330). Social anxieties are traumatically projected onto the physical realm of the bodies of the characters, primarily through sexual violation, abjection, mutilation, or death. The alienated protagonists’ true struggle is not against other characters so much as it is against the surrounding *mise-en-scene*—usually dystopic conurbation. Despite their efforts, they are

doomed to succumb to inevitable psychological or physiological destruction (or both). The protagonists' resignation to defeat reflects their position as amoral, agentless actors staged in "a world in which there is indeed no salvation, but on the other hand nothing to be saved" (338).

Although Standish identifies significant themes and historical continuities between the resistance era (New Wave) film style and contemporary cinema, her term 'post-moral' is a problematic appellation. Not only must we question her usage of the denomination "moral" and its limiting projections of normativity, as well as her stance that these films somehow operate in a temporal disconnect from a nostalgic moral system, but we must also consider what seems to be a reductionist determination of the widely diverse thematics of the contemporary postmodern (her term) palette. This is surprising given her methodical approach to other eras of cinema history, in which she traces multiple paths of expression and representation. Instead, Standish equates the 'post-moral' generation with postmodernity—a troublesome mode to designate with historical specificity in regards to Japan without resorting to intellectual colonialism. One wonders if all members of a generation are indeed spoken for here and if in fact all cinema expressions of the contemporary era are under consideration. Where do group-oriented *seishun eiga* (youth films) or cathartically moralizing romance dramas, both coming into significant popularity (but not international distribution) as early as the late 1990s, fit into this analytical narrative?

While I do not mean to suggest that Mes, Sharp, Gerow, and Standish are *wrong*—far from it, they are all important and leading contributors to the field of Japanese

cinema studies—what I mean to point out that they are being *strategically selective*. In part, this is the constraint of an auteur-based approach. In designating a particular “generation,” it is of course necessary to pinpoint notable representatives. You will find that here, knowingly, in this dissertation. Yet, by doing so, these key players can be used *misrepresentationally* (and in some cases ahistorically) to exemplify the entirety of cinema both coming out of and circulating around Japan. This is not just a cautionary tale for contemporary cinema, but for film study across generations. Focus on a particular, hand-selected group, the creation of a canon, necessarily omits large bodies of work and workers, individuals and collectives, expressions and visions. This canon, in turn, creates a bottleneck in the field: scholars and critics with limited access to Japanese films tend to recapitulate emphasis placed on known entities. This is particularly the case when language and distribution regions are a limiting factor. Whether the selection is based on personal preference (Mes and Sharp), international recognition (Gerow), or historical continuity (Standish), the process necessitates omission.

In an attempt to deconstruct the staid canon, to make a path for a plurality of perspectives, and to insist on the inclusion of overlooked visions, I present in this dissertation the emergence of a different kind of generation of filmmakers. They are all born within ten years of each other and share a characteristic that, in such numbers, is unprecedented in Japanese film history: they are all women.

A New Generation

In this dissertation I have identified an emerging trend in recent Japanese cinema: a new generation of commercial female filmmakers. My began in 2007, while I was

studying at the Inter-University Center for Advanced Japanese Language in Yokohama, Japan. I noticed a blossoming industry of female film authorship working in concert with marketing campaigns that targeted female spectators, a topic that became my final project at the school and the seeds of this dissertation. Prior to 2004, there is little record of female directors working in commercial narrative cinema and as such, aside from a sampling of token figures, women's history as creators of cinema is largely absent in Japanese film scholarship. Although women made commercial films, their works were few and far between, and many directors, denied access to studio support, were unable to secure long-term financing. However, the socio-economic effects of the studio system collapse in the 1980s paired with advancements in home cinema technology granted more women access to the auteur role, if not the industry. Since the straight-to-video and art theatre/mini theatre markets of the 1980s were still dominated by male auteurs, most of them refugees and/or rebels of the fallen studio era, nearly all female directors operated in documentary circuits. After all, the low-budget documentary project is not dependent on industry contracts and, as a primarily one-woman production, is free from the potentially problematic sexual/gender politics of a female director in charge of a male crew—a power issue that contemporary female artists currently encounter. Even so, the actual figures are still slim: eleven titles were released in 1985, six in 1986, two in 1987, six in 1988, five in 1989, and three in 1990. Of these thirty-three films, eighteen are documentaries and “diary” films, six are dramas, four are animations, four are short experimental films, and one is science fiction. These (now and then) obscure films, released over a period of five years, are the works of twenty-two women. This lack of

activity, as I will show, led to an oversight and exclusion from canonical, scholarly recognition.

The early 90s were likewise sparse, with documentaries and dramas by women few and far between. However, since 1995, the numbers dramatically increased, with a shift in more recent years to decidedly narrative-driven commercial productions. By 2006, the popular Japanese literary journal *Eureka* published a special edition on what they referred to as the “rise of female filmmakers,” including interviews with directors, critical essays on gender and cinema, and mini biographies of the top female directors of 2006—twenty-eight “new faces” with recent directorial debuts (*Kantoku-kei jyoshi fairu*). Several of these women have achieved star status including the directors featured in this project: Nishikawa Miwa, Oigami Naoko, Tanada Yuki, Ninagawa Mika, and Iguchi Nami. *Eureka*’s hand-picked list is by no means a comprehensive list of women currently making films, but between the twenty-eight women featured, they have released sixty-three feature-length films in the past five years alone, not including numerous made-for-TV movies, straight-to-video projects, and screenwriting and assistant director credits.

In the same *Eureka* volume, film producer and essayist Kimura Tatsuya notes the concomitant surge in female authorship and female spectatorship in the domestic movie industry. Citing a similarly notable list of recent female filmmakers and their respective public accolades, he rhetorically asks, “Why now?” As Kimura points out, increased accessibility in terms of flexibility or deconstruction of the formerly stringent studio hierarchy, advancements in do-it-yourself filmmaking technology (such as laptop editing and increasingly affordable mini-DV cameras), and open call film festival eligibility

alone do not account for the recent well-publicized and acclaimed boom some female filmmakers enjoy. According to Kimura, independent male filmmakers too are also eligible to benefit from the same privileges. This is, however, a problematic rationalization. It is somewhat revealing that the author seems to think that increased accessibility to filmmaking production would necessarily result in the same, or similar, gender ratio among contemporary filmmakers given no other additional constraints or influences. This embedded assumption is perhaps a good clue for solving the riddle Kimura does not ask: “why *only* now?” I agree that the answer to the question he *does* ask is more complicated than the historical, contextual reasons cited above. Or, rather, they are only one, albeit important, facet of a complex manifestation. In this dissertation, I ask both questions: why now and why only now?

Organized around the central feature of the emerging wave, this dissertation is a multifaceted project that combines cinema reception studies (in particular the characteristics of exhibition sites), media industry studies (with attention to marketing paratexts as conceptualized by film scholar Jonathon Gray, gender studies, and film analysis focused on cinematography. In exploring the connections between industry production, reception, and auteur personas, I argue that this recent boom is not solely the product of shifting consumer interests, as some speculate, nor is it the inevitable outcome of progressive social movements that promote women working in contemporary media. Similarly, it is not simply the end result of the democratized proliferation of accessible at-home consumer technology. Rather, as I show, the emergence of women into commercial cinema as directors is the combination of all three, fueled by marketing tactics of

distribution companies that seek to target female consumers. The goal of this dissertation is to reveal the relationship between female filmmakers as creative talent and labor, production, distribution, and marketing businesses as socio-economic power structures, and the capital-wielding demographic of female spectators as influential consumers. In the process, I am particularly interested in the experiences of women operating within a socially rigid industry. To do so I: (1) approach cinema studies as cinema in context, grounded in historical, economic, and socio-cultural research and interdisciplinary analysis; (2) place theoretical emphasis on the industrial production of cinema (and cinema productions themselves) as the production of culture; and (3) pay particular attention to deconstructing depictions of gender and space as exploited, for-profit constructs of an industrial market.

In addition to being a film scholar and a feminist in process, I am also a spectator and a movie fan. In Chapter IV, I illustrate how I arrived at my dissertation topic, but to provide some brief perspective, I add here that I did not conceive of a project, an argument, or even a theoretical perspective beyond my training as a Masters student in the areas of Japanese language, history, and contemporary culture (paired with film theory and cinema history) prior to conducting research in Japan. I did not, in other words, arrive in Japan looking for odds and ends to support a preconceived position or an observed empty space on a shelf. Of course, my background and training in reception studies, gender theory, and pop-culture analysis shaped my sensitivities and readings of my experiences there, but it was with a relatively blank slate that I set out to find a dissertation topic. Through the experience of total submersion in cultural specificity

(both in language and location), the pieces of a phenomenon became clear and it is thus that my dissertation arises out of the context of its subject: I discovered the topic of inquiry in its own right and, a year and a half later, pursued my investigation again in the midst of context and cultural particularity *as it was happening*. To be quite blunt, my dissertation was never conducted from afar and I was never a distant observer. On the contrary, it was and continues to be, throughout, in large part the product of my own experiences.

Chapter Descriptions

In Chapter II, “The Pioneers,” I take the first step feminist film scholars exercised elsewhere in cinema scholarship and turn to the history of female film directors in Japan. This is not a complete history due to the very limitations of available materials and preserved, documented accounts: a testament to the routine practice of discounting the roles that women play (or were prohibited from playing) in studio industry cinema. It is something akin to a patchwork quilt of material history: a sample selection sutured together at seams of similarity and significance. I compare the experiences of four women seeking entry into the film industry from the 1920s to the postwar era—Sakane Tazuko, Tanaka Kinuyo, Takano Etsuko, and Haneda Sumiko—thereby revealing the gendered proscriptions of their labor and participation in a patriarchal hierarchy. Among their experiences of assimilation attempts are the shared prerequisites of economic privilege, social nepotism, and an embodied transformation of performed gender. For each, they reveal that being a woman in commercial cinema production was a perceived liability that had to be overcome, generally through a process of disavowal and

metamorphosis.

Having established some baseline experiences of women historically within the industry, I then turn to women's experiences outside the industry and the central role that female spectators have in shaping the financial and social health of Japan's studio system. Starting with the first theater district in Japan, the Asakusa Rokku entertainment area of Meiji and Taisho-era Tokyo, my third chapter, "Genders, Genres, and Going to the Movies," takes into consideration the gendered aspects of exhibition spaces. I trace the social atmospheres of movie theaters as they transformed from bawdy entertainment venues that catered to the erotic and pleasurable senses of both men and women alike into increasingly homogenized voyeuristic venues that eventually became the purview of a predominantly male clientele. This transition of the cinema experience, from erotic spectacle for all to pornographic play for men, is in large part due to the disappearance of female demographics who, I argue, found the cinema bill for sale stale and out of tune with their rapidly changing lifestyles. At the heart of the incongruity is the *josei eiga* and its outdated representations of women and social relations. The studio system, unable to modify its own conventional perceptions of what were ultimately dynamic female audiences, collapsed from stagnation in large part due to its own inattention to the demographics they underestimated and devalued. By way of case study, I analyze the role that promotional paratexts, primarily film posters, played as signifiers of the studio industry's entrenched gender assumptions; namely, the industry's construct of "Woman" on screen.

Chapter IV, "What a Girl Wants: Sea Change and the Girl's Style Cinema," follows the female spectator into the contemporary context, noting a concerted effort by

the industry to bring back women to the movies. Called the “F1-sou” by marketers, women between the ages of 20 and 34 are the most sought-after demographic for Japan’s consumer market of the early 21st century. Exhibition spaces, distributors, and production companies have been selectively producing and distributing films that will draw female audiences. What we are starting to see is a drastic change in the landscape of cinema all along the production to distribution chain, a transformation some refer to as the “feminization” of film culture. In the chapter, I illustrate this changing terrain, analyzing the remodeling of theaters and the repackaging of promotional materials, to show how a new generation of targeted female movie goers supports and generates a new generation of female authorship.

After laying out the primary causes behind the contemporary industry investment in female directors, I turn to the directors themselves. In Chapter V, “A New Wave,” I begin by highlighting representatives of the current generation. They are a diverse group and I give attention to their individual styles and ideas, arguing for a plurality of perspective and experience that resists gendered typecasting and monolithic generalizations. By spending time with each one, discussing their experiences as filmmakers (where applicable), their developing aesthetics, and consistent motifs (again, where applicable), I hope to counter their industry produced and packaged images as especially *female* directors. And yet between them, there are similarities resonant of the trials and challenges faced by their predecessors, the personalities of Chapter II. Addressing this, I return to the issue of canon laid out here in the introduction, analyzing the promoted director personas of Nishikawa Miwa and Oigami Naoko who seem to exist at opposite ends of the constructed art vs. commercial cinema dichotomy. Here I

turn once again to analysis of promotional paratexts, this time reading not only their impact on target films but also their effect on the directors who made them. In so doing, I present the following question: What does it take for a female film director to gain critical and canonical attention?

The last chapter, “In the Eye of the Beholder,” brings the dissertation to a close with an attention to the artistic and technical visions of three contemporary female directors: Ninagawa Mika, Iguchi Nami, and Ogigami Naoko. I pay special attention to each director by means of sequence analysis in an effort to explore how female directors are repurposing and deconstructing the role of the camera as an instrument of historically troubled gaze. Ninagawa Mika’s film *Sakuran* (2006), a visual extravaganza, incorporates the entrenched histories of women trapped in patriarchal structures metaphorically reflective of the real experiences of women in the film industry. Her camera, at once a device of voyeurism and exhibitionism, compares and contrasts generations of women as it looks across both time and space. Iguchi Nami’s domestic drama *Inuneko* (2004) manipulates both sound and camera to subvert the subject/object positions in the spectator/spectre relationship. Her film highlights a shift in presumed audience demographic, incorporating the increased participation of female audiences in contemporary cinema. Lastly, Ogigami Naoko’s *Megane* (*Glasses*, 2001) neutralizes gender dynamics via recentered cinematography that deemphasizes the role of human characters while simultaneously emphasizing *mise-en-scene* in the creation of environmental narrative cinema. Her particular aesthetic, however, also reveals the troubling dynamics of paratextual packaging and industrial influence at work in casting female directors as *female* directors.

Notes

¹*Pan pan* was a derogatory slang for prostitutes who serviced American GIs in postwar Japan during the American occupation. The image of *pan pan* girls—women sporting lipstick, high heels, and western hairstyles and fashion—became a ideological signifier of the occupation. For more on the interpretations of both the real and figurate figure of the postwar *pan pan*, see Sakamoto, Rumi. “Pan-pan Girls: Humiliating Liberation in Postwar Japanese Literature.” *Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies* 7.2: 1-15 (2012).

² The subject of Japanese Film Studies as a field with a “use value” in relation to other national cinemas (historically and theoretically) was the topic of a Kinema Club Workshop in 1999. Yoshimoto and Nornes collaborated on a statement of “continuing/concluding thoughts” from the workshop and their summary can be found online at: <http://pears.lib.ohio-state.edu/Markus/workshop/wconclusion.html>.

³ “V-cinema” is short for “direct-to-video-cinema.” After the studio system collapse, domestic film in Japan catered to the video market, primarily the soft-core pornography (pink) market.

⁴ For example, this phrase is used for publicity in Vincent Canby, “Experimental Shorts from Japan at New Cinema Playhouse,” *New York Times* May 3 1968.

CHAPTER II
THE PIONEERS

I am beaten down by men over and over
I'm gonna try and make a movie
Soon they'll see....soon they'll see
Sakane Tazuko¹

There is no shortage of writings on the *benshi*—the silent era Japanese film narrator—and his role in shaping early Japanese film (e.g. Fujiki; Matsuda; Dym; Standish).² This is no doubt because the *benshi* is a peculiar figure, long outlasting American and European film narrator counterparts and even delaying the production of talkies in Japan by almost a decade. The somewhat unique flavor of the *benshi* makes him a notable figure in defining the particularity of early Japanese cinema as a national cinema: he represents a culturally specific performance style that draws on a heritage of narration from theatrical stage *kabuki* plays and masked *noh* dramas. The *benshi*, sometimes acknowledged to be a temperamental and self-important figure, is regarded by contemporary scholars as an in-the-flesh movie star in his own right: *benshi* drew audiences to movie theaters as, arguably, the main attraction.

There is another character in early Japanese cinema whose personage, or, rephrased accurately as less subject and more object, whose *body* not *voice* drew a particular type of spectator to movie theaters. Although also particular to the Japanese national cinema industry, they are hardly, if ever, mentioned in national cinema histories. *Joshi annai nin* (girl guides), or *jyokyū* (hostesses), were young women between 17 and 23 years old who stood near ticket boxes at theatre entrances.³ Originally called *tehiki*

(handtaker), their job was to attract male customers to the establishment, calling out to passersby, while sitting pretty in the box office sidelines. When a (male) patron bought a ticket, the *tehiki* would hold his hand (hence the name) and escort him into the dark theater, guiding him to his seat. Depending on the theater, they would also prepare seat cushions for an extra fee (Y. Sakai 33). During intermissions, she returned to sell concessions such as *sembei* (rice crackers) and *ramune* (soda pops) (Toeda 916). As with the *benshi*, reviews of a theater's *joshi annai nin*—her appearance, her job performance, her attire—appeared right alongside film reviews in movie magazines and fan publications. Commentary in hand, readers went to the movies to take in a girl as well as a flick (31). What was on sale, in other words the attraction of the Japanese cinema of attractions, was never just the appeal of the onscreen spectacle. *Benshi* may have been the stars and vocal experience, but *joshi annai nin* were a sensual part of the early cinema package; movie theater managers sold their male patrons the opportunity to hold the hand of young woman in the dark. It was innuendo. It was fantasy. It was objectification. It was marketing. Her body, on display as a *misemono*⁴ to attract spectator gaze and then made tangible at ticket price, provided a slightly sexualized experience (N. Murakami 34). However crass or unseemly their public position, these young women were just as much a part of the theatrical business and experience of moviegoing as the *benshi*, from sales to critique.

Despite their importance in boosting ticket sales, *jyoshi annai nin* are not the “unsung heroines” of silent cinema by any stretch of the imagination; that is not the reason for their inclusion here. They are, however, a poignant metaphor for the history of

women in the film industry, not to mention to whom the cinema has been marketed, and their erasure from most film histories is a commentary on film criticism both academic and popular. From nearly its very beginnings, the film industry has traded in the voiceless female body and privileged patriarchal words, ideas, and thought expressed through manipulations of the female form. Although Timothy Iles has written on the metaphorical implications of the male voice / female body dichotomy operating within contemporary cinema, in fact the problem has existed quite literally since the embodied division of labor between the benshi and joshi annai nin in early theatrical spaces. The roles of each, benshi as author and joshi annai nin as object, transferred readily to subsequent (male) director and (female) actor power relations once the invention of sound made the benshi obsolete in the 1930s and the inclusion of female actresses on screen made the joshi annai nin redundant in the 1920s. Ever since, the male/voice female/body dichotomy persisted throughout commercial cinema. That is, until now.

While the dissertation at large concerns the many implications and contexts of this transformation, this chapter addresses the question that film critic Kimura Tatsuya, while decrying contemporary Japanese commercial cinema as a “girl’s thing” (*onna no ko no mono*) does not ask—why *only* now? The answer to Kimura’s question is polemically simple. There was never a significant representation of women working as directors because an industry tightly controlled by patriarchy and tactics of strategic exclusion never had a need for them and, as such, did not want them there.

Sakane Tazuko – Japan’s First Female Film Director – 1936

Most articles, books, essays, or even throwaway paragraphs regarding the history of female directors in Japan—and there are not many to be sure—begin with the commentary that the development of women directors was "late" (Satō, *Nihoneiga shi* 86; Takano 39; Y. Matsumoto 5).⁵ Inevitably, France's Alice Guy is invoked, and Japanese film history is compared to both European and American cinema cultures. While the diagnosis acknowledges a kind of representational or developmental lack, the measurement of speed, or rather lack there of, is also permissive. "Late" is noncommittal. "Late" is also mostly unapologetic, matter of fact, and dismissive. It suggests an inevitability (hence the strategic alignment with assumed upper echelon European and American cinema histories instead of, say, more regional comparisons) and a disavowal of responsibility: nearly all of the texts jump forward to more "progressive" times backed by feminist movements (i.e. the 1970s and 1980s) and pick up with women's active participation in the industry on their own terms. "Late" requires an expectation, admits slight embarrassment, but is an arrival without excuse, without explanation, and requires the late party to catch up to what is already going on in a non-specific global context. "Late" seems harmless, but the purposeful exclusion of women from film is indeed anything but. Complicit in a history of inequality is the designation of temporal delinquency without an investment in historical causality: *why* was it "late?"

When 25-year-old Sakane Tazuko (1904–1975) (see Figure 3) walked on set at Nikkatsu Studios in 1929, to say that her presence there was an oddity would be an understatement. Although there were a few female actors in the early days of Japanese



Figure 3. Sakane Tazuko, 1943 in Manchukuo. Image source: (Ōnishi, 1).

cinema (Satō *Nihoneiga shi* 122), by the 1920s it was customary for men, *onnagata* from the kabuki stage, to play female roles.⁶ Any additional film crew present—producers, directors, camera operators, lighting technicians, engineers—were all certainly men. So, not only was it highly unusual for a woman to step on set, that she should do so in the capacity of assistant director was unprecedented. She got there by the same beaten path cinema hopefuls looking to get a foot past an exclusive doorstep still follow: money and connections.

Initially, Sakane followed an educational track. The daughter of somewhat liberal and indulgent parents who, after losing several of their children, were particularly precious with their surviving offspring, Sakane went to Kyoto's Dōshisha Women's College to study English literature. However, after she entered the college, her mother passed away and her father remarried. Her stepmother shared the sentiment of her day and felt that a woman's social position was at home raising a family, not in books and the

classroom. She pressured Sakane to drop out of school and orchestrated an *omiai kekkon* (arranged marriage) for her to a gynecologist in 1924. Sakane was 20 years old. The groom was a fellow selected by Sakane's parents solely for his income and property holdings, and on the very night of their wedding Sakane's new husband berated her for not having a large enough dowry. He left their new home to spend the night with a mistress he had kept from before the marriage (Ōnishi 16).⁷ More perturbed by his expeditious infidelity than his assessment of her financial worth, Sakane ran away from home, hid out with her grandmother in the countryside, and later agreed to return to her parents' Kyoto home only on the condition of divorce (17). Sakane's bold actions that drew on commitment to self-worth and self-reliance are characteristic of her strength and agency, uncharacteristic for 1920s Japan, and can be seen to characterize her subsequent life choices, behavior, determination, and to some degree resiliency. Unfortunately, although Sakane was able to escape the contractual terms of her marriage, she was not able to free herself of its legacy. And, just as her actions set a precedent for her future confrontations with gender limitations and expectations, so too did her indulgent post-runaway drinking binge foreshadow a liquid relationship with depression and self-medication.

It was during this time of bottom-of-the-bottle blues that Sakane assessed her future potential (19). She didn't have any. Already divorced, her chances at a good second marriage were slim to none. Having dropped out of college, she was no longer on track as a career woman. Without any trade skills, she could not join an occupation that would pay enough to support her; not that the job market in 1920s Japan was particularly

fruitful. Fortunately for Sakane, her father, an inventor of some financial means, had connections in the film industry. A cinema enthusiast, he had a hobby of writing screenplays—some of which were even turned into films—and invested in the then still young Nippon Katsudō Shashin studio, or, as we know it now, Nikkatsu Studios. Feeling responsible for his daughter’s failed marriage—and indeed guilty for having pressured her to drop out of college and orchestrating the catastrophe in the first place—he used his influence as financial investor and arranged for Sakane to enter the Contemporary Directing Department as the first and only female assistant director in 1928 (Parker 259). The original terms of her involvement were permission to participate for a half year, without pay (Ōnishi 21).

After a period of observation, Sakane’s first assignment was akin to secretary: she took dictation for legend Mizoguchi Kenji while he and his partners brainstormed the script for *Tōjin Okichi* (*Mistress of a Foreigner*, 1930). To do so, she went to his house every day and worked attentively, clocking long hours (Ōnishi 24). After the scenario was complete, he called her to the set to keep track of impromptu changes to the script and shooting schedule. She pulled all-nighters in order to implement on-set revisions and make carbon copies for the next day (25). Having proved to Mizoguchi that she was a reliable worker and willing to stomach arduous tasks, he kept her on for the making of *Fujiwara Yoshie no furusato* (*Fujiwara Yoshie’s Home Town*, 1930). The film was a “mini-talkie”—a film with only partial sound recording—and she joined Mizoguchi at Nikkatsu’s Tokyo sound stages to take on a job that came along with the invention of cinema sound: scripter.

With *Fujiwara Yoshie no furusato*, Sakane's labor role, embodied presence, and utility value to Mizoguchi went through several significant changes. To begin with, she had to quickly adapt to her new responsibilities as the first female scripter (Shindō "Interview with Sakane Tazuko: Sukuriputā kara mita Mizoguchi enshutsu" 179). The duties are essentially the same as for the contemporary script girl, except that at the time—the advent of recorded sound in cinema—the job presented novel difficulties, not the least of which was how to avoid microphones. Implementing recording devices made problems for everyone, from camera operators to actors, and so too for scripters. Whereas action and blocking comprised the majority of a scripter's scribbles in the pre-sound era, now they had to contend with actors who were not used to written lines: scripters had to keep track of every aberration, note down every improvised line, and help coach the actors through delivery, memorization, and cues. Moreover, they had to do all this within earshot (rather than from a previously unobtrusive distance) without disrupting microphones, lighting effects, the actors, other crew, and the director. Sakane found herself climbing ladders and crouching behind set pieces, all of which was extremely difficult in a kimono.⁸ Taking initiative, Sakane bought pants (Ōnishi 33). And then she bought a suit (36). And then she cut her hair (38).

After filming, Mizoguchi assigned Sakane to the editing room where she assisted the cameraman by suturing pieces of film together with acetone (35). As a woman, she was not trusted to have any creative agency, choice, or skill in making the actual cuts; she was only considered capable of facilitating the mechanical fuse. Again, she worked late through the nights. Cleverly opportunistic, instead of throwing away the unused

clippings on the cutting room floor, Sakane pilfered the extra frames, took them home, and practiced cuts and sutures exhaustively in her free time (35). During the shooting of *Taki no shiraito* (Mizoguchi, *The Water Magician*, 1933) four films later, Mizoguchi's team fell behind schedule. There was no time to wait to start editing after principle photography finished, and it was necessary to do both simultaneously. However, Miki Minoru, the cameraman and then also the editor, could not leave the filming location to process, cut, and suture the film. Since Sakane had been on set the entire time as scripter documenting the film and therefore knew the exact timing of the cuts, since she had learned and practiced in private the necessary editing techniques up to the standard of professional precision, she successfully convinced Mizoguchi to let her do the editing (45). Thanks to a combination of perspicacity and luck, Sakane was ready for the opportunity, impressed Mizoguchi with her resourcefulness and reliability, and secured a permanent position as his personal assistant, script girl, editor, transcriber, and assistant director for the next seven years. She was paid.

Throughout the twelve years of their master-pupil relationship, Mizoguchi changed film studios five times. Where Mizoguchi went, Sakane followed (Parker 259). However, Sakane was not satisfied with lifetime employment as an assistant director; she wanted to direct. While at Shinkō Kinema studios in Tokyo, Sakane approached Mizoguchi with the prospect of advancement. Soon, there was some general talk of promoting Sakane to the position of director. Excited to progress, Sakane began to prepare a script based on *Onna no isshou* (Yamamoto, *A Woman's Life*)—a serialized novel (Asahi Shinbun, 1932-1933) that questioned the social presumption that it is a

woman's duty to raise children— in order to shoot the film “through the eyes of a woman” (*onna no me de*) (Ōnishi 48).

Talk of Sakane's potential promotion spread throughout the studio and soon slanderous talk circulated within earshot:

Hey, it looks like Sakane-san will become a director. Women have it easy!
She's sleeping with Mizoguchi-san so she'll be a director soon enough.
[But] it's not just Mizoguchi-san, otherwise how else would a woman become a director? (49)

Without official go-ahead, Sakane began to prep sets and collect props and costumes. Even so, as she began, she noticed that suddenly the usual staff members she worked with had all been transferred to other departments and locations. Moreover, necessary supplies and equipment started to disappear or were moved beyond her access. She started receiving passive aggressive criticism and evasion from the new staff around her. “For someone who is going to be a director choosing this costume is [not good]” (49). “Tomorrow's schedule is erratic so I can't prep the lighting [for you today]” (49). All invitations to go out drinking after work ceased. When she entered the staff room, the room would suddenly fall silent and everyone would abruptly leave (50). Feeling lonely, depressed, and thwarted, she returned to the bottle:

Intoxication

When I'm drunk on *sake*
I want to write something asexually...
A poem, a song, a novel, whatever comes
If I'm sober, I can't write anything.

Now I'm writing a story
It's something I couldn't write if I wasn't me
It's an important movie plot I couldn't create if I wasn't me
A little drunk, I write

Drunk again, I write
Tonight's the third night...I write a third and sigh a little
Tonight I am troubled
The pen can't go forward
Woman! Woman! I am writing a woman's world
I'll say as many bad things as I can
Although I'm ever in something like a weak-spirited bubble
Ha! What a wretched woman's world I have to write.

Morons. Men. All assholes.
Lechers.
How this loneliness accumulates
Feels like I will live on alone...
Feels like I will die alone.

I am beaten down by men over and over
I'm gonna try and make a movie
And for that...didn't I get into this movie world because of men?
Soon they'll see....soon they'll see
I will definitely try to make a movie.

If I can make a movie in that vision
My life will be complete
I'll drink the best sake and win
In Hokkaido or Sahalin
I think I'll go sleep in the white, white snow
By body and spirit
I will be buried in the white snow
I dream of the day I return purely once again to virginity.

I want that day to come quickly, quickly
I'm already turning 30
When I look in the mirror...wrinkles have increased
If I were to go outside in these Western clothes, what a laughable sex appeal...sex appeal
"What's that, Old Miss Guy?"
Even though I'm reasonably dressed
But, me, I'm a woman...I'm not something that's going to crumble one day.

I feel like it would be okay if I died tomorrow
Failure! Don't cry!
When you rouse the *sake* you eventually get sad
Gradually you'll come to tears

Outside, the signs of falling rain.⁹

Ultimately, Sakane was not able to make her film. Instead, she transferred to a new studio with Mizoguchi, left behind the potential chance and started all over again with new executives to campaign for a directorial promotion.

In 1936, 32-year-old Sakane broached the possibility again and this time was successful, in a manner of speaking. She still wanted to make *Onna no isshou*, but was instead handed *Hatsusugata* (*New Year's Finery*, 1936) as her project. Although Sakane's goal was, as with *Onna no isshou*, to "infuse it with a new, different sense, from a woman's point of view" (Parker 260), Sakane grappled with the film's core: a love story. As if the precarious position of first female director wasn't challenging enough, Sakane's insecurities arose from her own failed marriage. To make matters worse, the studio published an article about her to promote the film, but the piece included the story of her divorce, thereby making her private past presently public (Ōnishi 62).

Moreover, Sakane encountered difficulties with her all-male staff. Her cameraman, again Miki Minoru, had been in the film business since the studios began and had worked with both Mizoguchi and Makino Masahiro. Sakane felt the constraints of a double bind: her job as director, particularly that as the first female director, was to assert her decisions and lead the crew, but she also felt that she should not disagree or contradict such an esteemed and senior talent. Sure enough, it did not really matter what she said: ultimately, Miki determined the cuts and the staff looked to him for direction (71). When she tried to take command, the crew pretended that they didn't understand

her. They perpetually questioned her authority and again her integrity fell victim to gender bias and innuendo:

You are a new director, so you should leave [the decisions] to the veterans.
Ms. Female Director, you are not in the same league as Mizoguchi.
It must be good to be a woman. Even if it took our whole lives, we'd never get to be directors. (71)

Despite the conflicts, she completed the film. The studio marketed it as the work of “Japan’s first female director” (68) and, unsurprisingly, reviewers looked for some telltale sign of “femaleness” in the film. They didn’t find it. *Kinema Junpō*’s Shigeno Tastuhiko wrote, “Since this is the first film by Japan’s first female director, I had expected feminine sensitivity and delicacy, but could not find it anywhere” (Parker). Sakane found herself an inevitable failure caused by unreasonable, hyped expectations to meet illusory male standards of femininity in a product not entirely of her making and certainly not of her vision or emotional connectivity. The studio did not give Sakane another project and she went back to working under Mizoguchi. There is no extant print of the film.

Sakane remained unsatisfied. As the (male) assistant directors around her continued to get promoted to directors, Sakane’s drinking got worse. She was a notoriously nasty and disgruntled drunk (Ōnishi 123). On Mizoguchi’s recommendation, she left narrative filmmaking and joined with Tokyo Riken Films (*Rikenkagakueiga*), a large company specializing in *bunka eiga* (culture films) (126). In accordance with the political project of *bunka eiga*, Sakane spent time researching Japanese history and culture. In particular, she became interested in the Meiji government’s efforts to naturalize the Ainu, the indigenous peoples of northern Hokkaido. Because the *bunka eiga* were often independent projects (albeit with company funding) and not studio

productions, Sakane was able to research, find filming locations, write a script, and title her film with little to no restrictions. She spent eight months shooting in Hokkaido, documenting Ainu customs, daily habits, and festival celebrations, with particular attention to Ainu women (Parker 261). The censors rejected the resultant film, *Kita no dōhō* (*Northern Compatriots*).¹⁰ The point, they argued, was to make films that supported the one-nation-one-people ideology, not films that mourned the loss of native cultures (Ōnishi 142). Sakane ended up returning to Hokkaido for an additional month to get more footage, and, following company orders, reedited the original footage spliced together with the new in order to create a more nation friendly film. The critiques were scathing with reviewers particularly disparaging of the resultant illogical editing.

In something of an act of desperation and propelled by a drive to make at least one film on fair and personal creative terms (and knowing well that she would have no more opportunities in Japan), she left Tokyo Riken Films and joined with Manchurian Motion Picture Association (*Manshu eiga kyōkai*) to make films in 1942. In Shinkyo,¹¹ the crew, predominantly Manchurian, appreciated a strong woman drinker and they had no problem working with a female director (166). While in Manchukuo, Sakane made 14 *manei* (short for *Manshu eiga*) films, mostly for the People's Education Department, and she emphasized the roles and lives of women living in the colony (Parker 262). Even after the Soviet army marched in and occupied Manchukuo in 1945, Sakane opted to keep making films with Russian-controlled *Tōhoku Denei Kaishi*, a film company pieced together by a lottery of refugees of the Manchurian Motion Picture Association (including Sakane) devised to resuscitate China with post-war, nationalistic film projects. Sakane

started to study Chinese and worked under Chinese directives, shooting documentary footage for news films while riding through the countryside in a manned jeep, until fighting between Communist and Nationalist forces shut down the project and disbanded the filmmakers (Ōnishi 187).

After an arduous journey wrought with starvation and personal danger, Sakane repatriated to Japan on October 14, 1946 (197). She returned to Kyoto and rekindled her friendship with Mizoguchi, but was not able to reinstate her role as assistant director, let alone obtain any more directing opportunities. Through her experiences in Manchukuo she became an adept filmmaker, learning every role from camera operation to editing, from writing to direction, but the only work available to Sakane in the post-war Japanese studio system was screenwriting (Parker 263).

There are two reasons why I have decided to go into Sakane's life story in such detail. I believe it is important for the account of this impressive and stubborn woman's life to reach an English language audience. She is, after all, the first female Japanese director. Moreover, I wanted to describe as much as possible the social and cultural climate for a woman trying to break into filmmaking from the 1920s to the 1940s. Since the next woman doesn't succeed until 1953, Sakane's experiences are all we have. As such, there are a number of important points from her story that I would like to emphasize. First, and most importantly, is that the inclusion of women in Japan's film industry was not merely "late," it was prohibited. Women weren't tardy; they were barred from entry. The only reason Sakane was even allowed the initial opportunity to join the studio was due to two things: money from a patriarchal source (her father) and

permission from patriarchal figureheads (the studio). Her continued involvement in the industry relied on paternal permissiveness: her literal father, studio executives, and her mentor Mizoguchi. It would have been impossible for a woman from a different socio-economic class to work her way up the studio hierarchy from, for example, an entry-level secretarial position. As it was, Sakane had to rely on recommendation and personal favor in order to advance. Although she proved herself with hard work and reliability (to Mizoguchi in particular), she had no voice to request promotion without going through Mizoguchi and she, unlike others, was not evaluated on measure of talent, only physical labor.

Second, it is worthwhile to note and reflect on the difficulties she faced. Her life was difficult due to the context of historical strife—economic depression, an increasingly militaristic and fascist government, natural disaster, food and sundries rationing, war—and it was difficult due to the social expectations of her gendered existence. Like so many other women, she was not allowed to pursue education. Instead, she was forced into an abusive, arranged marriage, and, when she escaped from the situation, spent much of her life questioning her value as a human being—not because she had made mistakes or lacked talent and intelligence, but because she was a woman who broke the prescriptions and restrictions of being Woman. Despite a clear reliance on alcohol as self-medication and recurring suicidal thoughts, what is remarkable about Sakane is that she did not give up.

Third, in order to become a filmmaker, Sakane felt compelled to recreate herself in the likeness of men. Whatever the value may be in transitioning from kimono to suit

and from coiffed hair to short crop, Sakane incorporated herself into an established male environment, from clothes deigned for the male body to working habits that could never accommodate child rearing or household maintenance, without requiring or expecting the environment to accommodate her. It was an embodied transition: working in the male industry meant that she had to abandon a form of her former self, however socially constructed and gendered that self may have been. Sakane didn't just work, she transformed. Proving her worth to the company didn't just mean proving ability, it meant proving her adaptability: namely her capacity to overcome her limitations as a woman and become something still less than but visually approaching man. Similarly, despite her continual desire to make a film from a woman's perspective (more on the problems and assumptions of this oft-abused turn of phrase in the next chapter), she was prohibited from doing so, though her supposed "femaleness" was exploited to promote her only fiction film. Through her various rejections, we can also read a kind of censorship taking place since Sakane's works all focused on a drive to represent the conditions and experiences of women in their/her own words and terms. Her emphasis ran into direct contrast to the constructed version of woman and women's lives (motivations, emotions, lived experiences, etc.) that was the movie ideal created by men.

Fourth, the most damaging roadblocks to Sakane's psyche and career alike were not simply prohibited access, lack of opportunity, or social expectations. The use and effect of *ijime* (a term often translated as "bullying" but is more appropriate to think of as psychological, emotional, and physical abuse) should not be underestimated. Although, as I have already discussed, there were significant structural barriers for Sakane, she

suffered from passive aggressive abuse and sabotage stemming from jealousy and gate keeping: relocation of her colleagues to remove her support group, gossip and sexually objectifying slander, rescheduling of equipment availability and staff availability, and suggestive comments to undermine her confidence. These tactics, in effect, are not outright restrictive impediments, but rather sinister strategies to turn Sakane into her own enemy by destroying her self-esteem and willpower through attacks on her emotional security and quality of life. This sabotage, more than anything, was effective at preventing Sakane, a woman, from standing beside men as a peer, equal, and, in the case of crew, superior.

It may very well be that her films and ideas were not very good. We will never be able to evaluate them since they no longer exist. We do know that they were not well received or appreciated by reviewers and officials. However, taste is arbitrary, as well as contingent on historical and cultural constructs. What we do know is that her films did not match the tastes of the time, and that the time was doggedly not in her favor.

Tanaka Kinuyo – Japan’s First Female Film Director, Again – 1953

Of course I think it was good that I was allowed to direct. Up to today, there’s been a fight. If I hadn’t been allowed to direct, if I would’ve stayed as I was, I don’t know if I would’ve made it to today.
Tanaka Kinuyo¹²

By the time Tanaka Kinuyo (1909-1977) (see Figure 4), one of Japan’s most beloved actresses and the darling of the silver screen in the 20s and 30s, turned her mind to directing, she already had an extensive film career with performances in over 230

productions, the majority of her roles in cinema and a few later in television. Her professional legacy

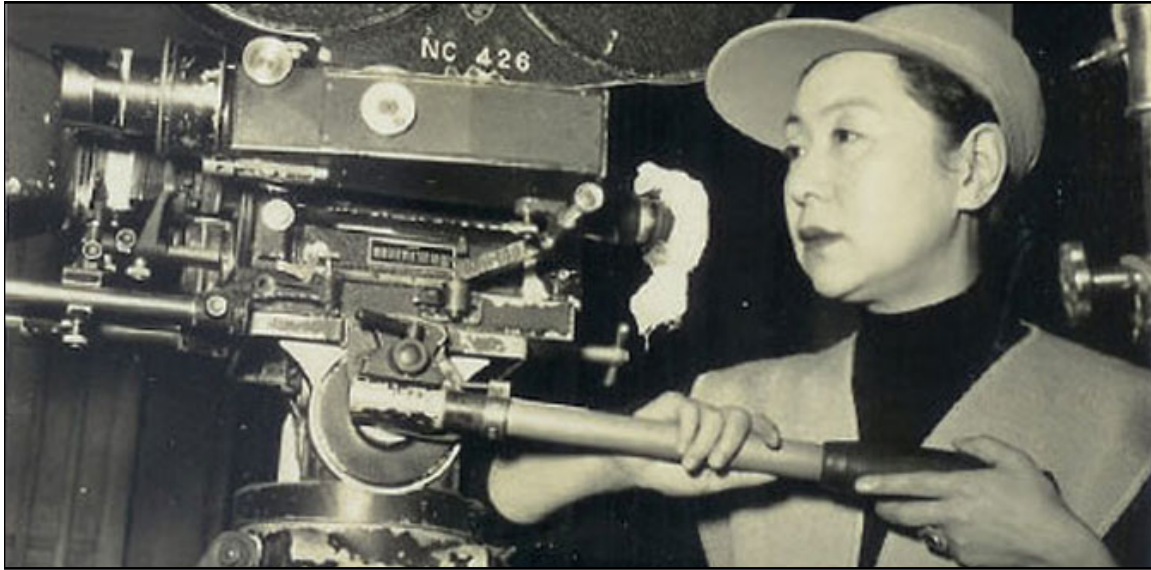


Figure 4. Tanaka Kinuyo stands behind the camera in the role of director. Image source: www.leedsfilm.com/films/kinuyo-tanaka-worksop/.

began at age ten when she passed certification for the *biwa*¹³ and joined an all-girl theatrical music group (KineJun 250). Taking center stage in the troupe, she amassed a significant fan base and, at eleven, dropped out of school to work full-time. After three years on the stage, she joined Shōchiku Studios as a stand-in, moved on to be an extra, and then graduated to actress, thereafter committing her life to the entertainment industry, or, in her own words, “I chose film as my husband and film I married” (K. Tanaka “Jyoyū seikatsu gojyūnen - eiga wo otto toshite erabu” 249). She debuted at age 14 in *Genroku Onna* (Nomura, *Genroku Woman*, 1924) and 79 films later she starred in Japan’s first full length talkie, *Madam to nyobo* (Gosho, *The Neighbor’s Wife and Mine*, 1931). In 1985, in honor of her considerable career, her cousin, director Kobayashi Masaki, founded the Tanaka Kinuyo Prize for outstanding actresses in association with the Mainichi Film

Concours. Throughout her career, she worked with Ozu Yasujirō, Naruse Mikio, Goshō Heinosuke, Shimazu Yasujirō, and Kurosawa Akira. Notable performances include *Daigaku wa detakereda* (Ozu, *I Graduated, But...*, 1929), *Munekata kyōdai* (Ozu, *The Munekata Sisters*, 1950), *Akahige* (Kurosawa, *Red Beard*, 1965), and *Sandakan hachibanshokan bōhkyō* (Kumai, *Sandakan Brothel Number 8*, 1974). However, the director she is most frequently associated with, the working relationship that preoccupies all who write about her from news reporters and gossip hounds to biographers and scholars, is her infamous and tempestuous relationship with Mizoguchi Kenji. It is both odd and somehow tragically poetic that Japan's first and second female directors, between them making films just about twenty years apart, should have experiences so closely linked to one of Japan's most famous masters of the melodramatic weepy, of the so-called "woman's film."

Unlike Sakane, who spent her entire career trying to advance to the position of director, Tanaka was a career actress from the start with no desire to direct until that acting career was in trouble. In late 1949, at age 40, Tanaka traveled to the U.S. as part of a goodwill tour. Although she left in a kimono, she came back in (what we could consider equally ideologically) "showy" Western clothes and green sunglasses, greeting her Japanese fans and reporters with a foreign English "hello" and kisses blown from her fingertips. The public responded by labeling her an *ameshon actress*: an actress who "has stayed in the United States for a brief period of time (i.e. just enough time to "piss") yet pretends to know everything about America after coming back to Japan" (Yoshimoto *Kurosawa* 408). With an already slightly tarnished public image, critics slashed her

visual appearance soon thereafter, calling her first performance back in *Konyaku yubiwa* (Kinoshita, *Engagement Ring*, 1950) “*roshu*” (old and ugly) (Yoshimoto 409). For Tanaka, the scathing public assessment was unnecessary: living in her own body, she of course knew that she was no longer a young actress and was quite painfully aware that she wasn’t landing leading parts in the new romance dramas. In fact, the roles for her no matter the genre were running dry.

Amid all the disfavor after I came back [from the U.S.], with myself as an example, I had think about the problem of age limitation as an actress. At the same time, to the extent that I loved film so much, I didn’t think at all that I would be cut out and cast off, and I held onto that somewhere in my heart. But, even if I were to stay in the movie world, the middle-aged roles...gradually I wouldn’t be able to get lead parts, and even if I turned to supporting roles, supporting roles that I’d really want to do, there weren’t really any in a given year, and so from my experiences living in the movie world for so long, it was something I understood. (K. Tanaka “Jyoyū seikatsu gojyūnen - eiga wo otto toshite erabu” 372)

In order for Tanaka to continue living in, as she calls it, “the film world,” she would have to do so in some capacity other than actress.

It is unclear if Tanaka first approached some of her many powerful friends she had made over the years in the industry or if they brought the idea to her perhaps as an alternative means to cash in on her star power (Yoshida 252), but in 1953 an arrangement was made and the Directors Guild paved the way for her directorial debut.¹⁴ The film, *Koibumi* (*Love Letter*, 1953), was an adaptation of Niwa Fumio’s serialized novel of the same name. The studio picked the source material, arranged for the screenplay adaptation, enlisted Ozu Yasujirō to revise the script, and hand-selected a specialty crew comprised of people who knew Tanaka, liked her, had worked with her previously, and would oversee her efforts as director from the sidelines (K Furukawa 436). Additionally,

she received personal training from Naruse Mikio in an arranged 50-day stint as his assistant director on the film *Ani imōto* (Naruse, *Older Brother, Younger Sister*, 1953). In other words, the studio did just about everything to ensure the ease of Tanaka's endeavor as well as divest most of the risk and creativity of her status through micromanagement. Phrased differently, whereas the completely antithetical situation orchestrated by the studio industry just about guaranteed Sakane's failure, Tanaka, by the same, albeit matured in years, governing body was scripted to succeed. We can read Tanaka's experience as a staged scenario, the relevance of which I will return to later.

Even so, reactions to Tanaka's arranged foray were not entirely positive. While she was working as Naruse's assistant, she had some trouble with the talent. One actress in particular sidestepped Tanaka's seniority, hovering over her during shoots and offering offhand, unsolicited advice (K. Tanaka "Jyoyū seikatsu gojyūnen - eiga wo otto toshite erabu" 374). Naruse himself would make dismissive comments about Tanaka's interest in film direction as a short-lived fancy, gossiping to others that she wouldn't last (374). Similarly, newspapers and magazines took a tone of admonishment. An anonymous critic wrote in to *Fujin Asahi* (Women's Monthly) warning, "there are two completely different talents for acting and directing—because you also need strength—and she doesn't understand on these points alone that she shouldn't try [directing]. There is also some concern about her level of education" (Furukawa 434). In addition to doubting her basic intelligence, a below the belt attack to be sure, detracting critics were quick to pile on potshots about her body as well, noting her "slippery descent" out of the lime-light of youthful romantic roles and into the "ugly figures" of middle-aged matrons (433-434).

But undoubtedly the most abrasive and detrimental reaction came from Mizoguchi, the same director who supported Sakane Tazuko's repeated efforts to direct decades earlier.

Japanese historians and biographers, when broaching the topic of Tanaka's (partial) transition from actress to director, seem to be incapable of discussing little else in greater detail than the resultant rupture between the so-called Tanaka-Mizoguchi "combo." Tanaka Kinuyo and Mizoguchi Kenji worked together on 15 films, a number which frequently draws particular attention. The emphasis on the numerical association is puzzling. Strictly speaking in terms of numbers, with Tanaka's repertoire of over 250 films and Mizoguchi's own list of 100, an overlap of 15 hardly seems like cause for eager emphasis. For context, consider that Tanaka made 18 films with Shimizu Hiroshi, to whom she was married to for a short period (Shindō "Interview with Sakane Tazuko: Sukuriputā kara mita Mizoguchi enshutsu" 19) despite her claims otherwise (K. Tanaka "Jyoyū seikatsu gojyūnen - eiga wo otto toshite erabu" 338), 27 films with Gosho Heinosuke, and 10 films with Ozu (as director and actress, more with Ozu as screenwriter) (Takizawa 61-75). In terms of accolades, although the two did receive festival wins on collaborations such as *Saikaku ichidai onna* (Mizoguchi, *The Life of Oharu*, 1952), *Ugetsu monogatari* (Mizoguchi, *Ugetsu*, 1953), and *Sanshō dayū* (Mizoguchi, *Legend of Sansho the Bailiff*, 1954), Tanaka and Mizoguchi both were more successfully recognized after they stopped working together. However, calling into reference the number of films they worked on together is less of historical or factual importance—a problem that plagues Tanaka's representation in English language materials, a point I will return to—than of melodramatic, statistical foreplay. It's not that

Tanaka and Mizoguchi made several films together, it's that they are seen as having a juicy narrative of a real-life relationship. Tanaka is characterized as Mizoguchi's love interest, his infatuation, and the number fifteen seems to suggest an objective justification of both hypothesizing about it and making record of it. The quantification permits highbrow, scholarly gossip. What this also does is make Tanaka a footnote in Mizoguchi's life; the scandal and in turn Tanaka's directorial experiences are in actuality all about Mizoguchi.

Although Tanaka appears in numerous texts on Mizoguchi and in Japanese film—typically in description of her acting legacy and sometimes as a literal footnote in Mizoguchi's oeuvre—there are two primary texts about her life that include both her acting career and, to an extent, her directing: Furukawa's *Hanamo arashimo* and Shindō's *Shōsetsu Tanaka Kinuyo*. These two texts are, rather surprisingly, extremely biased and can be read quite clearly in opposition to one another. The authors take sides specifically in regards to the Tanaka-Mizoguchi incident. Shindō, a friend of Mizoguchi's and quite clearly on *his* side, authors his book from collected manuscripts, personal experience, and interviews with Tanaka (notably interviews about Mizoguchi). Starting the book with Tanaka's best actress win for *Sandakan Brothel Number 8*, he depicts Tanaka as a wizened and half-crazed crone, manipulative and deceitful: a real-life Norma Desmond right out of *Sunset Boulevard*, responsible for the fall and misery of the late, great Mizoguchi. For most of the book, he sets to debunking many of the statements Tanaka made throughout her life, and in particular defends Mizoguchi's honor, simultaneously shaming Tanaka, in regards to their falling out. Furukawa, on the other hand, is

obviously on *her* side and designates Shindō's book as partial impetus for her own undertaking and her text reads as reclamation of Tanaka's character and star text. Whereas Shindō positions Tanaka as a manipulative sexstress who beguiled her way through a life of cinema with an almost child-like seduction reminiscent of Nabokov's fictional Lolita (this is Shindō's claim and he explains that her sexuality stems from a powerful coyness and her short, small-chested physique (25)), Furukawa insists upon a saintly version of the star who was always polite, never had a bad thing to say about anyone, and never looked down on others (433). As both texts quite clearly express incompatible agendas, shared events and citations seem to be the only safe ground for accuracy. It is also not unreasonable at all to point out that Furukawa is female and Shindō is male, and the depictions of Tanaka fall along respective and altogether stereotypically disappointing gender biases—the one overly laudatory and the other shockingly misogynistic.

Between the two, this is how the story goes.

When Tanaka and Mizoguchi left for Venice to exhibit *Ugetsu monogatari* at the 1953 film festival, she had just finished working under Naruse and was already in negotiations with Shin-Tōhō Studio to make *Koibumi*, although she had not yet given an official reply to the studio as to whether or not she would accept their offer. Tanaka had briefly mentioned the possibility to Mizoguchi before Venice, but Mizoguchi told her to drop the subject and forget about it, summarily stating and almost threatening that if she went ahead with directing that her reputation would suffer, presumably due to failure, and she would not be able to “go back” (Furukawa 430). Alternately, Mizoguchi may have

given the subject the brush off in order to “protect” Tanaka. Reasoning that directing demands a great deal of responsibility and that the labor is arduous and tiring, he discouraged Tanaka in order to save her the difficult experience (Shindō 297).¹⁵ While in Venice, interactions between the two were stilted and tense. There are a few theories on why their interactions appeared so strained. Mizoguchi was apparently under pressure to succeed with *Ugetsu monogatari* since his string of prior films received negative press. It is likely that Tanaka’s decision to go against Mizoguchi’s will and take on the *Koibumi* project was a point of unspoken personal tension. There is also a tremendous amount of speculation (that now seems to be assumed fact) that the two spent one of their Venice nights together in a less than professional capacity, a tryst that may have made Tanaka feel even more fraught with incommensurable conflicts of allegiance to her own career ambitions, Mizoguchi’s wishes, and the added complication of the existence of Mizoguchi’s wife (Furukawa 429). Alternately, Shindō suggests that the rendezvous and subsequent evenings even back in Japan embarrassed Mizoguchi, since Tanaka’s behaviour was “like a prostitute”—his words (Shindō 305). The press picked up on the probable romantic interlude when the two returned to Japan with a Silver Lion win for *Ugestu* and circulated a media rumor that they were engaged. They were not.

Tanaka went ahead and directed *Koibumi* for Shin-Tōhō Studio. There is very little discussion of Tanaka’s actual experience directing the film. She did not talk about it in detail in any of her memoirs or interviews and her biographers do not seem too overly concerned with the process. Oddly enough, we do know some peculiar and particular details, thanks to press coverage. On the first day of shooting, Tanaka wore a

black sweater with a grey cardigan over it, slacks, low-heeled black shoes, yellow socks, a yellow director's hat, and transparent, rimmed glasses (Furukawa 436). We should take a moment to stop and question why we know what Tanaka Kinuyo was wearing down to the minutia of her heel height and glasses. Do Ozu and Mizoguchi's biographers (for example) paint a visual picture of their personal color palate on their respective first days? One reporter included the tidbit in their coverage that her makeup was a little too thick for someone in the role of director (Furukawa 436). Did Kurosawa wear just the right amount of rouge on his first day? This is similar to the textual treatment of Sakane's embodied transformation: her biographer bothers to detail that her first suit was light blue, and provides an anecdote of how difficult it was for Sakane to have Western-style underwear custom made for her special ordered "menswear" (Ōnishi 36). Tanaka, more so than Sakane due to Tanaka's status as legendary screen star, was judged not on how well she did the job on her first day, but how well she looked the part. This, of course, reveals the primary expectations of an actress—not how well she acts *per se* but how well she looks—and is supported by Tanaka's sudden interest in directing in the first place: recall that it was because she *looked* too old to get good roles. The journalist's coverage of her on-set presence befit the description of a woman in front of the camera, not behind.

Ultimately, *Koibumi* received a lukewarm reception. Most reviewers felt that it wasn't bad for a first film, but some felt that it "smelled" a little too much of Naruse and Kinoshita's influence (Furukawa 438)—unsurprising considering the studio's micromanagement of the film and her history of working with the two directors.¹⁶ As the

story goes, Mizoguchi called Tanaka after seeing it in theaters on opening day. In their conversation, he mentioned it only in passing. Tanaka prompted his evaluation, asking him what he thought. He replied that he was “relieved” (Furukawa 439; Shindō 299). He had been expecting a disaster, but felt that the film passed and was “safe” (Furukawa 440; Shindō 299). Shindō goes on to explain Mizoguchi’s reaction. To Mizoguchi, the film was acceptable, but any director would have felt dissatisfied with it. To his mind, Tanaka was a top actress, but the film would only score about a fifty or sixty out of a hundred. Even if Mizoguchi himself had made the film, it would have only scored an eighty. The project itself wasn’t very good and he would never have taken it on and he was annoyed with Tanaka that she should take such a quintessentially bad film (299). Without missing a beat, Mizoguchi, assuming that Tanaka’s days dabbling in directing were over, offered her a role in his next film, *Sanshō dayū* (1954), saying that he couldn’t think of anyone else but her for the part. Tanaka accepted.

This is where the tale gets twisted and passive aggressive. On set, their relationship had clearly changed. Mizoguchi stopped calling Tanaka by her first name, Kinuyo-san, as he used to when they were close, and would only refer to her as Tanaka-kun, clearly designating both a social distance and a hierarchical pecking order between director and actress (as opposed to between colleagues) (Furukawa 441). Mizoguchi also stopped addressing her directly at all: he conducted all instruction for Tanaka through an intermediary, even when she was directly in front of him. One particular instance of this roundabout passive aggressive behavior involved a physical demand on Tanaka: Mizoguchi believed she didn’t look convincing enough for the role—an elderly woman

previously sold into prostitution and slavery and at the end of the film decrepit and blind—and told his staff members to tell Tanaka to go on a rash diet, cut her calorie intake, and lose weight fast (442). Tanaka did as she was told and Mizoguchi thereby effectively controlled her time, her energy, her status, and her basic sustenance. After principle photography ended, Tanaka went back to Kyoto, went out to a restaurant the next day to celebrate the end of a grueling diet and regimine, and ate a now infamous beefsteak.

After lunch, she went into the studio to record dialogue. After several takes, Mizoguchi commented (to his assistant) that there was something odd about Tanaka's voice: it didn't sound quite the same as it did during filming. The harsh edge, despair, and suffering seemed to have faded from her delivery. It is entirely likely that Tanaka *did* sound different in the comparatively cozy sound studio as she did on first delivery in the wind and cold on location. Tanaka, however, believed that Mizoguchi suspected that she had splurged on the beefsteak and was punishing her. Whether or not he knew is really beside the point. That Tanaka was so wrapped up in a psychological mind game that she felt she was being punished for eating ought to be the take-home message. Regardless of what Mizoguchi did or did not know, he would not let Tanaka leave while he was dissatisfied with her delivery. They went outside in the Kyoto February snow to recreate the environmental effect. Mizoguchi insisted on take after take, never feeling the pitch of her voice to be quite right. Finally, Tanaka broke down and confessed that she had eaten a beefsteak for lunch. In other words, she felt compelled to admit that she had eaten. Food. Sustenance. Mizoguchi, red in the face with rage, said nothing and just stared at her (443).

Surprisingly, although perhaps not really insofar as cycles of manipulation, emotional abuse, and power struggles go, they did make one more film together later that year: *Uwasa no onna* (Mizoguchi, *The Woman in the Rumor*, 1954). Also surprisingly, it was not their filming experiences that brought a decisive end to their collaborations, although they certainly contributed to the finale. Instead, it was an offer from the Directors Guild for Tanaka to direct a second film, an Ozu screenplay entitled *Tsuki wa noborinu* (*The Moon Has Risen*, 1955).

While the official offer effectively legitimized Tanaka's first film and recognized her potential with the opportunity for a second production, Tanaka's status (now) as director and actress put her in a difficult and contested situation in terms of contractual obligations. At this point in time, Mizoguchi was the chief director of the Directors Guild as well as the director of Daiei Studios. Clearly, Ozu's offer circumvented Mizoguchi's authority since he did not approve of Tanaka's further attempts to direct, nor would he have approved of the project. Moreover, Tanaka was still under contract with Daiei, Mizoguchi's company at the time, as an actress. The offer to direct Ozu's film came through Nikkatsu. Should Tanaka agree to make the film, this would violate the terms of her extant contract with Daiei and as consequence exclude her from further dealings with Daiei and the associated five film group: Shōchiku, Tōhō, Daiei, Shin-Tōhō, and Tōei. Mizoguchi called Tanaka and explained the binding situation, telling her that if she proceeded with Nikkatsu, she would be expelled from both the Directors Guild and the five studio group (Furukawa 447). He encouraged her to quit notions of directing, appealing to her vanity or some sense of social responsibility by calling her "Japan's

ambassadorial actress” (Shindō 306). Unsuccessful, he then called up Ozu and said, “Tanaka Kinuyo doesn’t have the brains to direct” (Yoshida 252; K. Furukawa 432; Shindō 306). Cheap talk costs dearly and when the slight reached Tanaka, she confronted Mizoguchi. He acknowledged, but did not apologize for, the petty affront and they did not speak again until his death bed (Yoshida 253).

Tanaka made *Tsuki wa noborinu* for Nikkatsu. Because the studio had just restructured its offices, Tanaka’s staff were all young film fledglings, coming to adulthood in the post-war climate of women’s suffrage and increasing equal rights. Moreover, we should not underestimate the effect of Tanaka’s status as an extremely famous and well-respected film persona: she was Japan’s ambassadorial actress indeed. Tanaka experienced little to no prejudice in the work-place and finished her film without incident (Yoshida 252). Despite Mizoguchi’s threats, she finished her contract with Daiei (acting for different directors), and continued to act in dozens of films for both Nikkatsu and the big five. She directed four more films: *Chibusa yo eien nare* (*The Eternal Breasts*, 1955), *Ruten no ōhi* (*The Wandering Princess*, 1960), *Onna bakari no yoru* (*Girls of the Night*, 1961), and *Ogin-sama* (*Love Under the Crucifix*, 1962). In 1975, she won the Silver Berlin Bear (Berlin International Film Festival), the Kinema Junpō Award, and the Mainichi Film Concours award all for best actress for her performance as a former *karayuki-san* (indentured prostitutes sent overseas during the war, used and abused by the Japanese military) in *Sandakan 8*. Two years later, Tanaka Kinuyo, once the darling of the silver screen, divorcee and childless, died alone of a brain tumor.

In print, Tanaka is usually introduced in one of two ways: either as Mizoguchi's muse (regardless of the outcome) or as Japan's first female film director. Sometimes, both: "The pioneer, the first woman feature film director in postwar Japan, was Kinuyo Tanaka [sic], who played the lead role in the films of the famed director Kenji Mizoguchi [sic]" (Karatsu 169). All three strategies suggest that either being the first director (which she is not) or a successful career actress in her own right isn't enough to situate her as a person of record. Generally speaking, the two approaches break down along a language divide. Japanese language texts, although sometimes slightly biographical, weigh heavily on the Tanaka-Mizoguchi relationship previously discussed. English language texts, on the other hand, when not simply citing a performance of Tanaka's, veer in favor of her token inclusion as female director in larger works on Japanese cinema. Both of these routes are entirely problematic. Whereas the working conditions Sakane encountered revealed the early barriers women faced in the film industry, with Tanaka it is the context—and in particular *the talk about* Tanaka both contemporaneously and posthumously—that paints a problematic picture.

First, Tanaka's story of becoming a director cannot, as it stands now, be separated from the Mizoguchi narrative. This is less because he is important to her transition into directing and more because her own story has been constructed in a way that centralizes Mizoguchi. It *would* be possible to reconstruct the rhetoric in a way that addresses the Mizoguchi-Tanaka scandal as a subtext or parenthetical, instead focusing on Tanaka's negotiations with the Directors Guild and the terms of her new working relationship with Ozu or her experiences on set, for example. While I acknowledge that my own detailed

coverage of the Tanaka-Mizoguchi events reinforces that which I am critiquing, my hope is that by deconstructing the narrative, I am subverting the seemingly unconscious, practiced method to contextualize or legitimize women in relation to more famous or “important” men—recall, too, that Sakane’s story similarly revolves around Mizoguchi. The Tanaka-Mizoguchi narrative reveals the problems concerning how we think (or don’t) about this woman (and by proxy women), historically and critically, issues that will come back to haunt us in critiques of contemporary cinema (see Chapters IV and V). In fact, Mizoguchi, as a character in Tanaka’s story (rather than the other way around), should only be important to her narrative as a stylistic influence as well as an example of the kinds of patriarchal barriers—primarily the power structure of permission and possession to the extreme of a personal level—even one of the most famous faces in cinema had to overcome, which is the other reason why it is so thoroughly discussed here.

Second, there is some considerable misconception regarding Tanaka in Japanese and English, although more in the latter than the former. This is another problem of how we talk about Tanaka: historical inaccuracy that suggests careless disinterest. Generally speaking, Tanaka is touted as Japan’s first female film director. As Sakane Tazuko biographer Ōnishi Etsuko writes, “When you ask ‘who was Japan’s first female film director?’ nine out of ten people in the film industry will answer, ‘Tanaka Kinuyo’” (3). Even while Sakane was still alive, the press was already calling Tanaka the first female director (Kawakita 5). This is obviously, categorically not true.¹⁷

Ōnishi suggests that the Japanese film world has rewritten history and by and large erased Sakane in support of embellishing and reaffirming Tanaka's star text (3). Despite her troubles with Mizoguchi and however the press may have described her in her silver years, Tanaka really was and still is a beloved actress with significant standing in Japanese film history and, during her youth, a powerful and evocative symbol of culturally ideal femininity (Satō "Tanaka Kinuyo ron" 4). I would go one step further and suggest that the misinformation serves to erase historical embarrassment and an account of failure due to a form of structural violence against women. Positioning Tanaka as the first director averts the uncomfortable situation of overt sexism and struggle that is Sakane's life story. Moreover, as already an inordinately successful and dazzling figure, the title of first director is one more trophy for the imaginary public vision of Tanaka, and, wrapped in star studded splendor, subsumes the "lateness" of female directors into a celebration of Tanaka, rather than an acknowledgment of prohibitive patriarchal power.¹⁸ However, those who bother to debate the title suggest that Tanaka is still the first *real* director because Sakane only made one film (Ōnishi 3). While also entirely and unforgivably erroneous, this is as ludicrous as suggesting that female film directors don't really have a presence in contemporary Japanese cinema because they haven't made enough films to be considered successful and are therefore nonexistent, which has also been "rationalized" recently (see Chapter V). What this nitpicking reveals is that there is something wrong with the way we talk about (and, again, more often *don't* talk about) women in Japanese film.

This legacy of strategic, evasive, and frankly dishonest manipulation of information for the sake of creating a more palatable picture has resulted in a preposterous amount of misinformation about Tanaka as a director in English language publications, although the Japanese language source material is only a small part of a much larger problem stemming from a lackadaisical legacy.¹⁹ No English language texts extant cite a Japanese language source (for information regarding Tanaka), and most cite each other. The information has gone unchecked and uncorrected. Is this what we do to female directors? Just copy and paste them into a regurgitated history? Would it be even possible for a legacy of egregious errors to follow noted male directors such as Ozu, Mizoguchi, Kurosawa, or Naruse? I do not doubt that there has been misinformation passed down for male directors, but to the extent of basic facts like number of films? Date of birth? First and last performances? That the errors are so roundly inherited from text to text suggests that Tanaka's presence in director rosters and film history surveys smacks of tokenism devoid of real interested or invested research. Tanaka—the “only woman director” and therefore *all* women directors—are anecdotal recitations.

Takano Etsuko – Japan's First Female Theater Manager – 1974

It's only when we're needed by male society.
Women are only allowed in response to the need.
Takano Etsuko²⁰

In *Watashi no shinema sengen* (My Cinema Message, title later changed to *Onnaga eiga wo tsukuru toiukoto*, When a Woman Makes a Movie) distributor, producer, theater manager, and creator/director of the Tokyo International Film Festival Women's Film Week Takano Etsuko (see Figure 5) recounts her own difficulties trying to break into

the studio system in the 50s and 60s (the same time during which Tanaka Kinuyo was allowed to make six films), an industry that “came to be monopolized by men” (*dansei ni*



Figure 5. Sitting portrait of Takano Etsuko. Image source: www.nippokyokai.org/KaichoAisatsu.html.

yotte dokusensaretekita) (Takano 39). Her brief story illuminates what it was like for a woman without a twenty-nine year career as one of Japan’s favorite actresses.²¹ It is brief because it is a failure. After studying film analysis in college, Takano began working for Tōei Studios in 1952, conducting consumer surveys and compiling test audience reports. While canvassing films and spectator responses, she began to take note of the types of roles available to actresses. From Takano’s perspective and research, most studio-produced films in the 1950s were melodramas and the predominant role for actresses was not the young love-torn romance heroines, but the image of mother (to a certain age, for

remember that Tanaka was getting “too old” for the screen). Takano diagnoses the female characters as largely simpleminded and two-dimensional:

They were young and beautiful, they were the object of men’s affections or the objects of men’s marriages, they loved their men no matter what, and their motherly hearts were of an overwhelmingly forgiving nature. They never opposed fate and they bore great suffering. No, there was one more [role]. They also played the part of vamp for wayward men; they were [a man’s] downfall. Men, on the other hand, enjoyed a great variety [of parts]. (38)

The images of women on screen greatly contradicted the immense social changes happening for women in real life.²² During the war, many women picked up the place of industry and labor left vacant by men fighting abroad. Women as primary workforce necessitated access to education, skills, and self-sufficiency. A generation of young women grew up during the Fifteen Years War with a new sense of resiliency, physical prowess, and intellectual aspiration. In the post-war occupation, suffrage brought about unprecedented political agency, although not always in line with the occupational government’s agenda. Women voted, took public office, went to college, and marched hand-in-hand with male classmates in the *Zengakuren* student protests. Still other young women rejected the restrictions of a patriarchal past and, perhaps embracing a different kind of patriarchal future, pursued international relationships, culture, commodities, and ideas. And yet, at the same time, women’s roles on screen resembled an unchanged, homogenous, pre-war representation: mothers and sexual misfits. Feeling that a new era for women in the public should mean a new era for women on screen, Takano approached directors, producers, and screenwriters at Tōei, advocating for characters that more accurately reflected developing social conditions that this new generation of young women could identify with. Staff members said that although Takano’s idea was good in

theory, it would never make for good cinema (38). The interests of female spectators mattered only insofar as they corresponded to a limited range of scripted gender scenarios and preset gender representations. The film industry's stubborn refusal to meet women's interests at this time—in the first years of decline and eventual collapse of the studio system—is a point that I will return to in Chapter III when I address what happens to an industry that fails to adapt to the changing interests of over fifty percent of its customer base.

Frustrated by an obviously canned response, Takano quit her job in consumer feedback and applied for a transfer to work as an assistant director. If none of the male filmmakers in the industry were going to make movies depicting women as anything other than foils and props for men, Takano realized that she would have to make them herself. Takano knew that in the rigid studio system she would only be able to advance to film direction by working her way up through the ladder system, starting first as an assistant and going through the process of experiential training and gradual promotion. The studio rejected her application with a single word, "*dame*"—"It's no good." According to the staff, there was "*no need*" for female directors (*josei no kantoku wa iranai to iu no de aru*) (39). Not one to really be discouraged by restriction,²³ Takano spent four years abroad studying at La Fémis (then IDEC, Institut des Hautes Etudes Cinématographiques) in France. She left home without a scrap of French, found an apartment in Paris, studied language intensively for three months, passed the entrance exam, and graduated from France's premiere film school, all in the social and cinematic environment of the early French New Wave.

Despite her noteworthy accomplishments and education, when Takano returned to Japan in 1962, Daiei hired her at the bottom of the food chain: as an assistant and screenwriter for both film and television. While scripting for the studio, Takano wrote her own screenplay entitled *Teppo monogatari (Story of a Gun)* on the side, and maneuvered for production finances and support from abroad to make her own film her own way. However, during an month abroad of pre-production organization, Daiei studios released *Teppo denraiki (Mori, The Story of a Gun, 1968)*, a film with a slightly altered name but decidedly the same script. Upon return to Japan, Takano filed a claim of plagiarism against the company, but the constraints of her own contract annulled her allegation: the studio owned any and all creative work she produced during her employment tenure (47). Disillusioned, Takano left film production and turned to film exhibition, becoming the manager of Iwanami-Hall, a 232-seat mini-theater still up and running today. Despite widespread vicious rumors that the exhibition hall would fail within months of opening because the person running it was a woman (48)—the production business, distribution and exhibition also apparently a “man’s monopoly”—the theater flourished under Takano’s long term supervision, specialized in foreign (especially French) film, and is said to be a leader of the mini-theater movement in the 1980s (“Iwanami Hall Nitsuite”). Takano holds the title of first female theater manager in Japan.

Drawing on her personal experiences, Takano argues that necessity is the passkey for women entering the mainstream studio industry. I will expand the term a little and argue in support of Takano’s personal assessment that necessity in response to

consumption trends and market demographics is the arbiter of access and agency for women in the Japanese movie business. To begin with, the first occupation for women was acting, although this did not come readily or rapidly early on in Japanese cinema. As mentioned previously, although there were a few screen actresses early on, most female roles were played by male onnagata actors from the kabuki stage. Takano argues that it was not until the development of the close up that a *need* for women arose in the industry. Although the refined and practiced performances of the onnagata were said to embody the ideals of femininity far beyond the capabilities of any actual woman, unfortunately no amount of makeup could rival the sexualized close ups of Hollywood starlets increasingly imported to Japanese theaters. Studios caved and hired women for close-up inserts, eventually letting them play the entire character throughout in response to spectator demand, regardless of shot distance (Takano 40). Film historian Satō Tadao also documents this consumer call for a need for female film actresses. He notes that in the latter half of the 1910s, Japanese audiences, exposed to a flow of Hollywood imports with Hollywood leading ladies, expressed a growing desire for Japanese actresses in Japanese film particularly in modern dramas (*shinpageki*) (as opposed to the heavily costumed and cosmetics oriented period films) (*Nihoneiga Shi* 127).

As studio productions became increasingly more complex, necessity again prompted a new role for women: script girl. As discussed in Sakane's biographical account, the onerous detail-oriented duties of the job—meticulous note keeping that is the backbone of cinema continuity including notation of camera position, wardrobe and makeup specifics, documentation of lighting effects, and precise accounts of actor

blocking as well as prop setup—were in line with secretarial tasks, already a woman’s job. The stressful combination of precision of rather menial mental mechanics seemed to be suitable for a woman: sterile record-keeping devoid of artistic merit or creative input. For the same reasons, women were next hired as film editors (Takano 40). Again, tasks of exacting, but routine, labor. However, the position didn’t arise until the 1930s, after the job function was split from the role of camera operator (Nornes *Japanese Documentary Film: The Meiji Era Through Hiroshima* 50).

It wasn’t until quite a different need arose, one requiring aesthetic insight and expressive ingenuity, that women were allowed into creative quarters. By the late 1950s, at least half of moviegoing audiences were women. Studios recognized both the potential and the need to attract these women to their theaters, women who, thanks to increased participation in the larger work force, had paychecks to buy movie tickets for themselves. Women went to the movies, they weren’t taken to them. To appeal to an increasingly female audience, studios supported screenplays based on literature by women and, later, expanded the adaptation approach, cut out the middleman, and directly hired women as screenwriters. But, as Takano argues, “a director stands at the top of all staff, the onsite boss who holds the authority as final decision maker in filmmaking. There was no need to look up to a woman as leader, and for that small reason, women’s advancement to the director’s chair was the slowest in coming” (Takano 40). There was no need for women to, as they say, call the shots.

By the time Takano was defeated by the corporate structure of a men’s monopoly that stole and appropriated her work rather than let a woman make a film on her own,

there were plenty of women working in the myriad of clerical-related fields within the studio system. There just weren't any making decisions or telling large groups of people what to do. However, like Sakane Tazuko who left the lots to film real people in real environments outside the prohibitive structure of the narrative cinema industry, so, too, did a new generation of voting, working, striking, schooling, flirting women in the post-occupation 60s pick up cameras to capture the world around them. They were documentarists.

Haneda Sumiko and the Documentarists: On the Margins of a Men's Monopoly

When we started to work after the war, femininity was a negative characteristic. You had to ignore that you were a woman and there was a need to show that you could work the same as a man...Back then, you could feel that a female approach was wrong.
Haneda Sumiko²⁴

Although this dissertation is primarily concerned with the filmmaking context of the commercial studio system and the post-studio distribution market (and in truth more the latter than the former), I would be remiss if I did not momentarily stray into a discussion of documentary filmmaking, as it is a tremendously important sphere for fostering the first generation of female filmmakers (as opposed to the heretofore discussed individual landmarks on the path of narrative film history). Documentary film in Japan is an elaborate field and, at times, a systematic expressive form that holds a noteworthy place in Japanese cinema history.²⁵ “Documentary” is something of a misnomer written here in English. Although Japanese filmmakers also use the word *dokyumentarī*, it is one of many categories in the umbrella classification also called

dokyumentarī film. Under that same heading are many specialized cinema forms, including *kiroku eiga* (record film), *jikkyō eiga* (real conditions film), *jissha eiga* (actuality), *senden eiga* (propoganda film), *kyōiku eiga* (education film), *jiji eiga* (current events film), *nyūsu eiga* (news film), and *bunka eiga* (culture film). Documentary historians are quick to point out that in Japanese film—and all national cinemas for that matter—documentaries are the *first* films, referring to, of course, the actualities. Whereas in other cinema histories, documentary film fell to a somewhat relegated wayside, Japanese state officials in both the prewar and war periods borrowed on German and British uses of the film form and viewed documentary as an important “weapon in the thought war” of propaganda (Nornes *Japanese Documentary Film: The Meiji Era Through Hiroshima* 66). Similarly, underground film collectives saw documentary as a potential tool to undermine fascist government appropriation of the very same cinema forms. Producers in the *business* of filmmaking saw documentary as neither really, but instead an opportunity for profit “primarily in the context of market economy competition” (49), there was a significant demand for news and journalism film in a nation embroiled in extensive military, political, and economic regional expansion, howsoever unfamiliar that may seem now. The outcome of a multifaceted network of interested parties practicing coercion, subversion, and dispersion is the development of a substantial industry of filmmaking that stands right along side, and operating in tandem with, a similarly rich history of narrative cinema. So much so, in fact, that just as narrative cinema, with all its investment in extensive genre classification, condenses and subsumes documentary film as a homogenous Other, Japanese documentary as a field of

cinema form with its own multitudinous classifications performs the exact same rhetorical maneuver by reducing all non-documentary Japanese cinema into the nugget term *gekieiga* (dramatic film).

When Sakane Tazuko joined Tokyo Riken Films in 1940 to make a type of documentary film called *bunka eiga* (culture films), and then shortly thereafter *manei* (Manchuko films) propaganda films for the Manchurian Motion Picture Association, there was already a highly organized system of documentary filmmaking to meet demands from government and private sectors. During the war years, theaters were required by law to pair each narrative cinema exhibition with a state-sanctioned film of one of the documentary genres. Due to the requirement, the need for documentary films was quite high: indeed it was institutional. After the war, the U.S. Occupation continued support of documentary production, albeit with a different set of scripted regulations, promoting it as a “medium to facilitate the peaceful democratization of Japan” (184). The postwar climate of documentary production, and in particular PR films, proved moderately profitable, particularly as low-cost television programming. Although Atsugi Taka was a prominent member of the left-wing film organization Proletarian Film League of Japan (Prokino) operational during the war years, it is in the postwar PR film environment that women—as opposed to *a* woman—found seating in directors’ chairs. Among them were Nakamura Rinko, Tokieda Toshie, Kurisaki Midori, Shibuya Nobuko, Fujiwara Tomoko, and Haneda Sumiko. Let us, by way of example, consider the prolific and highly acclaimed career of Haneda Sumiko (see Figure 6) to see how the documentary industry, although not necessary flooded with women directors, was a



Figure 6. Haneda Sumiko (right of camera) directing on location. Image source: *Watashi no shinema sengen* (Takano).

significantly more approachable avenue than the closed off studio lots of narrative cinema. It is worthwhile to remember that Haneda is a contemporary of Tanaka Kinuyo and Takano Etsuko, working (or in Takano's case trying to work) in the field of cinema production at the same time, but in a decidedly different industry.

Haneda started working at Iwanami Eiga Seisakusho in 1950 in the photography archives editing department. After three years there she transferred to film production and worked as an assistant director under Hani Susumu on his film *Kyōshitsu no kodomotachi* (*Children in the Classroom*, 1954). She had her directing debut three years later with the film *Mura no fujin gakkū* (*Women's College in the Village*, 1957), which she shot for two months in a farming village in Shiga prefecture. Twenty years later, she produced and made her first independent film *Usuzumi no sakura* (*The Cherry Tree with Gray Blossoms*, 1977). Haneda financed the film with her accumulated work bonuses and filmed it during vacations with the cooperation of a coworker cameraman. The film

took four years to make and required eleven different trips to shoot on location.

Meanwhile, she continued to work at Iwanami until 1981, when she hit the age of compulsory retirement. During her tenure with the company, she participated in the making of over 80 films, most of them PR films and several of them award winning, including *kyōiku eiga* (education films), *sangyō eiga* (industry films), *gakujyutsu eiga* (research films), and *kagaku eiga* (science films).

Haneda's second career began after retirement, whereupon she focused on independent filmmaking, feeling that she could freely make for the first time films that she wanted to make (rather than PR films assigned to her by the company) (Nornes "Haneda Sumiko" 50). Her independent documentary films are ambitious projects (e.g. the eight-hour film on kabuki actor Kataoka Nizaemon) and are acclaimed both at home and abroad. Most of them have been exhibited at Iwanami Hall—she and the theater manager Takano Etsuko have a long term friendship—and her film *AKIKO-Aru dancer no shouzō* (*Akiko- Portrait of a Dancer*, 1985) was the only domestic Japanese film screened at the first Tokyo International Film Festival Women's Film Week (also run by Takano) in 1985.

But, of course, what is relevant to the inquiry at hand are the terms of her career and the working environment that supported her access and success. Haneda describes her entry into the documentary business as a special case scenario:

After the war, two female directors were born, me and Tokiude [Toshie]. While still in the period of post war confusion, The Iwanami Film Company came about because of its mother company Iwanami Publishing. Iwanami Publishing didn't discriminate against women; even the pay was the same... Tokiude and I were able to enter the company directly... It was only in that post war confusion that

Tokiude and I were able to become directors. After things settled, [the hiring of women] didn't continue. (Uchida 33-34)

The Iwanami Film Company, under its parent company Iwanami Publishing, started in 1950 after a year as a center for research film production. Other than a few veterans, most of the staff employed by the newly constructed company were young, albeit mostly male. Nearly all were inexperienced and fresh out of school. According to Haneda, “nobody knew anything about making films” (Nornes “Haneda Sumiko” 47). Because the company was new, they were willing to take risks and weren't beholden to prescribed methods or structured hierarchy. They readily incorporated new technology and filmmaking techniques (47) and were hip to the postwar spirit of increased gender equality (or as Haneda describes it “postwar confusion”). The environment was a clean slate.

Like Tanaka Kinuyo, Haneda had no real ambition to be a film director until the option was made available to her (C. Tanaka 151). She joined the company because she was socially connected to it and she needed a job: the head of the new company was her mother's former teacher (Y. Matsumoto 95). She worked in the photo library with a fellow alumni, Hani Susumu (now also a notable director), who transferred shortly after to the production department (Yoshida 264). While Haneda was still editing books, Hani recruited her to be his assistant for *Kyōshitsu no kodomotachi* and arranged her transfer into production (Nornes “Haneda Sumiko” 47). During the first few years as a director, she didn't have particular aspirations to make anything specific. She was interested in trying whatever the company assigned to her (Uchida 34). Although it would be incorrect to describe Haneda as lacking ambition, particularly given her illustrious career

and the important position she embodies as role model for future generations, it may be safe to suggest that Haneda lacked an agenda. Unlike Sakane and Takano who specifically wanted to address women's issues and in so doing claim a position as representing a female point of view, Haneda was game for anything and tried overtly to maintain a gender neutral position. In her own words, "When we started to work after the war, femininity was a negative factor. You had to ignore that you were a woman and there was a need to show that you could work the same as a man" (Y. Matsumoto 98). Haneda wasn't a threat to a patriarchal system because she wasn't trying to subvert it; she was trying to operate invisibly within it.

Haneda has been quite insistent that she did not approach filmmaking as an opportunity to address gender issues and that she always felt on an equal level with her male coworkers to the extent that she did not think of herself as a female director (Y. Matsumoto 97; Ikehata 62; Uchida 11). However, her repeated insistence on an outwardly gender blind career history is reminiscent of one who doth protest too much. Or, to be a little more culturally specific, her response falls in line with the Japanese adage, "*deru kugi wa utareru*" (the nail that sticks out is hammered down). Certainly, her comments about being a women in the industry, and particularly her feelings that being a woman at work was considered a "bad" thing, suggest that she deflects gender critique on a personal level. However, her rhetorical deflection reveals a critical consciousness of ongoing gender struggles in an avowedly impersonal social sense. Indeed, her work, which Eric Cazdyn describes as "fifty years rethinking how to represent the body" (256), and her involvement in various women's film festivals and

organizations from the 1980s to the present suggest a gender-conscious perspective.

What's happening with Haneda's public statements about her experiences as a filmmaker (and not a *female* filmmaker) is a disavowal of sex and gender, similar to the transformation required of Sakane and Tanaka. However, whereas Sakane and Tanaka went through a physical transformation by altering their appearance and affected behavior, we can read Haneda's stance as a kind of psychological performance where she had to be "the same as a man" in behavior and opinion. For example, within the same interview, she will reiterate this gender neutral claim while describing how difficult it was to rely on a male crew who were not always willing to work under her, but rely on them she must because she wasn't seen as physically capable of operating the heavy equipment (Uchida). Similarly, Haneda describes a freedom of expression in independent filmmaking, but acknowledges that her ability to make these films is dependent on the influence of her husband Kudo Mitsuru, who owns a small film company and produces her films. Thanks to his connections in the industry, she is able to secure equipment, access locations, and rent studio space. Although she never really has the money to make films, their combined efforts generally result in the arrival of a financier at some point in the process (Nornes "Haneda Sumiko" 52). And yet, Haneda's contradictory claims are entirely understandable: she is stuck between a rock and a hard place between wanting equality of respect and access without being a "special" gendered case (which is not meant here as a positive position), on the one hand, and forfeiting the right to demand that a patriarchal society change for women rather than the other way around, on the other. This complex and difficult problem, as well as the pros and cons of adopting the

necessary attitude, haunts contemporary female authorship in contemporary mainstream Japanese cinema and I will return to this particular pickle in greater detail in Chapters IV and V.

Although she herself got in on the postwar ground floor, over the next thirty years Haneda witnessed important changes in filmmaking, changes that fostered subsequent space and success for female directors in at least the particular arena of documentary filmmaking: although a few women in the 80s and 90s directed narrative mainstream film, the greater percentage of women finally working with celluloid did so in the documentary genres. To this day the most well known Japanese female director is documentarist Kawase Naomi (winner of the Golden Camera in 1997 and the Grand Prize of the Festival in 2007 at Cannes). Both Haneda and film critic Ishihara Ikuko describe documentary film as a gateway for women because, when compared to studio narrative film, it was an undesirable job with low pay, few resources, and even less recognition. There was space in documentary filmmaking because, simply, there was a vacancy. Haneda explains: “Making documentaries is a poor path and so most people don’t choose it. It is not lucrative. People go for the drama filmmaking instead. That is where the money is” (Nornes 53).

Ishihara supports this by arguing that the largest reason is that documentaries are a “quiet” image, and since the field is not profitable, most people do not want to enter it. There was room for women because it was an undesirable, but it was a field with a small, mandatory market nonetheless. While men pursued more desirable professions within the studio system, they left vacancies in documentary filmmaking (Ishihara *Josei eiga*

kantoku no koi 147-148). As Takano might argue, women stepped in to fill a place of industry need.

While vacancy was the reason why women got a foot in the door, changes in technology account for their growing numbers. Looking back at the history of technical filmmaking, an even more depressing and sparse record than female film women directors is the account of crew members. Women, as the “weaker sex,” were seen by their male coworkers/gatekeepers as incapable of taking on the physical labor of film production. Moreover, they also internalized the restriction and thought that they could not amass the strength required.

Mostly only men were able to use the equipment. If a woman didn’t use a male staff, she couldn’t make a film. There were many men who were resistant to working with women. So one of the biggest reasons why there are now able to be so many more female filmmakers is because the equipment has changed. Even if there aren’t men [around], you can make a movie. (Uchida 98-99)

Certainly remarkable advancements in technology have yielded smaller, lighter cameras, professional and compact sound equipment, and portable lighting. Once women had access to equipment they could purchase and/or operate themselves or with amicable companions, independent documentary film, as a genre without professional actors, without artificial sets, and without oversight from bosses or external decision makers, was an open arena for creativity and expression (Nornes “Haneda Sumiko” 52). By the 1980s, it was quite literally possible for a woman to buy a camera and make a film in her own neighborhood or the town next door. Or in her own room. Moreover, once films were available for easy rental on video (and then DVD), the entire process of learning technique, studying visual repertoire, and gaining educated inspiration became

increasingly easy and accessible while in the comfort of one's own home (Matsumoto 99). The other details came with practice. As Haneda reflected in the mid 1990s, "Now anyone can make a movie" (100).

Mind the Gap

Eric Cazdyn writes:

To mention the category "Women and Film in Japan" is almost always to mention those male directors who most interestingly employ women in their films, such as Mizoguchi, Naruse, and Imamura. But to mention the category "Women and Literature in Japan" is almost always to mention the most famous female writers of Japanese literary history, such as Murasaki Shikibu, Higuchi Ichiyo, and Miyamoto Yuriko. The obvious explanation for this is that so few women have made film in Japan. It takes a great deal more capital to participate in the film industry, mainstream or independent, than it does to write a prose narrative. Add to that gender biases against women in the larger collectives required by the filmmaking process, and it is clear why the history of women as writers is more developed. No one disputes these facts, but they still fail to account fully for why female directors have been consistently written out of Japanese film history and criticism. (256)

The stories and history (so far) of women in the industry, as documented in this chapter, were pieced together out of tidbits of film histories, biographies, and scraps of articles because, as Eric Cazdyn argues, women *have* been written out of cinema history production.²⁶ What this has done is shape Japanese cinema history as a *de facto* men's cinema and, through systematic and repetitive exclusion, has made men's cinema normative cinema. Moreover, as the history of Japanese cinema scholarship and critique is complicit, if not almost entirely responsible, for the elision, not only has Japanese cinema been a men's cinema, Japanese cinema scholarship has been a men's scholarship of men's cinema. This is true for academic and popular press texts in both Japanese and

English, even when the authors aren't actually men or aspire to the politics of feminism, regardless of gender.

The filmmaking experience for women in the past came with specific and shared prerequisites: backgrounds of economic privilege, social and familial connections to the industry, and an embodied gender pseudo-transformation. While the first two are necessary and I think obvious observations, it is the latter that requires special attention. All four women discussed, representing women's experiences in six consecutive decades, underwent a reconstruction of their relationship to their own gendered existence in order to reconfigure and situate themselves in a gender hostile environment. For Sakane, Tanaka, and Takano, this was a physical metamorphosis, whether through the adoption of male clothing or socially perceived masculine behavior traits. For Haneda and Tanaka, it was a psychological and rhetorical performance: Tanaka as an actress acted out the role of director (by default a pseudo-male persona due to lack of significant female precedence) and Haneda felt compelled to prove herself not as equal to a man but as a nongendered nonwoman. And yet, although this was required by the work environment, their labor output and their final projects struggled under the rubric of gender tokenism imposed by distributors and critics: their films were marketed as having a special female perspective or a unique femininity and were evaluated on the terms of those expectations. This is not to say that the filmmakers themselves did not want to represent a "female perspective"—quite the contrary. However, it is painfully clear that the insistent and ambitious women who approached filmmaking because they perceived a gender bias in film and actively sought to reform it (Sakane and Takano) were sabotaged, demoted, and

eventually boxed out. Conversely, women who took on a passive and apolitical attitude (Tanaka and Haneda) were accepted and supported. Their work is decidedly concerned with women's position (and more often than not plight) in society, but through roundabout non-vocalized subtext. Even so, all four women had to don costumes of masculinity while laboring under gendered expectations to deliver a product marketed to reinforce cultural notions of femininity. All the while, their bodies, already in an unchartered position of instability, were under attack: let us not forget that their experiences are fraught with gender bias and, in many cases, sexual harassment.

I am not arguing that these women had to deny their gender in the sense that gender actually exists in a magical, biological, and/or monolithic sense, but that they were put in a socially structured transgendered position, expected to perform the roles, appearances, behaviors, and presumed innate characteristics of masculine and feminine genders as a double burden and a double bind. To return to Eric Cazdyn's point, this may very well be true for female scholars who have also, by and large, ignored women in film in order to, perhaps, fit into topical (male-dominated) academic routes of inquiry.

I support Takano's argument that the inclusion of women into the film industry is predicated on need and function. It's not that there haven't been women directors making films in Japan, it's that there was never a perceived *need* for them. There is a feedback mechanism (more on this in the next chapter) between film production, film reception, and film criticism. Our neglect of women in industry as critics, and our lackluster settling for an often misogynist and almost always problematic (in terms of gender representation and imagination) cinema as spectators, plays an important part in their

exclusion from the industry. As spectators and critics, we can take the responsibility to represent undervalued film and art, bring it into the limelight, and thereby encourage more production of similar products. This is, in part, how business works and, as consumers, we can help create this need. It is with some amount of sad irony that I recognize that I myself am writing a dissertation on female authorship in Japanese cinema because I perceive a need and that any personal success I may achieve in publication or profession will be for the same reason.

The status, process, and experience of female authorship in Japanese cinema *is* changing. Haneda's observations on contemporary filmmaking are true. Anyone *can* make a movie. Anyone who puts down a comparatively small amount of cash can gather necessary equipment and make their own film. We see evidence of this on YouTube every day. Indeed, as of 2001 (close to the beginning of the current boom in female authorship in narrative cinema) there appear to have been more Japanese women making *jikken eiga* (experimental film), *kojin eigai* (personal films), and *nikki eiga* (diary films) than men (Ishihara *Josei eiga kantoku no koi* 158). However, even though women can make films, these films are not necessarily distributed. This is where the balance of power has shifted in the post-studio industry, from production to exhibition. Access to theatrical distribution and the retail market is still highly selective and it is still highly gendered. The studio system of the pre-, mid-, and post-war eras was a male-dominated system. The Art Theatre Guild and the mini-theaters of the 1960s and 1970s were a male-dominated industry. The video market of the 1980s was a male-dominated industry. The pink film market was and still is a male-dominated industry. The recent resurgence

of studio-financed film and the revival of theatrically successful mainstream cinema is a male-dominated industry. Yet, from the mid 1990s, there has been a rise in female authorship projected in theatres and home entertainment systems. In large part, this is due to increased accessibility of equipment as well as significant strides in social attitude about working women, as well as increased participation of women in important positions of financial power such as managers and producers, but this is not the entire explanation. We must not ignore the business component of film industry and its markets. We must not ignore the new need: female directors for female spectators.

Notes

¹ Quoted in Ōnishi, Etsuko. *Mizoguchi Kenji wo aishita onna*. Tokyo: Sanichi shobō. 53 (1993). Translation mine.

² Listed above are the major works available in English. There are far many more in Japanese. The point here is that there are no works in English on the *joshi annai nin*, and no publications in Japanese solely devoted to the topic.

³ The term *jokyū* for female theatre ushers was adopted by the café and bar industry in 1911 to describe the tasks of waitresses/hostesses. See Hirokazu Toeda, *Eigakan Korekushon: Modan Toshi Bunka*. Tokyo: Fuji ripuro kabushikigaisha. 915 (2006). Their job was less to serve drinks or food from the bar, but rather to serve drinks while seated at the table, keeping patrons company and enticing them to order more. Later, in accord with similar developing roles in the café and bar industries, the theatre *tehiki* title changed to *jokyū* (hostess) in the 1910s, and then later to *joshi annai nin* (girl guide) in the 1920s.

⁴ *Misemono*, literally meaning ‘shows’ or ‘exhibits’, are the origins of the theater business in Japan. Extremely popular in the Edo period (1603 - 1868), they were displays of oddities and novelties, often crude and vulgar in nature, that were short-term, highly changeable entertainment enterprises. Misemono artists were essentially commercial buskers, skilled in the creation of spectacle, who traded on the curiosity and attraction of the new and bizarre—hence the high turnover rate—similar to carnival tent acts, though much smaller in scale and more individually operated. Misemono acts included anything and everything, ranging from such standard fare as imported novelties, monkey performances, snake dances, juggling and acrobatics, to eating feats, one-man sumo shows, archery performed using one’s feet, religious relics, and exotic medicinal remedies: Andrew L. Markus, “The Carnival of Edo: Misemono Spectacles from Contemporary Accounts,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 45.2 (1985). The Asakusa area in Tokyo became a hub for misemono acts. When moving pictures arrived in Japan, it did not take long before showmen incorporated them into misemono displays. Asakusa Rokku (Asakusa sixth district), already home to many theatrical stages and music halls, became famous for its Theatre Street in the 1910s and early 1920s as a movie theatre hub. For a thorough discussion of the Asakusa district, see Chapter III.

⁵ To be fair, Satō does bring up other Asian countries in passing reference (87).

⁶ Film versions of kabuki plays made for popular cinema at the time and many filmmakers adapted these theatrical productions whole cloth, from set to actor. *Onnagata* were female impersonators of the kabuki stage, men that were said to embody performative femininity to such excellence that they were considered *more feminine* than any woman. After women returned to the stage in the Meiji era, there were also all female troops with women who performed the roles of men (*otokoyaku*) and some of these all female productions were likewise adapted to film, but not nearly with as much frequency all-male performances (Satō *Nihon eiga shi* 122). It wasn't until the increased importation of Hollywood films with their starlets framed in full glamour closeups that audiences began to demand the same thing from domestic cinema (Takano 40). Apparently the *onnagata* could out-woman a woman in constructed gender expectations, but not in physical biology.

⁷ Most of the information about Sakane in this section is drawn from Ōnishi Etsuko's biographical study. Although there are other cursory writings on Sakane, they rely on Ōnishi's foundational and invaluable text. The information and stories found in the biography are drawn from Sakane's own personal papers, journals, and memoirs. Although her life story is available in great detail in Ōnishi's text, it is sadly not available in English. For this reason, I have decided to rework a biographical account in English here.

⁸ Although men had adapted to Western wear, women still largely wore kimono both at home and in public (except for the young, fashionista “modern girls”), especially outside of Tokyo.

⁹ A poem from Sakane's personal papers, reprinted in (Ōnishi 51-54), translation mine.

¹⁰ The film is sometimes translated as *Kita no ainu*.

¹¹ Shinkyo (as it is called in Japanese, Hsinking in Chinese) was the capital of the Japanese controlled puppet state of Manchukuo (1932-1945).

¹² Quoted in Osamu Takizawa, Tanaka Kinuyo Kiki Kaki, Kyoto. p. 39.

¹³ The *biwa* is a Japanese lute derived from the Chinese *pipa* used as musical accompaniment to theatrical storytelling. It has a short, fretted, neck and a pear-shaped body. By passing the certification process, Tanaka became a licensed *biwa* performer.

¹⁴ Tanaka describes it as a humble and passive process, but for an actress trained in the performance of male-defined ideals of femininity—passivity, modesty, humility, and stoic repression of personal desire or ambition—she describes nearly every event in her life with a high degree of feminine performativity. To hear Tanaka tell it, life just happened to her.

¹⁵ It perhaps goes without saying, but both responses smack of chivalrous chauvinism.

¹⁶ After Tanaka's death, there has been subsequent high praise for the film, particularly as it is (mistakenly) perceived to be the first film by a female director and to contain feminist themes (Furukawa 439).

¹⁷ A number of celebratory Japanese texts designate Tanaka as such, including, during the drafting of this document, the website for the Tanaka Kinuyo Culture Center in Shimonoseki City, Yamaguchi prefecture (*Nihon wo daihyō suru jōyū Tanaka Kinuyo*). While working on this manuscript, I wrote a substantial blog entry about the historical elision of Sakane, and linked to the Culture Center's website as a citation for a perpetuation of the myth. Although the website had been up for at least ten months prior to my blog entry (the site existed before the centennial celebration of Tanaka's birth held at the National Film Center in Tokyo during September of 2009), some time after I wrote my post and before I checked the website again on September 17th, 2010 (two and a half months later) the biography on the site had been altered. It now informs visitors that Tanaka is the first *actress* (not *woman*) to become a director in Japan. This edit is displayed in boldface in an otherwise plain type paragraph. Whether or not the alteration is a result of my online blogging is irrelevant—although since I am the only person seemingly writing about Japanese female filmmakers in the English language blogosphere, however infrequently, and the blog continues to get hits from search engine queries on a daily basis, speculation seems fair—the precision and consistency of the edit is revealing.

¹⁸ What the edit on the Tanaka Kinuyo Culture Center's website does, other than to reveal underlying values about being first at something...*anything*...regardless of how obtuse the qualifiers, is to bend to historical legitimate accuracy while still insisting and maintaining the fabricated celebration of Tanaka. It's a dicey rephrasing that suggests on the one hand that Japan has a legacy of actresses turned directors (it doesn't) and that there are plenty of female film directors before Tanaka (there weren't). Why else would anyone ever particularly make the designation that she is the first *actress* to direct? It is not a harmless mincing of words and it is entirely strategic, even if the copywriters know not fully how they are manipulating the truth, or the historical legacy involved in their actions. It is entirely possible that no one has thought about it that much.

¹⁹ "The only woman to become a director is actress Kinuyo Tanaka [sic], the heroine of so many of the *shomin-geki*. After thirty years of acting in the films, she made her debut as a director in 1953 in *Love Letter* (Koibumi), a film which revealed a genuine lyrical talent." Joseph L. Anderson and Donald Richie, *The Japanese Film: Art and Industry*. Princeton University Press. (1960) 185.

"Actress Kinuyo Tanaka, who plays Hiroko in *Chimneys*, was one of the most popular movie stars in Japan during the 1930s. Born in 1924, Tanaka first worked with a musical troupe before joining Shōchiku in 1924." Beverly Bare Buehrer. *Japanese Films: A Filmography and Commentary*. University of Michigan (1990) 72.

"Japan's first woman director started as an actress for Shōchiku Studio in 1924 and was Japan's top female star in the early 1930s, ending her acting career in 1977 in Kei Kumai's *Sadakan 8*, a film which won her Japan's Best Actress Award...In 1953 Tanaka directed her first film, *Koibumi*, which reflects the concerns of the *shomen-geki* [sic]. Despite its melodramatic quality, *Koibumi* appropriately captured the atmosphere of the times...Despite the help she received from the traditionalist Ozu, Tanaka's directorial ambitions were shortlived because of the male-dominated studio system. Her personal liaison with Mizoguchi, who was then head of the directors' organization, did not help her when he decreed that women should not make films." Annette Kuhn and Susannah Radstone. *The Women's Companion to International Film*. University of California Press (1994) 398-399.

"Director Kenji Mizoguchi decreed that 'women should not make films'...Kinuyo Tanaka is considered Japan's first female director...*Love Letter* (1953) is Tanaka's first film. It is a slightly feminist melodrama in the *shemin-geki* [sic] genre...Tanaka's next film, *The Moon Has Risen* (1955), is a distinctly feminist melodrama." Gwendolyn Audrey Foster. *Women Film Directors: An International Bio-Critical Dictionary*. Westport: Greenwood Press (1995) 352.

"By then another accomplished wartime actress, Tanaka Kinuyo, had created a media uproar when, after a short visit to America, she emerged from her airplane at Haneda Airport and threw kisses to the crowd—a thoroughly un-Japanese thing to do. She survived the pundits' hammering, however, to become a film director, turning out scores of movies after directorial debut [sic] in 1953." Conrad D. Totman. *A History of Japan*. Blackwell History of the World (Wiley-Blackwell, 2000) 528.

"Kinuyo Tanaka [sic], incidentally, made 13 films with Mizoguchi, and withstood everything, from his directing methods to a rumoured marriage proposal, but eventually she snapped¹⁹. In a move entirely typical of his conflicted attitude to women, he tried to block Tanaka's efforts to direct. He failed, and she proved her independence by becoming Japan's first female director—and by never working with him again." Justin Bowyer. *The Cinema of Japan & Korea*. Twenty-Four Frames, vol. 2. Wallflower Press (2004) 55

²⁰ Etsuko Takano. *Watashi no shinema sengen: Eizo ga josei de hiraku toki*. 1st ed. Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha (1992) 39.

²¹ At this point in history, it is extremely important to clarify that this work is concerned with the experiences of women trying to break into mainstream studio run film with theatrical release deals, *not*, for example, independent *avant garde* cinema.

²² The image of women and female representation is by and large what comprises Japanese feminist film scholarship.

²³ In her memoirs, Takano structures her life narrative as a series of gender biased restriction since childhood. She wanted to join a military academy, but was not allowed because she was female. She wanted to serve her country in active combat during the war, but was not allowed to because she was female. She wanted to direct films, but was not allowed to because she was female.

²⁴ Quoted in Yumiko Matsumoto. *Eiga wo tsukutta Onnatachi*. Tokyo: Cinema House (1996) 98.

²⁵ For an articulate and thorough analytical history of Japanese film, I defer to refer to Markus Nornes' extremely helpful topical oeuvre:

Markus Nornes. *Japanese Documentary Film: The Meiji Era Through Hiroshima*. University of Minnesota Press (2003).

Markus Nornes. *Forrest of Pressure: Ogawa Shinsuke and Postwar Japanese Documentary*. University of Minnesota Press (2007).

Markus Nornes. "The Postwar Documentary Trace: Groping in the Dark." *positions*. 10.1 (2002).

For a Japanese language overview and study, please see Satō Tadao's collaborative three part series Tadao Satō. *Nihon no dokyumentarī*. 3 vols. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten (2009).

²⁶ There are, however, many texts in Japanese dedicated to biographies and studies of actresses.

CHAPTER III

GENRES, GENDERS, AND GOING TO THE MOVIES

The history of post-war Japanese cinema is written and rewritten with an obsessively fixed eye on the director and his creations. What this creates in past scholarship is a chain of events documenting the tectonic terrain of filmmaking following modes or “waves” of production resulting in a chronology: the post-war studio golden age followed by the New Wave, the Art Theater Guild, the studio collapse, the indies and V-cinema. It’s a neat and causal history, to be sure, that skips along stepping-stones of production contexts. Yet it is the overemphasis on auteur filmmaking that has generated and fostered a narrow-minded view of Japanese cinema history, one in which a set of production networks is replaced whole cloth by a new generation of filmmakers and filmmaking mechanisms. Throughout the progression, a great deal of emphasis is placed on the creation of cinema and the people who do the creating. Even reinventions of or interventions in this history are structured around a production, or rather authorial, bias, generating alternate histories inclusive of alternative industries—documentaries, pink films, stragglings studio B-movies and *kaijū eiga* (monster films), and experimental works—all based in studies of filmmakers and filmmaking spheres. But what of the people who watch cinema and the places where they watch it? Certainly fluctuations and reconfigurations of audiences and exhibition venues have a dramatic feedback effect on cinema production, at the very least on the level of revenue and demand. Are they not

equally important players? What would reception studies reveal about the arc of Japanese film history?

Within the scripted history, there is large debate over whether or not the Fifteen Year War (and/or the subsequent U.S. Occupation) created a rupture in cinema style and expression, but there is little doubt that the postwar, post-Occupation studio collapse and concurrent, *avant garde* indies cinema movement beginning in the 1960s designated a distinct and significant break in form and content. Like every other era in cinema history, discussion of this transitional period follows the filmmakers, beginning with the so-called New Wave generation. There is, generally speaking however, a sideways nod to the relevance and impact of film reception if only in passing: film's competition with television.

TV is the *a priori* scapegoat behind the collapse of the studio system. To an extent, the logic seems rational enough; the proliferation of television caused significant trouble for cinema industries the world over, much like file sharing and instant streaming on the Internet does today. This explanation has, in fact, become something of a practiced mantra in both private and public sectors. For example, the following is an extremely typical gloss of reception history in the post-war period:

Japan once had 7,457 theaters during the golden age of cinema in the 1960s [sic], but the growth of television forced this number down steadily. This led to a vicious cycle in which the declining number of theaters led to inconvenience and crowding and further disenchantment with movies. (JETRO 2)

This cursory description comes from a 2004 economic report released by JETRO, the Japan External Trade Organization. It is not dissimilar from the sketch of history provided in the 2009 Guide to Japanese Film Industry and Co-production published for

foreign investors by UNIJAPAN, an international promotion company supported by the Japanese Government's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry.

The Japanese film industry reached its peak in the 1950s. The annual production of Japanese film exceeded 500 works, and all studios were enjoying brisk business, while the films produced during this time were also of very high quality... With TV yet to come out to the market and the undeveloped amusement facilities in the 1950s, film was the prime entertainment for the people, thus all films became a hit once it was screened. In the second half of the 1950s, the number of audience and cinemas in Japan reached its peak... With the Tokyo Olympic coming up in 1964, TV was rapidly making its way to Japanese households. In contrast to the rise of TV, the film industry was starting to mark a decline. (UNIJAPAN *The Guide to Japanese Film Industry & Co-Production*)

Nor is this snippet altogether that different from academic scholarship. Eric Cazdyn discusses the correlation between television and film with particular regard to the live national broadcasting of the 1964 Tokyo Olympic games, noting a shift in large corporate production investments from film to television (Cazdyn 184). Keiko McDonald implies a direct cause and effect relationship between the two with comparison of their respective audience statistics (McDonald 9). And Aaron Gerow contextualizes thematic developments in 1960s cinema genres, picturing the flagging studios' responses to broadcast programming as they began to heavily feature "sex and violence unavailable on television" (Gerow "Japanese Film and Television" 224).

If we assume, momentarily, that film and television were in direct, unequivocal competition with one another as is often suggested, from the perspective of spectatorship studies there are two large differences between them: programming and location. Films were, of course, shown in public theaters. The screenings arranged by contractual agreements between studios and exhibitionists through block booking, the times set and limited by screen number and reel time, and admission fixed at a ticket price per film.

Film is, in other words, a bounded experience within the realm of the public. Television, on the other hand, cost a one-time purchasing fee in addition to minimal subscription, was available throughout the day with regular and abundant programming, and, most importantly, was located in the home. In contrast to film, television had the potential to be a seemingly limitless experience, albeit bounded within the experiential confines of the domestic. Considered as such, film and T.V. spectatorship are, actually, quite separate and distinct phenomena offering significantly different experiences. It does not seem unreasonable or illogical at all to suggest that if a competition exists between the two, it was not necessarily about what was on screen *per se*, but the spectatorial contexts: who was watching, at what convenience, and where. If audiences really were abandoning theaters in favor of television, then they were opting for an entirely different leisure experience altogether—one that was not actually accessible to all audiences. Who, then, benefited from daytime, perpetual, low-cost entertainment in the middle-class home?

This line of inquiry leads us to a somewhat *defacto* conclusion not dissimilar from Isolde Standish's in her chapter "Genres and Genders" in *A New History of Japanese Cinema*, after which this chapter is named. She argues, "By the 1960s the decline of the studio system and the increase in independent production companies forced the major studios to experiment with new production styles to attract new and diverse audiences. This was reflected in a trend in film content away from melodrama towards action and 'soft-core' pornographic (*pinku eiga*) genres targeted primarily at male audiences" (267). Here, as with Gerow, the argument that Japanese cinema studios increasingly targeted a male audience and the proliferation of action films (among them the *jidaigeki* and *yakuza*

genres) as a result of the industry's appeals to this gendered demographic. Presumably this is because their female audience had opted for television. Accordingly, Standish claims, "Shōchiku, with its emphasis on women's films and 'home dramas', suffered badly as married women, often confined to the far flung conurbation's of the apartment housing estates (*danchi*) of the newly forming middle-class salarymen, stayed at home to watch television" (266).

And yet, what is incommensurate in my mind with the TV versus film dichotomy and, in particular, the removal of female audiences to the domestic suburban trenches, is that it requires a reimagining of women's presence in public spaces.¹ The above line of argument, incidentally also shared by the studios themselves at the time as I will discuss later, hinges on a significant vanishing of women from the public sphere, a disappearing act that did not, in fact, happen. Quite the contrary, we know that urban spaces were of course rife with young women in many guises—office workers, students, consumers, young mothers, entertainers, fashionistas, political activists, and many others. What is true, as I will show, is that they were not going to the theaters.

We must challenge the idea that women holed up in their homes, an idea, I suspect, that stems from a false parallel of the domestic with the feminine and seems to make more sense in a culture that forefronts individualistic habitus than, say, cultural preferences for group activities and socialization. Television is not a replacement for the public activity of going to a theater. We must remember that moviegoing is a social event. Even women in the 1960s liked to get out of the house.

If not the television straw man, what caused the studio decline?

This chapter addresses the impact that audiences had on postwar Japanese cinema and the relationship between female spectators and the film industry. There is a connection between what is being made (genres), where it is being shown (theaters), and who is watching it (genders), and this connection is, for profit makers, a point of exploitation and a practice of business. How this connection is manipulated and/or mediated takes many forms and has many implications; what this chapter is concerned with is how producers and exhibitors invested in particular genres, and by proxy crafted a gendered clientele in order to make (or in reality lose) money. Let us recast the auteur-based progression of cinema history through the lens of reception studies and see how the business of film exhibition and production interacted with industrial concepts of gendered demographics.

Asakusa Was For Everybody: A Case Study

Movies were central to Asakusa culture. Asakusa was also central to Japanese film culture.
Miriam Silverberg (195)

The Asakusa district of modern day Tokyo began as a small fishing and farming town located on the banks of the Sumida River. Its only remarkable feature was a rather large Buddhist temple devoted to Kannon—the now enormously popular and famous tourist attraction Sensō-ji. As the nearby city of Edo (contemporary Tokyo) grew in mass and population, Asakusa transformed into a leisure site for vacationing city-dwellers. Asakusa's street fairs, markets, and sundry entertainments such as summer fireworks, boat rides, and moon watching parties attracted Edoites looking to get away from the

hustle and bustle of the medieval city. As Edo expanded evermore, it eventually subsumed Asakusa within its city limits. Many renowned stage theater companies reestablished themselves in Asakusa, as well as all the city's licensed pleasure (read: prostitution) houses. In 1873 the newly renamed city of Tokyo officially labeled the temple precincts as "park areas" (Liotta 618). What was once a quiet site of worship and commerce grew into a carnival of recreation and amusement, with somewhat wanton overtones.

By the turn of the twentieth century (late Meiji), Asakusa was a full-blown hub of activity. The district was a mad house of the novel, the flamboyant, the extravagant, and the risqué. Increasingly frequented by young people, Asakusa was the romping grounds of the so-called "modern boys" and "modern girls" (*mobo* and *moba*), as well as a plethora of unsavory characters looking to make a fast yen. A liminal space somewhat removed from the rest of the city by the natural barriers of the temple's park grounds and the Sumida river, Asakusa earned a reputation as a fantasy world in which the realities and conditions of daily life faded away.

Asakusa is Asakusa for everyone. In Asakusa, everything is flung out in the raw. Desires dance naked. All races, all classes, all jumbled together forming a bottomless, endless current, flowing day and night, no beginning, no end. Asakusa is alive...The masses converge on it, constantly. Their Asakusa is a foundry in which all the old models are regularly melted down to be cast into new ones. (Kawabata 30)

In this festival of entertainment and desire, public identity, norms, and social expectations melted away in the easy pursuit of pleasure and spectacle.²

At the heart of the Asakusa experience were the *misemono*, "shows" or "exhibits." *Misemono* were the lifeblood of the Edo-then-Meiji period entertainment

district. Literally meaning “things to show,” misemono were exhibits of oddities and novelties: short-term entertainment enterprises, often crude and vulgar. The turnover rate was high with most displays lasting only days. Misemono artists were commercial buskers, skilled in the creation of spectacle, who traded on the curiosity and attraction of the new and bizarre—hence the faddish attention span—similar to small carnival tent acts. Misemono included anything and everything, ranging from such standard fare as imported novelties, monkey performances, snake dances, juggling and acrobatics to eating feats, one-man sumo shows, archery performed with the feet, religious relics, and exotic medicinal remedies (Markus).

Writers in the early 20th century who tried to capture the cacophony of activity in Asakusa wrote in disjointed prose, often resorting to lists as if to capture, in language, the district’s pastiche on page. Novelist Tanizaki Jun’ichiro described Asakusa’s attractions as:

Plays of the old style, operettas, plays in the new style, comedies...acrobats on balls, bareback riders, *naniwa bushi* singers, girl *gidayu* chanters, the merry-go-round, the Hanayashiki Amusement Park, the Twelve Story Tower, shooting galleries, whores, Japanese restaurants, Chinese restaurants, and Western restaurants—the Rairaken, won ton mein, oysters over rice, horsemeat, snapping turtles, eels, and the Café Paulista.³

Grounded in the business of leisure entertainment, it is perhaps only fitting that Asakusa also became the home, as Tanizaki continues, of “movies—movies from the West and Japanese productions, Douglas Fairbanks and Onoe Matsunosuke.” In short, cinema, perhaps the most phenomenal misemono of the twentieth century.

In October of 1903, Japan’s first permanent theater constructed solely for the purpose of showing films opened its doors on the Asakusa Rokku⁴ Chinsekai Street, a

thoroughfare meaning “world of curiosities” already known for stage theaters and music halls (Bernardi 69).⁵ The Denkikan, literally meaning “electricity hall”, was not just a theater, however; it was designed as a full misemono electrical experience. Upon entering, patrons were enjoined by a “house explainer” to place their fingers into an tank of water coursing with a mild current so that they could experience this new marvel of science through electrified embodiment. Thereafter, they were guided through an examination of their skeletal structure by way of an X-Ray machine imported straight from the Chicago World’s Fair (High 31-32).

Shortly after the notable success of the Denkikan, the Kinkikan, a kabuki theater once rented as a venue for Edison’s Vitascope, transformed into a permanent movie theatre. This sparked a boom in theatre construction and the world of curiosities known as Chinsekai Street became “Theatre Street” (see Figures 7-10), named after its solid block of movie houses. Colorful banners and billboards bursting with large kanji characters and elaborate depictions of cinematic scenes lined the street on either side. Barkers called out from entrances and joshi annai nin waited to escort male patrons into dark theaters. Moviegoers—students, children, sailors, housewives, lovers, seniors, politicians, foreigners, farmers, writers, mobo and moga—ambled from venue to venue, enjoying misemono displays between shows in an extravaganza of constant and fluid entertainment that was the essence of the Asakusa carnival (Markus 540).

The ecstatic energy and popularity of the “Theatre Street” increased in the 1910s and 1920s and it became the primary venue for moviegoing in Japan until the Pacific War. By 1923, Asakusa boasted twenty permanent movie houses with enough programs

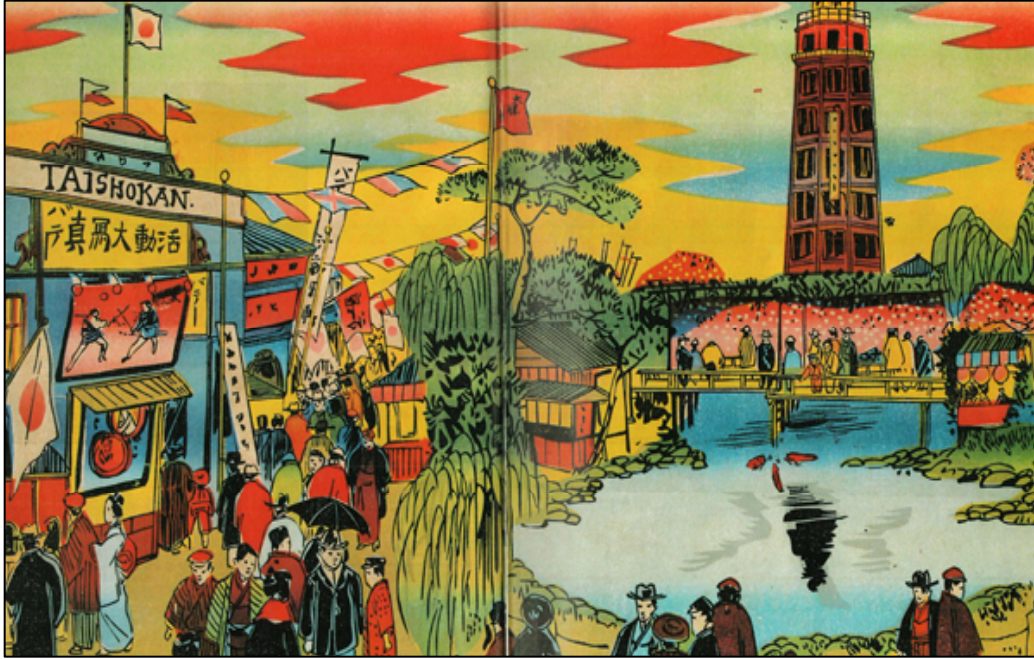


Figure 7. Artist's rendition of Asakusa at the end of the Meiji period (Image source: Iwamoto).



Figure 8. Approach to Senso-ji in Asakusa at the end of the Taisho period (Image source: Iwamoto 1998).



Figure 9. A photograph of the Asakusa Rokku “Theater Street” including a banner for the Denkikan. Men and women, adults and children, flood the street on a cold winter’s day.



Figure 10. A tinted photograph of the Asakusa Rokku “Theater Street” in summer. Patrons vary visibly in age, gender, and class. Colorful banners create a cheerful and welcoming atmosphere.

to warrant daily schedules advertised in the local newspaper. Although theaters appeared in other parts of the city (particularly in the Ginza shopping area and later the Shinjuku suburbs), it was in Asakusa that audiences first saw the “talkies” and Asakusa premieres served as litmus tests for box office longevity and success, even during the depression (Silverberg 195). Film, having become central to the Asakusa experience as the dominant *misemono*, relied in turn on the vibrancy of the district to enhance and complete the theatrical experience. Thus intertwined, we can read the cultural climate and heartbeat of Asakusa—in other words the environment and cultural climate of exhibition spaces—as the tenor and pulse of the film industry itself. It is not a coincidence that the decline of the Asakusa district in the post-war period mimics the decline of the Japanese studio system, but that it should reflect, or rather embody (as Asakusa is often an organic place of bodies *en masse*) the changing conditions of the industry so precisely is quite remarkable.

In grappling with the sexual undertones (or perhaps overtones) of the district after the 1923 Kanto Quake,⁶ Miriam Silverberg argues, “Of course Asakusa was pornographic (185)...of course it was a pornographic space where women’s services were sold, but it also included women as agents in its search for unending pleasures and shifting gender” (186). Borrowing definitions from a lineage of analysis and rhetoric passed down from Robin Morgan and Gloria Steinem, then utilized by Ellen Willis and Linda Williams,⁷ Silverberg makes the following distinction between erotica and pornography: she adopts the previous definitions and argues that erotica is “based on mutual desire and affection” and pornography is “premised on male domination and exploitation of women”

where “‘power’ is central to the pornographic and always related to a ‘trafficking’ in women” (186). Asakusa, as a place where “women’s services were sold” (from waitressing to prostitution), has been a space of the pornographic since it had transformed from a site of religious worship into an escapist and hedonist pleasure district (albeit often conjoined with a perfunctory nod to spiritual practice). However, Silverberg goes on to argue that Asakusa was *at the same time* a space of erotic enjoyment for women as well. Women also enjoyed the thrills of the theater and the vagaries of the district, particularly the food. She states, “Asakusa offered yet another form of eroticism: a consumerism that enabled women to stretch their senses. The cheap eateries had begun to welcome women with families, women with men, and women with women” such that the area resembled, and here she quotes anarchist singer songwriter Soeda Azenbō, “‘a procession of women; a flooding’” (187). Similarly, the environment was in accord with the diversity of films for consumption (from foreign to domestic), with a diversity of forms (from dramas and action to comedies and newsreels), and with the diversity of filmic bodies (from exotic, coquettish Lillian Gish to native, heroic Onoe Matsunosuke). These spectacles drew a plurality of audiences enjoying a multitude of simulated and earthly pleasures. As a veritable feast for the senses, cinematic variety was the spice of life.

What I wish to point out here is that the *pornographic* elements of the neighborhood—the domination, exploitation, and trafficking of women—did not create a condition of exclusion for the *erotic* possibilities for both men and women alike, either with each other or not. Let me be clear and state that the employed distinction between

the pornographic and the erotic may suggest a problematic binary based in heteronormative assumptions between the sensual experiences of men and women that ignore the complexity of the individual (their personal desires, motivations, histories, philosophies, and value systems) who exists simultaneously within and often at odds with social conventions. This is not a binary I wish to embrace for several reasons, not the least of which is because it *is* heteronormative and because erotic desire “based on mutual desire and affection” could potentially be informed and molded by power structures and conventions rooted in the pornographic. Moreover, the distinction, based as it is in a simple two-gender system, requires us to think of “men” and “women” as metaphors if we are to incorporate more complex situations of gender identifications and gender play, and that is hardly very helpful in either a practical or activist sense. Howsoever problematic, the distinction is useful in that it provides a framework, or at the very least a point of reference, for comparison between what the Asakusa Rokku was—simultaneously a pornographic and erotic entertainment district catering to a wide array of diversities due to the extravaganza of variety for sale (i.e. Asakusa is for “everyone”)—and what it became: an exclusive pornographic district for men. A cinema for an audience that was, as Donald Richie described pink film theaters, “entirely male, watching film entirely made by males” (Richie 162).⁸

Most of Asakusa’s cinema houses on Theater Street were lost in the fire bombings of Tokyo during the Pacific War. Entrepreneurs were quick to rebuild some of the theaters, including the historic Denkikan, in concert with the general public enthusiasm for growth-oriented post war reconstruction. In 1960, right smack in the golden era of

the so-called Woman's Film, the district hosted 36 theaters, surpassing numbers from Asakusa's prewar salad days (Liotta 619). By the 1970s, however, the decline of the district now heavy with yakuza and samurai action films mirrored the decline of the studios, with the number of cinema houses falling to 28. A decade later, after the collapse of the Japanese film industry then most heavily devoted to producing soft-core pornography, ten more theaters were repurposed into the likes of bowling alleys and pachinko parlors. By the 1990s, there were only eight theaters left (619-620).

At the turn of the millennium, three theaters remained with a combined total of six screens. "Theaters" is a bit misleading in that the term is far too generic and almost meaningless for socio-cultural headcounts. These theaters, in fact, did not and do not screen the same blockbusters one might find at the American-owned cineplexes in suburban Tokyo or the domestic first run prints favored at the fashionable Shinjuku Picadilly or even the film festival winners still favored in art house theaters. As of 2010, one Asakusa theater specialized in old yakuza and samurai period films (*jidaigeki*) and the other two showcase adult films, or more accurately, pornography.

The atmosphere of the Asakusa Rokku Broadwahas changed considerably as well and has understandably lost its "Theater Street" title. Drab, dingy, and rather seedy, the area is awash with strip clubs, gambling halls, and literal pornography. The Asakusa Rokku Broadway is quite depressing. The festive colors of the glory days have decayed into muted tones of wear and tear; banners replaced by chintzy, cracked neon signs and buildings reshaped into boxy, all-purpose quadrangles, stained and battered by time and apathy. In 2009, the reconstructed Denkikan stood empty, space available for rent.

Smoke, nearly tangible, coalesces in pachinko parlors, clinging to patrons as they step outside, fresh cigarettes hanging between limp fingers, to take respite from sensory deprivation induced by the hypnotic lights and persistent clamor of the pachinko machines: a smoke break for a smoke break. Throngs of resigned habitués stand outside horse race parlors, newspaper timetables and notation pens clenched in hands, faced in fixed unison toward televised results overhead. There is no sound in this crowd, no dialogue, no murmur, no communion, no community. Silence. Tension. Occasional terse cell phone calls. In between horse gambling venues and pinball gambling houses are the strip clubs. Small, nondescript, dark doorways fronted by sometimes shocking depictions of women in compromising and quite misogynistic positions lead to, well, something your diffident author can only imagine is a delivery falling far short of the advertisements. Groups of four or five men sit on the street at corners drinking, swearing, smoking, and spitting.

The area, redolent of yakuza syndicates, is no longer a thriving hub of gaiety and novelty. It now bears more resemblance to nearby San'Ya, Tokyo's officially "nonexistent" day laborer and homeless slum, than it does to even closer tourist favorite Sensō-ji. In fact, it is hard to believe that the neighboring temple's Nakamise-dori souvenir street, a promenade that daily attracts quite possibly the most diverse crowds in the city, is only three blocks to the east. This is perhaps the most shocking difference; in sharp contrast to other high-density areas in Tokyo that are known for niche subcultures such as the brand-conscious fashion meccas of Ginza and Omotesando, the youth counter culture hubs of Harajuku and Kichijoji, the foreigners with expense account haunts of

Roppongi and Azabujuban, or the all-night clubs of Shinjuku's red light San-cho-me and gay district Ni-cho-me, the Asakusa Rokku is surprisingly homogenous, and it's hard to get more homogenous than a sea of black suited salary-men-and-women in Tokyo's Marunouchi financial district at 8:00am on a Monday morning. The street itself is just as crowded as ever, but the throng takes the visage of homogeneity: working class, middle-aged men (see Figures 11 and 12).⁹

This Asakusa, the Asakusa Rokku Broadway, is not "for everyone." In fact, when I visited in 2009 and again in 2010, I felt quite unwelcome there altogether, monitored by stares and jostled out of place by uncompromising pedestrians. When Asakusa's Theater Street lost its variety, when the district limited itself to an increasingly specific demographic, when the only thing to see on screens appealed to very specific demographic, when at least half of the attractions—more if we consider, for example, the aggrandized abdomens of the pinup girls that adorn the pachinko machines—are solidly rooted in the sex industry, Asakusa ceased being erotic. Whereas art theaters and mini theaters in the 1970s and 1980s explored new terrain in cinema, much of it foreign and much of it erotic, Asakusa instead deteriorated in step with the changes in the major studio industry. Which is to say that, after transitioning from an area of diversity with something to offer everyone, it, like the paired down industry, collapsed to ruin. Arguably all that is left is the pornographic.

What I have set the stage for here is not a causal relationship between the Asakusa district and the domestic film industry. The industry did not decline because of the

district or vice versa; however, there is a correlation between the change in the district's demographics and the change in the industry's genres in that the element of variety disappeared and both the district and the movies targeted the same demographic. We can read the transition of Asakusa, and indeed more to the point all concentrated sites of film



Figure 11. Photograph of the Asakusa Rokku Broadway taken in December of 2010 (Laird). Working-class men stand outside a horse race parlor, following the schedule of the race times in the newspaper and recording the televised outcomes.



Figure 12. Photograph of the Asakusa Rokku Broadway taken in December of 2010 (Laird). Working-class men amble outside the “classic” theater and one of the porno theaters (out of frame to the right).

exhibition, as a special social text that has a direct relationship with the commercial business, or more precisely the commercial interests, of filmmaking.

The Josei Eiga

Expressio unius est exclusio alterius.

In thinking about genres and genders, I naturally turned first to the category of the Japanese Woman's Film. This is a term, it exists, and, because it is used, it must mean something to someone. So it was that I asked myself, "What is the Japanese Woman's film?" and very quickly ran into trouble. There are a few problems we encounter when considering the genre/category of the Japanese "Woman's Film." They are:

- 1) a semantic problem of linguistic and translation difference.
- 2) a subject-object problem of absent addressee.
- 3) a disciplinary problem of cultural and historical conflation (i.e. hegemony).
- 4) a normative problem of gender-based exclusion.

In truth, these difficulties are intertwined, but I will do my best to tease them apart.

First and foremost is the issue of terminology and translation. There are two terms in Japanese that mean "woman's film": *josei eiga* and *onna no eiga*. Although the two terms may be translated literally as "female film" and "woman's film" respectively, this is misleading in English since the common usage of the two terms in Japanese appear to be both interchangeable and not burdened with quite the same nuance of sex and gender attributes *per se* (and the "female" in "female film" does not connote a gendered suggestion that the film itself is somehow female). More to the point, what these terms actually refer to in popular and scholarly usage is difficult to pinpoint. Historically

speaking, the terms *josei eiga* and *onna no eiga* appear to be terms created by critics and fans rather than the industry and filmmakers and, although used throughout Japanese film history, are not circumscribed categories.

Catherine Russell encounters this difficulty in her work on what she calls Naruse Mikio's "Woman's Films" (*The Cinema of Naruse Mikio: Women and Japanese Modernity*; "Women's Stories in Post-War Japan: Naruse Mikio's Late Chrysanthemums;" "Too Close to Home: Naruse Mikio and Japanese Cinema of the 1950s;" "Naruse Mikio's Silent Films: Gender and the Discourse of Everyday Life in Interwar Japan"). She notes that:

Japanese film genres tend to be named for their semantic content...there is a great deal of overlap among such genres as wife films [*tsuma eiga/tsuma mono*], mother films [*haha mono*], husband-and-wife films [*fufu eiga*], salaryman films [*sarari-man eiga*], home dramas [*kazoku dorama*], and *shoshimineiga* [films depicting the lives of "everyday" people]. ("Too Close to Home: Naruse Mikio and Japanese Cinema of the 1950s" 90)

This is not an exhaustive list of genre terms. For example there is also the *kanashii eiga* (sad movie) (Mochizuki) or even more generally the *shinpa-geki* (new school drama, often melodramatic) and *renai eiga* (romance) (Saito; Shimura). Clearly as bothered by the sticky equivocation in such designations as I am (wife films, mother films, women's films, romance, etc.), Russell groups these semantic designations—categories based in characterizations of the protagonists and their relationships rather than style, form, or narrative pattern—into the umbrella heuristic "home drama" (*hōmu dorama*) (Russell "Too Close to Home: Naruse Mikio and Japanese Cinema of the 1950s", 90). However, even this designation is lacking; she also refers to these particular films as woman's films in the same article and even consistently throughout her larger body of scholarly work on

Naruse Mikio.¹⁰ Undoubtedly this is because the heuristic of “home drama” is not particularly useful in addressing films set outside the construct of house and home, nor does it address the issues of film spectatorship, an important component of the “woman’s film.” Moreover, the inclusion of the “salaryman film” belies any attempt to consider cohesive female subjectivity, another woman’s film mainstay.

Mitsuyo Wada-Marciano offers, to my mind, a slightly more workable context for the Japanese woman’s film. Calling into reference industry practices, Wada-Marciano frames the woman’s film as a strategic mode of filmmaking that targeted female spectators, particularly championed by Shōchiku Studios from the 1920s to the 1960s. For Wada, the genre of the Woman’s Film perforce forefronts the female spectator and her relationship to the images and representations of female characters within the films.

Shōchiku’s woman’s films were specifically targeted at a female audience. The rise of that studio’s woman’s films is connected with the wider appearance of a female consumer subject in Japanese culture, brought about by the social stability and economic prosperity of a growing urban middle class in the 1920s... Shōchiku responded to this growing market by adapting an extensive range of fiction aimed primarily at women. The studio produced many woman’s films, by directors such as Nomura Hotei, Ikeda Yoshinobu, Shimazu Yasujiro, Shimizu Hiroshi, Gosho Heinosuke, Naruse Mikio, and Ozu Yasujiro, and it employed a greater number of actresses than any other Japanese studio. Shōchiku’s woman’s films solidified the studio’s production system, which was characterized by the use of trademark star actresses such as Kurishima Sumiko and Tanaka Kinuyo, domestic sets, and Tokyo as the background for narratives of urban middle-class life. (Wada-Marciano 79-80)

Linking the woman’s film to a precise production context (e.g. Shōchiku Studios) helps root the term back to the Japanese category *josei eiga* (more frequently used than *onna no eiga*) by at least rooting it in an extant Japanese system. The incorporation of female spectators, female roles, and female actresses into the concept of the Woman’s Film

offers us more conceptual fabric to play with; however, in the sense of a genre definition derived from terminology, there lacks a conception of consistent formulas, structures, or expectations that shape genre development and genre study, all of which indicates that, as such, the Japanese woman's film is not a genre at all insofar as it does not have the "clear, stable identity and border" (Rick Altman 16) required of a generic category. Moreover, this choice ignores the complexity of the other semantic Japanese categories. To address the fissure of genre function, Wada-Marciano incorporates another English term (which further embeds us in the problem of English/Japanese language exchange): the melodrama.

Let us, for the moment, stick with the problem of language. The term "melodrama" exists in Japanese as a loan word: merodorama. For example, film critic and scholar Katō Mikirō categorizes the *kouta eiga* of the 1910s and 1920s as a merodorama. Citing Greek origins, he defines the merodorama as a drama accompanied by song (Mikirō 230). *Kouta eiga*, short scenery films sometimes including song lyrics as a graphic overlay and always accompanied by a musical performance (either a live singer or recorded track), are merodorama by very literal and simple conclusion. Even so, he links these early merodorama to women, noting that they were popular with female audiences (233) and suggesting that as the *benshi*'s voices faded from the theaters, the live and recorded voices of women (both of the *kouta eiga* and in talking pictures in general) took their place, signifying a gendered shift in the sound of cinema—an interesting argument to be sure (234-235). Satō Tadao, on the other hand, unequivocally combines gender and genre with the term *josei merodorama* (woman's melodrama) in

reference to the Shōchiku films of the 1930s (*Nihon eiga shi* 356). Satō emphasizes the pathos of the *josei merodorama* as its defining characteristic, particular the spectator's programmed response: crying. What's interesting about Satō's choice is the combination of English and Japanese as a neologism that incorporates both the industrial context highlighted by Wada-Marciano and the thematic patterns that interest Russell, but his long career as a Japanese film historian predates both. However, by borrowing the English term "melodrama," Sato et al invite the baggage of melodrama as a culturally informed mode of production and expression, which is, to say the least, confusing.

Just in the strictest sense of language, the Japanese woman's film suffers from a clear case of Derridean *différance*—that words must rely on other words in order to realize definition through difference, particularly problematic between languages. This is not the same as perhaps other genres or film categories that exist in simple differentiation to other film groups. With the Japanese Woman's Film the term itself must *defer* (Derrida's word play) to other established categories for definition or clarity (wife films, mother's films, home drama, melodrama, woman's melodrama, etc.) bouncing between alliances and indeed languages. However, rather than establish distinction, the Woman's Film as a category crumbles and merges into other recognized conceptual categories. This suggests to me that "woman's film" doesn't actually mean anything in particular, but is based in assumptions that cannot bear the weight of probing clarification. This is probably because the identification of a group of films as in some way belonging to or aligned with a gender (particularly when the products are the creation of the opposing

gender's ideas or presumptions about the target gender) is an idea rooted in gross generalization. Which brings us to the second problem.

Simply put, it is unclear what is meant by the "woman" of "woman's film," or, more locally, the *josei* of the *josei eiga*. Is the woman the spectator? The star? The character? The filmmaker? An interpreted, thematic subjectivity? Combinatoric subsets? Clearly many scholars and critics of Japanese film (Russell, Wada-Marciano, and Satō included) specifically mean spectators, or at least targeted spectators because we can already contradict this assumption given that many of the films designated as woman's films were and are reviewed, critiqued, and studied by men: male scholars, male critics, and male filmmakers. Indeed, many of the classics of the as yet staid Japanese canon, a set of works created by male authorship and male scholarship, are "woman's films," particularly the melodramas/home dramas/mother films/whathaveyou of Mizoguchi, Ozu, and Kinoshita. Be this as it may, we can continue to overlook the obvious exclusions made by selective perspective and still think of the woman's film as a film made to attract a presumed female audience, even if this may not work out to be the case either because men watch them too or because women don't actually watch them or both. If, in fact, the defining woman of the Japanese woman's film is the spectator, something strikes me as particularly odd: when the Japanese woman's film is an object of study, *no one studies the female spectator*. This is what I mean by an absent addressee; the very spectator, in a sense the subject, of the woman's film is nowhere to be found. Instead, emphasis is displaced onto the other considerations of "woman" including representation, subjectivity, actor embodiment, and, when applicable, authorship.¹¹ I believe this is in

large part because the study of the Japanese woman's film originates early on in somewhat sloppy commentary (far predating the aforementioned scholars) and then is substantiated by building on ideas originating from scholarly studies of the American (i.e. Hollywood) Woman's Film. It does not arise organically from a Japanese context.¹²

In the parent field of film studies, more precisely Western feminist film theory, the Woman's Film is a well-known, well-theorized entity. So too is the melodrama, and they are often considered hand-in-hand, although not unproblematically. Western feminist film criticism begins with Molly Haskell staking a claim for female spectatorship through analysis of what she designated as a genre: the Woman's Film. A subset of the melodrama, the woman's film is a genre targeted at female audiences and in order to do so forefronts female characters and themes considered relevant and appealing to women's experiences and/or fantasies. Haskell's approach is focused specifically on representations and thematic interpretations, classifying recurring stereotypes of both. Feminist film criticism has since greatly diversified beyond Haskell's retrospectively simplistic call for more "positive" images of women in film with ever increasingly complex and nuanced undertakings invested in exploring hybrid and diverse positions of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and class. The definition of "the woman's film" from an industry perspective has likewise expanded to incorporate films made by women for women.

As yet, the comparatively new serious study of the Japanese "woman's film" (whatever that may be) relies heavily on the concepts and theories derived from this history of Western feminist thought. This is true in both English language scholarship

and Japanese language scholarship. As a result, most of the work done so far has focused primarily on on-screen gender representation and thematic interpretation, as if in order to incorporate a study of gender in Japanese film studies, we must to repeat brick-by-brick what has already been laid down elsewhere. We may very well not be able to get out of this tricky problem. Indeed, I myself would rally to the call for a culturally specific counter history with specific attention to spectator participation starting from the ground up, and yet there is certainly there is no need necessarily to reinvent the wheel of great thought. However, it is absolutely necessary to be aware of the sociohistorical lineage of these ideas and be mindful that terms such as “woman’s film” and “melodrama,” laden as they are with a legacy of meaning and critique, already have packaged meanings to English readers unfamiliar with Japan and Japanese film. This is in large part why I have spent eight pages looking for, unpacking, and problematizing a definition—to address my own bilingual and interdisciplinary audience.

Film scholar Yoshimoto Mitsuhiro tackles this very problem of conflating cultural contexts between overlapping disciplines in his consideration of the postwar Japanese melodrama, which he very carefully does not assign a gender. Yoshimoto argues that although study of the 1950s Hollywood melodramatic form reveals important sociopolitical subtexts crucial to understanding contemporaneous American society and the American film industry, the sociohistorical context and influence, in other words the meanings and functions of the 1950s Hollywood melodramatic form, cannot be mapped verbatim onto the postwar Japanese melodrama (101). Japan, as a “semiperipheral country within the U.S. hegemonic sphere,” does not share the same historical or political

context as the United States and therefore cannot be expected to deliver the same media subtexts (102). Yoshimoto reads the postwar Japanese melodrama as a vehicle of “victim consciousness” that signifies not only a Japanese inferiority complex to the West, but is also actively complicit in constructing a “subject position from which [Japanese people] can fall into a delusion of being innocent victims of evil doings by others” (108).

Interestingly, in this interpretation, Yoshimoto connects the psychological underpinnings of the melodrama to the greater moviegoing populace, not just women.¹³

In order to circumvent this interdisciplinary pitfall, Yoshimoto calls for scholarly attention and precision to culturally specific contexts including history and sociopolitics. He suggests, by way of example, that we reframe the Japanese melodrama in accord with understanding Japanese modernity. Incidentally, in their works on the Japanese woman’s film (again, their term), this is precisely what Wada-Mariciano and Russell do. Using Miriam Hansen’s concepts regarding vernacular modernism (i.e. understanding a society’s process of becoming modern by analyzing the products of mass culture) they both read the woman’s film as metaphor for Japan’s modernity and for the developing modern Japanese woman.

The last problem is the most obvious and not exclusive at all to Japanese film, although the problem itself is exclusion. When we designate a group of films as belonging to a particular group of people (woman’s film, queer film, black film, etc.) the implication by extension is that the remainder of films not labeled as such are for someone else; “normal” films without identity markers (horror, action, comedy, jidaigeki, for example) are for whichever “dominant” group is not specifically attached to a

category of film. Whether or not the designation holds any water in terms of actual accuracy of representation, participation, or identification is neither here nor there; what matters are the embedded assumptions and the drive to assign certain genres to demographics. This is, of course, not a new argument, but it nonetheless requires attention and vigilance in order to mindfully consider the implications of normativity and the power of marginalization by designation. For example, Richard Dyer (*White*) exposes the privilege of anonymous normativity in regards to racial labels through a careful consideration of how whiteness, as an unmarked/nonlabeled category, is nothing and everything at the same time through the very process of denoting by name that which is not white. In the same vein, the category of woman's film renders female spectators as an exception to the rule, at least in the rubrics of who is devising and using the category.

That said, the label of woman's film can also be a powerful tool that, when equipped with an attentive lens, calls into focus the very issue at hand: if women's films are for women, then who are the remainder of films for? That *who* is, of course, the subject of Laura Mulvey's seminal essay in which she argues that the gaze of the camera is a male gaze ("Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"). This stance has subsequently been hashed and rehashed by feminist film scholars, particularly concerning her problematic assumption of essentialist, binary gender identifications and homogenous moviegoing audiences, but her groundbreaking study carved a path for subsequent explorations of heterogenous spectator positions. Many scholars have since attempted to relocate spectatorship studies in the bodies/subject positions of spectators—a work forever in process—with special attention to deconstructing gender identification (e.g.

Silverman; Kaplan), sexuality (e.g. Dyer “Don’t Look Now- the Male Pin-Up;” Neale), and race (e.g. Dyer *White*; hooks). However, with very few exceptions mostly coming out of work on queer film in Japan, the locus of the spectator has yet to really be of concern in the subfield of Japanese film studies. There is, curiously enough, more work on the reception of Japanese media and spectator fandom (especially for *anime*, T.V. dramas, and international film festival accolades) *outside* Japan than within.¹⁴

Yoshimoto acknowledges, as I have already suggested, that “any generic category is a construct, not a natural object waiting to be found by cultural critics” (104). And yet, I agree with his position against throwing the baby out with the bathwater. “Generic categories in general are useful because they are critical constructs instead of natural objects; that is, genre is important for cultural studies because it is a social institution where form and content of text are intersected and articulated with sociohistorical contradictions and ideologies” (104). In order, then, to address each of these problems with one utilitarian solution to continue on with the current study, I wish to employ Occom’s razor and invoke the Japanese language term *josei eiga* in this English language account. Moreover, I wish to root the *josei eiga* in its socio-economic context by returning to the original concept—a film created by studio infrastructure with the primary intention of attracting female consumers.

Doing so relieves some of the strain of label ambiguity and confusion by narrowing the focus of study to the target market as an already acknowledged group (particularly in the postwar period), by using the term that is most associated with accounts of or writings about female spectators. In this way *josei eiga* becomes more of a

brand or business model than a genre. This does not negate the necessity or importance of generic studies of the home drama, mother's films, husband and wife films, and so on; in fact, I feel that it does quite the opposite. In easing these genres away from the woman's film umbrella, we are free to analyze their conventions and derivations without getting stuck in a gooey gender gap. The way to bring spectator studies into a consideration of these genres, however they are negotiated, is easily done by considering them as particular genres that sometimes are also packaged as *josei eiga*.

The term also forefronts the female spectator, the addressee of the *josei eiga*. However, as a term that signifies the idea of the female spectator—what studio executives, accountants, and filmmakers imagine or wish to be the female spectator—and not actual female spectators, we can openly acknowledge the female spectator as female spectre. This is, admittedly, strategically useful with regard to diminishing attendance in the postwar period. For this reason, I will be concerned with the perception of the spectral female spectator rather than testimonial accounts of female spectatorship, an albeit important subject for future study.

Using the term *josei eiga* also makes the concept instantly strange, foreign, and not readily knowable to the English-language reader. In accord with Lawrence Venuti's call to "foreignize language" (Venuti), using the Japanese term *josei eiga* disrupts English fluency and manipulates the reader into approaching the categorical concept as something unfamiliar, hopefully preventing cross-discipline conflation devoid of sociohistoric particularity, at least on initial encounter. "Woman's film" does not do this.

Lastly, using *josei eiga* maintains the powerful utility of deconstructing gender normativity and gender expectations because, like “woman’s film”, *josei eiga* specifically points to both. The gender binary is preserved, but within the context of the imaginary female spectator, we can acknowledge that the gender division is an artificial construct while simultaneously addressing submerged normativity and expectations that surround films that are not classified as *josei eiga*.

Definition: The *josei eiga* were and are films made with the specific intent to attract *josei kankyaku* (female audiences), but not necessarily made by women, not necessarily representing accurate depictions of women, not necessarily conveying the attitudes or desires of women, and not necessarily only watched by women although, at times, *they might be one or all of these*.

Whither the Josei Kankyaku?

Where have all the young girls gone?
Pete Seeger

Catherine Russell writes:

Naruse’s films were very popular among female audiences...In post-war Japan, half the cinemagoing public was female, most of the them ‘office ladies’ or single unmarried women who went to the movies in groups. Twelve women’s magazines were published in the 1950s, many of them containing film reviews and stories about actors and actresses, indicating that Naruse’s cinema was part of a much larger phenomenon. Suzanne Audrey observed in 1953 that in postwar Japan women were flocking to the movies to see a wide variety of films, including the many imported American films that displayed the lives of women in the United States. (“Naruse Mikio’s Silent Films: Gender and the Discourse of Everyday Life in Interwar Japan”, 28-29)

Russell’s description of the popularity of Naruse Mikio’s *josei eiga* among female audiences—*josei kankyaku*, (a similar illusory and industrial construct as *josei eiga*)—

and the assertion that “half the cinemagoing public was female” is no doubt meant to introduce and defend a study of Naruse and his work, both unjustly overlooked in Japanese cinema scholarship. Moreover, one gets the sense that Russell is simultaneously defending a study of josei eiga which have been historically denigrated for the most part by the canon and academy in the West. Be that as it may, in the early post-war era, Naruse’s films *were* part of a much larger phenomenon. As mentioned previously, Shōchiku Studios in particular had built their production line around the profitable mainstay of the josei eiga since the 1920s and continued to profit from these projects in the immediate post-war years. Producer Kido Shiro originally backed josei eiga in recognizing female audiences as a foundation of business profits: “Women don’t come to the movie theater alone; they are always accompanied by other people such as friends, sisters, and boyfriends, so we have larger audiences while spending less money for advertising” (Wada-Marciano 80). Although the other major studios also invested in these productions early on in the post-war era, Shōchiku Studios became synonymous with the josei eiga. Similarly, the company became the largest employer of actresses and actively sought adaptations of stories written by women.

There is, however, something slightly askew with the distinctly hyperbolic affirmation that women “flocked” to the theaters in the 1950s (and in particular 1953, which I will return to later) or that they made up “half the moviegoing public” that warrants some suspicion. Japan’s population in 1950, post-war, but still under the U.S. Occupation, was 84,114,574 people comprised of 41,241,192 males and 42,873,382 females (Communications). In short, there were one million more females in Japan in

1950 than males. Even without these numbers, one might suspect that after fifteen years of war, fifteen years of men sent overseas never to return, the public spaces in post-war Japan would be dominated by the women who had stayed behind, and by more than half. If, in fact, the spectator population of Japanese films in the early 1950s was approximately half female (and as the decade continued the numbers don't even come close to that), then this would be a clear sign that the strategy behind the *josei eiga* was already beginning to fail.

In the pre-war period, a large part of the appeal of the *josei eiga* derived from the film industry's embrace and celebration of the new modern woman as a symbol of the nation's own modernity. Wada-Marciano argues that the "rise of the studio's [*josei eiga*] is connected with the wider appearance of a female consumer subject in Japanese culture, brought about by the social stability and economic prosperity of a growing urban middle class in the 1920s" (79). The characters and themes of the film were at once overtly modern and yet cast in a nationalist framework that engendered a spectatorship experience that was consistent and relevant to female moviegoers' actual social positions, particularly the young, stylish, and ever evolving *moga* (modern girl). However, it was not long before containment of the *moga*—the economic and culturally unruly young woman who bore signs of increasing Westernization on her body and in her actions—became a thematic component of the *josei eiga*'s melodramatic moral occult. *Moga* characters were paired with more culturally sanctioned traditional figures: innocent and virtuous girls. Set against this idealized figure, the *moga* were seen as:

girls who secretly socialize with young hoodlums, have sexual relationships with foreigners, and have day jobs as café waitresses...so far modern girls mean

Westernized young women...at the same time, they are women who appear to embody resistance against male-dominant morality and society...they are symbols of discontent within the society. (87)

This put the figure of the cinematic moga in a precarious situation: she bore the weight of social revolution but was too threatening a symbol to operate unfettered. As a result, things inevitably turn out poorly for the moga in the josei eiga. The “young hussy” finds herself destitute, loveless, ostracized, or dead and the virtuous maiden by contrast is rewarded with social, economic, and/or romantic security. This containment of the moga through the good girl/bad girl dichotomy (a Madonna/whore complex) stems from literary patterns common in women’s magazines of the 1920s (88) and solidified through repetition in the Shōchiku narrative recipe.

In post-war josei eiga, the moga largely disappears (taking up residence and a new guise in overtly male-oriented sexploitation genres) and the ingénue grows into two main roles: the self-sacrificing, stoic mother and the marriage-age duty-bound daughter. However, like the moga of the pre-war era, both are doomed to suffering. Feminist film scholar Saito Ayako argues that the female characters in post-war josei eiga were constructed around the “erasure of the self [as] proof of their love, and through self-denial they become heroines” (A. Saito 157). This love was the selfless devotion to family, husbands, and the nation. She writes:

As a famous critic Tadao Sato [sic] observes, this “self-sacrificing type” of heroine emerges from a masculine “cult of female worship” in which the heroine constitutes a “painful reminder of female pathos”; that is, this “tradition of the cult of female worship” is interpreted by Sato as one of “Japanese film feminism: in which “one woman’s unhappiness” becomes a “censure of masculine oppression.” Accordingly, the classical “unhappy woman” is unhappy *for men* and *because of men*; her unhappiness exists for the purpose of upholding and valorizing the morals of men. The proposal of this kind of heroine as a male morel dilemma is

made possible by a certain *martyred* nature given to women's suffering within patriarchal society. (157-158)

This was a significant shift for female spectator subjectivity. There was little to no positive outcome for identification in terms of gendered viewer identification in josei eiga dramas, positioning female moviegoers quite solidly in masochistic theater seats. A new generation of female spectators saw images of themselves on-screen in roles not reflective of their newfound postwar independence based in significant advances in social equality and personal opportunity but rather in what could by comparison be seen as archaic (or at the very least outmoded) constructs of patriarchal, moralizing constraint wrapped up in an emotionally manipulative masquerade. Even the costumes were a mismatch with the postwar woman's shirtdresses and pencil skirts; many of this era's productions were called *kimono-dramas* after the apparel of their female leads (Kusayanagi 18), suggestive of a pre-war and even a pre-modernization period. As both Saito and Satō suggest, the josei eiga did little by way of their female spectators and, in fact, appear to have better served the cathartic viewing pleasures of male filmmakers and moviegoers. Similarly, Yoshimoto Mitsuhiro attributes the post-war melodrama (and we can by extension assume an overlap since most melodramas as such were by and large josei eiga) with in-part creating and wholly reinforcing a national "victim consciousness" discussed briefly in the previous section. Victim consciousness—a national paradigm shift that helped the Japanese people "make sense" of a failed war, massive public and personal losses, and a subsequent occupation by the enemy—arguably did more to ease the minds and hearts of its active male citizens than its largely powerless, politically passive female citizens, particularly the younger generation.

By the mid-1950s, the cult of the suffering, kimono-clad wife/daughter duo derived from a patriarchal post-war imagination dominated the so-called josei eiga and were mostly only effective at targeting middle-aged women (Kusayanagi 19).

Meanwhile, as Saito argues:

The contemporary masculinization of film audiences hastened the tendency toward the objectifying and symbolizing of women between both the filmmaker and his audience. That is, during this time (i.e., from the late 1950s to the 1960s) Japanese film began to discount its female audience at a structural level. (174)

Actually, this “masculinization of film audiences” (see Figure 13) occurred on at least two structural levels: (1) female audiences were presented with material that stemmed from a patriarchal imagination and as such demanded or required them to take on a masculine filmic world order for face-value narrative appreciation and (2) by the mid-1950s female spectators were in fact leaving the theaters in large numbers, effectively reshaping the general moviegoing populace as decidedly male. According to



Figure 13. 1959. An elderly man peruses film promo stills outside a small theater. (Photo source: Rogge).

surveys conducted by Tōei Studios, by 1959, 30.5 percent of women surveyed were watching mostly Japanese films. On the other hand, 47.9 percent were watching mostly Western films. Seven years later, in 1966, those numbers fell to 19.4 percent and rose to 63.4 percent respectively (Kusayanagi 17). To get to the bottom of this dramatic polarization of preference, the surveyors asked female spectators what kind of films they liked. They answered, in order of dominance:

- (1) Refreshing and modern emotional films
- (2) Films with a lot of foreign things (presumably fashion, goods, music, etc.)
- (3) Films with themes relevant to their lifestyle
- (4) Musicals
- (5) Films with themes about social issues

(Kusayanagi 17)

When asked which films they hated those surveyed replied:

- (1) Sex/erotic films
- (2) Jidaigeki (period films)
- (3) Yakuza (gangster films)
- (4) Science fiction
- (5) War films
- (6) Spy films

(Kusayanagi 17)

In short, female spectators were looking for contemporary dramas that they could relate to while simultaneously including exotic (or, rather, specifically not domestic) influence and style. The 1950s josei eiga, with its somewhat Oedipal-based erotic heroines symbolizing national virtues of tradition and the past were exactly the top two things female spectators were *not* looking for.

To some small extent, these were also not the values that the postwar generation of filmmakers in the 1960s were looking to create. Standish argues that the burgeoning New Wave directors, and she specifically pinpoints Ōshima, Imamura, Teshigahara, and

Suzuki, rejected the romantic melodrama forms and styles of the previous generation. Instead they emphasized “corporeal individuality expressed through carnal desire” (*A New History of Japanese Cinema* 257). They, too, had had enough of the stodgy and restrictive ideals of Japan’s older generations of filmmakers. However, although this may have been a “resistance” against forms and ideologies of the previous generation, or as Standish says “an attack” (257), this was also an attack on female audiences who rated erotic films at the top of their “most hated” list. On the one hand, subverting the romance genres through antimelodramatic expression as found in the *taiyozoku* (sun tribe) youth films, the *avant garde* sexploitation New Wave films, and the booming pink films also meant subverting the containment or reformation of women as discussed earlier. On the other hand:

These same misogynistic themes and anxieties where [sic] allayed through physical violence, rape, coerced abortion and the often violent death of the heroine” such that they resulted in “the recurrence of the same misogynistic themes and anxieties that were once played out in romance in terms of the containment of women’s sexuality within the institution of marriage and the constraints of child rearing. (257)

Little changed for the female spectator in terms of end result, but the fantasy and escapism—what pleasure there was even in the visage of the suffering, aging, traditional female—of the genres of the *josei eiga* were lost. The female moviegoing experience changed from masochism played out in the emotions, coupled with a certain amount of cathartic payback, to masochism played out on the body, coupled with frequent images of sexual, physical, and psychological abuse. Although Standish also argues that these filmmakers tried to include a female desiring subject position, she herself does not seem convinced that they were successful. Standish concludes through analysis of case

examples—*Nikutai no mon* (Suzuki, *The Gates of Flesh*, 1964), *Shunpu den* (Suzuki, *Story of a Prostitute*, 1965), and *Ai No Korīda* (Ōshima, *In the Realm of the Senses*, 1976)—that the films ultimately define “pleasure from a phallogocentric ideological position” (265). I contend that it doesn’t actually matter if these films attempted to include a female desiring position if Japanese women weren’t actually going to go see them.¹⁵ Before female audiences can assume a female desiring position, they have to actually assume the position of sitting in a movie theater.¹⁶

Audience turnout in 1966 totaled approximately 345 million for all tickets sold including domestic and international productions (Uriu 88). Female moviegoers accounted for 33.8 percent of the total, nearly doubled by male spectators at 66.2 percent. Clearly this is a surprising distribution but, as film critic Uriu Tadao noted in 1967, weighing these numbers against the general population count is even more puzzling. He documented the total population for Japan at 100,554,894 people: 50,895,231 females and 49,659,663 males (88). As he notes simply, there were plenty of women living in 1960s Japan, more women than men, and a lot of those women were not going to the movies. Uriu’s *Kinema Junpō* article “Cinema recovery begins with women’s mobilization” (*Eiga fukkō wa josei no dōin kara*) is a summary explanation for the decline of cinema in specifically gendered terms as well as a simultaneous call for the industry to recognize the economic mobility of women as a pivotal, neglected, and ostracized resource. The disappearance of female audiences, he argues, is the primary cause behind studio cinema decline (90). The numbers certainly support his claim. Between 1955 and 1957, prime years of the second Golden Age, an average of 62.9

percent of moviegoers were male (see Figures 14-16). Female spectators peaked in 1956 with a turnout of 37.4 percent. Uriu compares this with the statistics for Shōchiku's 1953

Averaged Audience Statistics by Gender and Age Group in 1955

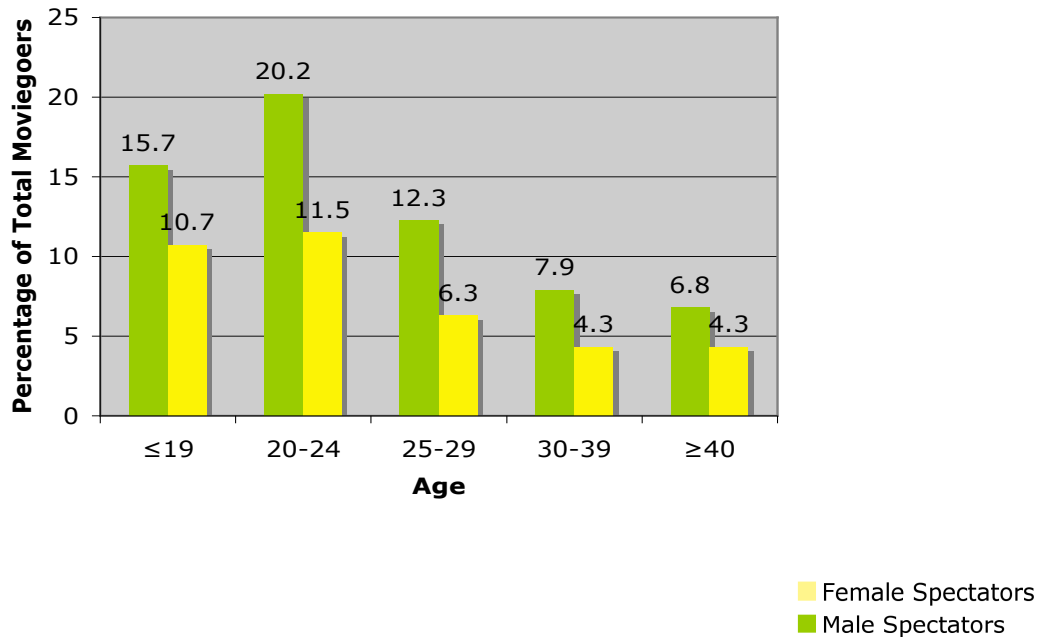


Figure 14. Even in 1955 male spectators outnumbered female spectators in every age group. Japan's population in 1955 totaled at 90, 076, 594 people with 44, 242, 657 males and 45, 833, 937 females (Communications).

josei eiga *Kimi no na wa* (Ōba, *What is Your Name?*, 1953), Japan's highest grossing post-war era film. In its first week, the film's audience was 54.5 percent female and 45.6 percent male. Uriu uses these numbers to indicate the powerful economic draw of the josei eiga and to provide a historical comparison for later dwindling attendance, but what he doesn't point out is that even for a film that was designed to target women specifically, the audience was still 45.6 percent male. By way of perspective though anachronistic, *Sex and the City* (King, *Sex and the City*, 2008) had a Los Angeles opening night turnout with women at 85 percent (Germain).

Average Spectator Statistics by Gender 1955-1957



Average Spectator Statistics by Gender in 1956

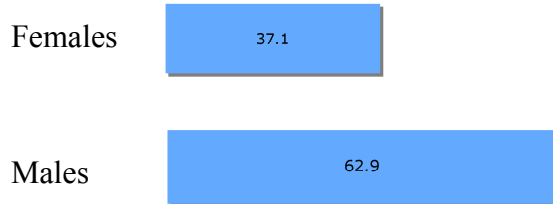


Figure 15. Between 1955 and 1957 the average of male spectators outnumbered female spectators by nearly double. The number of female moviegoers peaked in 1956 at 37.1 percent.

Select Audience Statistics by Gender from 1958-1966

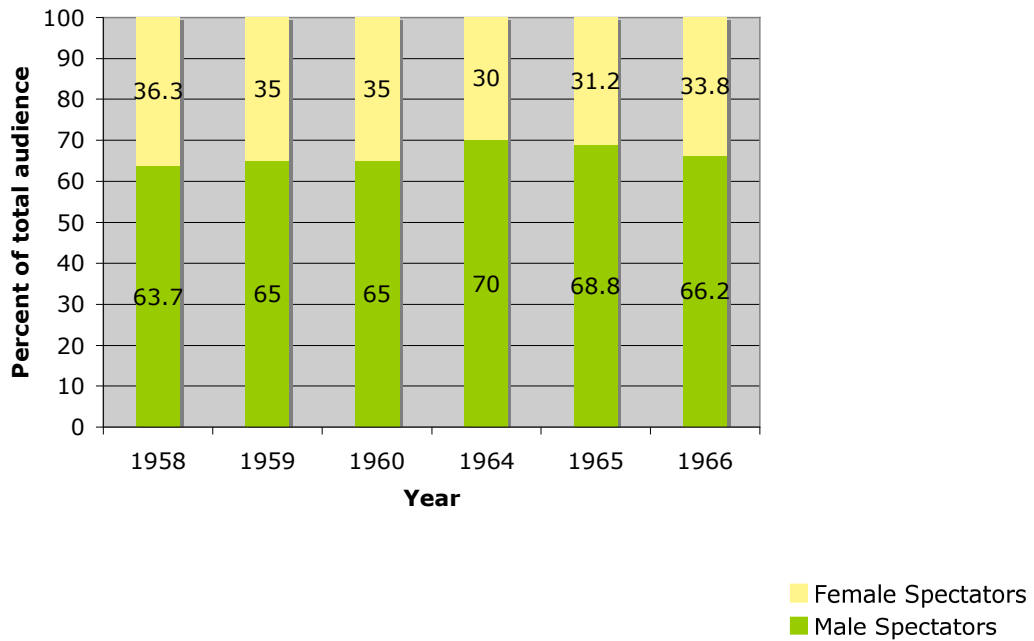


Figure 16. Beginning in 1958, the percentage of female spectators steadily decreased with a slight increase in 1965 and 1966. However, the numbers did not recover from the demographic statistics of the early 1950s.

The ratio for *Kimi no na wa* certainly suggests that postwar josei eiga attracted male viewers just shy of equal proportion and the films were not necessarily of overwhelming interest to female spectators specifically. So much for the idea that women were “flocking” to the theaters.

Interestingly, Uriu does not argue that the degeneration of film content into an overtly male centered—in addition to mediocre and boring (Uriu’s words)—media is to blame for women leaving the movies. Like others, he agrees that, beginning with Nikkatsu’s *Taiyo no kisetsu* (T. Furukawa, *Season of the Sun*, 1956) the studios catered to a male majority market. Female spectators were subordinate (*gyū*) to the presumed interests of a young male demographic and this resulted in a proliferation of the action, *chanbara*, and adventure genres with increasing emphasis of erotic (*ero*) and barbarous (*zankoku*) themes and imagery (his words). In short, films that would be “shameful or scary to the average woman” (Uriu 89). While that sentiment is certainly problematic, Uriu argues that the assumption that women left the theaters because films were focused on male interests is also problematic. Instead, he reasons that the increase in films targeting a male demographic is the result of a diminishing female audience. This is something of a chicken and egg paradox, but he argues that the dominant paradigm within the film industry at the time was that since TV statistics for female viewers was consistently over 50 percent in every time slot that the female draw to television was a forgone conclusion that could not be contested (90). While business sense suggests, as Uriu does, that at the moment when television saw a reliable increase in the female market, the film industries most important goal should have been to aggressively compete

for female audiences. Instead, the studios washed their hands of female moviegoers and honed in on their vestigial male audience who was also fleeing theaters, but in less dramatic numbers (90). Arguably, given the thematic patterns of the *josei eiga*, this may have consistently been the market all along.

However, it is important to note that Uriu does not believe that women “flocked to” television in their abandonment of cinema. Instead, this is just as hyperbolic an illusory statement as the idea that they “flocked to” the cinemas in the 1950s. He merely argues that this was the general assumption at work in the film industry that justified increasing homogeneity and an overall substandard, cookie-cutter production process (90). This does not make it true. Indeed, television subscription did not seriously increase in step with cinema’s decline until the early 1960s (S.-W. Lee). Just because more women percentage-wise tuned in to the tube than men does not mean that more women on the whole were watching specifically in lieu of cinema. It does, however, reflect rather accurate gendered social patterns of domesticity and corporate or public labor. Uriu, in something of a feminist move, insists that in reality television programming was just as banal as the products of the suffering film industry and that both platforms tended to produce media that infantilized their female viewers, creating content that made fools of its audience (*baka ni suru*) (90). Films and television both subscribed to anachronistic ideas about women, treating them as if they had the mentality of, at worst, children or, at best, teenagers. Mass media was out of step with the intellectual and economic advancements of women in the postwar era and programming executives failed to connect with a new generation of intellectual and independent young

women with college degrees and personal incomes (specifically the new O.L., or Office Lady, work force) (91). Citing by way of example the rise of female-oriented vacation packages and tourist bureaus in the late 1950s and 1960s, Uriu attests that women did not leave the theaters in favor of television, but rather the demographic that mattered most, females between 15 and 34, sought other social activities such as the booming industry of domestic travel engendered by all-female group vacation packages (91). It is the loss of this demographic, he argues, that crippled the film industry. The studios, failing to understand the characteristics or desires of their evolving market, were the victims of their own ignorance and apathy. The only recourse, he claimed, was to recapture this missing demographic: female spectators between 15 and 34. Uriu pleaded with the industry, “Cinema people—artists, businessmen, staff, anyone associated with production, anyone associated with exhibition—we must learn more about the contemporary young woman!” (91).

One year later, film critic Izawa Jun also wrote an editorial for *Kinema Junpō* with a similar call for a critical discussion on film audiences. He was particularly concerned about how the industry seemed to be ostracizing their female spectators and he predicted, accurately, that the studios would suffer (Izawa). Inspired by the unusual sight of women entering the Marunouchi Picadilly theater to see Claude Lelouch’s film *Vivre pour Vivre* (1967), Izawa reflected that in his daily commute past the theater, he hadn’t seen women lining up for tickets since before *Tokyo Orimpiku* (Kon, *Tokyo Olympiad*, 1965). Taking it upon himself to conduct an informal survey of these female moviegoers, all seemingly in their early twenties, he asked them why they weren’t going to see

Japanese films. Their simple response was that Japanese films were “boring.” Regarding Izawa’s follow up question inquiring how they knew Japanese films were “boring” if they weren’t watching them, the general reply was that the women “just didn’t feel like going to a Japanese movie theater.” One common justification for this apathy was a lack extra pocket money, but by and large the women questioned explained that when they “looked at the magazines [advertisements], the movies didn’t look that interesting” (42).

Drawing from other personal experiences, specifically his eye-witness account of a gaggle of middle-school girls at a rock concert waiting backstage for band autographs, Izawa warned that the film industry was quite obviously not keeping in step with the changing interests and demands of female spectators, especially the younger demographics. He praised the tactics of Tōei and their moves to corner the middle-class male market with their specialization in so-called “salaryman films” and took Shōchiku to task for not attending to their female clientele in a similar manner. Izawa believed that the niche market approach would be a strong and lasting strategy for Tōei, and to some degree he wasn’t wrong considering that the company did survive the studio collapse. Although he supported the problematic gender division of cinematic genres/products, he argued that without attention to women’s needs and interests, the Japanese film industry could not survive (43). In particular, Shōchiku, the josei eiga company, was failing to keep up with their female audiences. Although Tōei adapted to the postwar phenomenon of the “salaryman,” Shōchiku continued to make films for the increasingly imaginary prewar and wartime woman: melodramas of women’s suffering that reinforced the morals and gender expectations of a previous generation. Like his contemporary Uriu, Izawa

was adamant that in order to attract the new women of the postwar era, the new woman's film had to abandon its outdated formula and old fashioned sensibilities (44).

In order to survive, Japanese films could not be boring and Japanese movie theaters needed to be a place women wanted to go to.

Judging a Book by Its Cover

Long before a moviegoer could evaluate a film—whether or not they liked it, if it was “good” or “bad,” if they found it “relatable,” and so on—he or she had to go to the theater, buy a ticket, and take a seat. In the days of early cinema, for example in the heyday of Asakusa's booming Theater Street, attendance was matter of course, part of the Asakusa entertainment experience. We may safely consider that going to the movies was habitual for Asakusa clientele. Quick turnover rates and benshi spontaneity ensured variety and a reliable frequency of repeat business. The very density of theaters clustered in the same area suggests less an atmosphere of competition and more a condition of high-density population; such is a luxury of high demand. Given this context, we can surely consider advertisements—be it banners, newspaper blurbs, fan circulars, and posters—as solicitations for particular films, their fledgling stars, and their nascent studio systems. We can also read them as enticements to draw consumers to specific theaters, particularly given the studios' block booking practices: theaters associated contractually with particular studios invested, as they were, with particular genres and stars, used advertisements to sell the flavor of their exhibition space. However, as theaters spread to other parts of the city, and indeed to other cities, the diversification of locale may have

made cinema accessible to new consumer markets due to proximity and access, but moviegoing itself became less of a foregone conclusion. Coupled with the proliferation of other leisure activities such as radio, theater, cafes, drinking parties, dance halls, live music venues, department store shopping, local tourism, festivals, school related activities, and eventually television, theater owners and filmmakers had to generate and sustain attendance. They had to convince audiences to come *to* the theaters, particularly in tough economic times and, later, especially during the war. To do so, theater managers and (for those venues incorporated into vertical integration practices) parent studios devised all manner of gimmicks to draw audiences. For example, as in the U.S., theaters were early adapters of internal heating, air conditioning systems, and eventually even “dish nights” a la the Americans as a means of creating secondary reasons for theater attendance (Kato). No matter the strategy, theaters had to relay to consumers their offerings and in order to do so the key was and still is advertising.

Let us turn to meaty textual analysis to address the image of the film, the image of the studio, the image of the theater: its face, the movie poster.

A film poster is—along with magazine ads, television promos, star and director interviews, reviews, theater promotions, film stills, collectible headshots, fan ‘zines, pamphlets, and in a more contemporary context trailers, related toys and other merchandise, associated music videos, official websites, DVD box sets, SNL parodies, and behind the scenes specials, etc.—what Jonathan Gray, borrowing from Gerard Genette’s work on literature, calls a paratext. Simply put, paratexts are the materials that surround a text, materials such as those listed above. However, Gray argues, “paratexts

are not simply add-ons, spinoffs, and also-rans: they create texts, they manage them, and they fill them with many of the meanings that we associate with them” (6). In other words, the materials bind the target text by way of repetitive explanation or contextualization and in so doing, envelope the spectator within an often rather rigid info-sphere of predetermined, “correct” meanings and interpretations (e.g. “bonus” materials that solve whatever perceived ambiguities or blank canvasses present such any celebrity’s appearance on late night television to discuss their most recent character’s psyche and what the relevant film is “about,” J. K. Rowling disclosing at a reading at Carnegie Hall that *Harry Potter*’s Dumbledore is a gay character (Anon. "Jk Rowling Outs Dumbledore as Gay"), or the fan-generated website *Lostpedia* that located, documented, and solved the many twists and mysteries in ABC’s series *Lost* (Anon. "Lostpedia: The Lost Encyclopedia")). Because so many paratexts are created by or with permission from parent production studios, they “tell us how producers or distributors would prefer for us to interpret a text, which audience demographics they feel they are addressing, and how they want us to make sense of their characters and plots” (Gray 72). Precisely due to this practice of creating packaged meaning in packaging, Gray posits strongly that critical attention to paratexts “promises a more richly contextualized and nuanced image of how texts work, how and why they are made, and how and why they are watched, interpreted, and enjoyed” (22). After all, “everyone consumes many more paratexts than films or programs” (26). Since the spectator is quite often familiar with paratexts for films and programs that they have never seen, in reception studies paratexts are not only more important than the target text, but in fact may well be the primary text themselves.

Gray suggests that posters and similar materials are the beginning of spectator meaning-making (52). They are an example of an “entryway paratext” that prepares us for the target text, the film. Entryway paratexts “condition our entrance to texts, telling us what to expect...like an airlock to acclimatize us to a certain text, and it demands or suggests certain reading strategies” (25). As such, posters “play a key role in outlining a show’s genre, its star intertexts, and the type of world a would-be audience member is entering” (52). Posters are, in effect, designed to tell the viewer in an instant what kind of film they will choose to either watch or pass on by. As a hermeneutic, posters afford us to take on the role of the potential spectator, particularly useful for film historians. Posters and other entryway paratexts grant access to the selfsame superficial, but important, information that consumers had without bringing to our analysis preexisting value judgments about a film that we may possess after watching and/or studying the film (although we can obviously draw on this knowledge as a means of comparison or context and must likewise be sensitive to our own anachronistic predilections).

Through the designed combination of star text, studio text, director text, possible screenplay adaptation text, actual printed text, and incorporated visuals, the film poster is responsible for transporting potential spectators from the street to the theater and does so by transporting moviegoers into the storyworld of the film before they even move an inch. Gray draws most of his examples for a study of paratextuality from the American (U.S.) movie industry and, looking at an assortment of posters from the 1950s and 1960s (see Figure 17), it’s quite clear what he means when he suggests that posters “transport viewers into their storyworlds” (55). One look and each poster delivers the most basic

film information—star names, director, film title, tag line, studio—in a clear, literally texted, manner. But this data mostly calls on and reinforces spectator knowledge of the signified entities. The genre, the feel, the storyworld of the film is conveyed through visuals and graphic layout drawing on spectator knowledge of signified aesthetics.

For example, the adverts for *Alexander the Great* (Rossen, 1956), *South Pacific* (Logan, 1958) and *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad* (Juran, 1958) create historic, exotic, and/or fictitious storyworlds by incorporating images (either stills or artist renderings) from that filmic world. Nuances of narrative tone, such as prolific battle scenes or romantic interludes, are conveyed through the bodies of the stars, but the characters are clearly placed in a distinct environment: Rossen's *Alexander* stands heroically above a massive battle, *South Pacific*'s cast appears in a pastiche of exotic stills from the actual film, and *Sinbad* stands behind a ship wheel, lady love to his right, underneath a collection of epic monsters from his journey. Horror/psychological thriller posters of the era evoke the dark tones and disturbing pathologies of predator personas. *Vertigo* (Hitchcock, 1958), *House of Usher* (Corman, 1960), and *What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?* (Aldrich, 1962), visuals all convey a storyworld of danger and dread through selective color palettes (most obviously the use of black) and distorted imagery: *Vertigo*'s art creates an obvious aura of confusion and distress by juxtaposing a detective figure with a psychedelic spiral (the film's motif), *House of Usher* borrows from an obvious dark-and-stormy-night aesthetic with interwoven classic taphophobic imagery, and *What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?* brings uncanny repetition to distorted star personas. Conversely, comedies seem to have more semiotic range to work with, but ultimately feature an element of play to entice

their viewers to comic realms. The posters for *The Facts of Life* (Frank 1960) and *The Graduate* (Nichols, 1967) provide two distinct departures for humor. *Fact's* stars Bob Hope and Lucille Ball, suggestively nude but protected strategically by hand-drawn barrels, sell a raucous, slapstick storyworld, whereas the black-and-white irony invoked by the careful arrangement of Anne Bancroft's leg, Dustin Hoffmin's furrowed brow, and the printed tagline conveys a brooding, sardonic wit. By contrast, similar to the epic adventures *Alexander*, and *Sinbad*, the panorama and attire in the poster for *Hud* (Ritt, 1963) clearly depicts a western film (and the modern clothing even distinguishes the film as a New Western) while the extreme largeness of Paul Newman, land and home strategically situated between his massive legs, forefronts a distinct tone of masculinity, not at a laughing matter in the film. Likewise, even children's films strategically conduct spectators to the orchestrated whimsy of their genre: *Mary Poppin's* cartoonish menagerie of dancing penguins, flying adults, and highspirited musicians clearly creates a magically merry children's film (Stevenson, 1964).

Although disparate genres with varying levels of star promotion—Paul Newman is clearly the selling point of *Hud* whereas the triple weight of Jimmy Stewart, Kim Novak, and Alfred Hitchcock stands alone in text without the need for image recognition in *Vertigo*—the posters uniformly create an aura, a taste, of a film and its onscreen spaces. As for the Japanese film industry, one might assume that, in the postwar era of presumed mounting competition with television (and in reality all manner of other leisure activities) for clientele, the film poster, hung outside theaters and reprinted in miniature form in film

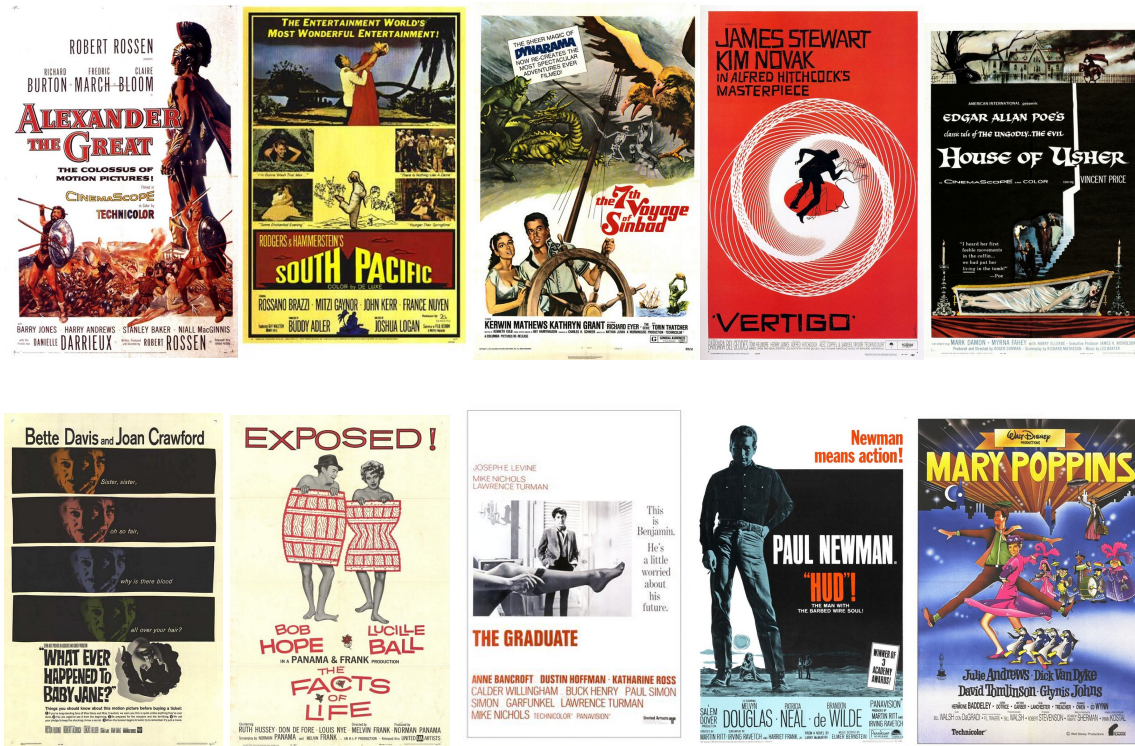


Figure 17. American film posters from the 1950s and 1960s. From left to right, top to bottom: *Alexander the Great* (Rossen, 1956); *South Pacific* (Logan, 1958); *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad* (Juran, 1958); *Vertigo* (Hitchcock, 1958); *House of Usher* (Corman, 1960); *What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?* (Aldrich, 1962); *The Facts of Life* (Frank, 1960); *The Graduate* (Nichols, 1967); *Hud* (Ritt, 1963) *Mary Poppins* (Stevenson, 1964). All images from www.impawards.com.

magazines and other print media, would have been an important device designed to draw audiences in days before widely accessible, alternate audio-visual media. Indeed, film poster production was a specialised art form. Most of them are artist composites, originals drawn and painted by hand and then turned over to mass production. However, they were just that—production line pieces—with only a few designers filling large orders in short turnaround, and poster aesthetics suffered a lack of variety and inspiration. There was, rather, a glut of homogeneity in two decades of advertising across genres. It

is perhaps unsurprising that female spectators began to feel that domestic films just ‘didn’t *look* that interesting’ (emphasis mine) (Izawa).

Japan’s domestic film posters of the 1950s and 1960s followed a planned and formulaic design scheme. The hierarchy of component importance simply based on visual dominance was as follows: (1) genre; (2) stars; (3) title; (4) tag line; and (5) staff (see Figures 21-26). The overall style of the poster relays the genre and supposed tone of the film, created by all of the poster’s visual elements working together in a semiotic package. Although this is most important feature of the advertisement it is also the most complex. The poster’s visual style, I argue, serves as studio branding. For this reason I will discuss the genre and style second to a consideration of stars and star power.

The importance of the film star is overwhelming. It is clear, from any film poster during the 1950s and 1960s era of studio filmmaking, that stars sold films.¹⁷ Or, at the very least, studios invested in the idea that stars sold films. Nearly every poster, regardless of production company, is designed around the dominant feature of the star, more specifically the features of the star. Actors’ faces saturate a poster’s frame. Sometimes one or two countenances take center stage, as it were, and the faces of supporting cast members fill in the borders leaving little room for negative space. Size aside, the import of the star, their dominance, resists or challenges additional visual information such that the stars’ portraits are generally decontextualized from the narrative of the target film. Take, for example, the poster for Ozu’s *Tokyo monogatari* (Ozu, *Tokyo Story*, 1953) (see Figure 18) that, uncharacteristic of fliers at the time, actually advertises the film as an auteur film, as an Ozu film. The concept is simple: artist renditions of

actresses Hara Setsuko and Kagawa Kyoko sit side-by-side at a rural, oceanfront location. The relatively ample and unusual negative space around the two figures—particularly compared with the typical, cramped styling of other posters—creates a lonely, introspective atmosphere. Coupled with the somewhat pensive expressions on their faces, the tone of the film is clear: this is not a comedy, but rather a drama about these two women, probably sisters gauging by their proximity and visual similarity, set in the countryside. With the assistance of the film title, we may safely guess that there is some point of conflict that pits the obvious aura of pastoral harmony with Tokyo, the titular story center. Perhaps it is an urban versus rural allegory. However, although the poster as a paratext assists textual analysis of the film *ex post facto*, especially in understanding the symbolic juxtaposition of the two characters played by Hara and Kagawa, as a promotional device it is completely misleading. In fact, *Tokyo monogatari* is not about these two women and they are not sisters. They are not friends, they do not cohabitate, and they are not coworkers. They don't even live in the same geographic area of Japan. As is well known by spectators of Japanese cinema, the protagonists of Ozu's film are an elderly couple, played by Ryū Chishū and Higashiyama Chieko. The husband and wife travel from the small seaside town of Onomichi in Western Japan's Hiroshima prefecture where they live with their youngest daughter (Kagawa) to Tokyo to visit their other children. The bulk of the film occurs in Tokyo's suburbs where they visit with their widowed daughter-in-law (Hara) and other family members, before returning back to Onomichi. The film is, however, a thoughtful drama and there is metaphorical juxtaposition of city and countryside.

on Ozu to sell the film as a star director. For the most part, however, the studio relies on veteran actress Hara and blossoming ingénue Kagawa to draw audiences, regardless of how much screen time they may actually have.

The disconnect between film image (here, meaning the promoted idea of the film as represented by the film as promotion) and film narrative is even more apparent in poster designs that dispense with background altogether in favor of cramming as many actor's heads into the frame as possible, a gimmick widely used for large ensemble productions. Such compositions offer even less immediate clues for deciphering a film's content and its associated storyworld. Nearly everything about the film other than written information (title, crew, tagline), font style, and overall color scheme (all of which, it should be noted, is designed to literally frame the stars) is conveyed by the drawn headshots of the actors. Time period is expressed by hairstyle and costuming of the upper torso. Genre and tone is largely suggested by facial expressions and head positions—profiles, three-quarter, direct address, tilt up, tilt down, etc. Social context is represented by how many actors are depicted, their age, their gender, and how they interact with each other, if in fact they do. As such, all the film information is processed through articulated visual nuance played out on the actors' bodies and, in order to be most effective, must be on some level understandable instantly. In this particular way, the simulacrum of the actors' faces, made recognizable by repetitive exposure on materials such as film posters, are almost solely responsible for doing all the semiotic work of promotion.

What this advertising strategy generates is recognition of and, if successful, fan dedication to particular stars. Given the convenient lens of retrospection, we find this to

be true in practice. Throughout modern Japanese entertainment history, media industries revolve around star formation, promotion, and adoration, from benshi and the joshi annai nin (female ushers) to contemporary pop-culture *tarento* (talents) and *idoru* (idols) such as SMAP and AKB48.¹⁸ In particular, AKB48 is a resonant example of the centrality of celebrity in the Japanese pop culture media industrial complex. AKB48 (pronounced *ah-kee-bah-forty-eight*) is a theater/idol troupe comprised of 48 teen girls. The girls are divided into three teams of 16 members (Team A, Team K, and Team B, see Figure 19) and they perform once every weekday (multiple times on the weekends) on the eighth floor of the Don Quixote super store in Akihabara (the Tokyo district from which the troupe borrows the AKB of their name). Despite the large number of participants, each girl has a devoted following, backed by an onslaught of supporting promotional materials beginning with their albums and including (but not exclusive to) frequent television appearances, miniature models, trading cards, T-shirts, posters, DVDs, photo sets, calendars, and cell phone straps. By far the most popular collectibles are the girl's individual photo sets. Like film stars of the 1950s and 1960s but perhaps to an even more extreme and refined degree, what's on sale are the images of the girls and their star texts. The music of AKB48 is incidental, particularly since it is sung in unison and processed beyond individual recognition. The girls don't sing solos, but they do get solos of a different, more telling, sort: individual photo and video close ups. The marketability of their star image as primary product is so successful that starting with their twelfth single *Namida Surprise* (AKB48) the group's producer Akimoto Yasushi introduced a new fan-based voting system. Each CD single came with a voting card that included a serial



Figure 19. Trading card pack sets of AKB48 Team A, Team K, and Team B. Each pack contains five random trading cards: four of the five are of the main team members and the fifth is of a “research student” girl in training. In April 2011, these sets sold for 1000 yen a pack (roughly \$10 USD) available on the group’s official website. Images from the official AKB48 website shop.akb48.co.jp/items/view/336.

number. That serial number granted online access to a virtual ballot allowing the fan to cast a vote for their favorite girl. The winners of the popularity contest are featured in the next album, which means more solo close ups in videos and more photo card sets. The single sold 104,180 copies in its first week, due in no small part to fans buying multiple copies in order to cast multiple online votes. Based on this success, the group continues to release a “voting card” CD single annually. In the case of AKB48, what perhaps was once considered “fan service” has become the entire point. These images are neither rarified nor are they derivative content; they are what’s for sale.

This is the fetish of the star mediated, of course, by commodity fetishism. The labor practice of the industry (the fabrication of the star and her text) is masked and the image object of the young girl (as a vessel of desire) becomes one half of a romantic pseudo-relationship between idol and fan. AKB48 is perhaps the manifestation of this phenomenon carried to its absurd, logical conclusion. But more than that, and to bring us back to the cinema of the 1950s and 1960s, the fetish of the star played out in headshots (as opposed to full body shots or environmental shots) and film posters is the politics of

the gaze writ large. Posters and other such promotional artwork that so heavily feature close-ups of stars—idols, actors, singers, etc.—are invested in the act of looking. The orchestration of that look made so important by the absence of body or background context is not obvious, it is not accidental, and it is by no means natural, but it is surely taken for granted. These disembodied heads aren't eating, they aren't talking, they aren't singing, they aren't smoking, they aren't crying. Sometimes they smile, sometimes they glare, but always they look. They are a universe of stars looking, looking at something, looking at nothing, looking at each other, looking at us. And of course we are looking at them, too.

However strong or problematic the argument of gendered gaze theory may be in regards to cinema, Japanese posters of the 50s and 60s magnify the semiotics of the gaze a hundred-fold. The politics of gender roles and gender power relations play out in the poster frame by who does the looking, who or what they are looking at, who is looking at them, and how our own gaze, as onlooking voyeurs, interacts with these various lines of sight. I am resistant to assigning strict gender designations for gaze ownership without a larger discussion of the social fabrication of gender. This is perhaps the largest and most reductive problem in Laura Mulvey's seminal work "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." I would argue, as many others have, including Mulvey herself (hooks; Stacey; Clover; Mayne; Gaines; Mulvey), that gaze is ultimately owned by the individual spectator. The voyeur trumps the gaze of the camera, and the resultant process of meaning making is done in the unification of the conscious and subconscious of an individual who is the sum total of multiple social, psychological, and personal

interrelated influences meeting in an individualized history of embodied experiences. However, if we leave the spectator out of it for just a moment, thereby sidestepping a weighty history of rightly disputed problems rooted in psychoanalysis (including scopophilia and viewer identification), and focus on the politics of gaze within the frame itself, the acts of looking and being looked at do indeed fall along the gender binary Mulvey proposed. Female figures on posters are to be looked at; male figures do the looking.

Mulvey argued: “In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female...In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness” (837). Neatly summarized, the roles of the gaze are “woman as image, man as bearer of the look” (837). Within a film, the gaze and gaze ownership becomes complicated, in no small part because multiple lines of sight exist given the time lapse of massive sequential images. However, the poster, as a fixed, singular image, is far more straightforward and simple because it presents far fewer possibilities compounded by variety. By and large, female figures were designed, meaning they were composed by designers and thereby intentionally fabricated, to look at the eternal abyss of off-poster space: nothingness. Admittedly it is a convenient design aesthetic. The blank canvas of the vacant gaze lends itself to numerous possibilities of meaning (see Figure 20).

Without a designated object to fix meaning or our attention, our eyes don’t follow her



Figure 20. The poster for Ōba’s *Yukiguni* (*Snow Country*, 1965). Kaga Mariko, playing female protagonist Komako, wrapped in a green blanket to ward off the cold looks down and off the poster’s edge. The tagline reads: “A pure heart burns, burning with a wild violence, Snow Country woman, Komako!”

eyes and we instead focus not on the absence of what she is looking at, but on what her look could possibly mean. Despair, yearning, sorrow, pensiveness, coyness, amusement, nostalgia, deceit, mystery, hope... a whole range of possibilities lends itself to the *tabula rasa* of a vacant gaze without fixed meaning. Such a design designates the *why* behind the gaze as the key to understanding not only what emotions she is feeling, but what events, what narrative, led up to her feeling as she does. Her gaze contains the mystery to what the film is about. Moreover, the foreverness of her distracted state fixes our own gaze (regardless of the spectator’s gender) comfortably on her face and her body. We are

afforded a disrupted gaze with impunity. We can stare at her as long and often as we like without fear of a gaze returned. We do not risk eye contact, that which disrupts an objectifying gaze. The figure of the woman or girl gazing off into space is the very picture of woman as semiotic vessel to be looked at.

When present, the male figures on posters are masters of the internal poster gaze. With the exception of a few instances found primarily in 1950s Shōchiku Studio posters catering to a female demographic (either ensemble comedies or, notably, josei eiga) or when a man, coupled in a woman's embrace (again, catering to a female demographic), gazes with stalwart resolution into the interpretive abyss, male figures hardly ever stare off into space. Even so, the latter gaze is rather singular in meaning. As opposed to the plurality of meaning suggested by a woman's gaze off-frame, a man's gaze takes one composite expression: strength, aggression, and the posture of defensive masculinity. In fact, the gaze of male figures in posters, regardless of where they look, are just that: a defense of masculine subjectivity. Again, Mulvey's arguments prove helpful:

According to the principles of the ruling ideology and the psychical structures that back it up the male figure cannot bear the burden of sexual objectification. Man is reluctant to gaze at his exhibitionist like...A male movie star's glamorous characteristics are thus not those of the erotic object of the gaze, but those of the more perfect, more complete, more powerful ego. (838)

While I do not believe that men cannot bear to look at other men—many, in fact, enjoy doing so—or that the male psyche dismantles in the process, renditions of the male figure as passive and to-be-looked-at do disrupt the power structure and foundational illusions of patriarchy. In order for sexual difference and male dominance to prevail, the male figure cannot overlap with the functions of the female figure. Within this power

construct, the male figure must combat the objectifying gaze of the spectator, erotic or otherwise.

This occurs in posters in one of two ways. The first is, ironically, the most literal and figurative. Posters for action-oriented jidaigeki, the most obvious example of men in actual combat, invariably feature the film's male protagonist. Interestingly, he is often featured as the sole body on the page, particularly in serials dedicated to a popular legend (e.g. the *Zatoichi* films). However, even positioned as the only object to look at in the frame, his too-be-looked-at-ness in no way deconstructs or undermines his masculinity because the figure rejects being looked at. The male jidaigeki star defends himself from objectifying gaze. With raised sword in hand, sneer etched across his face, the combative male star confronts the gaze head on and wards himself from it (see Figure 24). This does not mean that spectators did not, in reality, treat the male jidaigeki (or contemporary action) body in a manner akin to objectification—it's easy to imagine jidaigeki fans, male or female, collecting these images in reverence or adoration. However, the male figure was designed in a composition of resistance: he is armed, fierce, and if he could jump off the page, he would slice you to bits before you could look away. Moreover, the male jidaigeki star is not asked to carry any additional information or meaning about the film's story other than star/character text. The jidaigeki poster posits a movie about men fighting; it doesn't really matter about what. This form of direct address, in which the male figure gazes directly out at the viewer, carries over to genres other than the jidaigeki and it serves the same purpose. Although guns, knives, and sometimes dynamite replace

swords, the attitude of the direct address challenges objectification by giving male figures what female figures are rarely allowed: eye contact.

The other role male figures take in film posters of this era are what Mulvey calls “controlling figures.” She argues that film narratives support “the man’s role as the active one of forwarding the story [and] making things happen’ (838). While the absence of sequential imagery prevents male characters from engineering cause and effect narrative over time, within the single-frame imagery of the film poster “the male protagonist is free to command the stage, a stage of spatial illusions in which he articulates the look and creates the action” (839). He does so by either breaking the spectator’s gaze, as in the direct address above, or by directing our gaze with his own line of sight to a focal point or object. This is, overwhelming, a woman’s body, and the occurrence of this focused gaze within the poster frame increases throughout the 1960s, particularly with the increasing rarification of genre and demographic within the studio industry. In many cases the objectification of the female body is explicit, especially with the Nikkatsu, Shin-Tōhō, and Daiei youth films. For example, the posters for *Chi to ai no shuppatsu* (B. Saitō, *Departure of Blood*, 1958) and *Atsui suna* (Mizuho, *Hot Sand*, 1960) brazenly feature young men gazing in rapture at their lover’s breasts while the young ladies gaze off screen, coquettishly in the former and with tempered resignation in the latter. Less obvious, but just as poignant, is the advert for Nakahira’s *Kurutta Kajitsu* (*Crazed Fruit*, 1956)—a highly misogynistic film laced with disasterously repressed overtones of homosexuality. The dominant male figure embodies the disrupt of the patriarchal psyche objectified by a domineering female (or rather by her presumed sexual

proWess), but the poster delivers a backdoor, as it were, reinstatement of sexual power through the gaze of the boxed costar who stares fixedly at the young woman's bathing-suited posterior. Even in less explicitly sexually exploitative film posters, male figures are actively engaged in looking at women. Boyfriends gaze on girlfriends (e.g. Y. Yamada, *Shitamachi no taiyo*/Sunshine Girl, 1963), husbands look on wives (e.g. Y. Yamada, *Kazoku*/Where Spring Comes Late, 1970; Kinugasa, *Haru kourou no hana no utage*/Blossom Banquet at a Spring High-Rise, 1958), fathers oversee daughters (e.g. Shima, *Hibari no komoriuta*/Hibari's Lullaby, 1951) and possessive men stare at glamorous heroines and femme fatales (e.g. Ōba, *Yokoborigawa*/Yokobori River, 1966; Nakajima, *Ame ni saku hana*/Blooming Flowers in the Rain, 1960). The effect is two-fold. By leading the viewer's eyesight onto the image of a woman via their own line of sight, the male stars act as controlling figures who direct the action, the eye movements of the voyeur, and whatever embedded narrative exists in connecting the type of male gaze to the type of female body. He thereby simultaneously preserves his subjectivity by redirecting the spectator's gaze. Moreover, he establishes a visual power hierarchy: our eye movements begin with his gaze and end with the objectification of a woman, which is where it rests precisely because she is staring off into space. Within the world of the poster, the gaze is almost always male (in that it belongs to the male figure) when male and female figures are present and "interacting." We cannot say that the gaze of the poster spectator necessarily buys into this dynamic or that there are *per se* monolithic real world gendered visions, but we can recognize the mechanisms and assumptions at work in a far less complicated, two-dimensional marketing universe.

If the poster, as a paratext, also operates, as Gray suggests, as a teaching device in that it establishes methods and practices of “proper” reception, then we can also argue that, at the very least, they inform the spectator in the preferred politics of looking as a prototypical experience. Although creation and reinforcement of a “correct” hierarchy of objectification was probably not overtly intentional by the artists or even studio policy, the repetition of a presumed effective composition techniques reveals embedded assumptions about the natural order of looking and desire in a male-dominated industry. What *was* intentional, on the other hand, was the use of film poster as studio brand. As in the Hollywood system, insofar as stars sold films, stars also sold studios. We can also think of this the other way around: studios created and promoted stars as emblems of their studio brand and promotional appeal. Working under multi-film contracts, actors (and crew) operated as ensembles, appearing together in different iterations, sometimes in serialized roles and sometimes between genres. But more often than not, stars were linked to specific genres (typecast) and the connection between star and genre was reinforced by posters as studio propaganda. These paratexts, then, didn’t just train spectators in the politics of sexual difference, they were important teaching tools for studio brand recognition. And the studio brands, like the kinds of looking politics they sold, were likewise just as gendered as their two-dimensional composition of sexual difference.

In the 1930s, what is often referred to as the First Golden Age of Japanese Cinema, studios engaged in what Aaron Gerow, borrowing from Mark Nornes’ work on documentaries, calls a “hardening of style.” During this era of filmmaking, the studios

committed to their own particular subgenres and series that served as a type of market branding (Gerow "Japanese Film and Television", 217). Shōchiku honed in on *shomingeki* (common people's films) and, of course, josei eiga; Nikkatsu focused on realist *gendaigeki* (contemporary dramas); Tōhō specialized in musical comedy and, eventually, war films (217). In the height of the Pacific war years, government regulation and censorship limited the freedom of the studios, in large part determining spectator choice by law. So too was the immediate postwar cinema controlled by political interests: that of the American occupation. In the post-occupation era, however, Japanese cinema had its second Golden Age and the studios went right back into the practice of genre branding with renewed vigor (219).

The brand of the studio is cemented in the film poster by the holistic organization, specialization, and repetition of its component parts. They share these features with other posters within their studio-branded genre. Everything from color palette and font styling to the actor's expression and costuming works together to immediately relay what kind of film, what kind of genre, and by extension which studio, is for sale. This complete package, the poster's aesthetic, works less to differentiate the relevant film from other contemporaneous films than it does to identify the backing production company.

Shōchiku's film posters are borrowed right from the aesthetics of women's magazines. It doesn't require a close inspection to see that the Shōchiku films of the 1950s—primarily josei eiga, comedies, and children's films—clearly invested in a female audience (see Figure 21). This has little to do with the prominent display of a female character, for reasons already discussed her figure tends to span genre and studio, and is

far more related to color choice: pretty pastels. Pink is a prominent choice across their genre-scape, from comedies to romance, accompanied by yellows and greens. The actor's faces, with toothy goodnatured smiles, beam on the page, doused in the watercolor equivalent of soft glamour lighting. The film titles, in an array of colors, are often stylized and cheerful, with soft curves for romances or jauntily askew for comedies. Women's hairstyle and clothing often have significant attention to detail and pattern. When set against a pastel background, this in particular links the style of the Shōchiku poster to the cosmetics and fashion ads in contemporaneous women's magazines. However, in the 1960s, as the company steered away from romantic melodramas and family comedies, their posters reflected the darker tones Shōchiku sought to borrow from more successful, seemingly edgier film companies. Pastels gave way to blacks, reds, and oranges—colors more closely associated with masculinity. Hard chiaroscuro and stark contrasts replaced the muted lighting effects of the earlier decade. Bright smiles gazing off into nowhere hardened into serious direct address and sidelong glances. Titles lost their rounded curves, becoming jagged and course in hand-scrawled or block-face typography. By the end of the 1960s, Shōchiku had abandoned its softer side (see Figure 22).

Conversely, the other companies invested in genres with little aesthetic appeal to effective conventions within the female market. Nikkatsu branded itself early on with a gritty, edgy style dripping with sex and machismo (see Figure 23). The companies' posters easily double as pulp fiction covers. Nikkatsu draped its action and teen drama film images in black: high contrast shadows, hair, and clothes complimented by

masculine blues. They targeted a young male audience with alluring figures of sexualized women who were ogled by their male counterparts. The film titles generally leap from the page in violent, thick, red characters. And it is flesh, not fashion, that received generous detail and coloring. Likewise, Tōei, invested in jidaigeki, dedicated itself to the samurai hero etched in high contrast black and white, brushwork titles drenched in blood red pigment (see Figure 24). And while great detail is spent on the action figure's kimono design, the image is hardly one found in a woman's fashion magazine. By contrast, Shin-Tōhō and Daiei, like Shōchiku, were transitional studios: they once targeted female demographics with romantic pastels and glamorous beauties *a la* dramas and romances—particularly Daiei's *hanamono* or “mother films,” but they too more rapidly than Shōchiku, followed Nikkatsu's brazen style. They focused on a male, teen demographic (see Figure 26).

Yet, while the posters effectively served to demarcate stylized genre (and thereby studio) through visual branding, they completely failed to distinguish themselves within their own genre, between a studio's own films. The end result is that, for the most part, all jidaigeki, all home dramas, all comedies, all youth films, you name it, look, from the position of a browsing spectator, nearly exactly the same. Moreover, as studios began to target the same minuscule market, they even began to lose their branding singularity. It wasn't just that all action films (aka Nikkatsu films) looked the same; all films looked the same regardless of studio. Young debutant stars handpicked to match the desired demographic bore the burden of studio brand as did their predecessors but could not hope to do so without the established careers and longevity of vetted movie stars. Since the



Figure 21. Shōchiku film posters from the 1950s. From left to right, top to bottom: *Konyaku yubiwa* (Kinoshita, *Engagement Ring*, 1950); *Tōkyō Kiddo* (T. Saito, *Tokyo Kid*, 1950); *Aikenbashi* (Nobuchi, *Bridge of Love*, 1951); *Chichi koishi* (Ogura, *Longing for Father*, 1951); *Hakuchi* (Kurosawa, *The Idiot*, 1951); *Bakushu* (Ozu, *Early Summer*, 1951); *Ringo-en no shōjo* (Shima, *Girl of the Apple Park*, 1952); *Tonbo kaerimichi-chū* (T. Saitō, *On the Round Trip*, 1950); *Hibari no yōkina tenshi* (T. Saitō, *Hibari's Cheerful Angel*, 1953); *Ojōsan shachō* (Kawashima, *A Young Lady as Company President*, 1953); *Tōkyō monogatari* (Ozu, *Tokyo Story*, 1953); *Wakaki hi wa kanashi* (Iwama, *The Days of Youth Are Sorrowful*, 1954). All images from *Natsukashi no nihon eiga postā korekushon Part 2* (Hidaka).



Figure 22. Shōchiku film posters from the 1960s. From left to right, top to bottom: *Yopparai tengoku* (Shubuya, *Drunkard's Paradise*, 1962); *Futari de mune wo hare* (Sakai, *Proud Together*, 1963); *Shitamachi no taiyō* (Y. Yamada, *Sunshine Girl*, 1963); *Yukiguni* (Ōba, *Snow Country*, 1965); *Danshun* (N. Nakamura, *Mild Spring*, 1965); *Yokoborigawa* (Ōba, *Yokobori River*, 1966); *Akane-gumo* (Shinoda, *Clouds at Sunset*, 1967); *Chiekoshō* (N. Nakamura, *Portrait of Chieko*, 1967); *Jyunjō nijyōsō* (Umetsu, *Devoted Duo*, 1967); *Hi mo tsuki mo* (N. Nakamura, *Through Days and Months*, 1969); *Kazoku* (Y. Yamada, *Where Spring Comes Late*, 1970); *Kaze no bajō* (N. Nakamura, *Journey of Love*, 1970). All images from *Natsukashi no nihon eiga postā korekushon Part 2* (Hidaka).



Figure 23. Nikkatsu film posters from the 1950s and 1960s. From left to right, top to bottom: *Tada hitori no hito* (R. Yoshimura, *Just One Person*, 1956); *Kurutta Kajitsu* (Nakahira, *Crazed Fruit*, 1956); *Mayaku 3-go* (T. Furukawa, *Narcotic #3*, 1958); *Ankokugai no bijo* (Suzuki, *Underworld Beauty*, 1958); *Chi to ai no shuppatsu* (Saitō, *Departure of Love and Blood*, 1958); *Shōjo* (Hori'ike, *Girl*, 1961); *Ame ni saku hana* (Nakajima, *Blooming Flowers in the Rain*, 1960); *Akai tsubomi shiroi hanai* (Nakajima, *Red Bud and White Flower*, 1960). All images from *Nihon eiga posutā-shū* (Anon.).



Figure 24. Tōei film posters from the 1950s and 1960s. From left to right: *Hatamoto taikutsu otoko: Nazo no gurentō* (S. Matsuda, *The Bored Samurai Hatamoto: Riddle of the Crimson Pagoda*, 1957); *Tenka no igagoe akatsuki no kessen* (S. Matsuda, *Bloodbath at Dawn at Igagoe*, 1959); *Tange sazen yōtō nuretsubame* (S. Matsuda, *Tange Sazen 2: The Mysterious Sword*, 1960); *Murasaki ukyō nosuke gyaku ichimonji-giri* (Hasegawa, *Purple Killer*, 1964). All images from *Tōei jidaigeki I & III* (Sasaki).



Figure 25. Shin-Tōhō film posters from the 1950s: *Non-chan kumo ni noru* (Kurata, *Nobuko Rides on a Cloud*, 1955); *Ama no senritsu* (T. Shimura, *Woman Diver's Terror*, 1957); *Hitogui ama* (Onoda, *Cannibal Ama*, 1958); *Onna kyūketsuki* (Nakagawa, *The Woman Vampire*, 1959). From *Nihon eiga posutā-shū: Shin-Tōhō e shū-hen* (Ninomiya).



Figure 26. Daiei film posters from the 1950s and 1960s: *Hibari no komoriuta* (Shima, *Hibari's Lullaby*, 1951); *Futari no hitomi* (Nakaki, *Girls Hand in Hand*, 1952); *Gion bayashi* (Mizoguchi, *A Geisha*, 1953); *Yoru no chō* (Yoshimura, *Night Butterflies*, 1957); *Haru kōrō no hana no utage* (Kinugasa, *Blossom Banquet at a Spring High Rise*, 1958); *Hiroku onna kura* (Mori, *Secret Notes of a Women's Prison*, 1968); *Atsui suna* (Mizuho, *Hot Sand*, 1960); *Sanbiki no onna tobakushi* (Tanaka, *Thoroughbred Women Gamblers*, 1967). From *Nihon eiga posutā-shū: Daiei eiga-hen Shōwa 30 nendai* (Nishimura) and *Nihon eiga posutā-shū: Daiei eiga-hen Shōwa 40 nendai* (Nishimura).

films were all targeting the same shrinking, gendered demographic, the studios continued to pigeonhole themselves into increasingly narrow genre brands defined by the gendered depictions in their advertising. In so doing, the studios themselves became images of gendered entities and what started out as an experimental cinema of attractions for everybody became, across the board, a tired, exploitation cinema for young men.

In a 1961 roundtable discussion regarding the then contemporary “design problem,” corporate artists discussed many of the same problems apparent in surveying film posters *en masse* now, fifty years later. Katsumi Masaru (Design Critic), Masukawa Susumu (Tōhō Advertising Department), Ibe Kishirō (Warner Advertising Department), Nakahara Fumito (Daiei Foreign Film Advertising Department), and Sakahashi Yoshio (Director of the Japan Advertising Artists Club) all clearly acknowledged the declining artistry and effectiveness of film posters as advertising, noting that the quality of the posters for films foreign and domestic alike had become “a little shameful” and that something was “going to have to change” (Anon. "Nihon No Eiga Senden Dezain"). The two main points of contention were (1) that the film content simply wasn’t any good and, concomitantly, the films had become routine and repetitive; (2) that posters likewise were repetitive, taking a uniform, studio-approved design shape. The two issues created a problem through feedback: the homogeneity of the posters stemmed from both homogeneity in film content and the restrictive studio requirements for poster design. As a matter of course, the studios demanded a line up of star images, generally at least five, and this left little space for other information or even interpretive freedom. In describing his own “creative” process, Masukawa stated that he preferred to read the screenplay

before tackling a design in order to instill the artwork with a sense of the film or even an image borrowed from the film, but that more often than not he received his assignments before the screenplay was released. As a result he designed rather blindly based on a brief description and the required lineup of the five stars. And, since the designers created on average a poster a day—even more images for newspaper and magazine ads—design took on the semblance of mechanized production. As Walter Benjamin might say, the posters had lost their aura.

Between them, the design representatives expressed a collective concern about the studio control of films, suggesting that the majors were stale and out of touch with their consumer base. Their arguments were not dissimilar from young filmmakers of the “New Wave” generation who were vociferously antagonistic toward studio demands. However, when brainstorming possible strategies to overcome their difficulties, the designers offered only three possibilities. They suggested that work move outside the studio system to freelance design and artwork. They suggested that their representative companies focus on advertising to the youth market since 70 percent of habitual moviegoers were young people—a gender neutral term although it is probably safe to assume that they did not mean teen girls. They suggested that designs emphasize attributes that would be appealing to an international market in the spirit of *Rashomon*’s (Kurosawa) tremendous success. Independent production, youth market, and international appeal. This is, as we know, exactly the subsequent course of the industry that led to its eventual collapse.

Of the five advertising professionals representing their organizations, not one suggested targeting or recapturing the female market.

As entryway paratexts, film posters failed to engage the interests of a diverse market. It is no small wonder that by the 1960s female moviegoers found Japanese films uninteresting at a glance. Because posters were so invested in the service of studio brand via the vehicles of star recognition/fandom and genre stylization, they failed to deliver spectators beyond the surface of face and name to the storyworld of the film—brand recognition, which informative, is hardly transcendent. As a promotional device, the posters were simply not designed around the concept of a storyworld, and understandably so when the poster artists themselves had no access to the fictive realm. Whereas the promotional materials Jonathon Gray studies of Hollywood tease or entice the viewer to singular texts, thus engaging consumer curiosity, the Japanese studios offered a what-you-see-is-what-you-get campaign based on genre and brand formulas (and in the case of adaptations, as is common with *jidaigeki* films, pop culture familiarity with the story itself). Because they were never intended to, the posters failed to transport viewers into a storyworld, a drastic oversight for, as film critic Abe Kasho argues, what drew audiences to theaters at the peak of Japan's second Golden Era was the pleasure of seeing a story (*monogatari*) come to life (*nikuka*) (8). As studios lost their knack for compelling storytelling, of transporting the viewer to a storyworld (as Gray would say) or bringing the story to life (as Abe would say), general audiences began to mumble that Japanese films were “boring” and professional critics repeatedly remarked that there just “weren't any good films this year” (10).

Finally, I would like to emphasize that posters aren't just the symbolic face of films and studios alone (doing all the semiotic work for and against both as discussed in throughout this section). As both marketing publicity and decorative frontispieces, they also become the literal face of theaters. Collections of posters hung in windows, arranged on sandwich boards, or plastered on walls also serve as a kind of branding for exhibition spaces, intentionally so in the days of block booking and perhaps inadvertently calculated in the case of later mini and art indie theaters. Simply put, the type of films exhibited, easily recognizable by a collection of posters designed to convey a collective brand, coded the atmosphere of the exhibition venue, the type of social space, and the demographic(s) of its most frequent consumer population. For example, a Shōchiku theater in the early 1950s, invested in the promotion and display of Shōchiku films, would have had a higher population (however dwindling) of female moviegoers and a higher density of pastel decor than a Nikkatsu theater. Respective demographics are encoded by the films and related advertising (posters just one publicity tool among many), but are also, as I will begin to argue in the following section and explore more thoroughly in the next chapter, embedded in theaters themselves. Considered as such, cinemas are a kind of experienced paratext, not discussed by Gray, of social spaces that reveal for whom exhibited films and atmospheres were created.

I Can't See You If You Can't See Me

Consider the two images below (see Figure 27). The photo on the left, of three women lounging on a desolate, boxed-in rooftop in a suburban neighborhood, conjures the environment and conditions evoked by the assumption that women in the postwar

era abandoned the public sphere (moviegoing) for sequestered domesticity (television). On the other hand, the frame grab on the right of three women grappling with a shoe-related wardrobe malfunction thanks to the wood-slatted sidewalks in under-construction downtown Tokyo, quite clearly challenges any notions regarding women's postwar great disappearing act. Somewhat apparent from the still above—and even more-so in the rest of the clip drawn from a YouTube montage of 1960s found footage, we can see that not



Figure 27. Photographs of women in 1959 and 1960. On the left is a photograph from 1959. Three women chat on a rooftop while their futons air in the sun in a suburban neighborhood (Image source: Rogge 2009). On the right is a still from a montage of 1960s found footage. Three women stop on a busy street in downtown Tokyo to help the friend in the middle whose heel is trapped between a crack in the wooden planks (Image source: suadade77).

only are these ladies dressed for a day out (as opposed to transit from work), but the people around them on the busy thoroughfare are mostly female: from young girls to middle aged women, from students to expectant mothers. Clearly women were out and about (both in the suburbs *and* in the city). However, what the two images have in common (admittedly a strategic selection on my part) is what Kido Shiro first banked on when he took over Shōchiku Studios in the 1920s: Japanese women did things in groups. He wasn't wrong.

People (and by now we know we really mean women) watching television in lieu of film is not an adequate explanation to account for the fall of the studio system. First, what film scholars rarely take into consideration is (1) television's development as a status symbol (along with the washing machine and the refrigerator) in the home as one of the three "sacred treasures" of the post-war era—a riff on the emperor's legendary three regalia; and (2) that ownership of a television by law required subscription to the national broadcasting service (NHK). Rather than a direct rival, television was a whole 'nother breed of cat. Media never competes solely with other forms of media, although this clearly was the assumption of cinema industry insiders (later adopted by media scholars) to their seemingly inevitable ruin. In truth, media competes with time and the myriad ways that people find to spend it; in capitalist societies, this is generally by means and desires created for them. It seems too simplistic to suggest a one-to-one correlation between film and television, as if televisual or cinematic products were *de facto* a part of human life and the decline of one automatically triggers the rise of the other, or vice versa. Nor is there an innate media void that must be filled. Rather, the demand for media—television, cinema, print, etc.—must be created, vying for attention and participation under the larger umbrella of leisure pursuits. In the postwar-post-occupation period, film competed with a number of other activities including shopping, travel, political protest, education, live music, drinking parties, and, yes, television, all booming industries in the rapid reconstruction climate. But the point of fact is that the film industry failed to create entertainment to match the postwar needs of its specifically female clientele.

What is true is that the studio systems started to lose the female demographics in the 1950s despite what is called the Second Golden Era of filmmaking and despite an abundance of josei eiga ostensibly targeting women. As we have seen, the josei eiga, although often adaptations of primary sources (novels, short stories, etc.) written by women for women, once churned through the patriarchal machine of the studio industry (as described in this chapter as well as in Chapter I) lost their relevance and relatability in favor of archaic value systems and the containment of blossoming female social power. This critique of the josei eiga will undoubtedly ruffle some feathers since the genre is so closely associated with the great humanist expression of the postwar era by masters such as Mizoguchi, Naruse, and Ozu; it is these films that are most often selected as representative of a national character that defines Japanese cinema. This is, in large part, precisely why I am critiquing them. To be absolutely clear, contrary to the standard formula of film history, it was not television itself that spelled the demise of cinema. The continual loss of revenue based on a total failure to recognize the economic vitality of women in the postwar era eventually caused the studio collapse. Just as women “never go to the movies alone” (again, Kido), neither did they abandon them alone. They took with them their “friends, sisters, and boyfriends.” And they did this not because they were watching television instead, because, simply, importantly, television is not a social replacement for the public activity of going to a theater. They did this because, as a social activity, the theater turned into a public space to which they no longer wanted to go.

The public space of the studio-booked theater in the late 1950s on into the 1960s and 1970s reflected the image conjured by their posteréd façades. The studio films of the era were of increasingly little interest to female spectators, but, moreover, the theaters themselves were places women didn't want to be. Posters, as literal entryway paratexts, defined the atmosphere of the theatrical experience as well as the embedded codes of power structure of voyeurism at the cinema, packaged into the gaze of stars and by stars. Posters also suggested demographic percentages within the theaters (absolutely connected to paradigms and subconscious themes and expressions depicted by the dominant genres). They effectively transmogrified cinemas from heterogenous social spaces that offered the possibilities of the erotic—of mutual desire and affection—to places of the pornographic, of male domination and exploitation of women. And at nearly every structural level.

Female spectators, who went to the theaters as a social activity (Wada-Marciano 80), no longer found theaters as desirable social venues. In the height of attendance decline, film critic Uriu observed that it wasn't just the films that turned women away, it was the theaters themselves, particularly due to the types of films shown and the associated population: "The atmosphere of the movie theaters became sordid and women did not want to enter into such social spaces" (90). Similarly, critic Izawa Jun documented that women's first response to why they weren't going to the movies was that "they didn't feel like going to a *Japanese movie theater*" (emphasis mine) (42). They were, however, still attending cinemas that featured imported films and these stragglers continued over to fill the seats of the largely foreign film-centric art house mini theaters

of the 1970s. JETRO pinpoints the role that theaters had in the decline of studio cinema, summarizing that the “declining number of theaters led to inconvenience and crowding and further disenchantment with movies” (2). JETRO avoided any mention of specific demographics, but from other sources we know the rates of disenchantment within specific subsets of the population. We can also safely surmise that the crowding mentioned is something of a euphemism: Donald Richie describes the atmosphere of the pink film—already 40 percent of Japan’s cinema production in 1965 (Standish *A New History of Japanese Cinema* 268)—as “like all pornographic productions, masturbatory cinema. The audience is not thinking about women, it is thinking about itself” (Richie *Lateral View: Essays on Culture and Style in Contemporary Japan* 169). So was the industry.

And yet, it may be that normative gender power structures did not control or possess film gaze and film power (or, here, advertising gaze and advertising power), as Mulvey originally suggested in her theories about scopophilia and viewer identification in Hollywood cinema. Given that the strategy of targeting a young male audience failed the Japanese studio system and was partner to its collapse, perhaps we can rethink the ownership of gaze and spectator power as not just who does the looking, but who chooses not to look. It may not be so unreasonable to suggest that when women took control of this gaze, by the numbers, they did so by *not looking*. Or, more appropriately, they didn’t gaze off into space or look into the abyss of nothingness like their two-dimensional facsimiles. They chose to look at something else.

Notes

¹ Standish does argue that working women still frequented theaters, but that they preferred instead to see foreign imports. Still, this seems too simple of a breakdown that relies on assumptions about behavior patterns fixed in daytime proximity: housewives stayed at home and working girls went out. Even these two groups operated in such holding patterns, this ignores other groups such as college and high school students.

² It is worthwhile, however, to be suspicious of the actual social structures and economic conditions underlying the supposed Asakusa extravaganza. While it may have been true that visitors to the district experienced a fluid appropriation of identity, it is unlikely that the workers and permanent members (or even all the patrons, for that matter) of the district experienced the same freedom or variable performativity. For example, Miriam Silverberg illustrates how the Asakusa district was not a “hermetically closed free space, but a part of the montage of social relationships throughout the Japanese nation during the modern years” through her analysis of beggars, vagrants, hawkers, juvenile delinquents, and freaks as fixed features of Asakusa’s “grotesquerie” (Silverberg 206).

³ Quoted in the forward by Donald Richie to Kawabata’s *The Scarlet Gang of Asakusa* pg. xiii

⁴ The Meiji government divided the appropriated grounds of Sensōji Temple and turned it into a public park in 1873. The park was further divided into seven districts in 1884. The temple remained the symbolic origin of the area by means of the geographic label *ikku* (the first ward), the shopping lane leading up to the temple—Nakamise-dori—became *nikku* (the second ward), the Denpō-in Temple are defined *sanku* (the third ward), Hyōtan Pond and its surroundings were *yonku* (the fourth ward), the Hanayashiki became *goku* (the fifth ward), the land to the southwest of the temple was the *rokku* (sixth district), and *nanaku* (the seventh district) was a residential neighborhood (Liotta 618).

⁵ Although the Denkikan was the first permanent movie theater, it was not the first site of film spectatorship in Japan, nor was Tokyo the origin of film in Japan as is often assumed. Public audiences first witnessed the specters of the Lumière brothers’ Cinématographe films—among them *L’Arrivée d’un Train en Gare* and *Baignade en Mer* (Anderson 22)—at the Nanchi Embujo Kabuki Theatre in Osaka’s Nanchi *geisha*-laden entertainment district on February 15, 1897 (Dym 511). When I say “specter,” I’m not just referring to the now fairly cliché metaphor that projected cinema is an ethereal vision of the past (and often the dead), but also to the peculiar technique employed by the Osaka projectionists. They used the imported, instruction manual-less Cinématographe machine as they would the domestic *gentou e* device (magic lantern), placing the projector behind the screen. The screen (a white linen sheet) completely obscured the images. To circumvent the apparent design flaw, the exhibitors did not circumvent the screen setup, but instead created an ad hoc industry profession. During the screening, a man with a bucket would pour water over the projection sheet and then sweep the water throughout the screen with a brush. The damp cloth would allow some light through, rendering the pictures somewhat visible from the front. According to audience member Okuda Saichiro, this peculiar, but innovative, technique gave the pictures a “very fine brilliance” thanks to the “dew formed by the water” (Satō *Nihon eiga shi* 50). Despite technical difficulties, the spectacle of moving images was, of course, a hit. The Cinématographe, followed rapidly by Edison’s Vitascope, made its way from Osaka to Tokyo via exhibition tents along the way, a theatrical setting in and of itself. Once in the capital, exhibitioners rented *kabuki* and *noh* theaters for their screenings (by this time with the projector behind the audience, not the screen).

⁶ Historian Jeffrey Hanes describes the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923 as a “catastrophe of almost unimaginable proportions” Jeffrey E. Hanes. “Urban Planning as an Urban Problem: The Reconstruction of Tokyo After the Great Kanto Earthquake.” *Policy Science* 7.3 (2000) 25. The 7.9 quake (by Japanese measurements) certainly took its toll, but it was the aftermath of three days of massive conflagrations and firestorms caused by overturned cooking braziers that left half of Tokyo in ruin. Although the combined disasters claimed more than 110,000 lives and left 2.5 denizens of the capital and neighboring Yokohama homeless (Charles J. Schencking. “The Great Kanto Earthquake and the Culture of Catastrophe and Reconstruction in 1920s Japan.” *Journal of Japanese Studies*. 34.2 (2008) 296) the government sidestepped humanitarian disaster relief in favor of capitalizing on a perceived opportunity to recreate Tokyo’s infrastructure in order to maximize efficiency and “spatial economy” (Hanes 129). This resulted in massive reconstruction efforts with special attention given to downtown districts at the cost of restoring residential neighborhoods (132). Asakusa, with its dense population and large number of commercial kitchens, was one of the sites of the five whirlwind firestorms and the park’s landmark 12-story *Ryōunkaku* tower—boasting Japan’s first elevator—had symbolically snapped in two. Although all of the cinemas on Theater Street disappeared in the fires, by 1925 the area was back up to 24 screening theaters, four more than before the quake (Liotta 2009, map of commercial theaters in Asakusa on page 620). It was not until the war, or more particularly until after the Occupation ended, that the district fell into decline and the theaters began to disappear in step with the dying industry.

⁷ Silverberg herself details this lineage, citing Ellis’ article on Morgan and Steinem’s definitions in *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*. ed. Ann Snitow, Christine Stansell, and Sharon Thompson, New York: Monthly Review Press, (1983). Linda Williams’ use of the distinction is found in *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure, and the “Frenzy of the Visible”* Berkeley: University of California Press (1989).

⁸ The latter is certainly hyperbole. Hamano Sachi made hundreds of pink films, although as a director she is a rather unique figure in pink cinema.

⁹ Or at least it was. Since the late ‘00s, the Asakusa area has been the focus of a massive city redevelopment and “clean up” project. The plan is to reinvigorate the district into a tourist destination, and construction efforts to turn the street into a nostalgic theme-park are already underway. I anticipate that just a few short years after this dissertation is filed, the district will look and feel drastically different.

¹⁰ Interestingly, Russell claims that “neither the industry nor the critical establishment used the term ‘woman’s film’” (Russell 90). We must assume that she is referring to industrial and critical descriptions of Naruse’s films and not films in general, although it is unclear in her article which she means. It is clear, however, that the term *josei eiga* was, in fact, used by both filmmakers and critics, although perhaps not in regards to Naruse’s works.

¹¹ For obvious reasons, female authorship in Japanese cinema generally refers to female screenwriters or female authors whose works are adapted to screen.

¹² This is tricky. There were many conversations about *josei eiga* in the Japanese film world—criticism, fandom, and production—particularly during the late 1950s through the mid 1960s when the “genre” began to die out. However, serious academic scholarship, and especially contemporary scholarship, of *josei eiga* now refers to the ideas and theories of the Western Hollywood Woman’s Film.

¹³ In truth, this position is a double-edged sword. On the one hand it relieves us from the melodrama=woman’s film and everything else=man’s film dichotomy. However, it also robs us of the powerful perspective scholars found in identifying the American woman’s film.

¹⁴ There is also a rather tremendous amount of attention given to the reception and popularity of Korean drama and film in Japan, particularly with Japanese women.

¹⁵ In his own reading of Ōshima’s *In the Realm of the Senses*, Eric Cazdyn notes that Oshima made the film specifically for foreign audiences with the help of foreign investment (Cazdyn 189) and the Japanese release was censored (191).

¹⁶ It would, of course, be ridiculous to suggest that women *never* went to see these films. For example, as Standish also hedges in the case of Tōei Studios, “although the *ninkyō* yakuza films were initially targeted at male audiences, as increased television ownership and changes in lifestyle precipitated a decrease in female audiences for domestic productions, this did not entirely exclude women from the potential range of spectators for the genre. Tayama hints at this, in his reference to middle-aged women in the audience at the screening of the fourth film in the *Abashiri* series, when he speculates that the could also identify with the loneliness of the hero” (Standish *A New History of Japanese Cinema* 309-310).

¹⁷ This is similar to what Gray finds in Hollywood film posters. He argues that the dominance of the star(s) on the poster invokes the star as “an intertext of all their past roles and public performances” (53). The studios simultaneously borrow on and create star texts for promotion of their products.

¹⁸ In truth, we can even trace this earlier to star texts created for the Yoshiwara courtesans, sumo wrestlers, and traveling theatrical troupes in the Edo period.

CHAPTER IV

WHAT A GIRL WANTS: SEA CHANGE AND THE GIRL'S STYLE CINEMA

When I walked into the Shibuya Tsutaya video megaplex in the fall of 2008, I took a deep breath and steadied for impending aggravation. Although this was my first visit back to Tsutaya (and Japan) in four years, I still possessed vivid memories of prior navigations through the company's collections, seemingly organized by streamlined obfuscation. The Tsutaya Corporation is the largest and most recognized media distribution/rental complex in Japan.¹ The company's CEO claims that Tsutaya's remarkable success stems from an early investment in niche marketing and continual development of excessive genrefication tailored to target specific market groups (Muneaki). Superficially, this strategy catering to market fragmentation may seem little different than the methods employed by equivalent and contemporaneous American companies such as Blockbuster, Hollywood Video (and later Netflix), or even homegrown, but rapidly diminishing, independent Japanese rental shops. However, the traditional model employed and developed by these well-known businesses utilizes a somewhat standard method of product organization that situates specific titles by location under the shared physical space of a genre umbrella. In other words, films are grouped together in categories. For those of us who still remember video stores, the visual is an easy one. As an added bonus for the indecisive or inquisitive, spatial organization facilitates suggestive future rentals by proxy and the illusion of similar characteristics. For example, if the Action/Adventure film *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981) is your thing,

you might also want to pick up *Romancing the Stone* (1984) located just one shelf down (or now one “click” away). For the more indecisive browser, endcap displays offer more specialized or “personal” suggestions organized by ever-changing themes such as “employee’s picks” and/or seasonal favorites.

The Tsutaya Corporation amplified this arrangement to even further shape their customers into consumers by trend or style, rather than title or even traditional genre conventions, in such a way that significantly alters the whole process of “finding” a movie to take home for the night. In addition to the standard categories most likely familiar to Western audiences—such as the aforementioned “Action/Adventure” genre in addition to the “Drama,” “Comedy,” “Classics,” “Animation,” “Adult Films,” and “New Release” sections commonly found in most video stores—Tsutaya divides its collection into fractal categories like “Japanese Films,” “Western Films” (as in American or European), “Korean Wave Films,” “Pure Love,” “Love Love,” “Idol Love,” “Youth,” “Gangster,” “Revenge,” “Period (*Jidaigeki*),” “Suspense,” “Thriller,” “High Speed Car Chase,” “Mystery,” “Horror,” “Psychological Horror,” “Director,” “Actor,” “Actress,” “Award Winners,” “Top Ten,” “Last Week’s Top Ten,” “Still Top Twenty,” “Just Released on DVD,” and so on. Moreover, since real estate (shelf-space) is a precious commodity, a film can generally only be found in one of these locations. Therefore, it is equally likely that, and difficult to know if, *Gone in Sixty Seconds* (Sena, 2000) is listed under Action, High Speed Car Chase, Nicolas Cage, Angelina Jolie, Customer Favorites, or Just Released as a region 2 DVD. Probably not Customer Favorites.

So it is that the standard Tsutaya clientele, when entering the video rental store, finds themselves looking for a film not by title, but by highly specified, tailor-made type or trend. This is a significant shift in spectator selection from premeditation and particularity (or perhaps more familiar long-term browsing indecision) to marketing malleability based on the maintained illusion of an individual's desires conformed to brands in the guise of genres, now in the loosest sense of the word. This is niche marketing at its most absurd extreme and seeming efficacy. In this business plan the decision of what to watch now occurs *after* the consumer walks in the door, and is made based on carefully crafted, corporately marketed criteria that reinforces both extant niche market tastes and the illusion of individual preference: mass media disguised as extremely fragmented, spectator-specific matchmaking. Incidentally, this is not unlike Netflix's current organization and recommendation system sans the personalized rating apparatus (for example), but Tsutaya got there first and has been invested in creating and selling to a fragmented market for longer and, remarkably, in actual physical space. Moreover, Tsutaya's suggestions are not based on user-influence algorithms, but by carefully manufactured sales agendas.

As a person with often specific cinema needs, particularly in terms of research, for me the Tsutaya layout is invariably frustrating and time consuming. This is precisely because Tsutaya is not designed for a person like me, someone with a clear idea of what they want before they leave home. Hence my history of discontent. However, when I entered the Shibuya Tsutaya and rode the escalator to the fourth floor where the Japanese

films are housed, I was not annoyed at all. I was surprised. Tsutaya had invented a new genre: “Girl’s Style.”

The Shibuya Tsutaya media megaplex has ten floors: B2, used games and CDs bought and sold; B1, DVDs; 1F, newly released CDs and DVDs and recommendations including the Lifestyle Concierge; 2F, CDs; 3F, CD rentals; 4F, Japanese and “Asian” film rentals; 5F, Western and adult film rentals; 6F, books and magazines; 7F, *manga*; 8F, cafe and dining. Escalators to each floor deliver customers directly to the primary display shelves: new titles and acquisitions. These titles are grouped regardless of sub-genre and are organized by popularity ranking, an extremely effective marketing strategy in trend-obsessed Japan (e.g. ranKing ranQueen²). But this initial layout is unsurprising and standard for most any business. New products are placed at entrances to attract consumers and, of course, to sell new products at higher prices. However, in 2007-2008, the profitable DVD New Release aisle in Tsutaya stores shared space with, and in some smaller branches actually was actually replaced by, the company’s new trademarked cinema of attraction: “Girl’s Style” cinema. While the New Release section sports Tsutaya’s typical blue and yellow brand colors, the Girl’s Style shelves are decidedly pink (Figure 28). Pink banners, pink fonts, pink recommendation placards, pink advert cards, pink spines, and a pink slogan in a pink banner that reads, “Girl’s Style: a new self begins” (Girl’s Style: *Atarashii jibun, hajimaru*). Assaulted by so much pink, I wondered, “*What is the chick flick doing at the front door?*”

And just like that, Tsutaya’s marketing worked its magic on me, too. Whatever I went into the Shibuya branch for, I came out with the beginnings of a dissertation



Figure 28. Typical Girl's Style display case in a smaller Tsutaya branch store. Photo taken in Tsutaya, Kikuna-branch, Yokohama-city, Japan (Laird, 2008).

inspired by their new, shiny, pink brand. And one that targeted my very own demographic, no less.

Some Restrictions Apply. Please See Participating Theater for Details

[Gonda] associated specific classes of moviegoers with certain theaters. He recorded the jeering of laborers at the Fuji showcase for the swashbuckling idol Matsunosuke, and the dialogue yelled back and forth between film narrators and 'girl and boy tykes' in the audience, while elsewhere women (and their husbands) wept to melodrama alongside vocational school students and a scattering of soldiers, who clattered their swords. There was also the rapt response of students and intellectuals who applauded when the names of their foreign idols appeared on screen. And there were finer distinctions: the Imperial claimed students from Tokyo Imperial University, while the Cinema Club catered to Keiō University students, and so on. The places that showed foreign films and played a smattering of Mozart and Beethoven for their audiences had "high-class" customers.

Miriam Silverberg, summarizing "social scientist of culture"
Gonda Yasunosuke's study of the diverse Asakusa theater audiences of the 1920s, drawing a clear connection between film genre, theater milieu, and spectator demographic (180)

There were, of course, several historical steps between flagging female attendance at studio-contracted exhibition sites in the 1950s and 1960s and intensified marketing targeting female spectators at Japan's largest video retail/rental flagship store in the late 2000s. These largely involve developments in exhibition sites and practices outside the studio mainframe.

Since the 1920s, there were many alternative production and exhibition groups operating outside, or on the sidelines, of the studio system oligopoly. The success and longevity of these organizations ebbed and flowed, subject to historical conditions of government censure and oversight (both during the war years and during the American occupation), economic hardship, and internal relations. Many such production houses (e.g. Makino Production, Shinsei Eiga, Kinuto Puro, and Kindai Eigasha) were the result of disenfranchised directors rebelling against the conservative (to their mind) studios that fostered them. Greater in number were political groups who used film as, on the one hand, a mode of *avant garde* experimentation and, on the other, leftist (generally Marxist and/or Communist) propaganda (e.g. Purokino, Yagi Puro, Shinseiki Eigasha, Gendai Puro, Hokusei Eiga, labor unions, and university film clubs). These films drew audiences in factories, assembly halls, and small independent theaters; the reels circulated within private film circles. Some of the more narrative-based (and less politically volatile) films even shared screen space in studio theaters, particularly in the 50s when cinemas adopted a double-bill schedule (*nihontate*) and the block-booking studios couldn't keep up with schedule demands (Domenig). As discussed in Chapter II, Japan also has a long-term, healthy industry of documentary production, with its numerous sub-genres from regional

PR films to news reels, and these products occupied a rather privileged fluid space among exhibition venues, at times required by law to accompany narrative cinema screenings, often included in festivals and film circles, and sometimes sponsored by government financing or backed by regional, private organizations. Considering these various film networks, the popularity and/or success of cinema in Japan is not a cut-and-dry situation measured solely by the relative health of the country's studio system. In fact, just as the Big Five felt the pinch of a disappearing female audience in the 1950s and even more-so in the 1960s, alternative sites of production and exhibition came to the fore after a spate of out-competition from the studios in the post war bubble fueled by severe regulation of independents by both late-war and subsequent occupation governments. By far, the most important independent organization that emerged precisely in accord with the decline of the studios, that with the largest long-term impact on the history of post-studio cinema, was the Tokyo-based Art Theater Guild (ATG).

The ATG grew out of a collaboration between the Japanese Art Theater Movement (*Nihon āto shiatā undō no kai*), Kawakita Kashiko (vice-president of Tōwa Studio), and Mori Iwao (vice-president of Tōhō). The Japanese Art Theater Movement itself was something of a predecessor to the ATG. Dedicated to importing “non-commercial art films,” the organization actively sought cinema spaces for the exhibition of experimental foreign films that were overlooked by large studio import markets in favor of safer films that were considered profitable, commercial guarantees (Domenig). Similarly, Kawakita Kashiko, who later joined the Art Theater Movement and became one of its leaders, had collected European films before the war and spent time in Europe

after the war in regions with developing *avant garde* film circles. Mori Iwao, friend of Kawakita and her husband, likewise was equal parts a film collector and fan, as well as a screenwriter and producer.

Scholar Ushida Ayami argues that the Shinjuku Bunka Cinema, the flagship theater of the ATG, in particular aimed at generating a female audience (92). Ushida notes that the ATG opened its doors in the middle of the post-occupation boom, when women (now college graduates and company employees) with expendable incomes sought entertainment in the city—precisely the condition that casts the standard TV/movie competition outlined in Chapter III as reductive. Looking to cash in on a profitable demographic, and aware that women's numbers at studio theaters were dwindling, the Shinjuku Bunka Theater attempted to attract these spectator *rōnin*³ with a new paint job and revamped seating space (92). The interior of the theater was grey, a color scheme that Ushida suggests was intentionally selected to emphasize the clothing of its customers. While grey hardly sets off the muted tones of menswear, she reasons, it does compliment and accentuate, rather than clash with, the styles of fashionable women. Likewise, the interior was refurbished with 400 seats (down from a previous 600), designed to give ample room before, behind, and to either side for patrons. Rather than simple comfort or a pretense of luxury, Ushida suggests that the new seats also reduced instances of sexual harassment and molestation (*chikan*)—an increasing problem at studio movie theaters that resulted in women hesitating to attend films alone and indeed characterizing the moviegoing experience as dangerous. In contrast to the studio theaters, the Shinjuku Bunka Cinema branded itself early on as fashionable and safe, as a space

accommodating women. While Ushida's claims do seem somewhat speculative (she doesn't, for example, provide any particular cited evidence that *chikan* and fashion were primary concerns for the redesign committee, and indeed the suggestion may raise a few eyebrows) she does provide evidence regarding the theater's attention to its female clientele via surveys. Ushida compares numbers from polls conducted by *Kinema Junpō* and by the Shinjuku Bunka Cinema in 1965. Whereas the film journal collected responses from men and women in a ratio of 14 to one, the theater's survey reported a ratio of three to one indicating, as Ushida argues, that either more women were intentionally questioned by the theater than the journal (supporting her claim that the theater staff was sensitive to its female clientele), or more women were available for questioning (supporting her claim that more women attended this independent mini-theater than those owned and operated by the majors) or, I might add on her behalf, both (93).

The ATG flagship theater tailored its programs as distinct alternatives to studio cinema: the primary goal of the guild was to showcase Western films (largely European) that were otherwise difficult to access in Japan. It is safe to read this selectivity as both the image of rarity, which appeals to aesthetics of refined taste, and a rejection of dominant domestic systems that invested in "safe" films perceived to bring in box office guarantees. First and foremost, the Shinjuku Bunka Cinema branded itself as a place for "art films" (*geijyutsu eiga*)—a far cry from Shōchiku's mass produced melodramas, Tōhō's monster films, Nikkatsu's action flicks, and the imported Hollywood fare the studios used to cushion their programs. Although the theater, as the base for the ATG,

eventually incorporated and then produced independent domestic features (notably those rejected by the major studios), the emphasis of foreign films appealed to female audiences who favored them over Japanese films. Another survey from the theater itself supports this supposition. Between July and August of 1969, a survey of 1674 attendees (299 women and 1375 men) showed that female audiences overwhelmingly preferred foreign imports. Although the percentage of women in attendance had dropped rather dramatically from the earlier survey in 1965 to just 11 percent, their responses favored foreign directors (notably the French New Wave auteurs) over domestic filmmakers (Anon. “Kankyaku Chōsa” 29).

Although the Art Theater Guild continued to act as a production and distribution hub for many independent filmmakers on into the 1980s, particularly for Roman Porno directors looking for opportunities outside the studio exploitation market, the group closed the Shinjuku Bunka Theater in 1975. By this time, the ATG had already lost most of their associated theaters and the flagship cinema was simply not generating enough revenue to continue operation (Domenig). Tōhō (who had partially financed the establishment of the ATG through its vice president Mori Iwao) took over the theater, turning it into a pink cinema house that same year.

Pink theaters, exhibition venues for *pinku eiga*, were the bread and butter lining the slim-picking pantries of Japan’s depressed studio cinema industry. Starting in the 1960s (Kawamoto), these theaters (many of them chains) specialized in pinku eiga programs, films that evolved from the earlier *eroduction* cinema (a portmanteau derived from “erotic productions”) of the post-Occupation period that were used to cushion

empty program slots caused by diminishing studio productions. They were named for the “rosy flush of sensuality that the works strove to provoke” (Sharp *Behind the Pink Curtain* 53). Not to be confused with studio branded Roman Porno found in mainstream commercial cinema houses, pinku eiga were soft core independent productions filmed on location “guerrilla-style” (meaning without permits) (55), loosely categorized (eventually) by a few standard genre conventions: a one-hour running time, routinized timing of sex scenes, and exhibition in triple-bill programming (53). These skimpy requirements, paired with low expectations among audiences and ergo low bars for criticism or acclaim, resulted in something of a blank canvas for young directors who, so long as they followed the bare-bones recipe, enjoyed the liberty of filmic experimentation and expression backed by a steady, guaranteed audience with minimal demands. As is well known, many of Japan’s celebrated (male) directors of the 1990s—the decade of the industry’s revival—got their start in the forgiving and pliable field of *pinku eiga* (e.g. Kurosawa Kiyoshi and Suo Masayuki).

Tōhō reopened Shinjuku Bunka Theater with the French import *Emmanuelle* (Jaeckin), a soft-core film successful worldwide with female audiences that, in the case of Japan, combined eroticism with exoticism (a recurring, winning combination) to draw domestic women to the theater. And it did just that. Women came to the theater in large numbers to watch the story of French protagonist *Emmanuelle* and her various love affairs with both men and women in search for sexual liberation. If we recall the surveyed preferences of female audiences in the mid-1960s as discussed in Chapter III, although the film is an erotic film (the genre women purportedly disliked the most) the

film certainly does reflect the contemporaneous social atmosphere (preferences 5 and 3) of young women in post-war, post-Occupation Japan insofar as it is an exploration into “modern” deconstructions of female-centric sexuality and emotion (preference 1) heavily replete with foreign objects and ideas (preference 2). While not without some gender trouble (e.g. an arranged rape scene) operating within the filmic constraints of “male-centred erotic cinema” (Phillips 133) (particularly since the sexual “liberation” of the protagonist is orchestrated and imagined by the male character (her husband) and male artists (the director and the crew)) the film nevertheless depicts “a new kind of female figure...curious about sex and, by her own admission, a woman who enjoys sex as much as any man...beyond what might be termed a permissive norm” (Harris). The success of the film even rose to pop culture status among women as a neologism: the verb “*emanieru suru*” (lit. “to do *Emmanuelle*”) meant “to have a casual and extravagant love affair” (Borggreen 198).

And yet, according to Ushida, the success of *Emmanuelle* itself was ironically the alienating force that turned women away from the Shinjuku Bunka Theater after the film finished its run (93). The film was termed “art porn” (*geijyutsu poruno*) by its very own supporters and the theater was characterized as a pornography house via transferred guilt by association. While the film *Emmanuelle* was considered a film for women and an celebrated exemplar of accessible erotica, the space of exhibition, the theater, fell under the well-established category of pornography: a social space for men. This distinction is key to understanding the habits of female audiences in Japanese theaters, the Shinjuku Bunka just one example. It is not, as one may incorrectly assume, necessarily that the

sexual content of the films was or is a deal breaker for female consumers *per se*,⁴ but, as I argued in Chapter III, rather it is the venue itself and the orchestration of male filmic gaze (both by creator and spectator) that was undesirable. According to female film critic

Ishihara Ikuko:

Some brave women did go to X-rated theatres [sic], with either a simple interest in them ‘as films’, [sic] or a progressive philosophy that sex and desire should be ‘equally open to women’. [sic] Unfortunately they were molested by male viewers and felt deeply hurt. They decided not to go back, ever again.

Furthermore; stories, camera angles, and positions in sex sequences all catered to satisfying men’s lustful desire, while disappointing female viewers. (Ishihara)

Pinku theaters were, though quite successful ventures from the 60s to the 80s, “men-only environments” (Sharp *Behind the Pink Curtain* 29) and the films themselves were “made with the intention of pandering to the desires of their [specifically] male audiences” (28).

Similarly, although the mainstream commercial theaters, and in particular Nikkatsu-owned cinemas, were “quite keen to attract couples and female viewers” (and we know this desire was not actualized) it was “never possible with the rowdy men-only pink theaters” (129).

While the 1960s saw a rise in independent pinku theaters and a general shift to Roman Porno cinemas associated with the majors (although there were still mainstream commercial Roadshow theaters screening general interest hits and reliable Hollywood imports), by the 1970s the number of screens in Japan in general fell to well below half the number of screens enjoyed during the post-war Second Golden Age (see Figure 29). However, there were two types of theaters that emerged to significance during these low times: the *meigaza* and the *mini-theaters*.

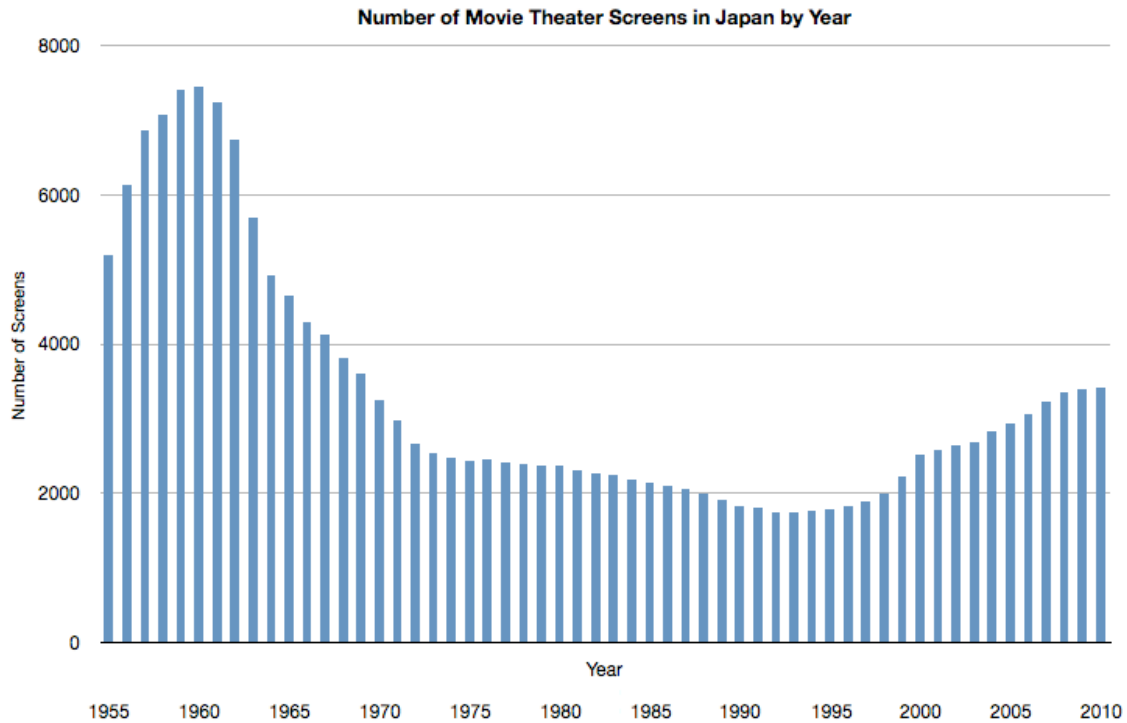


Figure 29. Number of cinema screens in Japan by year from 1955 to 2010. Screens began to rapidly decrease in the mid-1960s in accordance with the sharp decrease of female audiences from movie theaters. Screens do not rise again until the late 1990s, after the proliferation of cinema complexes and a domestic revival within the cinema industry. Data from UNIJAPAN (UNIJAPAN “Sukurī sū”) and the Motion Picture Producers Association of Japan (MPPA).

The first meigaza was actually established in 1953 (Itakura). Located in the Tokyo’s Ginza district, the Namiki-za opened under the direction of Tōhō producer Fujimoto Sanezumi. The concept behind the cinema was to create programs that showcased two-to-three-year-old Japanese films that had been highly praised (or at least been greatly discussed) and were considered works of notable artistic merit. The cinema had a mere one-hundred seats and operated under the slightly punny (homophonic) slogan *saishō no gekijō, saikō no funiki* (“the smallest theater, the greatest atmosphere”) (239). While it was not the intention of the Namiki-za to show older films, particularly

films from before or during the war, as the idea of the meigaza, the “masterpiece theater,” spread beyond the small, atmosphere walls of Fujimoto’s theater (see Figure 30). The term, as a particular type of venue, took on the associated meaning of “classic” cinema. By the 1970s, when high-quality commercial new releases were few and far between, the concept of the meigaza—a theater specializing in the revival of older, already extant and therefore cheaper to come by films—was well suited to the economic and industrial reality of a dying domestic cinema. In contrast to the major chains, for a brief while the meigaza flourished.

In addition to revival showcases for “classic” films, the meigaza served as something like third-run theaters during the first half of the 1970s. After a major commercial film (domestic or imported) ran through its Roadshow circuit with the first-run release theaters, the reels found their way to the the second-run theaters and were often paired with B-movies as double features (*nihontate*) (Tazawa 96). Thereafter, the reels were not limited to strict, scheduled runs and were available for wider distribution. However, in addition to off-Roadshow films, meigaza, as independent operations, were amenable to the interests of their congregating community steerheaded by vested management. As such, the meigaza were as varied as they were many. In addition to “classic” and “recent” Japanese studio releases and Hollywood imports, the meigaza also incorporated European films, Roman Poruno, and independent films including works by emergent artists Oshima, Imamura, and Yoshida Kiju (Y. Miyazaki 54). With eclectic variety, the programs of the meigaza reflected the often specialized interests of their audiences. Film writer Tazawa Ryūji thought of meigaza as small communities of like-

minded fans (Tazawa). Theaters ran double and triple bill features, programs that showcased particular directors, stars, and motifs. Pamphlets sold at showings often featured essays written by enthusiastic regulars, sometimes as serials. Well-connected managers arranged events with live appearances by filmmakers and actors, arrangements akin to a live “talk show” held before screenings (10). These unique, tailored opportunities, Tazawa reflects, would never have been possible at the second-run or first-release theaters (10).

Popping up in second or third story office buildings or nestled underground, these small theaters reflected the interests of their immediate community and as such were often seen as communities themselves: fan networks and social microcosms. Illustrator and film writer Miyazaki Yūji remembers the theaters as being particularly popular with young people (probably teens, judging by other accounts) in the Tokyo districts of Shinjuku and Shibuya (Miyazaki). College students crowded the small spaces of theaters in Suidobashi and, of course, the Waseda Shōchiku theater near Waseda University (opened in 1975). Salarymen playing hooky from work were attracted to the action films running in small cinemas in Shinjuku and Ikebukuro. And the meigaza weren’t just limited to pockets of urban Tokyo; independent theaters emerged in neighboring Kanagawa and Chiba prefectures, down in the Kansai region including the heavyweight cinema scenes of Kyoto and Osaka, and throughout Japan in cities large and small.

And yet, despite the claims to diversity, there was something that the meigaza had concretely in common: they were cheap. While the majors charged between 500 and 600



Figure 30. Images of prominent *meigaza*. From left to right, top to bottom: interior of the cinema at the Waseda Shōchiku theater; Waseda Shōchiku interior lobby; Asakusa Meigaza cinema interior; Asakusa Meigaza lobby (Ōya “Asakusa Meigaza”).

yen for a first-release showing, the *meigaza* programs cost only between 150 and 200 yen. Unsurprisingly, the venues themselves were also cheap and often downright seedy. Not at all disparaging, Tazawa fondly remembers the *meigaza* of his youth as barely maintained with poor equipment and “comfortably cramped” seating (Tazawa 10). Miyazaki recalls crowded student scenes (sometimes such that the doors didn’t close) in which the only empty seats were broken chairs. Conversely, and less fondly, he also remembers desolate rooms sparsely inhabited by old timers in which “even men would get molested” (Y. Miyazaki 55). Both authors recall prevalent unsavory odors.

In fact, while the *meigaza* seem to hold a special place in the nostalgic reveries of contemporary well-seasoned film aficionados and nonfiction essayists (e.g. Anai; Takase;

Kawahara), nearly all accounts include rather visceral and, seemingly unintentional, unpleasant descriptions of the moviegoing experience; descriptions crafted with such nostalgic longing that it is clear that the rundown squalor of the theater is, for these silver gentlemen waxing poetic about the glory days of their teen and college years, quintessential to both their youth and the very idea of a film itself. Miyazaki Yūji opines:

I still feel that a movie watched on video isn't a movie. Watching a movie in a movie theater is...it starts with taking a train to the movie theater, buying a ticket and receiving your half of it, waiting in the lobby until the film begins, sitting next to a stranger, getting irritated by the sound of chatter or food, the worst is when you can smell socks, the projection light is too bright, you realize the image quality isn't good, etc. etc., all of that is the real pleasure of a film I think. (Y. Miyazaki 55)

For Miyazaki and others, a film is only a film if it is accompanied by the sensory experience of the meigaza. And yet, it is quite clear that the atmosphere of the meigaza appealed to a rather specific clientele, despite the diversity of locale and programming. Namely, the theaters attracted a group low on money and undiscerning about environmental quality and comfort: teens, college students, and napping salarymen. Although there were meigaza that targeted an adult female clientele (e.g. the Miyuki-za in Tokyo's Ginza district (Tazawa 105) the majority of "masterpiece theaters" were not frequented by, for example, post-graduate O.L.s or young housewives.

Despite a certain popularity, by the end of the decade, the meigaza were in trouble. In the latter half of the 70s (although this happened as early as 1974 with some companies such as Warner and Kadokawa (Okada 174)), film distribution procedures changed, crippling the meigaza's supply chain. Whereas new films used to distribute in a top-down trickle from first-release Roadshow theaters to second-runs, third-runs, and

then to the meigaza, distributors switched to a newly created system, the *issei kakudai rōdshō hōshiki*: an all-inclusive package system of distribution and advertisement (Okada 173). Promos and blurbs for films ran on television, in newspapers, and in magazines simultaneously while Roadshow theaters released the films all together as a single event supported by a nation-wide campaign (as opposed to traveling reels). The hype was effective in drawing those audiences that still went to theaters in a single roundup, turning out greater numbers for studio-backed first release Roadshow theaters, but leaving little remaining ticket sales for second and third run theaters, let alone the meigaza, the little guy catering to little audiences at the bottom of the moviegoing food chain. Moreover, toward the beginning of the 1980s, the meigaza suffered a dire blow from the release of cheap home VCR systems. With films released to video shortly after their second and third runs, video stores enabled spectators the same inexpensive alternative the meigaza provided, but with a greater selection to be watched in the comfort (and quite possibly greater cleanliness) of one's own home. The 1980s saw the rapid decline and near extinction of the meigaza.⁵

In contrast to these hubs of indiscriminate young people and hooky-playing *ojichan*,⁶ another small-market theatrical venue arose in the 1970s and, unlike the meigaza, they did quite well throughout the 80s boom of home entertainment systems. By the end of the 1970s, moviegoing practices and patterns operated within mini-markets: niche markets that supported and shaped disparate industrial practices (and disparate communities of moviegoers) with direct links between production, exhibition, and consumption. In other words, a fragmentation and specialization of production and

exhibition techniques that, in a sense, constituted a holistic commercial cinema comprised of both the studio industry and these independent ventures. Moreover, exhibition houses that also doubled as production studios and distribution centers mirrored, perhaps ironically, the business practices of the vertically integrated majors—as in the case of the ATG, some pinku theaters, and the larger meigaza. And yet it would be incorrect to think of these mini-markets as true fragments operating independently or in real friction with the studios. Since these markets sometimes overlapped (for example studio productions and Hollywood imports help to fill programs at the meigaza and independent works, pinku eiga and otherwise, supplemented gaps at studio-owned first release theaters) and they certainly developed within direct contact and context of one another since none would exist without profit declines and genre shifts in mainstream commercial cinema, we might re-conceptualize the Japanese film industry as not an industrial dichotomy of studio cinema versus independent filmmaking, but rather as a network of symbiotic miniature markets and cinema cultures.

It is in this spirit of an established mini-market culture that the “mini-theaters” (*mini shiatā*) rose to popularity. The first mini-theater, the venue that set the conceptual framework, business structure, and programming practice for the 1980s “mini-theater boom,” was the Iwanami Hall (see Figure 31). Its manager, Japan’s first female theater manager and thwarted filmmaker hopeful, Takano Etsuko (see Chapter II).



Figure 31. Left: the interior of the Iwanami Hall’s two-hundred-seat mini theater (“Iwanami Hall nitsuite”). Right: exterior of the Iwanami Hall building (“Iwanami Hall”).

We know from Takano’s biographical account of frustrated attempts to break into the studio system (due to stringent gender politics) that in 1968 she took a position at the newly opened Iwanami Hall—a multipurpose culture center designed to feature film lectures, music concerts and appreciation clubs, classical literature reading series, and educational lectures. Although financially backed by the Iwanami publishing group (and the Iwanami family into which she had married) the hall was an independent operation run under Takano as general manager. Although the venue was used for a variety of community interests, from the beginning the center was structured around a particular interest in film exhibition and education. Thirty-minute lectures on topics such as “Postwar Japanese Film History,” “Concepts in Japanese Film,” and “Japanese Literary History Through Film” were arranged once a fortnight, accompanied by a thematically appropriate film screening (Iwanami). They organized series around film adaptations of classical Japanese literature as well as the so-called “Outsider Cinema”—the action oriented yakuza films. According to Takano’s niece Iwanami Ritsuko, who joined Iwanami Hall as manager in 1978, these films that originally targeted a male audience,

when paired with a scholarly lecture in the comfort of the center, were able to somehow draw in female audiences that had stopped attending such genre-pics in the mainstream commercial theaters. What the Iwanami Hall managed to create, with its plush seats, ample yet limited seating, organized and regulated ticket sales (there was no cramped standing room only with doors that can't shut at Iwanami Hall), and highly organized screenings paired with professional talks, was a rather "high brow" environment of film education and formal appreciation that seemed to cater particularly well to the interests of an educated, adult female clientele. Moreover, the center also screened foreign European films occasionally (meaning the U.K., Italy, Germany, France, Russia, etc.), also paired with lecture content, as well as series on domestic classics that were screened with in-house developed English subtitles (a rarity to be sure) that attracted a cosmopolitan, international clientele.

In 1974, with the help of fellow female film enthusiast Kawakita Kashiko (the very same Kawakita Kashiko who cofounded the ATG as both a financial contributor as well as a content contributor through the donation of European reels she had collected during her postwar travels among *avant garde* circles), Takano founded an exhibition program: Ekipu do Shinema (from the French *équipe de cinéma*, meaning "friends of cinema"). Whereas the center had generally emphasized domestic cinema education and appreciation (similar to the domestic focus featured at the contemporaneously running *meigaza* although in decidedly different program packaging) Ekipu do Shinema specialized in specifically foreign imports. The program, seating merely 232 people

within Iwanami Hall's theater, opened with a triple-bill program of Satyajit Ray's Apu trilogy *Pather Panchali* (1955), *Aparajito* (1956), and *Apur Sansar* (1959).

From its opening, the Ekipu do Shinema has maintained the following four goals (and is still in operation today as of 2012): (1) the exhibition of films rarely shown in Japan (particularly from the non-European non-American global areas of Asia, Africa, and South America, or what we now call Third World Cinema) *as well as the proactive support of female filmmakers*; (2) the exhibition of European or American (U.S.) films that were not picked up by major distribution companies; (3) exhibition of classic films that were, for whatever reason, not screened in Japan or experienced a truncated run; (4) the assisted distribution of classic Japanese films to the rest of the world ("Iwanami Hall Nitsuite"). As Takano continued to act as the general manager of Iwanami Hall and the director of Ekipu do Shinema, she was necessarily active in world cinema networks, particularly with international film festivals and distribution agencies. Through these connections, Takano associated with other prominent women working in film, as well as noted feminists. She cites interactions with both Simon de Bevoir and Agnes Varda as powerful influences who fostered her interest in supporting female film directors and turning her attention to the continued paucity of women filmmakers in Japan (Takano). Under Takano, Iwanami Hall invested in film production as well exhibition, releasing a small number of titles a year. By 1983, four out of seven of the films financed and distributed expressly through Ekipu do Shinema were made by women. In 1985, she directed and organized the first Tokyo International Women's Film Festival, held in collaboration with the Tokyo International Film Festival, and continues to run the event

annually. It is Japan's largest women's film festival that regularly features highly competitive, internationally acclaimed female filmmakers.

Never profitable enough to expand into a chain of theaters or a large production studio (and this was quite distinctly never the goal) Iwanami Hall and the Ekipu do Shinema has been in business since opening, regardless of VCR sales and video store markets, with regular programming and considerable recognition. Its recipe for success was a clean and fashionable environment, regulated ticket sales, and a solid showcase of international films selected on the basis of what the (remember largely all female) staff found “moving” (*kandōshita sakuhin*) (Iwanami). All the programs were and are advertised with materials crafted in-house including posters, fliers, programs and even the subtitles. As an independent venture managing its own distribution and exhibition (and even production) for a particular, select audience, the Iwanami Hall with its Ekipu do Shinema programming was termed a “mini-theater,” quite perfectly suited for a moviegoing mini-market culture. Others followed in its footsteps.

In 1981, the Cinema Square Tōkyū theater opened in Tokyo's Shinjuku district. Modeled after the operations and physical layout at Iwanami Hall, the new mini-theater managed its own distribution and exhibition, self-advertised as cheaply and effectively as possible, focused on good customer service, featured modernized technology, enforced a fixed-capacity with theater entrance in shifts that prohibited a standing audience, and featured a program of international films (Okada 177). The theater successfully crafted a reputation of excellence, both in environment and content, and secured a reliable clientele. Other theaters popped up around Tokyo and throughout the four major islands

of Japan (even Okinawa) in its likeness. Throughout the 80s, mini theaters drew audiences: Shine Amūzu, Shinekuinto, Eurospace, Shante Shine 1 • 2, CineSwitch Ginza, Cinema Rise Shibuya, Nu Cinema Paradaisu, and Cinema Argo, to name a few. In direct “antithesis” to the countrywide Roadshow tours of the commercial major studios, they called their runs “Art House Roadshows,” even though the films only booked solo stays at individual theaters (176). Thanks to their meticulous decor, attentive programming, and careful management, the mini-theaters were considered “fashionable movie theaters” (*osharena eigakan*) and were a hit with that long-time missing O.L. demographic (179): college educated, upwardly mobile, adult women with paychecks to burn, also known as Office Ladies (see Figure 32).

Film critic Ōtaka Hirō argued that the mini theaters revived the theater business by bringing back customers, providing them with niche interest specialization, and igniting a relationship between spectatorship and an informed interest or study of film (what we might today call active viewing practices) (Ōtaka). They did this largely by targeting women. For example, the Paradaisu Shinema in Osaka specifically sought a female audience when designing the layout of the theater (Haruoka). The interior, the lobby, and the restrooms were all built with a particular eye toward cleanliness. The lobby included both a concessions counter and a bar, serving a (perhaps now slightly unlikely) cosmopolitan combination of hot dogs and cocktails (among other things). Each seat sported its own cup holder and ticket prices included discounts on food and beverages. Clearly the Paradaisu Shinema offered a full service boutique experience wrapped in the verisimilitude of luxury, only available at a single, participating location.



Figure 32. Images of other prominent mini theaters. From left to right, top to bottom: Eurospace interior cinema 1 (Shibano); Eurospace lobby (Shibano); Cine Saison lobby (Ôya "Cine Saison Shibuya"); Cine Saison cinema interior (Ôya "Cine Saison Shibuya"); Image Forum exterior (Kame); Image Forum lobby (Ôya "Image Forum ").

In reviving the theater scene and finally bringing female audiences back to the movies, the landscape of moviegoing changed in Japan's metropolitan centers. And it all happened from the late 1970s through to the 1990s, despite the high season for the video market that so disastrously wiped out the meigaza, worried the remaining majors (for the second time with regards to home entertainment), and foreshadowed the pinku theater sunset.

In the 80s, all at once something changed. Women's advancements in society progressed, and there was an increase in the fashionable mini theaters that women would go to even alone. Film culture was gradually feminized. There weren't yakuza films or pornos anymore. The figures of Outcast Cinema disappeared one by one...the 1980s feminization era. (Kawamoto, 53)

Beginning with the boom of the mini theaters, their consciously constructed atmospheres of luxury and fashion, their internationally fixated programs featuring contemporary social issues replete with "foreign objects and ideas," and their small market (what grew into a female market) mindset, *film culture was gradually feminized*.

Let's Go Shopping: The Feminization of Film Exhibition

Just about a five-minute walk from the Ebisu train station (in Tokyo), less if you take the moving walkway in the pedestrian Skywalk, is Ebisu Garden Place: a planned urban community somewhat brimming with optimistic futurism, or at least a case of overindulgent high-concept city planning. The Ebisu area, just one stop southeast from Shibuya on the Yamamoto Line, is named after the beer that was once brewed there. The home of the Ebisu brewery (owned by Sapporo), the area was an industrial zone; in fact the local train station was built to transport Yebisu beer along its distribution line. In

1998, however, as nearby Shibuya transformed into an official municipal ward, residential and commercial zones spilled beyond its borders, pushing factories and industrial sites ever farther to Tokyo's outskirts. Ebisu's workshops and plants closed down in the still ongoing expansive stride of conurbation. In 1991, the area began a massive, planned metamorphosis in both physical reality and public perception. Three years later, in 1994, it emerged from its cocoon, open to consumers as the Ebisu Garden Place (see Figures 33-35).

The prominent skyscrapers, housing both office spaces and residential units, are arranged around the concept of a mini-urban, self-contained, life-style community—what is called a Corporate Urban Center. Projects initiated by large-land development corporations, Corporate Urban Centers create an urban center through the assemblage of residential and office spaces integrated with entertainment and public spaces, all with the main focus of urban amusement (Caballero). Within the carefully sculpted urban space of the Ebisu Garden Place are commerce lots (nearly all chain installations that pose as boutique businesses), restaurants, entertainment venues, office spaces, rental apartments, and purchasable condos. Generally speaking, Ebisu Garden Place is not dissimilar from generic suburban planning: residential communities that construct an illusory sense of autonomy by having all the benefits of an urban space (business, entertainment, and sustenance) in an enclosed, artificially constructed zone, while maintaining a commutable distance to an already extant metropolitan center. More specific to the Ebisu Garden Place is its high-concept design based on the unification of natural elements—water and greenery—realized in its artificially constructed “natural spaces” such as the garden beds,



Figure 33. The Ebisu Garden Place buildings, commercial and residential skyscrapers surrounded by a periphery of greenery, as seen from the Tokyo Tower across town. Photo from the Wikipedia Commons project (Commons).

the public square (Garden Place Hiroba), and the pedestrian walkways. These are all designed to reflect manifestations of the two natural elements. Additionally, there are two distinct features worth considering and relevant to the study at hand: (1) While selling itself as an all-inclusive life style community space, the Ebisu Garden Place also openly embraces and encourages tourist visitation through a permeable boundary of “open” gated checkpoints;⁷ (2) The Ebisu Garden Place caters and markets to a very particular clientele: women.

While offering its residents the potential for business, leisure, and respite all within a few city blocks, the area is also quite decidedly a tourist destination, welcoming day visitors and overnight guests (the Westin operates a hotel on grounds). Winning several awards for being an exemplary urban development center, as well as a place among Japan’s one-hundred national scenic urban spaces, Ebisu Garden Place was a model for other subsequent residential communities also parading as tourist attractions



Figure 34. Ebisu Garden Place area map from the official website("Yebisu Garden Place"). A: Entrance Pavillion. B: Glass Square, a shopping building containing 10 restaurants and 15 shops (as of 2011) . C: Beer Station, a beer restaurant featuring German cuisine. D: St. Germain, a French style patisserie. E: Ebisu Mitsukoshi Building including the Mitsukoshi Department Store. F: Ebisu Garden Terrace apartments and formerly the Ebisu Garden Cinema (now K Theater Tokyo). G: Sapporo building. H: Sapporo Beer Musuem. I: Joël Robuchon resturant, fine dining. J: The Garden Hall and the Garden Room. K, L, & M: Yebisu Garden Place Tower, office spaces, restaurants, and cafes. N: The Westin Hotel. O: Tsutaya. P: City Wall. Q: Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography.

such as Roppongi Hills (nearby to the east) and Minatomirai's Queen's Square down in neighboring Yokohama City. As such, the Ebisu Garden Place is designed with what Roman Cybriwsky calls a theme park "playful design," modeled after the commercial success and spatial aesthetics of the Disney parks.

Taking a cue from the success of theme parks such as Disneyland, today's urban gathering places [in New York and Tokyo] are often designed to figuratively transport users to distant places or different times. Thus, in Tokyo, Yebisu [sic] Garden Place has at its center a replica of a Louis XV chateau and a miniature version of a Versailles courtyard, and provides visitors with a chance to pose for photographs as if they were truly in France. (228)

In fact, most of the aesthetics of the Ebisu Garden Place conjure a decidedly faux-French atmosphere, from the *rococo chateau* and courtyard at the heart of its plaza, to the art deco modernism of its foundational structures (including the arched pavilion and the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography), to the 250 electric bulb Baccarat chandelier fixed display, to the prominent French *patisserie* at the entrance. While the obvious postmodern conflation of time (18th century rococo, 1920s art deco, and an 18th century inspired chandelier repro fitted with electricity) and space (Tokyo and Paris) is interesting in and of itself, what is more compelling here is the pairing of foreign exoticism posing as daily lifestyle with leisure consumerism all targeting not just any consumers, but an adult female demographic.

Writes one travel reviewer on TripAdvisor.com:

In Ebisu, there's the station building etc., but I like that there are so many cute street shops. For first timers if you walk from the Garden Place [station] exit to Garden Place, you can find lots of cute shops. Also, there are stylish cafes and such fun for girls (*onna no ko*), and when it becomes night the "Light Up" has started so you can eat dinner as a couple while watching the night view. (dnbdx959)

While we don't know the gender of site user "dnbdx959" (and it hardly matters) the review accurately reflects the general atmosphere of Ebisu Garden Place: a fashionable and feminine location popular with women. Indeed, of the 146 store lots in the center, 43 are for women's apparel, two are men's clothiers, eight cater to both (including Banana Republic, Tommy Hilfager, and Timberland), ten specialize in goods for babies and small children, 21 feature handbags and accessories, 20 sell beauty and cosmetic items, and 33 are speciality stores for sweets, delicacies, import foods, and alcohol. There is only one convenience store, one bookstore, a museum shop, and, of course, a Tsutaya (the multimedia culture convenience club). For the most part, Ebisu Garden Place is a commercial center for women consumers; you'll most likely see a man there because he's on a date or is looking for one.

What does this have to do with cinema? As an entertainment and leisure center incorporated into residential space, other than museums (and shopping as entertainment), the main amusement fixture of the Ebisu Garden Place was its mini-theater, the Ebisu Garden Cinema (1994-2011) (see Figure 36). Like the Iwanami Hall, the Ebisu Garden Cinema was owned by, or rather leased the space from, a larger company. In the case of Iwanami Hall it was a publishing group; with Ebisu Garden Cinema, it was the small film distribution company Nihon Herald Eiga. Fully incorporated into the design aesthetic and commercial paradigm of the larger architectural body that housed it, the theater's interiors integrated the center's design concept of balanced harmony between water and greenery (Ôya "Ebisu Garden Cinema"). Inside, white, clean walls met with wood paneling. Large windows in the lobby let in natural light that both afforded waiting

customers with a view onto the center's structured green spaces as well as cast the interior lobby with the changing seasonal light in order to create a sense of the outdoors inside. The overall color palette expressed cool tones balanced with neutral shades and even the plush seats in the screening halls balanced water and greenery: the chairs in cinema 1 were blue and the chairs in cinema 2 were green. Slightly larger than the mini-theaters of the 80s, the cinema had two screens (cinema 1 and cinema 2), both dedicated to what the theater called "Hollywood Indies." This is something of an oxymoron, but not surprising considering that the theater itself was something of an oxymoron.

To be fair, many of the mini-theaters are. While they have independent and perhaps autonomous management responsible for the programming, the theaters themselves are, often, owned by larger corporations. Nihon Herald Eiga joined with Kadokawa Pictures (a substantial production and distribution studio) in 2007 and became Kadokawa Cineplex, a company that ran not just the Ebisu Garden Cinema in Tokyo, but also the Umeda Garden Cinema mini-theater in Osaka, the Kadokawa Cinema Yurakucho mini theater in Tokyo, and the Kadokawa Cinema Shinjuku mini-theater also in Tokyo. Iwanami Hall, of course, was owned by Iwanami Publishers. Cinema Square Tōkyū (the second mini-theater that opened after Iwanami) is owned by Tōkyū Cinemas (which in turn is owned by Tōkyū Recreation Co, Ltd., a large corporation specializing in real estate, cinemas, bowling alleys, hotels, fitness clubs, restaurants, and the aforementioned RanKing RanQueen). The famous Jimbocho mini-theater/meigaza in Tokyo is owned by Shogakukan Publishers. The Cine Quinto mini theater in Tokyo is owned by Parco Co., Ltd. While some mini theaters genuinely operate as entirely self-structured, autonomous

companies—Eurosace and Cinema Rise are exemplars here—the verisimilitude of independence is far more important to the concept of the mini-theater than an economic

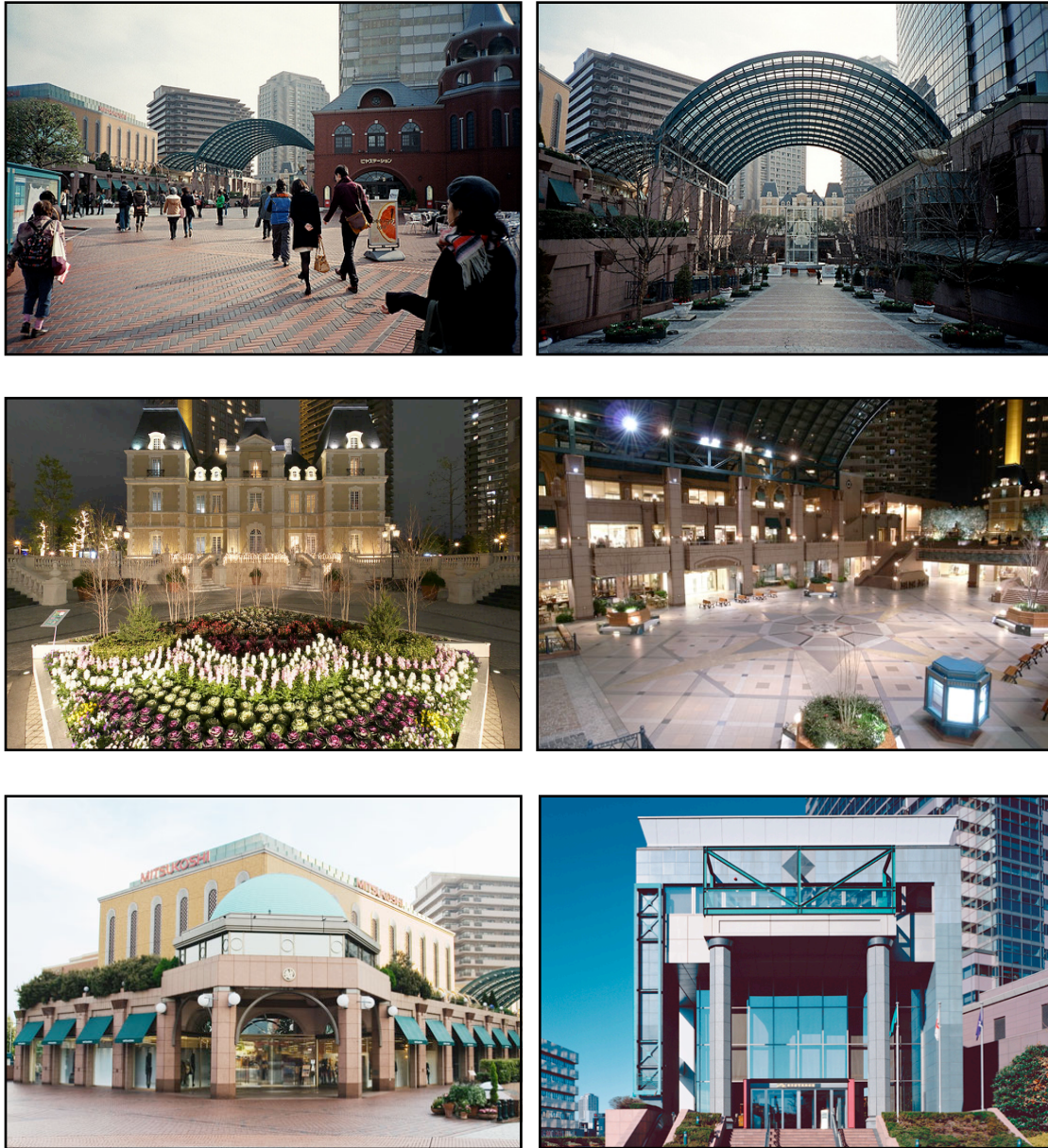


Figure 35. Photographs of the Ebisu Garden Place. From left to right, top to bottom: the Garden Place Hiroba public plaza (Zooka); the central promenade (Zooka); Chateau restaurant building and plaza (Shizuya); inside the central promenade("Yebisu Garden Place"); the Mitsukoshi department store and building("Yebisu Garden Place"); the Tokyo Metropolitan Photography Museum("Yebisu Garden Place").

reality. This image is constructed through an intentional smallness of space (only one or two screens limited to between 100 and 250 seats each), fashionable and trendy interior decor that suggests an upperclass value (despite or even to disguise the sale of mass media), and the illusion of rarity that crafts high quality (accomplished via short runs, limited seating, and programming heavily advertised as “hard to find”). Along these guidelines, the Ebisu Place Cinema is the perfect embodiment of the mini-theater and can sell the idea of the “Hollywood Indies” via its own stylized window dressing.

Hollywood Indies are, manager Takahashi Wataru explains, “Films rejected by the Hollywood majors...American movies you can only see here” (Ôya "Ebisu Garden Cinema"). Films like Robert Altman’s *Short Cuts* (1993, estimated \$12,000,000 budget), Woody Allen’s oeuvre, Stephen Frears’ *High Fidelity* (2000, estimated \$20,000,000 budget), Tim Robbins’ *Dead Man Walking* (1995, estimated \$11,000,000 budget), and James Mangold’s *Girl, Interrupted* (1999, estimated \$40,000,000 budget). While there’s really clearly nothing “indie” about the films on the Ebisu Garden Cinema’s program—either in financial terms or production context—it doesn’t matter much even if we consider that the manager Takahashi may have been referring to rejection by national Roadshow circuits in major chains. The carefully constructed visage of the theater itself is enough to sell the artificial concept. As an “independent” theater, it screens *ipso facto* independent films via branding, just like any film in a Criterion Collection box is considered a classic, even Michael Bay’s *Armageddon* (1998). In this case, the venue, rather than the box set, is the packaging for the content.

While all mini-theaters arguably operate in this sense, what makes the Ebisu Garden Cinema such a compelling case study is its environment. While the theater's ownership and programming are of questionable "independence," the cinema was certainly not independent of its physical surroundings. Quite the contrary, as an integrated component of the district's financial concept (as opposed to its design concept)—the merger of commerce, entertainment, tourism, and residential community—the theater was dependent on the commercial environment of the Corporate Urban Center as well as its primary consumer base. Although men certainly frequented the Ebisu Garden Cinema, as a trendy, fashionable theater it ushered in the same adult, female clientele already drawn to the Ebisu Garden Place, doubly benefiting from the image of mini-theaters elsewhere that attracted women back to the cinema as previously discussed. Film commentator Yūki Estuko reflected on the environment after the closing of the theater in January of 2011, "That movie theater [the Ebisu Garden Theater] that showed so many films was the first movie theater in my life that I was able to go to by myself...the Garden Cinema was clean and cozy, somehow [it gave you] a peace of mind" (Yūki). Indeed, the mini-theaters transcended the idea that women go to the theaters in groups (see Chapter III), by arranging an environment that they would venture to alone, quite unlike the theaters of previous generations. But in the case of the Ebisu Garden Cinema, it undoubtedly did so in large part due to its commercial context. As Ebisu Garden Cinema movie-goer Lindsay Rebecca Nelson described:



Figure 36. Photographs of the Ebisu Garden Cinema. From left to right, top to bottom: the entrance to the theater (hideki); lobby and ticket counter for the second cinema ("Tokyo odekake gaido: Ebisu Garden Cinema"); lobby interior (Ôya "Ebisu Garden Cinema"); lobby interior (Machi-Log); cinema 2 interior (Ôya "Ebisu Garden Cinema"); cinema 1 interior (Ôya "Ebisu Garden Cinema").

Movies often sold out quickly because the theaters were small and often the movie in question was only showing at Ebisu. It was nice to buy your ticket early and then stroll around in the nearby cosmopolitan atmosphere of Ebisu Garden Place. I remember on one of our first dates, my boyfriend and I went there to see Woody Allen's 'Whatever Works,' but the show we wanted to see was sold out. So we bought tickets for the next show, then wandered over to the bookshop on the other side of the station and browsed, then wandered over to the St. Germain bakery and had tea and pastries, and by then it was time for the show. (personal communication, 2011)

This practice of taking in a film as part of a general consumer shopping experience (women do shop alone) seems par for the course and undoubtedly the intentional plan of the Ebisu Garden Place designers. When a theater with limited seats is in a commercial zone, the situation encourages advance arrival and waiting time spent among stores and restaurants. As the Odekake Guide advertised, "After purchasing a ticket, you can shop in the area while you wait" ("Tokyo odekake gaido: Ebisu Garden Cinema").

I chose to highlight the Ebisu Garden Cinema because it is not only a place quite famous for attracting a female clientele as a mini theater—indeed it is hard to imagine the closing of one of the still remaining meigaza getting coverage in the ladies' fashion magazine *Japan Elle Online* ("Ebisu Garden Cinema, Kyûkan") —but also because it bears commercial and conceptual similarities to shopping center mini theaters, precursors to the cineplex. Indeed, we may even think of the Ebisu Garden Cinema as an exemplary Shopping Center mini-theater, despite its central, urban location.

Shopping Center (SC) mini-theaters of the late 80s and early 90s were small venues, just like their urban mini-theater predecessors/contemporaries, and featured art house or so-called independent fare. Their primary distinction, like the Ebisu Garden Cinema to follow, was their location. SC mini-theaters were established within shopping

centers (hence the name) in the suburbs. Located within shopping centers, these mini-theaters were accessible by car; the suburban shopping centers were more convenient by private transportation than public since they were outside central metropolitan areas, and therefore included the unusual attribute of a parking lot (Okada 180). In addition to streamlined access—outside Japan’s municipal centers trains are less convenient, cars become more of a necessity, and parking is hard to find—the SC mini-theaters, enclosed within a fixed commercial zone, were close to food, drink, and shopping. These were mini-theaters incorporated into a general concept of consumerism that “matched people’s lifestyles” (180). Moreover, SC mini-theaters solved the perceived suburban housewife problem of the 1960s by expanding goods to the outskirts of the city. Knowing their target audience, SC mini-theaters “created an environment such that women can go in alone” (182). The staff at SC mini-theaters were generally all women and most included daycare services so that mothers could leave their children and get some time to themselves in the plush comfort of air conditioning and armchairs in mini-theaters. Some SC mini-theaters even offered parking validation and membership access reservation to further create an environment and business of easy leisure (182). Excepting the parking validation (the Ebisu Garden Cinema was easily accessible by a major train line) the EBC functioned precisely as a SC mini-theater (including daycare services) such that we may think of the theater as both a mini-theater *and* a SC mini-theater case study in the evolution of Japanese domestic cinema spectatorship. The EBC is an example of the late 80s, early 90s strategic integration of moviegoing, shopping, and lifestyle creation, which I will turn to in the next chapter.

Although the mini-theaters certainly did the most work to bring an active, adult female demographic back to moviegoing, any serious study of contemporary theater spaces would be remiss without a consideration of the cineplexes (particularly their role in solidly uniting spectatorship with leisure consumerism) and the quite interesting subsequent changes in first run (Roadshow), metropolitan, studio owned-chain theaters. Both capitalize on and enhance the moviegoing practices established by the mini-theaters, and even more precisely the Shopping Center and/or Urban Development Center cinemas.

The first cineplex (*shinekon*) opened in Kanagawa Prefecture (south of Tokyo) in Ebime City in 1993 by the Warner Mycal Corporation, a Time Warner company (also, of course, the parent company of Warner Bros. Entertainment) founded in 1991 with the partnership of the AEON Group (a Japanese corporation). Despite the partnership, however, Warner Mycal is primarily an American-influenced company and its cineplex was fashioned after American mutliplexes. A cineplex is defined as a theater with several screens sharing the same single floor of a massive building, accessed from a central entrance, with a lobby for ticket sales, all components running under the same management. In truth, though there had been instances of multi-screen Roadshow theaters (*fukugō eigakan*) in Japan since the 1950s, and of course many of the mini-theaters had multiple screens, none could claim quite the same investment in space (at least six screens in a Japanese cineplex) or program variety as the American-style Warner Mycal theater, although many theaters in Japan contest the foreign-backed cinema's title to "first *shinekon*." Opening such a large multi-screened theater was a risky venture,

particularly in 1993, the country's lowest reported number of screens on record after decades of steady theater closure. And yet in the same year Warner Mycal opened two more cineplexes, one in Higashi-kishiwada (south of Osaka City) and one in Takaoka (remotely in Toyama on the Japan Sea side of the country). The next year, in 1994, the company opened up more cineplexes, one in Utazu on Shikoku Island and one in Hirosaki in the Aoyama north. 1995 saw two more openings: Chigasaki (southwest of Yokohama City in Kanagawa Prefecture) and Kuwana (Mie Prefecture). Other corporations rapidly followed. AMC, Universal/Paramount, and Virgin Cinemas Japan all began cineplex campaigns, as well as the domestic companies, Shōchiku and Tōhō. By 1999, 34.2 percent of cinema screens in Japan were cineplex screens (Saitoh, 55). The trend continued and by 2010, a remarkable 2,774 screens out of a national total of 3,412 were housed in cineplexes (81 percent) (MPPA) (see Figure 37).

Many credit the business model and proliferation of the cineplexes in the late 90s and throughout the 2000s for reviving moviegoing in Japan by opening the market to new audiences and offering them variety in their choice of programming (e.g. Saitoh).

Regarding a revival of domestic spectatorship, The Japan External Trade Organization claims:

The number [of screens] began rebounding in 1995 and grew by 144 to 2,825 in 2004. This was largely due to the spread of cinema complexes offering multiple screens. Cinema complexes, which now account for more than 60% of all screens, have earned great popularity because they enable customers to choose from several movies and they are often located conveniently within shopping malls. (JETRO 2)

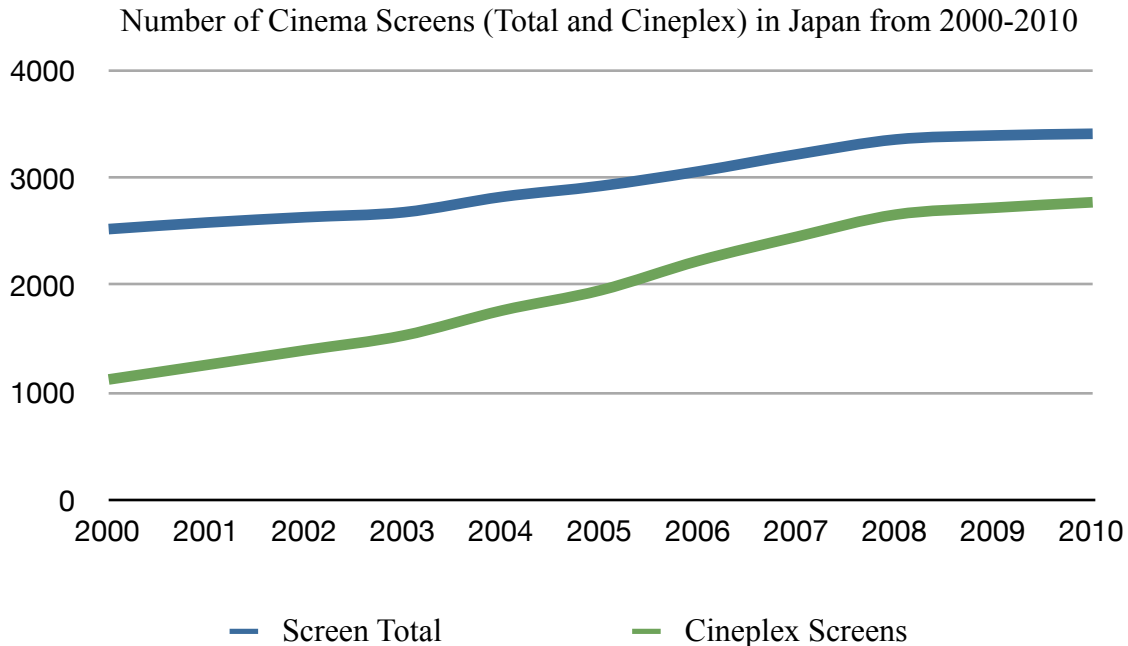


Figure 37. The total number and cineplex number of screens in Japan from 2000-2010 (data from MPPA). There is, overall, a steady increase of cineplex screens accounting for the majority of Japan’s total screen nationwide. By 2010, 81 percent of Japan’s screens were housed in cineplexes.

UNI JAPAN describes the situation to foreign investors as:

Japanese cinemas were suffering a long period of decline. People had the impression that the cinemas were unhygienic and the chairs were uncomfortable, but multiplexes completely changed this image. Multiplexes drew back in the elderly movie fans that went to the cinemas in the 1950s and 1960s, making movies a more casual, everyday entertainment. (UNI JAPAN)

But this is certainly both an exaggeration and an oversight of the important influence already extent moviegoing practices had on the implementation of this new kind of theater.

To begin with, the “revival” is true to the extent that an increase in box office sales since 1996 (with a hiccup between 1999 and 2001) has supported a revival of the barely ambulatory domestic studios and a return to domestic production after 2006 (in

what is called the Japanese Film Bubble), the numbers are nowhere near the popularity of cinema enjoyed in the 1950s and 1960s (see Figure 38). Moreover, the revival did not happen immediately in a manner that would suggest a sudden, dramatic impact after the cineplex movement (see Figure 38). Rather, the impact required momentum that was largely fueled by particular content in the year 1998 and later in the early 2000s, an important matter I will return to later.

Secondly, the cineplexes were not necessarily offering a new kind of moviegoing or business model, conceptually, just more of what was developing already in the 80s and 90s on a more grandiose scale backed by large, international corporations with investment capital. Warner Mycal's cineplexes were all built in fairly rural and remote destinations. Ebime and Higashi-kishiwada are substantially outside the central film hubs of Tokyo and Osaka (respectively), and Toyama, Shikoku, and Aoyama are quite far flung indeed. On the one hand, this effects metropolitan moviegoing not at all (in the short run), but they were not built in a total cinema vacuum. The cineplexes were not built in rice fields; rather they were built in shopping centers. A key to the success of the cineplexes was their location: each one was established in an already extant space of commerce and leisure. While customers benefitted from a larger number of films to chose from and ample seating, the cineplexes benefitted from the shopping center environment, a relationship already enjoyed, and perhaps exploited, by the Shopping Center mini-theaters that were drawing in adult, female audiences. In fact, many of the new cineplexes directly integrated into shopping centers that already housed SC mini-theaters, drawing on a moviegoing clientele that was preconditioned to combining

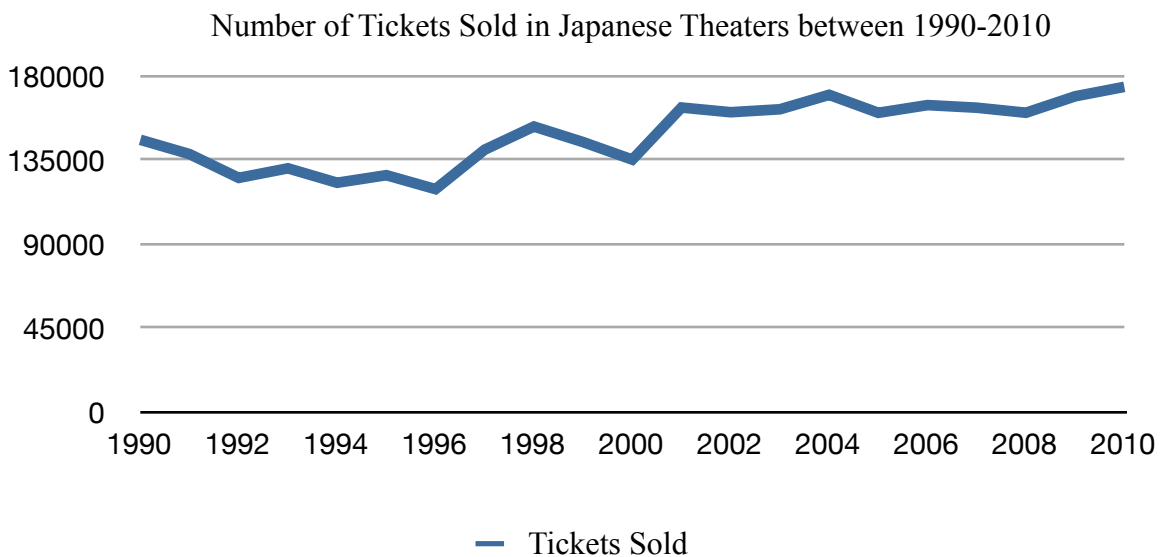
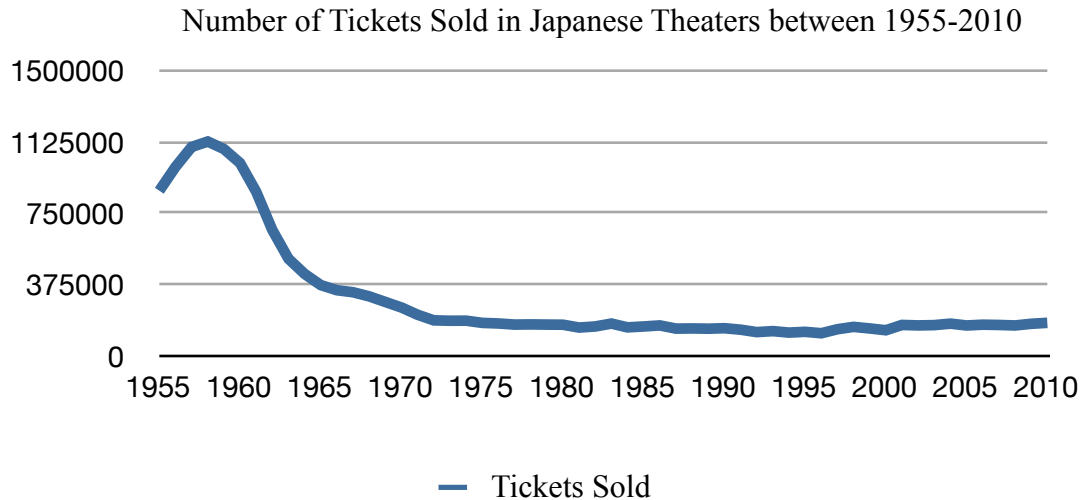


Figure 38. Number of tickets sold in Japanese theaters between 1955 and 2010 (data collected from MPPA). Although it is difficult to see given the large timeline, there is a rise in ticket sales beginning in the late 1990s. However, the numbers nowhere near approach the ticket sales of the Second Golden Era heyday.

spectatorship within a larger consumption activity (such as eating at restaurants and shopping), as was the case, for example, in Tomakomai, Hokkaido (“Shō sābisu to goraku”). By building in remote areas, cineplexes did open the film market to new markets—moviegoers who were estranged from metropolitan theaters—but they did so

by expanding on an already extant practice. Moreover, since Warner Mycal's cinemas were not bound by the block-booking practices still operating at many of the Roadshow chains, they were free to fill their screen selections with a variety of films: in addition to the major Hollywood imports, they also screened independent and art films. In the suburbs, and to a degree even in rural locations, consumers could choose from lineups that combined the mainstream appeal of the Roadshow circuit as well as the more niche market fare found in mini-theaters.

The major corporations expanding into the cineplex market each had different strategies, but most honed in on the shopping center locale. Warner Mycal, as discussed, built their theaters in suburban or rural shopping centers: the necessary feature was a large parking facility. Later, the company moved into shopping centers accessible by a train line. AMC began in cities, but soon found the new market of the suburbs far more profitable. UCI stayed in urban centers and targeted prefectural capitals. Tōhō and Shōchiku, however, played a delicate balancing act with their already extant Roadshow theaters, and adapted the cineplex layout carefully in both urban and rural locations. No matter the company, however, moviegoing increasingly became tied to the larger locus of shopping.

As the domestic chains restructured their Roadshow theaters into cineplexes, particularly after 2003 when, after a series of corporate takeovers and buyouts the only foreign owned cineplex owner left operating was Warner Mycal (all others were bought and run by Japanese companies), the shape of cinemas in metropolitan centers began to change as well. However, there is quite a distinction between suburban cineplexes (in

particular the Warner Mycal theaters) and the refashioned studio-owned urban cineplexes currently dominating Tokyo's cinema cityscape. The Warner Mycal theaters, while adopting the spatial benefits enjoyed by the mini-theaters and to some extent even their programming, look nothing like a mini-theater whatsoever. In fact, and perhaps unsurprisingly, they look like American multiplexes. Located within a structured shopping center or train station, the theaters have little control over their architecture. The lobbies are dark and windowless, but cavernous, with black wall interiors that mimic the dark, close hall of the cinema, foreshadowing perhaps the dark, transformational cocoon that awaits. Larger than life (if such applies) 3D models and 2D cutouts of the Warner Bros. Looney Toon characters hang from the ceiling and high up on walls: Bugs Bunny eats a carrot by the concession counter and Daffy Duck perches wildly above the ticket window. The whole place smells overwhelmingly of popcorn and the sweet intoxicating heartburn of artificial butter. While you can buy beer to wash down your large barrel of popcorn overflowing in a corny, commercial bucket printed with that week's blockbuster characters, and you'll be able to rest your feet on spartan floors devoid of mysterious adhesion, for the most part taking in a film at a Warner Mycal theater is very similar to being in a multiplex chain in the United States (see Figure 39).

By contrast, several of the remodeled domestic, urban cineplexes (remodels that are relatively recent and still ongoing) such as the Tōhō Cinemas Roppongi Hills (home of the Tokyo International Film Festival), the 109 Cinemas (run by Tōkyū Recreation), United Cinemas (owned by Kadokawa), and the Shinjuku Picadilly (owned by Shōchiku) pay quite a great deal of attention to aesthetic and decor suggestive of a rather



Figure 39. Interiors of the Warner Mycal in Shinyurigaoka, Kanagawa Prefecture. Bugs Bunny munches on a carrot on top of every register at the concessions counter. 2D cutouts of the Looney Toon family greets you as you enter the dark lobby (Laird, 2010).

fashionable and trendy makeover. Take, for example, the latter: the Shinjuku Picadilly. The cineplex is in Tokyo's Shinjuku district: a fashion-conscious area, albeit now three to four times removed from current youth trends. It is also something of a theater district, with more known theaters (from multiplexes to art theaters and one-screen cafes) per capita than any other Tokyo district. As for all contemporary cinemas, location and

environment is key to understanding the cinema's demographics and business, not just the actual demographics of their clientele, but their *desired* clientele. In other words, the theater's image and brand.

The 13-screen Picadilly is in a heavily populated tourist haven, shopping district, and commuter nightmare—with 3,398,006 people entering and exiting Shinjuku's 200+ exits per day, it is still the busiest train station in the world. However, I would argue that the theater is just off the beaten tourist path. The front of the building faces Yasukuni-dori, a street without direct connection to the station, and the back abuts a rabbit warren of upscale boutiques and restaurants with significantly less English language representation than those closer to the station. Moreover, this neighborhood is on the sparse East JR exit, which is also a bus and parking lot access point; to the casual tourist, the scene definitely feels like you got out at the wrong exit. This suggests that the theater is after high-end ZARA and Marui window shoppers of a distinctly domestic variety, as opposed to casual tourists who rarely venture far from the station. To be perfectly explicit, while not housed within a shopping center (a middle class gathering ground) the Shinjuku Picadilly, as an urban cineplex, is still submerged in a consumer corridor, one that is upmarket and brand name (see Figure 40).

The theater shares first-floor space with a Muji, a high-end home goods and clothing retail chain. Muji, meaning “no brand,” is named after the company's commercial concept: minimalist, trendy design free of brand labeling. In an extremely brand-conscious city, the company may seem somewhat subversive. True to their mission statement, everything sold at Muji is simple: their stock comes in a solid brown, white,

clear, or black color scheme (and those colors aren't mixed in a single product), and nothing has a company logo on it (except the shopping bags). However, the company has effectively branded this color scheme and label-less design to the extent that a brown, blank notebook or a white wicker laundry basket is rather instantly recognizable as a Muji product. And when that product is in a bag with the Muji brand name on it, it is, of course, even more recognizable. Moreover, Muji goods are not cheap. The company is the pseudo-consumerist rebellion equivalent of Converse shoes. Ultimately, Muji is hip. Which is what makes Muji the perfect companion for the Shinjuku Picadilly.

The cinema is clean and sparkling white. Entirely modernist and sleek, the interior is more reminiscent of a day spa than a multiplex movie theater. And yet screen culture permeates the layout, from the digital ticket counters and flat-screen marquee displays to the mini screens playing trailers that are inset into the building's walls and columns. The concessions counter sells popcorn and draft beer as well as chocolate and *anko* croissants, maple pecan danishes, custard, chocolate, and apple pastries, ham and cheese be reserved on your cell phone at their website) who assist you in selecting your numbered seat. As a service, the agent provides a seating chart and indicates which seats are still free. Unless the theater plans to sell out (e.g. big ticket items like the Harry Potter franchise) they will automatically designate any seat next to an already purchased seat as "unavailable." This service is arranged to help customers avoid the uncomfortable sandwiches, churros, lattes, and soft serve ice-creams. Tickets are sold by agents (or can experience of sitting next to a stranger in a dark room, if at all possible—an experience, if you recall, that was dreaded by women of previous decades and then mourned by older male meigaza fans.

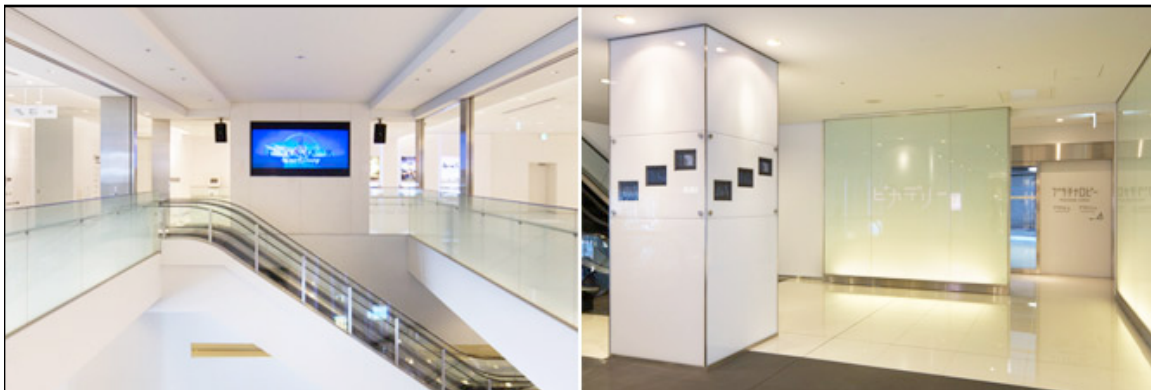


Figure 40. Interior and exterior photographs of Shōchiku's Shinjuku Piccadilly Theater. All images from the theater's website: www.shinjukupiccadilly.com.

This seating practice is not unique to the Shinjuku Picadilly, but is now common throughout all major contemporary cinemas. Perhaps more unique to the Picadilly is that every seat in its theaters reclines just a little and comes with a soft blanket, in case you get cold.

The Shinjuku Picadilly, like the Ebisu Garden Cinema and many of the contemporary cinemas, is a theater that is designed to attract a once-missing female demographic. This does not mean that men don't go to the Shinjuku Picadilly (or the EBC for that matter), but it does mean that they are not the target market, as they had been in previous decades. Contemporary theaters target women in a number of ways. First, unlike the suburban cineplexes that expanded on the mini-theater program to borrow and increase their market, the urban cineplexes are additionally expanding the mini-theater's aesthetic and climate. By borrowing the aesthetic of the mini-theater (not to mention their clientele) the cineplexes craft the illusion of an artistic, boutique experience in a large, commercial complex. From the fancy sweets (preferred more by Japanese women than men) as concessions to the soft blankets in the theaters (the idea being that women get cold more easily than men), from the illusion of upper-class leisure (the Shinjuku Picadilly boasts private rental rooms going for ¥30,000 (\$357) per room per show—Don Perignon Rose and kopi luwak refreshments cost an additional ¥100,000 (\$1,189) and ¥50,000 (\$594) respectively—actual upper-class leisure) to the fashionably sleek spa-like architectural design situated in an upscale brand-conscious neighborhood, the Shinjuku Picadilly brands itself. However, unlike the paratextual posters of the 1950s and 1960s (see Chapter III), this brand is not for the studio (in the case of the Shinjuku

Picadilly it would be parent company Shōchiku Studio) but for the actual theater. For the Picadilly it's the visage of a high class, modern, (almost clinical) cosmetics counter. For Tōhō's Roppongi Hills theater it's a Hollywood-esque romanticism done up in red velvets and glistening golds maintained by an all-bilingual (Japanese/English) staff—not only is it the home of Japan's largest film festival, Roppongi Hills is situated right in the most international section of Tokyo: the embassy district. By contrast, for Warner Mycal it's the image of middle-class suburban family fun. Even though nearly all of these cineplex theaters will share the same programming at any given time thanks to free booking (perhaps only the smaller independent program fillers will really differ) they each manufacture and maintain a distinct spatial brand that attracts their desired clientele.

Second, the theaters attract women by strategic location: they are nestled in the heart of leisure consumerism. Whereas meigaza, pinku theaters, and many of the small-scale truly independent mini-theaters (not associated with either in-house or studio production) are likely to be tucked away in cheap rent, sometimes hard to find, neighborhoods, the boutique mini-theaters and subsequently the cineplexes are all in high-density shopping locations. In most cases, the shopping areas are themselves a part of a development remodel, like the suburban shopping malls or the high concept Corporate Urban Center of Ebisu, Roppongi, and Minatomirai. “HoneyRoasted,” a user reviewer on the website TripAdvisor.com, reflects on the changes that accompanied the Ebisu Garden Place construction project:

Hate to date myself, but I can remember what Ebisu was like before Garden Place was built (mostly ramen shops, izakaya, local shopping street and a famous pool hall). After Garden Place was built, (for better or for worse) Ebisu suddenly

underwent a complete transformation and suddenly became ‘upscale’ and ‘trendy’.

While HoneyRoasted is merely expressing his or her impression of the transition, it is not simply that the area transitioned from one kind of entertainment to another. Specifically, the area transformed from a perceptibly masculine territory (ramen shops, izakaya, and pool halls) to an overtly feminine public space (code words “upscale” and “trendy”).

This restructuring movement, the EBC a prime example, in which public space and society is reconceptualized, is a major part of the feminization of film culture Kawamoto described (see previous section). It’s not merely that the demographics (from men to women) was changing, but the landscape of film culture, the very physical space itself, was also transforming: it was and is the “feminization” of public and commercial film spaces.

Third, cinemas attract women through highly stylized, and blatantly obvious, discounts and campaigns. Regular admission at the major cinemas is fairly standardized, regardless of managing company. At the Shinjuku Picadilly, Tōhō Cinemas Roppongi Hills, Iwanami Hall, Warner Mycal cineplexes, and the Tokyu 109 Cinemas (for example), general admission is set at 1800 yen (as of 2011), approximately \$23 USD. Tickets at the famous Jimbōchō meigaza run 1200 yen, or almost \$16 USD. However, nearly all theaters offer both regular special prices as well as routine discount days throughout a calendar month (such as the first day of the month at 1000 yen, or special late show discounts), with some specific decreases or increases in price on annual holidays. Standard discounts based on age include college student discounts (1500 yen),

students younger than college age discounts (1000 yen), children under three (900 yen), and senior citizens over 60 (1000 yen). However, theaters also typically offer the following additional discounts: couples day (usually once a month, date varying by theater, ~1000 yen), senior couples discount (any day, one person has to be over 50, ~1000 yen), and, most importantly, “Ladies’ Day” (generally every Wednesday, 1000 yen). In each of these special discounts, it should be noted, the discount requires the presence of a woman.⁸ While the Ladies’ Day discount is linked to a much larger phenomenon of targeting female consumers specifically on Wednesdays (see Figure 41),



Figure 41. Various advertisements for Ladies’ Day specials. From left to right, top to bottom: Flier for Wednesday “Lady’s Day” specials at the Tokyo Dome shopping plaza; Tsutaya flier from 2007 advertising Ladies Day ¥100 discounts on DVD and VHS rentals every Wednesday; advertisement for weekly (Wednesday) Ladies Day discount on oil changes with an additional “super discount” on Valentine Day; poster for Ladies Day discounts on internet usage at the I-Café (language pun on “love café”) internet café; Wednesday Ladies Day special advert for Silkroad Pachinko Parlour; Ladies Day Wednesday discount for two free games of bowling at Shiritori Bowling Center.

here's what the discount does to the online calendar at the Shinjuku Picadilly (see Figure 42):

上映カレンダー				CALENDAR		
ご覧になりたい日付を選択してください。						
土	日	月	火	水	木	金
11/27	11/28	11/29	11/30	12/1 ★1000円	12/2	12/3
12/4	12/5	12/6	12/7	12/8 👠1000円	12/9	12/10
12/11	12/12	12/13	12/14	12/15 👠1000円	12/16	12/17
12/18	12/19	12/20	12/21	12/22 👠1000円	12/23	12/24

Figure 42. Sample of the Shinjuku Picadilly's film calendar regularly updated on the theater's website: www.shinjukupicadilly.com.

Despite a rather lengthy list of discounts, the Picadilly's calendar specifically features pink high heel shoes once a week (水=Wednesday). In truth, nearly every cinema's calendar would look like this, but Shōchiku's advertising staff took the special effort to visualize it. It is a strategy that, apparently, works. In a 2003 survey conducted by Sankei Living Shibun Inc., 78 percent of women polled answered that they use Ladies' Day discounts (see Figure 43).

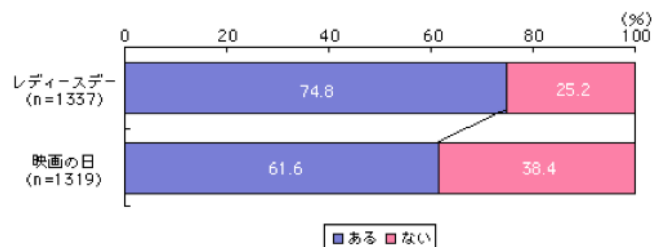


Figure 43. In 2003, Sankei Living Shinbun Inc. conducted a survey of women between the ages of 20 and 34, asking them if they used the once a week “movie day” or weekly “Ladies’ Day” discounts at theaters. Out of 1337 women, 74.8 percent said that they used Ladies Day discounts (25.2 percent did not). Out of 1319 women, 61.6 percent said that they used the “movie day” (38.4 percent did not). Data and chart from the Sankei Living Shinbun Inc. website (OL Market Report: eiga ni tsuite).

Moreover, the cinemas often run special prize giveaway or point accumulation campaigns. When I visited the Shinjuku Picadilly theater in December of 2010, the cinema was running a rather curious marketing ploy: the Autumn Special Present Campaign (see Figure 44).⁹



Figure 44. Advertisement for the Shinjuku Picadilly's Autumn Special Present Campaign (2012).

In brief, the campaign was structured as a raffle prize giveaway, with a raffle ticket granted per film watched. If a customer saw all three films featured in the campaign, they were guaranteed a prize (which included concession stand food and drink tickets). The top prizes included a trip for two to Kyoto (one winner total), a viewing in a Picadilly Premium Room (two winners), a top quality casserole dish (three winners), a White Musk set from the Body Shop (ten winners), and a box of premium tea (ten winners). While it's extremely obvious who these prizes target, it's also worthwhile to consider the three films selected for the Autumn Campaign: Oigami Naoko's *Toilet* (*Toilet*, 2010), Takimoto Tokiyuki's *Soup Opera* (2010), and Matsumoto Kana's *Mother*

Water (2010). The line up sports two films by women and a third distributed by Prénom H Co. Ltd., a distribution company dedicated to a female market (Morimoto).

This leads us to the most relevant technique contemporary film producers and exhibitors use to target a female market: content.

The F1-Sou and Girl's Style Cinema: The Feminization of Film Content

Why women? Once largely ignored by the film industry, why the return to courting a female demographic? The answer is the same for why Japanese corporations and businesses have been aggressively targeting women since the late 1980s. They are after what is known as the “F1-sou” (F1層), a marketing term that stands for the first group (by generation) female demographic. In more precise terms, this “number one” group are women between the ages of 20 and 34, almost exactly the same age grouping whose disappearance film critic Uriu Tadao cited as the predicted demise of the studio system back in 1967 (Uriu 91).¹⁰ Unlike the United States, with a primary consumer base of males between the ages 18 and 34, in the domestic Japanese media industry the *F1-sou* is the most profitable and sought after consumer group, often considered by distribution strategists to be the “main target” (Nakamura). This is quite a shift from the previous main consumer group of men over the age of 25. Originally the term was used by broadcasting and advertising companies to measure survey responses from users by gender and generation. The other groups break down as follows: F2層 (females 35-49), F3層 (females 50 and over), M1層 (males 18 or 20, depending on the industry, to 34), M2層 (males 35 to 49), M3層 (males 50 and over), C1層 (children 4-12), C2層

(sometimes T層, children/teens 13-17 or 19, depending on the industry). However, in the mid 2000s, the designations became widely used by marketers in most consumer industries. The reason why the F1-sou is so valuable is because that is the most active consumer demographic in Japan, strongly and actively out-purchasing the other groups. F1-targeting is also known as “O.L. Marketing,” because the age group is largely comprised of working women (still referred to by the outdated term “Office Lady” even though many “O.L.s” don’t work in offices) who increasingly wait until later in life to get married and have children or, alternatively, are increasingly opting out of marriage and childbirth altogether. These women for whom themselves are their only financial responsibility, spend little on rent (at least the large percentage who still live with their parents or in small, cheap apartments) and spend quite heavily and reliably on consumer goods. Companies are honing in on this resource and there are, as such, marketing and, rather fascinating, PR firms that specialize solely on targeting the F1-sou (e.g. Sankei Living Shibun Inc.; F1 Media Inc.; Girls Marketing run by Cross Inc.). The F1-sou has money and is willing to spend it (see Figure 45). Although not the main focus of their consumption, since the 1990s, they have increasingly spent it on media. And, from 2000-2005, they consistently outspent their male demographic counterpart at the theaters (see Figures 46 and 47).

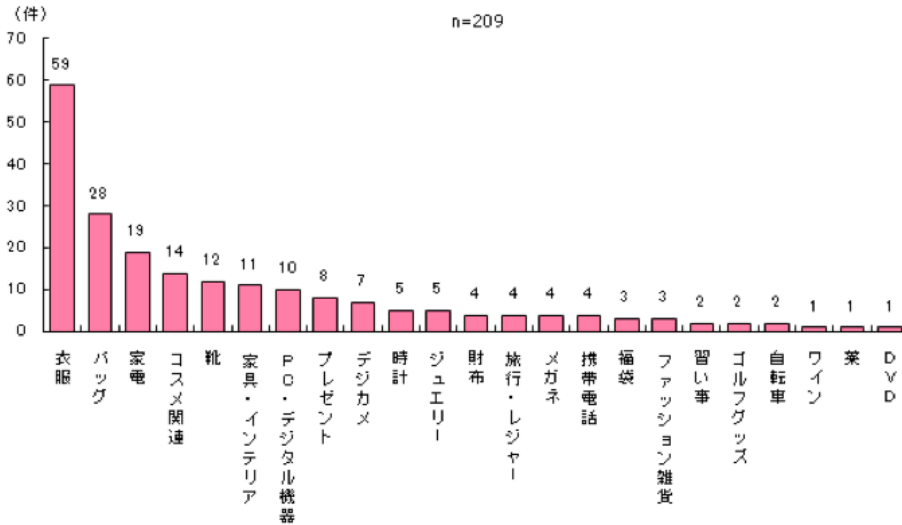


Figure 45. Survey results of expenditures by women between 20 and 34. In 2009, Sankei Living Shinbun Inc. polled 209 women between the ages of 20 and 34 and asked them what they had spent over 10,000 yen (~\$120 USD) on for a single item. In order from left to right the categories are: clothing, handbags, home electronics, cosmetics, shoes, furniture or home goods, computing or electronic goods, presents, digital cameras, watches, jewelry, wallets, travel and leisure, glasses, cell phones, lucky grab bags, fashion goods, lessons, golf supplies, bicycles, wine, medicine, DVDs. Data and chart from the Sankei Living Shinbun Inc. website ("OI Market Report: OI No Shôhi Kôdô Ni Tsuite").

Year	Teens	20s	30s	40s	50s	60 and over
2000	39.2	39.6	32.7	32.3	23.4	16.0
2001	53.8	45.7	38.1	42.9	28.6	16.6
2002	48.1	45.1	42.9	36.7	25.6	19.4
2003	48.2	52.7	32.5	45.3	30.0	21.8
2004	45.2	50.6	38.2	42.8	30.4	25.2
2005	40.6	48.0	35.3	43.3	34.3	15.7

Figure 46. Percentages of males who go to the movies from 2000-2005 broken down by year and age group (Recreated from source: Nakamura).

Year	Teens	20s	30s	40s	50s	60 and over
2000	58.0	48.4	43.5	38.6	31.2	16.0
2001	65.2	58.3	46.3	50.5	30.3	16.8
2002	62.3	61.4	44.0	55.2	34.8	15.2
2003	75.0	58.1	46.9	46.8	33.7	15.8
2004	67.6	62.5	50.0	49.8	37.2	21.0
2005	64.3	60.1	42.9	52.9	34.8	20.9

Figure 47. Percentages of females who go to the movies from 2000-2005 broken down by year and age group (Recreated from source: Nakamura). Between this chart and Figure 46, women between teens and the 30s outrank male participation at movie theaters.

While the key to some of this activity is certainly the social and spatial reconfiguration of movie culture heretofore outlined in the dissertation (not to mention continuing increases in financial mobility for women), it has occurred contemporaneously with a shift in the kind of content available at the theaters. To begin with, while many film writers pinpoint 1998 as an important year for domestic ticket sales (see the dramatic peak in Figure 38), many citing the triumphant increase of cineplex screens, few look at content for the reason why. Although the film came out in 1997 in the United States, the Romeo & Juliet-esque tale of star-crossed lovers *Titanic* (Cameron) grossed a whopping ¥160,000,000,000 (a reported \$225,000,000 USD at the then exchange rate). The second highest grossing film of the year was a Japanese film, *Odoru daisōsasen THE MOVIE* (*Bayside Shakedown: The Movie*), a police drama based on a popular television series by the same name. The film earned ¥50,000,000,000, an impressive sum after decades of slump, but not even a third of the proceeds of Cameron's epic love story. After a three-

year downturn, profits again soared in 2001, thanks almost entirely to Studio Ghibli's animated feature *Sen to chihiro no kamikakushi* (H. Miyazaki, *Spirited Away*) which brought in ¥30,400,000,000. The next year was another big year with the first installment of the Harry Potter franchise, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (Columbus, ¥20,300,000,000), followed shortly by its sequel, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (Columbus, ¥18,000,000,000). The top grossing Japanese film of the year was another Studio Ghibli production, *Neko no ongaeshi* (Morita, *The Cat Returns*, ¥6,460,000,000). *Chamber of Secrets*, an end of year release in 2002, continued to bring in profits in 2003 adding ¥17,300,000,000 to its pile from the previous year.

2004, however, is particularly revealing. Not only does the year mark a shift for domestic films as they earn increasingly more box office profits (resulting in the subsequent production of more and more films), but the year indicates a significant shift in genre, already foreshadowed earlier in the decade from *Titanic* on. The top grossing domestic film was another Ghibli film, *Hauru no ugoku shiro* (H. Miyazaki, *Howl's Moving Castle*, ¥20,000,000,000), but the second place contender was *Sekai no chūshin de, ai o sakebu* (Yukisada, *Crying Out Love in the Center of the World*, ¥8,500,000,000) a tale of unrequited love between two teenagers as remembered in flashbacks by the adult, male protagonist. Third place was *Ima, ai ni yukimasu* (Doi, *Be With You*, ¥4,800,000,000), a family drama/romance featuring an amnesiac mother/spouse whose search for her identity lies in the love narrative between her and her husband: how they met, when they fell in love, their courtship, their wedding, etc. Ranked seventh—fourth through sixth were animated children's films based on *manga*, a consistent box office top

placeholder throughout the decade—was *Kuiru* (Sai, *Quill*, ¥2,220,000,000), a film about the life of an adorable guide dog. Following closely was the youthful comedy about a ragtag group of high school girls who reform their hearts and attitudes through their unlikely collaboration of an afterschool jazz band, *Swingu gāruzu* (Yaguchi, *Swing Girls*, ¥2,150,000,000). As for the top grossing foreign film? The blockbuster story of international heartthrob Tom Cruise falling in love with a Japanese woman and going rogue with a sword in *The Last Samurai* (Zwick, ¥13,700,000,000).

2005 follows suit. Ghibli's *Hauru* stayed at the top ¥19,600,000,000, followed by two other animations. Third place was another installment of the *Bayside Shakedown* franchise, part seven, *Kōshōnin Mashita Masayoshi* (Motohiro, *Negotiator: Mashita Maayoshi*). However, coming in fourth was *NANA* (Ohtani, ¥40,300,000,000), an opposites attract (or at least coexist) adaptation of a girl's manga featuring two young women named Nana from the countryside who share an apartment in big city Tokyo, trying to make their dreams come true. The sixth top grosser was *Densha Otoko* (Murakami, *Train Man*, ¥3,700,000,000), a makeover romcom in which a shy, introverted “geek” finds his dream girl (a fan of designer goods) on a commuter train and spends the film trying to win his lady love by reworking his hygiene, fashion sense, and charm.

At this point, it seems unnecessary to continue listing box office ranks by year. Since 2004, the domestic charts fill ever increasingly with F1-sou target fare: romcoms, dramas, films featuring young women and/or high school girls achieving personal success, and (what is known as) “pure love” (*junai*) films. In 2006, the number of

Japanese films shown in theaters outnumbered Western films for the first time in over 20 years (Nakamura, 19). Some significant earners within these genres in the later half of the decade were: *LIMIT OF LOVE: Umizaru* (Hasumi, *Limit of Love: Sea Monkey*, ¥7,100,000,000); *Koizora* (Iami, *Sky of Love*, ¥3,900,000,000); *Hana yori dango fainaru* (Ishii, *Boys Over Flowers*, ¥7,700,000,000). What should be remembered is that while the films gathered here thus far held notable places high up in box office ranks, the continued success of their genres and motifs prompted the development of dozens of films that did not perhaps establish themselves as top earners, but nevertheless increased in number in a very particular category, what some might call “chick flicks.” But regardless of any genre definition, it’s clear that the films of the 2000s looked far more interesting to women than the films of the previous decades. The paratexts were different, to be sure (see Figure 48).

It’s fairly clear that the advertising aesthetic throughout the 2000s, like this dissertation, gets increasingly more pink. Not pink alone, either, but a return to the soft pastel color palette missing since the early 1950s Shōchiku posters. Although there are obvious generational differences and advancements in printing technology (e.g. a transition from hand drawn art to digital graphic design), contemporary posters bear the imprinted influence of Hollywood and are more approachable as entryway paratexts that incorporate suggestion of storyworld. Although the visage of the star lingers in importance (particularly in posters that incorporate screenshot headshots that continue to function as an actor lineup) often faces are deemphasized over bodies and bodies



Figure 48. Posters for films targeting the *FI-sou* (and in some cases also the youth market). From left to right, top to bottom: *Ima, ai ni yukimasu* (Doi, *Be With You*, 2004); *Swingu gāruzu* (Yaguchi, *Swing Girls*, 2004); *Inuneko* (Iguchi, *The Cat Leaves Home*, 2004); *Shimotsuma monogatari* (Nakashima, *Kamikaze Girls*, 2004); *Densha otoko* (Murakami, *Train Man*, 2005); *NANA* (Ohtani, 2005); *Linda Linda Linda* (Yamashita, 2005); *Koi wa go shichi go* (Ogigami, *Love is 5-7-5*, 2005); *Aozora* (Iami, *Sky of Love*, 2007); *Hyakumanen to nigamushi onna* (Y. Tanada, *One Million Yen Girl*, 2008); *Shiawase no pan* (Mishima, *Happiness Bread*, 2012).

themselves are made small, becoming an element of the environment. Take, for example, the promotional poster for *NANA*. We can guess that the film is about two young women (it is) who are archetypal opposites of one another (they are). We know this not just from their dress and hairstyles, but because one sits in a light, washed-out domestic space and the other is rocking out in the spotlight of a dark performance venue. Moreover, duality of the image suggests a narrative setup that contrasts domestic life and a working career (it does). Similarly, the bodies of the two main characters in the poster for *Inuneko* (*Inuneko*) blend in with their larger surroundings, suggesting a domestic drama in which the image of “home” plays as large (or larger) role as the main characters. As the bodies of the players in these posters become smaller and less fetishized (compare them to the head shots of the contemporaneous AKB48 girls), the background becomes more dominant such that in many cases the environment is the foreground *in toto*; the human shapes are just one component of a larger idea.

The deemphasis of the face, the body, and the actor disrupts the previous set patterns of voyeurism established in earlier decades. Although there are still lines of sight generated by looking within the paratexts—so long as there are human figures there will always be looking—there is more variety for the female figures, less patterned chains that direct the external spectator’s eyes to a fixed point, and, in particular, more instances of direct address, the look that breaks and takes back the gaze. There are more female figures and they are more active. In a very literal example, the two girls in *Swingu gāruzu* (*Swing Girls*) and *Koi wa go shichi go* (*Love is 5 7 5*, a parody of the teenage school club genre of which *Swingu gāruzu* is an exemplary text, hence the similarity) are

jumping in the air. In *Swingu gāruzu*, *Linda Linda Linda*, and *NANA*, the characters are depicted as musicians who perform. The woman in *Shiawase no pan (Happiness Bread)* appears to be running a business. The woman in the *Densha Otoko (Train Man)* advert is checking out a man. And the two young women in *Inuneko (The Cat Leaves Home)*, rather than gazing off vacantly into space, appear to be actually thinking. What these posters suggest to the casual browser is a shift in film culture and filmic representation. Not only are there more women/girls in these films, but they don't appear to be overtly sexualized. They appear to have different roles, a variety of personas, and are actively involved in a diversity of pursuits packaged in an array of genres. From schoolgirl to mother and from fashionista to entrepreneur, these characterizations reflect exactly what the F1-sou had been missing: relatable, relevant options, something that looked interesting to them.

However, just as the cineplexes did not revive domestic spectatorship overnight, the F1-sou's renewed interest in cinema fueled by an arsenal of promotional media did not materialize out of thin air. There was a strong, highly profitable precedent wrought with gendered marketing that came from across the Japan Sea. In her work on transcultural fandom of Hong Kong film stars among Japanese women, Lori Morimoto traces the reception and popularity of Hong Kong cinema beginning in earnest in the late 1980s¹¹ with the star text of international man of action, Jackie Chan (Morimoto). As opposed to the seemingly invulnerable, Gumby-like, scrappy doofus (particularly in his later films made in Hollywood) persona created for Chan in the United States, his star

text in Japan shaped him as an idol, an object of romantic desire. Marketers played Chan as “boyish” and romantically available, open to flirtation and responsive to his fans (43).

Japanese distributors discerned a potentially lucrative audience in Japanese girls and women, whose discretionary spending had spawned such popular culture industry behemoths as the boy-bands (‘Johnny’s’) of music promoter Johnny Kitagawa. Thus, from as early as 1983, Chan was linked semiotically with so-called ‘idol’ culture. (43)

They organized articles in women’s magazines, public interviews and exchanges with fans, an album of love songs performed by Chan, and special collector’s memorabilia—all of which specifically crafted Chan as a male pop idol, the target of a female gaze. The nexus of this fandom, the intersection between the fans and the films (Chan’s primary star texts) was, perhaps unsurprisingly, the mini-theaters.

Beginning as an informal project of a handful of Japanese film critics and industry insiders of bringing the comparatively esoteric films of the Hong Kong New Wave to Japan through small-scale Tokyo film festivals, it evolved from the late 1980s through the mid-1990s into one of deliberately articulating new Hong Kong cinema with Euro-American art and ‘indie’ films for the purpose of capitalizing on a lucrative audience of underserved female filmgoers. (51)

These “small-scale film festivals” were held in mini-theaters, really the only venues with reliable female clientele.

Drawing on the success with Chan, distributors crafted romantic personas for other male actors such as action star Chow Yun Fat, elsewhere known for his gritty, hardboiled roles in violent cop dramas. And while HK male stars were cast as idols in Japan, female HK celebrities such as Cecelia Yip Tung and female director Ann Hui were shaped as role models for the contemporary working woman (60). The success of marketing targeting an adult female demographic created a passionate fandom within

Japan for HK among women. Not just HK media and its stars, but a desire for HK itself as projected through its media texts such that “the mid-1990s witnessed an exodus of Japanese women to Hong Kong that was captured in headlines dubbing them “The Japanese Runaways” and broadcasting “Despite Low Pay, Hong Kong Jobs Lure Women: Greater Responsibility, Chance to Use English Add to Exotic Aura of Working Abroad” (71). The HK obsession among Japanese women—of all ages, Morimoto is careful to argue—became the topic of films (particularly comedy), TV dramas, and a great deal of published social criticism and journalism.

While the public space of the mini-theater was important for negotiating and arranging the first contact experience for fans with these targeting texts, further circulation of the films (either to new viewers, for repeat watchings, or for purely for archival possession (a staple fan activity)) happened primarily on the VCD (video compact disc) and VHS home video formats during the 1990s (115, 117). Video rental stores became an important location for female fandom of Hong Kong cinema, particularly the smaller shops, more convenient in location and often more diverse due to eclectic owners. As Morimoto describes:

Such sites, whether in Tokyo or outlying Oita or rural Tottori, stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the grocery stores, dry cleaners, and cafes that women frequented, effectively bringing Hong Kong cinema into the daily patterns of women’s lives. Particularly outside urban areas, the inclusion of Hong Kong films within the rental offerings of a given shop was often random and unpublicized; as such, women’s rental of such films was also frequently happenstance. (118)

And so it would seem that while the domestic film production market took a while to get around to this burgeoning and profitable demographic, the video market was on top of the

phenomenon much earlier. Although the female fan networks of HK films habitually frequented mom and pop stores, it was only a matter of time before a larger company took notice, one that started out as a small independent store of the mom and pop variety.

Tsutaya, the multi-million dollar multimedia video store chain I described in the chapter introduction, began as a small record store in 1980. However, the owner, Masuda Muneaki, seemed to understand the shifting patterns of commerce better than his competitors and instead of selling records, he rented them. As his business grew, largely thanks to youth clientele (Masuda 21), he incorporated rentals of newer technology: cassette tapes and then compact discs. When Tsutaya became a franchise business in 1996, Masuda had developed a whole new concept behind the audio-visual rental business. According to Masuda himself, his original intention in shaping Tsutaya was to create “a new type of multimedia shop that was embedded in the progress of information revolution” (11). To do so, he borrowed the layout of a bookstore, rather than the video store model which, to him, “were really synonymous with adult videos. Video stores were the filthiest places in town, lit by suspicious neon lights, an atmosphere of guilty clients who sneak in and out” (16). He adds, “Of course, they were not a place that the average female customer would go to.” (16). And although this contradicts the consumption patterns of the burgeoning HK fans (a somewhat niche group to be sure), it is representative of the larger social image surrounding video stores in the 1980s, their shelves stacked with primarily pink films and (often sexually charged) V-Cinema. In fact, the reconceptualization of Tsutaya as not a media rental outlet, laden with the cultural images Masuda described above, but rather as a (1) multi-package store, (2) new

media shop, (3) “life information center”, and (4) “Culture Convenience” store was in large part to corner a female market. This was a key objective for his enterprise (Masuda). By drawing on the atmosphere of a bookstore—something Masuda associated with “information access,” perhaps something like an expensive library since his materials are mostly for rented borrowing and lending—he felt that it would become “a place for female customers, for high school kids, for families, so anyone can come without feeling ridiculous” (16). And just to ensure the right kind of vibe, early Tsutaya multimedia stores incorporated cafes into their floor plan, a place of commerce and leisure coded as a gathering place for women since the pre-war Taisho period (1912-1926).

Fifteen-years after the opening of the first store, Masuda is now the president of the Culture Convenience Club¹² and the 39th most wealthy man in Japan (in 2009, Forbes.com). Tsutaya is the largest and most recognized media distribution/rental complex. The Tsutaya “Girl’s Style” slogan/brand was developed by market researchers and trademarked by the company in 2007 as a joint in-store and online venture (TSUTAYA). The campaign falls right in line with the company’s approach to marketing media: Masuda claims that the secret to the Tsutaya success has been an investment in niche marketing, and a subsequent development of excessive genrefication tailored to target specific market groups. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the company has developed into a massive franchise with highly developed customer account databases: Tsutaya has focused not just on providing goods to consumers, but also on collecting information about them. “Tsutaya realizes that being able to sample the population's pulse in real time

is central to its success. We're not interested in merely renting videos to people. We're collecting lifestyle information, and the possibilities of that are, over time, enormous” (Harney). As of October 2006, Tsutaya online membership surpassed ten million accounts. To describe the possibilities inherent in the compiled information from over ten million lifestyles – what they watch, what they buy, what advertising links they follow – “enormous” doesn’t quite seem big enough. Indeed, Tsutaya now promises its customers “lifestyle navigation.”

As a lifestyle navigator, TSUTAYA supports the self-actualization of customers through their selections of DVDs, CDs, books, and video games. According to American psychologist A. H. Maslow's theory, human needs advance through five levels with the development of society. Humans have the desire to first satisfy physiological needs, then safety needs, social needs, and esteem needs, and at the highest level, the desire to become what one is, or the need for self-actualization. Developed nations such as Japan are now at this level. Traditional lifestyle models and ideals are no longer valid. Each individual must sketch out one's life and ideals through his or her own intentions and judgments. That is when entertainment content presents an outlook on life and ideals. Various types of content are hints to discover oneself, and TSUTAYA is, so to speak, a showcase of such models. And, that is why the TSUTAYA business will continue to serve as a lifestyle navigator, providing discovery, enjoyment, and excitement through DVDs, CDs, books, and video games. (Tsutaya Guiding Principles, June, 2009)¹³

The largest single demographic of the consumer base that has provided Tsutaya with so much “lifestyle information” is the F1-sou. Accordingly, the company’s marketers, equipped with millions of “lifestyle information possibilities” have zeroed in on the same consumer group that was a main target of the initial franchise, upgraded their original gendered spatial strategy (café meets media store), and rearranged their layout to funnel their now genre-browsing patrons directly through their new highly marketed and overtly packaged gender genre display rack: “Girl’s Style.”¹⁴

Just what exactly is “Girl’s Style” cinema? While a great deal of the “genre” seems to be romances, they are, in fact, not bound by the genre. *Sex and the City* (King, 2008) is an obvious find in the Girl’s Style rack, along with films like *Amélie* (Jeunet, 2001), *Love Actually* (Curtis, 2003), *Bridget Jones’s Diary* (Maguire, 2001), *Emma* (McGrath, 1996), and *Legally Blonde* (Luketic, 2001). Equally unsurprising are fare that feature female leads (women or girls) and female-centric narratives such as *Kill Bill* (Tarantino, 2003), *The Stepford Wives* (Oz, 2004), *Mr. & Mrs. Smith* (Liman, 2005), *Mean Girls* (Waters, 2004), and *Freaky Friday* (Waters, 2003). And yet films like *The Village* (Shyamalan, 2004), *I Love You Phillip Morris* (Requa, 2009), *Big Fish* (Burton, 2003), and *Little Miss Sunshine* (Faris, 2006) also find their way onto the pink-infused shelves of Girl’s Style Cinema.

According to the company itself, Girl’s Style Cinema is a “project developed by Tsutaya to create a corner for women from their 20s to their 30s.” Simple as that. And yet, because it is so very vague and broad, the company has to generate complexities to masquerade their direct marketing that is based on nothing other than the desire to generate revenue from a profitable demographic regardless of the film’s own characteristics, intent, artistic integrity, motifs, or original market. Tsutaya must *make* films into “Girl’s Style” and they do this through, first and foremost, literal packaging (paratexts), hence all the pink. Second, they use the power of scripted suggestion. Recommendation, which is just another form of advertisement, is central to the campaign. Appraisals that incorporate a cosmetic link to the individual, despite the wholly impersonal format, operate within the company’s larger goal of lifestyle creation. Recommendations appear

throughout the Girl's Style stacks—"If you like such and such, you are sure to like this" or "If you're the kind of woman who likes such and such, then this is the film for you"—and on the online site (<http://tsutaya.jp/gstcm>), as well as in their free, published monthly entertainment guide, TSUTAYA CLUB MAGAZINE. These recommendations, while nearly totally impersonal, affect a sense of self, i.e. the slogan "A New Self Begins," that targets the union of body—in this case a feminized, gendered body—with consumption. Which is why the company, for example, can incongruously suggest to their users that they consider the length and shape of the heart line on their hand in order to find the right kind of romance to watch. Tsutaya identifies four kinds of heart lines, provides diagrams, classifies them into types, and links the specific types, "A" through "D," to newly released romances (Yukimaru). Within Tsutaya's marketing concept, this makes absolute sense because film taste, a la gendering, has been inscribed upon the body.

While Tsutaya's Girl's Style Cinema is certainly the most organized, perhaps hamhanded (hearhanded), and trademarked phenomenon of F1-sou targeted film marketing, the company is certainly not alone in manufacturing a contemporary distribution of "woman's film," howsoever nebulous in definition. Since the mid-2000s, there has emerged a number of analogous marketing publications and slogans throughout both visual and print media, if not strictly in trademarked name *à la* Tsutaya then in shared conceit. For example, *Kinema Junpō*, Japan's premiere and longest running film journal, has published two special issues under the telling series title *No Movie, No Girl* dedicated to female moviegoers and the film genre they call the "Girlie Movie" (*Kinema Junpō No Movie, No Girl Vol. 1*; *Kinema Junpō No Movie, No Girl Vol. 2*). Columnist

and author Yamazaki Madoka penned an entire book celebrating contemporary “Girl’s Cine.” The hot pink cover of her book covers three verbal variations of Girl’s Style Cinema “*Joshi eiga sutairu*” (women’s film style), “Girl’s Cine,” and “*gāruzu mūbi*” (girls’ movies). Other publications, such as Yahoo BB’s monthly guide, rely on the non-committal standby concept of films that express “Girl Power.” And yet, like Tsutaya’s Girl’s Style Cinema, between the multitudinous sources there exists no coherent definition of what a Girl’s Style film actually is. The genre-scape of the Girl’s Style film, whatever the catch phrase incarnation, is vast indeed and subsumes films from all terrains including horror, science fiction, action, and comedy.

In the introduction to her book *Girl’s Cine Bravo!*, Yamasaki Madoka attempts to define Girl’s Style cinema: “For Girl’s Movies, there is a unique gaze and fundamental analysis. That is: when a woman rendered speechless can only express herself with a cheer of “*kiyā!*”...when the ending credits have all ended, only the words, “Oh, that was good!” remain.” In other, less exuberant, words the defining feature of Yamasaki’s Girl’s Style film is that women like it. It is a mostly arbitrary, yet well-groomed, consumption feedback loop based on the marketing of an idea and an identity in which the product is typified not by its content, but by an external calculation measured in the terms of the bodies of its primary consumer group. A “Girl’s Style” movie is a movie that women will like, these women are categorized as members of the F1-sou, and market statistics based on consumer trends of the category created by market research show that the F1-sou like movies advertised as movies that the F1-sou will like. This process is similar in some regards to the construct of the *josei eiga* of the post-war era, but vastly different in that

those genre films were conceptualized by their producers as films for women (regardless of who was actually watching them) whereas the Girl's Style films are conceptualized by distributors *post facto*; it is unlikely, for instance, that Tarantino set out to make a chick flick to target Japanese female audiences when he made the *Kill Bill* films. Excepting a most literal legal sense for the Tsutaya corporation, we can hardly call the larger cultural phenomenon of the Girl's Style films a genre or even a brand because the films (and the television shows, music, books, magazines, and other cultural products that have begun to fall under Girl's Style domain) themselves are now defined by the borrowed cultural concept of their consumers: femininity. And it's working.

In addition to the enthusiastic Yamasaki-san, an increasing number of books written by members of the *FI-sou* themselves rally to the call of the Girl's Style concept through such self-promotional ventures as LiLiCo's "*Eiga teki seikatsu*" (A Movie-esque Lifestyle, LiLiCo)," Tsuchiya Haruno's "*Yōkoso, Tsuchiya Meigaza e*" (Welcome to Tsuchiya's Masterpiece Theatre, Tsuchiya), and Mizuno Junko's "*A-ko-chan no Beautiful ♥ Cinema*" (A-ko's Beautiful ♥ Cinema, Mizuno). Although these publications are thinly veiled smoke screens for the authors' own self-solicitation and print fame (and that recognition, however minuscule, most notably comes with the creation of a public, overtly "girly," persona replete with printed hearts in the books' margins or headlines) they follow the same formula. Each book is built around the character of the author (representative of her readership) as she leads browsers through movie reviews, one short chapter per title, that summarize plots and provide explanations regarding the film's

qualities and features that “naturally” appeal to her demographic. Martha Stewart meets film critique.

Regardless of how financially successful or effective these small-print ventures may be, or the actual effect they may have on a supposed readership, such fan publications are a necessary component to the industry feedback system. They are promotions. They are validation. They are prime for the pump, primed by the pump. They also have an effect on future production/distribution guidelines. While capitalizing on market trends, these texts are another source of “lifestyle information” that influences distribution decisions by such companies as Tsutaya that have subsidiary print publishing companies in addition to film distribution operations. As each author weighs the pros and cons (read: her subjective likes and dislikes) of different films, the author represents herself as a spokesperson as well as trail guide for what women (in general) want: what themes, what scenes, what colors, and what shots. In this sense, the tailored demand for a specific feel and look to a film, the desires of the dominant demographic, culturally manifested in the construct of femininity howsoever rooted in or emerging from real bodies are changing the very content of film. These are, after all, just as much products of a marketing machine as the Girl’s Style image.

The combination of active F1-sou consumption of cinema and the industry’s active efforts (from in-house theatrical exhibition to VHS and DVD circulation) to target the F1-sou through the unification of body and consumption has led more recent film pundits to question whether or not film itself, not just the commercial infrastructure of film exhibition culture, has also been feminized. Is contemporary film in Japan meaning

the content itself, becoming, to borrow a phrase from the cover of December 2006 *Frau* magazine, a “woman’s thing” (see Figure 49)?

Thinking Pink

In this chapter I have attempted to cover the shifting terrain of film spectatorship in Japan’s major metropolitan centers (particularly Tokyo, but to some extent rural locations where applicable) from the 1960s to the present day, from the small art theaters of the ATG to the massive cineplexes at the heart of trendy commercial districts. While this is a tremendous undertaking, and certainly not as neat a trajectory as we might like given overlapping modes of exhibition practices throughout, the various bread crumb trails for



Figure 49. The cover of the December 2006 issue of FRAU magazine boldly declares, “Movies are a woman’s thing!” The feature article of the issue is on female director Sophia Coppola and her film *Marie Antoinette*, but supplementary pages focus on reviews and introductions of other films “for women,” by women, and starring women.

an orphaned demographic lead to the same indulgent destination: an excessive cotton candy cottage wherein stories featuring female characters are packaged by the thematic trappings of femininity. Abandoned by the domestic industry in the postwar era, both in terms of exhibition housing and content malnourishment, female spectators left the cinemas in search of other leisure entertainment and alternative stimulus. The project of luring them back, of enticing them back through cinema doors—in some instances spearheaded by women breaking out in the industry (e.g. Takano and Kawakita)—involved a complex process of transformation of public spaces, consumption practices and habits, advertising strategies, market fragmentation, paratextuality, and film content. Each component necessarily worked together to change gendered practices of moviegoing, no one solely responsible for the massive shift. The result is the creation of contemporary spaces unlike any moviegoing exhibition sites experienced in Japanese cinema history. As I have shown, Tsutaya, the mini-theaters, the Ebisu Garden Place, and the Shinjuku Picadilly are all examples of the perceived commercial feminization of film *context* (particularly physical and visual space) and film *content* within Japan's capital since the late 1980s. The key word underlying the mechanism of the transformation is the commercial creation and maintenance of “lifestyle” consumerism.

In an article published in *Eureka*'s pink and purple special edition on contemporary female filmmakers, Kimura Tatsuya, film critic, producer, and contemporary voice in domestic cinema circles, expresses his concerns. In regards to the recent boom of female film directors (the focus of the next chapter), Kimura opines, or rather maligns, that it is only natural that female filmmakers enjoy such success because film itself in Japan has

become a “girls’ thing” (*onna no ko tachi no mono*) (T. Kimura 60). This is an echo of the claim on the cover of FRAU magazine published the same month (see Figure 49), only with the disdainful flavor of infantilization (instead of “woman,” Kimura uses the term “girl”). Kimura specifically notes the predominance of romance and melodrama narratives in the 2000s, preferential marketing tactics oriented toward the F1-sou, and even analogies between multiplex theatre screen offerings and window shopping. Without offering any substantial, citable evidence, Kimura nevertheless draws upon his cultural memory and personal industry experience to link changes in demographics with changes in production. Drawing parallels to the dominance of 1970s yakuza films that targeted a young, male, post-occupation generation, Kimura notes that the movies that dominate the theaters in any given recent historical period are specifically tailored to match the perceived interests of the dominant consumer base. Kimura goes on to suggest that the current cinema climate has its roots in the manga industry (and its own boom of female authorship during the 1980s), as well as the field of television drama in the late 1990s. The cinematic changeover, he postulates, follows a similar pattern: women enter these industries at the level of print authorship as female writers (*josei sakka*), their influence of style and content infuses the medium with certain non-defined female or “girly” characteristics, these qualities appeal to female consumers who, in turn, support the field financially and facilitate ever-increasing authorial roles for women. As the fields themselves become dominated by this so-called “female content,” so, too, does the creative domain find itself directed by women.

However, Girl's Style cinema (to ride the Tsutaya band wagon), the product that has emerged to target the consumption patterns of the F1-sou, is similarly not so clear cut nor easily negotiated. First, like the programs featured in the 1980s mini-theaters, Girl's Style Cinema is a foreign cinema. In its flagship store, Tsutaya houses the Girl's Style display on its "foreign film" floor (5F) and in the "foreign film" section of its smaller branches. The primary film of FRAU's celebratory issue is Sophia Coppola's *Marie Antoinette* (2006), an extravaganza of pseudo-Rococo aesthetic similarly celebrated at the Ebisu Garden Place. And with very few exceptions, the films reviewed in the "Girly Cinema" guidebooks mentioned previously in the chapter are of Hollywood and European origin. The emphasis on foreign films in the niche marketing strategies directed at the F1-sou presents something of a difficulty for domestic production companies looking to attract the same market. In this sense, the threat of the Girl's Style Cinema is not just the threat of a mass-market feminization, but the threat of non-domestic corporate and cultural dominance.

Second, insofar as domestic production circles are concerned, while more women are working as screenwriters (as Kimura claims) and, as I likewise argue, there has been a drastic increase in commercial female directors, most of the domestic films that target the F1-sou—the romcoms, teen films (*seishun eiga*), and family dramas that concern Kimura—are still directed and produced by men. Timothy Iles has shown that although there has been an increase in media featuring central female characters and narratives concurrent with a rise in "female buying power" and progressive social movements for women, the

roles and motives of the characters ultimately serve to support the needs of a still flourishing patriarchy (Iles). He writes:

In Japan as elsewhere the vast majority of cinematic production is controlled by men, from scriptwriters to producers to directors. Thus female characters not only serve to support the necessities of plot, dramatic tension, and realism, but also serve to give voice to male imaginings of femaleness, reinforcing traditional gendered social constructions that position women as subservient, nurturing, identitiless and essentially silent....current Japanese films present a façade of support for strong female characters, while in fact subverting the notion of a progressive feminism through a very compelling, though insidious metaphor: that of voice.

This voice, Iles argues, is ultimately the voice of patriarchy that guides female characters into socially “appropriate” and conservative roles: predominantly caregivers and objects of heteronormative male desire. While it may be that there is more fare targeting the F1-sou, these films are not necessarily, ultimately, saying anything new and are often themselves subversions of so-called “girl power”—a complicated term in and of itself. Girl’s films, in this sense, are most decidedly not a “girl’s thing” at all. Moreover, as I will cover more in the next chapter, although these “female-oriented” genres may be proliferating in domestic theater programming, they are all but ignored by the dominant awards circuits and international export market, a testimony of value-laden judgement and dominant cultural values worldwide.

Third and last, any disdain for contemporary commercial cinema couched in gendered terms is simultaneously a critique of larger mechanisms of commercialism and mass consumption. It is a tired divide in which mass culture is devalued as inferior, laden with the the feminine attributes of subjectivity, emotional excess, and triviality, whereas high culture (in this case the cinema of the past) is elevated as genuine, objective, thoughtful, and of high aesthetic merit, all traditional male attributes (Huysen). When

culture, in this case film culture, is characterized by dominant critics as undergoing a process of “feminization,” it is simultaneously devalued as low-brow and commercial. When couched in a historical context—as in, over time film has become more feminine and contemporary cinema is now a “girl’s thing”—film of the past, a dominant men’s cinema, becomes, by distinction, the antithesis to Girl’s Style: high art. It is perhaps only expected that contemporaneous with a rise in “girly” film guidebooks written by women, there has also been a market for nostalgic theater guidebooks (mostly concerning the *meigaza*) written by men, both of which were used to write this chapter.

In light of this problematic dichotomy and gender imbalance, it may seem better to characterize the film industry as having always been a commercial market, historically and at present. This is, in fact, true, and it is simply that the dominant market has changed its demographic focus. But, I would argue, we cannot so easily dodge the contentious idea of film culture feminization in this way. We should not do this. On the one hand, the larger cultural perception is that film has undergone a process of feminization and that the diagnosis means different things to different groups of people. Clearly to Yamazaki Madoka (“*kyā*”), it is empowering. To Kimura Tatsuya, it may be the forlorn end of an era. To F1-sou moviegoers, it means more options. To non-F1-sou moviegoers it may not mean fewer options. On the other hand, as I have discussed at great length, there has been a legitimate project of gendering space and content within Japanese cinema since the late 1980s. Marketers, distributors, and exhibitors have aggressively targeted women, drastically transforming film culture in order to do so. The path of the transformation involved the strategic unification of mass consumption and

lifestyle consumerism, thereby legitimately forging a connection between contemporary cinema and mass market consumerism. It is therefore right, I argue, to consider the changes in recent film consumption in Japan as a process of culturally constructed “feminization,” and it is equally right to consider what this means both objectively and subjectively. As I will show next, both positive and negative connotations of this “feminization” have had an impact on contemporary female film directors. While the creation of a market for women has fostered a new generation of women in cinema, the simultaneous linkage between femininity and low-brow consumer culture has made the place for women in cinema no less difficult to navigate.

Notes

¹ As of March, 2008, there were 1,327 Tsutaya stores in Japan with over 27 million members. According to the company’s membership statistics, one out of five people in Japan have a Tsutaya membership and, more specifically, one out of two people in their 20s are active Tsutaya renters. Although there are other video store companies, and recently alternative online rental companies such as Posuren, Tsutaya remains the commercial leader with ever new enterprise strategies such as Netflix-like online rental operations (TSUTAYA DISCAS) that offer both home delivery as well as burnable, digital HD downloads. In 2009, the company estimated that they have an average of one million new accounts per month. Additionally, Tsutaya also offers the T-card: a credit card that also operates as a point card at Tsutaya locations as well as at 43 partner companies.

² The ranKing ranQueen retail chain is comprised of eight stores—five in Tokyo, two in Yokohama, and one in Fukuoka—owned by the Tokyu Corporation. The outlets are rather unusual in their merchandise. Based on the fluctuations of a trend obsessed consumer market, ranKing ranQueen only stock the top 3, 5, or 10 items in an ever fluctuating list of categories derived from sales data accumulated from the Tokyu retail enterprise (including their department stores, Tokyu Hands, and the JR East Japan Retail Network) and from independent data sources Tokyu, *Ranking Ranqueen*, Available: www.ranking-ranqueen.net, October 5, 2011. The stock may include anything from bath powders and beauty supplies to cell phones and pasta sauces. Items are swapped out of shelves every week to reflect the most up to date product rankings.

³ The word *ronin* means “masterless samurai” but has been appropriated as contemporary slang to mean a white-collar worker who is between jobs (companies) or a high school graduate who has not yet been admitted to a University. Here, I am using it tongue-in-cheek to refer to spectator demographics who used to, but no longer, attend theaters.

⁴ Jasper Sharp, as yet the leading Western authority on Japanese pink films, is quite adamant on the point that pinku eiga can and are enjoyed by female audiences on their own terms, meaning in safe and friendly environments. In particular, he cites female interest in retro pink films beginning in the mid-90s in such venues as “Ladies Night” art houses and adult-themed TV channels and internet sites aimed at women spectators (Sharp, *Behind the Pink Curtain* 293). He also insists that the increasing number of women participating in the production of pink films—from crew to even director—suggests an area of accessible interest for women in the genre. Indeed, in August of 2010, the Okura Theater in Tokyo’s Ueno district added what they called “Female-ing:” a weekly women’s only pinku eiga event Bree Bull. “Historic ‘Pink’ Theater Hopes to Put Ladies on Seats, Not Just Screens.” *The Japan Times Online* August 1, 2010. However, despite his claims to increased female participation, Sharp describes the contemporary pink theater thusly:

Salarymen on extended lunch breaks, sheltering from the rain or taking advantage of the air-conditioning during the long hot summer months, or just wanting somewhere comfortable to sit alone and while away the hours—these are the pink theatres’ [sic] primary patrons. During the screenings, dark figures shuffle in and out of the auditorium, seldom seeing an entire film through from beginning to end. Most theatres [sic] have incredibly low projection standards, the sound barely audible above the rumbling of passing commuter trains and the lights only marginally dimmed to discourage the less than savoury [sic] habits of some of their clientele. (309-310)

⁵ There are, of course, some meigaza still running today and others that lasted into the late 1990s.

⁶ A slightly affectionate term for elderly men.

⁷ Cybriwsky interprets the seemingly open gated access to Ebisu as a security surveillance measure in which private spaces masquerade as public spaces Roman Cybriwsky. “Changing Patterns of Urban Public Space: Observations and Assessments from the Tokyo and New York Metropolitan Areas.” *Cities* 16.4 (1999).

⁸ Japanese theaters do not, as yet, recognize couples in any non heteronormative sense.

⁹ During the writing of this section in late December of 2011, the Shinjuku Picadilly was advertising another campaign, a “Happy Valentine” campaign centered on the film *Twilight: Breaking Dawn* (2011).

¹⁰ Uriu’s age spread was a little wider at fifteen to thirty-four, a difference that included teenage girls.

¹¹ Morimoto traces the fandom of HK pop stars back to public image of Bruce Lee in the 1970s, but identifies Jackie Chan as the point and person in time in which the popularity of HK stars becomes a profitable venture for distributors within Japan.

¹² The Culture Convenience Club has 59 subsidiaries and 14 associated companies including LOFT, Virgin Megastores Japan Co., Ltd, Sumiya Co., Ltd., Rentrak Japan Co., Ltd., Esquire Magazine Japan Co., Ltd., and Digital Hollywood Co., Ltd.

¹³ Culture Convenience Club website www.ccc.jp/english/guide/life.html.

¹⁴ “Girl’s Style” is no longer the frontispiece of the Tsutaya layout. However, the organized displays are still running strong and clear in the regular stacks as of March, 2011.

CHAPTER V

A NEW WAVE

There is no such thing as unmanipulated writing, filming, or broadcasting.
Claire Johnston (252)

I want to be known as a filmmaker, not a woman filmmaker...there are male directors and women directors who produce interesting and not so interesting films, regardless of their sex. I don't think there's any difference in approach or subject matter between men or women.
Tanada Yuki

Women have a way of portraying a particular feeling. No matter what setting I'm in, I am me as a woman. My way of making things is, of course, a woman's way of making things. Isn't that, then, the reality. In movies and photographs...you can only express your own experience and perspective of reality. I can only make things that revolve around my own experience. I can only make things that are within the reach of myself...That is how it is for women...That is my tremendous strength.
Ninagawa Mika (*Kantoku Nikki*)

Romantic narratives and pink packaging of the Girl's Style aside, if the tagline of the all-female staffed independent publication *Cinema Journal*¹ is any indication, what women *really* want is "films by women, for women." While the journal certainly doesn't speak for womankind (although there is something of a sisterhood vibe to the publication whose contributors claim to write from a particularly "female perspective" (cinemajournal.net)), marketers seem to agree. Contemporaneous with the feminization of film (figuratively embodied by the "Girl's Style" and "Girly Movie" labels and literally embodied by women returning to exhibition venues) there has been a boom in female directors working in commercial cinema. Although these women, like their predecessors, have been largely ignored by international (read: Western) audiences all along the import-to-critic supply chain, domestic advertisers and producers have

identified and earmarked female filmmakers as important F1-sou consumer magnets.

Their simple guiding philosophy is that like attracts like.

In this chapter I turn the focus of the project away from one form of spectatorship and exhibition (theaters and the F1-sou) to a more metacritical study of spectatorship and exhibition that is quite often overlooked: the directors and their texts as seen through the gaze of film critics and specialists both within the industry (producers, PR firms, distributors) and without (journalists, critics, scholars). Here I am interested in how contemporary Japanese female directors and their films are marketed (the construction of public perception), how they themselves are received, evaluated, and promoted (their director/auteur personas), and the tricky negotiations they exercise in order to make themselves visible (as participants or outliers) in the heavily zoned commercial industry of Japan's contemporary film world. Although all the directors I will feature have experienced commercial success and public recognition (in Japan), not all directors have been treated equally by the gatekeepers of a constructed and guarded Japanese national cinema. Nor does each director choose the same path to self-promotion and public image creation. As such, while I investigate the constructed images of Japanese female filmmakers I also ask, "What does it take to get *in*?"

Introducing a New Generation

One day, an angry male customer came from the (theater) hall to the office with a message. I went out to deal with him and his opinion was: 'Recently you've only been doing films by female directors, but I want you to do the masterpiece films like in the old days!' I boldly replied, 'Sir (*okyakusama*). The times have changed. Now the good Asian films are by women.'

Iwanami Ritsuko

Before considering how female directors are imagined by popular discourse and marketing packages, I would like to introduce some of the most prominent directors individually. Although there are many women working in commercial cinema now (and even more in documentary, experimental, and short form cinema), this project focuses on a core group of directors who have garnered a considerable amount of attention and acclaim (see Appendix A) and represent the current common career paths to film direction in commercial cinema.

Nishikawa Miwa

Director, screenwriter, and novelist Nishikawa Miwa (see Figure 50) is at the perceived forefront of the current generation of Japanese female filmmakers. However, she stands noticeably apart from her contemporaries both in reception and acclaim. In addition to her pedigree as a Waseda University graduate and protégé of director Kore'eda Hirokazu (she first worked for him as a staff member on *Wondafaru raifu* (Kore'eda, *After Life*, 1998) and he has subsequently produced her films) critics laud her works as reminiscent of classical Japanese cinema. Such high praise perhaps comes as no surprise considering that her film *Dear Doctor* (2009), starring popular entertainer and personality Shōfukutei Tsurube, won over twenty domestic awards (including the Kinema Jumpō Best Film Prize) and came very close to winning the Japanese Academy Award for Best Film, which would have made Nishikawa the first woman to receive the prize.

西川美和
(にしかわ・みわ)

Nishikawa Miwa
Born 1974, Hiroshima Prefecture

Graduate of Waseda University. Worked on Kore'eda Hirokazu's *Afterlife* (1998) during her studies at Waseda. Debut film: *Hebi Ichigo* (2002)

Filmography as feature-length director:

2002	<i>Hebi Ichigo</i>
2005	<i>female (megami no kakato segment)</i>
2006	<i>Yureru</i>
2007	<i>Yume jūya</i> (the ninth dream segment)
2009	<i>Dear Doctor</i>
2012	<i>Yume uru futari</i>



Mainichi Film Concours Best Screenplay 2003
Yokohama Film Festival Best New Director 2004
— — Best Screenplay 2006, 2009
— — Best Director 2006
Japanese Professional Movie Director Award 2006
Blue Ribbon Award Best Director 2007, 2010
Japanese Academy Award Best Screenplay 2009
Kinema Junpō Best Film 2009
— — Best Screenplay 2006, 2009
Best Director Hoichi Film Award 2010

Figure 50. Biographical data and promotional photo of director Nishikawa Miwa during her *Dear Doctor* (2009) festival circuit. Image source blog.udn.com/dodobear/4096018.

Despite the acclaim, Nishikawa does not particularly distinguish herself as a director of artistic composition, creative cinematography, or inventive editing, although she is quite adept at creating mood and tone that borrows on familiar styles and imagery; for example, she draws strongly on the aesthetics of contemporaries Kore'eda and Kitano Takeshi and as such builds rather knowable visual worlds that inspire a sense of cinematic nostalgia (a point I will return to later in the chapter). Instead, the strengths of

her filmmaking are excellent casting (she is quite connected), effective directing, and compelling storytelling (see Figure 51).

Nishikawa is a writer. Her background as a screenwriter and novelist is evident in her films, and in fact she publishes novels in-between cinema projects. She transforms her writing into visual narration on the screen, and her films are powerful experiences for plot-hungry spectators. They bear attributes we expect from print novels: metaphor, foreshadowing, parallelism, and lyricism. Take, for example, *Dear Doctor*, a mystery/drama that explores the relationships between a country doctor, his patients, and staff. These relationships are strained when, after the doctor goes missing, the small village learns that he was not a licensed doctor and had never been to medical school. Although the dramatic developments in the film are quiet and understated and the surprise twist (his fraudulent background) is a rather drawn-out dramatic irony, the narrative of the film unfolds poetically, replete with visual and verbal clues, allusions, and clever parallels accessible in the juxtaposition of small moments that warrant repeat viewings. To some extent, this almost literary style is also Nishikawa's cinematic shortcoming. The narrative nuances in her films are almost too few and far between, too reliant on a knowledge of the film as a whole, and are lost in a strangely direct cause-and-effect sequence of events that relies on stock characters.

While the thematic cores of her films are compelling, characterization falls short. To use *Dear Doctor* again as an example, the tone and serious nature of the protagonist's lie lends the characters a veneer of psychological interiority as they each process the situation, but ultimately Nishikawa relies on canned personas who act and feel as we

expect and accept given their cultural archetypes: a city-raised youth who learns values only accessible in the countryside, a scam artist with a heart of gold, and a suffering elderly mother who doesn't want to be a burden to her children. Nishikawa trades on these stock archetypes at the expense of individual depth or motivation.

Be that as it may, Nishikawa is clearly developing a consistent style across her films that emphasizes rack focus shots, ambitious cutaways, hip jazz and blues soundtracks that amusingly contrast with bucolic settings, and a precise delivery of orchestrated absolute silence. The articulation of silence (both diegetic and non-diegetic), especially for psychological reveal, emotional expression, or public and private trauma as a cinematic expression of *ishin denshin* (non verbal heart to heart communication), has been a particular staple of classic Japanese cinema and Nishikawa borrows on this tradition. Although she pays particular attention to the interplay between sound and image in all her films, it is a prominent motif in *Yureru* (*Sway*, 2006), a courtroom drama concerning two brothers split over the death of a shared love interest.

Early in the film, an altercation erupts between protagonist Yakeru (played by heartthrob Odagiri Jō) and his father Isamu (veteran actor Ibu Masatō). Isamu knocks over a bottle of *sake* during the outburst and Yakeru's brother Minoru (the exceedingly popular character actor Kagawa Teruyuki) rushes to clean up the spilled alcohol. While wiping down the *tatami* flooring, Minoru doesn't notice that the *sake* bottle is still overturned behind him, dripping its remaining contents onto his pant leg. However, we notice and so does Yakeru. Nishikawa pairs a close up of the *sake* bottle and Minoru's leg with nearly absolute silence; the only sound on the audio track is the effect of droplets

hitting fabric. Nishikawa then cuts to a reaction shot of Yakeru who clearly sees and focuses on the drops of liquid even from across a tumultuous room as if, like the audio track, Yakeru too hears the droplets and nothing else. Poignantly, Yakeru sees the spill, but says nothing to his brother. He witnesses but does not react. This curious image and sound juxtaposition serves as a mysterious and reflective interrupt so early in the film. For a first time viewer, it may simply signify the unspoken tension in the family, acting as a cutaway, symbolic of unrest and foreshadowed disaster. For the repeat spectator, this small moment is in fact part of a larger image/sound motif. The crux of the entire film is whether or not Yakeru saw the dispute between Minoru and shared love interest Chieko (Maki Yōko) atop a swaying bridge just prior to her death. More to the point, what police investigators and spectators want to know is if whether or not Yakeru could *hear* their fight over the roar of the river below. If he did, he would know what the police are trying to unearth in the film: whether or not Yōko's death was an accident. But what the early *sake* incident reveals to the audience is that Yakeru the photographer and documenter sees and hears all. It is his perpetual, recalcitrant choice to remain noncommittal, aloof, and perhaps silent.

As is apparent from the star-studded cast in both *Yureru* and *Dear Doctor*, unlike many women directors currently working Nishikawa features male characters and male-oriented narratives that emphasize issues of ethics and self, often coded within troubled masculinity. Although her first two filmmaking efforts centralized female characters (*Hebi Ichigo*, *Wild Strawberries*, 2002 and her segment in *female*, 2005), her subsequent works focus so resolutely on male protagonists that the figure of women and women's

roles is a glaring absence. Early on in *Yureru* the female love interest dies and the two brothers are simultaneously haunted via implied narrative parallelism by the death of their mother. In *Yume jūya* (*Ten Nights of Dreams*, 2007), Nishikawa alters the original Soseki story of the ninth dream to suggest issues of a mother's abandonment for the young male child (also inserting the perspective of the slain husband badgered by his wife not present in the original text). The central relationships at play in *Dear Doctor* are between protagonist Dr. Ino Osamu (Shōfukutei), his understudy Soma Keisuke (Eita) as well as Ino's estranged senile father, but they play out against the backdrop foil of troubles between an ailing, lonely older woman in the country and her own estranged daughter (also a doctor) living in Tokyo.

Between her films, Nishikawa expresses an interest in the role of honesty in society (played out in the dynamics within dysfunctional families) and the related capricious nature of fact derived from personal testimony operating in systems of power. While her previous films *Yureru* and *Hebi Ichigo* were studies on truth—who has access to it, how it relates to perception, its fallacious relationship to the law, and the terrible power it grants to those who possess it—*Dear Doctor* touches upon the same issues in regards to lies. As the film's tagline "Is this lie a sin?" suggests, Nishikawa asks viewers to reconsider conventional cultural ethics that automatically render falsehoods as wrongdoings. In both *Dear Doctor* and *Yureru* Nishikawa incorporates the legal justice system, individual and community consciousness, and a liar's terribly vital power over others.



Figure 51. Marketing *chirashi* for Ninagawa Miwa’s three most recent full length feature films: *Yureru*, *Dear Doctor*, and *Yume uru futari* (*Dreams for Sale*, 2012). Nishikawa’s films are clearly billed as serious dramas that play on dichotomous couplings arranged in near graphic matches that are strategically divided by design elements: two bedraggled halves of the marriage partnership in *Yume uru futari* are split by the film title in yellow, the young, city-slicker intern and the older, countryside doctor in *Yureru* are matched in profile but contrast in nuanced meaning-laden angles, and the character Hayakawa Takeru (played by heartthrob Odagiri Joe, obviously milked for star power in the advertising) against himself.

Ogigami Naoko

Barber Yoshino (2004) opens with a legacy of shots from the Japanese cinema canon: a slow pan of a sleepy *furusato* village, a zoom in on a distinctive cultural artifact, static environmental shots of bamboo swaying in the breeze, and cherry trees bursting with blossoms. Soon, a procession of grade-school boys with identical bowl haircuts walk in single file underneath the beautiful boughs. They obediently raise their right hands as they cross the street, even though no adults are watching, before climbing up the winding stair-speckled paths of their hillside neighborhood. They pass briefly under an impressive white Shintō gate before ascending to the village shrine. There they wait to have their hair carefully combed into uniform, black domes by the village barber.


Groomed to perfection, the boys, suddenly suited in white choir vestments, stand side-by-side on a small stone walkway. Quite unexpectedly, and at comedic odds with the overtly crafted environment of cliché Japanese tradition (albeit with some telltale quirks), they sing the Hallelujah chorus from Handel’s *Messiah* backed by full orchestral accompaniment. For some, independent director Oigami Naoko’s (see Figure 52) arrival on the Japanese cinema scene is a similar tongue-in-cheek breath of fresh air.

荻上直子
(おぎがみ・なおこ)
Oigami Naoko
Born 1972, Chiba Prefecture

Chiba University, Image Science, 1994.
Studied Film Production at University of Southern California, USA. Debut film: *Barber Yoshino* (2003).

Filmography as feature-length director:

1999	<i>Ayako</i>
2001	<i>Hoshino-kun Yumeno-kun</i>
2003	<i>Barber Yoshino</i>
2004	<i>Koi wa go shichi go</i>
2006	<i>Kamome shokudo</i>
2007	<i>Megane</i>
2010	<i>Toiretto</i>
2012	<i>Rentaneko</i>



PIA Scholarship Prize 2000
 — Best Music 2000
 — Audience Award 2000
 — Best Director 2006
 Berlin Film Festival Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk
 Special Mention 2004
 — Manfred Salzgeber Award 2008

Figure 52. Director Oigami Naoko holding the script to her 2010 film *Toiretto (Toilet)*. Image source ppp.asianfilmmarket.org.

After graduating from Chiba University's Image Science program, Oigami tired of her field: still photography; she wanted to see her images move. Feeling that the then extent training curriculums at Japanese film production schools were not a good fit for

her, she moved to the U.S. and earned a graduate degree in film production at the University of Southern California. While in the program, she invested in a year of intensive English language training, participated in several promo films and television commercial projects, and made her own short films. After completing the degree and returning to Japan, her first domestic short film *Hoshino-kun and Yumeno-kun* (*Hoshino and Yumeno*, 2000) won the Best Music Award, the Audience Award, and the Scholarship Prize at the Tokyo-based PIA Film Festival. Like so many other independent filmmakers in Japan, the PIA festival wins were the catalyst for her career. Oigami has been making films at a steady pace ever since, each with increased domestic and international attention.

Oigami's border-crossing background leaves an indelible imprint on her body of work. Trained in the foundations of Japanese imagery and shaped by a lengthy period abroad in the heart of Los Angeles film production, her work bears unmistakable overtones of internationalism. In some cases, the theme is embodied by Japanese characters living abroad who juggle their integration into foreign environments with efforts to preserve a sense of home (*Kamome shokudo*, *Seagull Diner*, 2006; *Toiretto*, *Toilet*, 2010). In *Megane* (*Glasses*, 2007), characters escape the metonym of Tokyo as Japan and retreat to an otherworldly Okinawan-island-as-exotic-Other in order to find themselves. In her earlier, more close-to-home films, she playfully questions and reinterprets the homogeneity of a presumed, essential Japanese cultural identity by incorporating traits that would be considered by the same ideological framework as imported characteristics: self-expression and individualism (*Barber Yoshino*, 2004; *Koi*

wa go shichi go, Love is 5 7 5, 2005). What these iterations have in common is the re-imagination of space and culture, but without the angst or anxiety found in the cinema by many of her contemporaries. In so doing, Oigami brings a fresh look, tone, and voice to contemporary Japanese cinema, proving that compelling and insightful art cinema doesn't have to be packaged in doom and gloom.

Despite international motifs and narrative conclusions focused on celebrating cultural difference in harmony with cultural adaptation that are based on her own experiences, according to Oigami nowhere do her films raise more confusion or misapprehension than in the U.S. "Many [Americans] want some kind of an answer to every question that is posed. They want to assign some kind of meaning to everything presented in the movie." These critiques are often linked to complaints that her works seem to lack a narrative, that "nothing happens." It may be that her original draw to filmmaking—a desire to see her still photographs move—influenced a style that privileges image over plot. After all, in interviews Oigami is clear to draw a distinction between the desire to make pictures that move as opposed to moving pictures (narrative films). That said, what perplexes Oigami about these criticisms, or the suggestion that she is an "atmospheric" filmmaker, is that she feels her films *do* have stories to tell. As the screenwriter, she distinctly remembers writing them. Although the detractors undoubtedly help define differences in reception cultures more than they provide a nuanced appraisal of Oigami's work, it is true that her films are understated in terms of conflict or explicit cause-and-effect narrative. Oigami's characters aren't saving the world, combating gangsters, or fighting against a ticking clock; they are composing

haiku, making *onigiri* rice balls, learning to relax, or practicing air guitar. Or, as some reviewers prefer, Oigami's films are "quiet" "slice of life" pictures.

Comparisons to Ozu Yasujiro feel as inevitable as they are perhaps tiresome. Certainly the similarities are there. Just as *Barber Yoshino*'s cast of grade-school boys who (with their nostalgic bowl cuts) question and then rebel against both their parents and the past seems like a contemporary retelling of either *Umaretakedo (I Was Born, But..., 1932)* or *Ohayo (Good Morning, 1959)*, Oigami's subsequent "quiet" "slice of life" scenarios invite easy parallels to Ozu's oeuvre and his narrative formulas that were more invested in characters and setting than dramatic events. So too does Oigami's aesthetic style suggest an Ozu influence: with each film, she develops an ever increasing preference for pillow shots, the illusion of flat space derived from bright lighting and defined colors, deep-focus long shots, carefully centered subjects, attention to negative space, and frame-within-frame composition. Oigami herself welcomes such comparisons, explaining that she is a fan of Ozu's work and finds the comments complimentary.

However, Oigami is probably equally, if not more, influenced by American independent cinema, particularly character sketch films such as *Welcome to the Dollhouse* (Solondz, 1995), *Ghost World* (Zwigoff, 2001), and *American Splendor* (Berman and Pulcini, 2003)—all films she cites as inspiring the tenor of her newest film *Toiretto*. In fact, it is not much of a stretch to draw parallels between Oigami and American auteur Wes Anderson. Both are studied filmmakers who borrow from a multitude of national film histories, invest in a personal and signature aesthetic style,

craft distinctive characters, reuse actors (e.g. actress Motai Masako appears in every one of Ogigami's feature-length films), and afford a great deal of attention to detailed environments. Just as imitations of Anderson's techniques feel derivative, so too has Ogigami generated a distinctive look and feel: Ohmori Mika's film *Pūru* (2009), starring Ogigami favorites Motai Masako and Kobayashi Satomi, set abroad with a preference for deep focus cinematography, understated character relationships, and illustrious close-ups of mouth watering food (all Ogigami staples), was marketed to spectators as "Ogigami-esque."

What most distinguishes Ogigami from international contemporaries and a domestic legacy is tone. Her films are so positive that they are almost utopian. Some may take exception with her fictional worlds that are largely devoid of strife, especially economic class disparity. For example, *Kamome Shokudō*'s protagonist never seems to worry about the financial repercussions of her empty restaurant and *Toiretto*'s grand matriarch mysteriously has a wallet packed with one-hundred (Canadian) dollar bills. Be that as it may, Ogigami does wonders with gender. She refreshingly offers new roles for women secure in themselves, who find personal fulfillment outside the trappings of romance, family, and the culture of *kawaii* (cute). She is good to her male characters too, recasting masculinity in vulnerable, rarely visualized situations that feel healthy, honest, and humanizing. Together, her characters find happy endings outside the staid confines of romantic ever-afters. Instead, friendships revel in simply relishing everyday sundries like sunsets, delicious food, and the washlet. While not a perfect depiction of gender equality—contingent as it is on utopian circumstances—Ogigami's works are certainly an

important step in breaking down a legacy of rigid and tired on-screen stereotypes (see Figure 53).



Figure 53. Marketing *chirashi* for Oigigami Naoko's films. These marketing *chirashi* do more to deliver the Oigigami aesthetic and atmosphere than provide a sense of narrative. The press sheets for *Kamome shokudo*, *Megane*, and *Rentaneko* (*Rent-a-Cat*, 2012) reveal the Oigigami staples: long shots that diminish human figures in scale to their environment, a preference for pastel color palettes (particularly blues and greens), bright flood lighting, and high contrast color balance.

Tanada Yuki

Tanada Yuki has a soft spot for underdogs. Or, in her own words, she has “developed an inclination toward those not touched by the sun” (*taiyo ni ataranai hito ga ki ni nacchau*) (M. Saitō). Indeed, many of Tanada’s films, which emphasize the contemporary lives of young people, feature awkward, ungainly, and often downright unattractive (by cinema standards) characters unwittingly caught in a complicated mess of societal decay. That said, Tanada’s taste for depicting the misfortunate may be criticized as rather zealous in hyperbole. Take, for example, *Akai bunka jūtaku no Hatsuko* (2007), an adaptation of the manga by the same name starring Higashi Ayu as the eponymous Hatsuko. Set in the industrial rural outskirts of Fukuyama City

タナダユキ

Tanada Yuki

Born 1975, Fukuoka Prefecture

Image Forum's Institute of the Moving Image.
Wrote the screenplay for Ninagawa Mika's
2007 film *Sakuran*. Debut film: *Moru* (2000).

Filmography as feature-length director:

2000	<i>Moru</i>
2003	<i>Takada Wataru mota</i>
2004	<i>Tsuki to Cherry</i>
2006	<i>Have a nice day</i> (segment)
2007	<i>Akai bunka jūtaku no hatsuko</i>
2008	<i>Hyakuman-en to nigamushi onna</i>
2008	<i>Oretachi ni asu wa naissu</i>
2012	<i>Fugainai boku wa sora wo mita</i>



PIA Film Festival Grand Prix 2001
Directors Guild of Japan New Directors
Award 2008
Udine Far East Film Audience Award 2009
Puchon International Fantastic Film Festival
Netpac Award 2009

Figure 54. Director Tanada Yuki on the set of *Oretachi ni asu wa naissu* (*Ain't No Tomorrows*, 2008), watching the action over the shoulder of her cameraman. Image source ticket-news.pia.jp/pia/news.do?newsCd-200811100005.

(Hiroshima prefecture), the film plots the increasingly disheartening fate of young Hatsuko, a middle school student (*sannensei*). She lives with her brother on the second floor of a dilapidated row house, orphaned by her deceased mother and runaway father. The film opens with payday at a ramen shop where she works part-time. The miserly owner jilts her salary and then, a few scenes later, fires her without real justification other than apparent stinginess. The impact the severance will have is made painfully clear early on in the film when, after returning home with her pay, the 15-year-old Hatsuko partitions her income into separate envelopes marked “gas bill,” “electricity bill,” “rent,”

and “food.” She entrusts these payments to her older brother Katsuhiko who has dropped out of high school to work at a local factory where he mostly manufactures trouble and fistfights. Hatsuko also divides the food allowance of 600 yen (~\$7.50 USD) between herself and Katsuhiko, selflessly giving him 400 to her own 200. She is surprised later in the day to come home from school to a dark apartment. The electricity has been shut off because Katsuhiko spends the utility money on his primary hobbies: prostitution and drinking. Hatsuko subsequently spends most of the night studying by candlelight. And this, really, is just how Tanada gets things going.

Life doesn't get any better for literally poor Hatsuko. Most of the film concerns the important decision she must make: does she follow her desire to apply for highschool with the aim of a better future or does she leave education after junior high, follow the footsteps of Katsuhiko, and enter the workforce. Without parents to advise or support her and with a brother who is a walking liability, the only adult in Hatsuko's life left to rely on is the person whose actual job it is to help her make this decision: her homeroom teacher. Unfortunately, this particular public servant is mostly interested in text messaging her boyfriend, and showing up to class too hungover to take attendance. Throughout the film, Hatsuko is consistently ill due to malnutrition—she mainly survives on a small amount of cooked rice diluted with hot water—which gets her briefly entangled with a religious cult against her will. These dire circumstances force Hatsuko to abandon dreams of high school; instead she takes a job in a biscuit factory. The only positive thing in her life is her boyfriend from middle school who has promised out of the true, zealous love of fifteen-year-olds that they will marry after he graduates highschool.

The situation limps along until the town transient follows her home one day and reveals himself as her estranged father. That very night he sets the row house on fire, surrendering himself (and all of the family's belongings) to the flames. Homeless and now decidedly fatherless, Hatsuko must leave Fukuyama. She heads off for employment in a bigger city, with only the promise of marriage to her middle school sweetheart to keep the tears at bay. This is a promise, as producer Koshikawa Michio wrote, that everyone in the audience knows is impossible.

While *Akai bunka jūtaku no Hatsuko* is perhaps the most extreme example of Tanada's penchant for calamity, her other films, more comedic, nevertheless follow suit. If not replete with dramatic tragedy, awkward and unsavory situations do seem to be Tanada's calling card. Yukari, the protagonist of Tanada's debut film and PIA Grand Prix winner *Moru (Mole, 2001)*, has two problems. First, her periods are painful and curious: they generally begin with witnessing a man committing suicide and result in blackouts, fevers, and a rather medically specious need for suppositories. Second, her love life is no less unlucky as we see her cycle through a series of "no good men" ("*dame dame na otoko*") including womanizers, perverts, and violent abusers. College student Tadokoro of *Tsuki to cherry (Electric Button, 2004)* falls in love with upperclassman Mayama, who is the most prolific and successful author in their erotic literature club. Unfortunately for him, Mayama, who takes his virginity, is only into the purely sexual relationship to get crib notes for her stories, to which end she arranges a series of surprising and unwelcome sexual encounters for Tadokoro. He complies out of a deluded notion that they are in an emotional relationship. *Hyakumanen to nigamushi onna's (One Million Yen Girl, 2008)*

friendless and introverted Suzuko is a young ex-con. Before prison, she worked as a waitress and lived with her family, but was persuaded by her only “friend” and fellow coworker to move into an apartment together. On moving day, the friend was nowhere to be found. Instead, her ex-boyfriend appeared, who had been added to the lease without consultation to Suzuko before the breakup. He’s a grade-A jerk whose *pièce de résistance* unfolds when he throws out a preposterously cute kitten Suzuko found—her new only “friend”—into the rainy street. Of course, Suzuko finds it dead on the ground. In turn, Suzuko throws out all of the transgressor’s belongings and goes to prison for the crime (it is illegal in Japan to wrongfully dispose of another’s possessions). Soured on human relationships, she avoids social interactions, traveling from town to town, taking jobs only to save up one million yen so that she can move on to the next town. Suzuko’s post-prison journeys are intercut with scenes of her younger brother, the subject of some truly gut-wrenching and emotionally trying grade school bullying. Lastly, Tanada’s newest film to date, *Oretachi ni ashita wa naissu* (*Ain’t no Tomorrows*, 2008), follows the sexual initiations of six highschoolers as they stumble their way through simultaneously hilarious and seat squirmingly maladroït makeouts, premature ejaculations, first periods, and erectile dysfunction.

Plots aside, Tanada brings an interesting voice and fresh perspective to contemporary Japanese cinema, a trait for which she is turning heads. Many critics are attracted to her candid and unflinching approach to (heteronormative) youth sexuality, particularly in *Tsuki to cherry* and *Oretachi*, both sometimes referred to as pink films. The PR writer for Ticket Pia’s online news site even linked *Oretachi* to traditions and

standards of both the Nikkatsu roman porunos and the ATG .² While some reviewers have been tempted to characterize these films as sex films “from a woman’s/female perspective” (e.g. Japan-Society; Bourne), such a description is both misleading and reductive. It should go without saying that of course there is no such thing as “a woman’s perspective” or “a female perspective” (and yet obviously it still does not). Moreover, Tanada is even more vociferous than Nishikawa Miwa in denying any special gender attributes to her films:

I want to be known as a filmmaker, not a woman filmmaker...there are male directors and women directors who produce interesting and not so interesting films, regardless of their sex. I don't think there's any difference in approach or subject matter between men or women. (Sharp “Tanada Yuki”)

Tanada has even, on occasion, distanced herself from other female directors, refusing to be labeled as a “woman director”:

I think [the contemporary female directors] are great, but I don't feel aware of them [when writing or making films]...no matter how much I respect the films that they make, it doesn't define (*tsukurenai*) me. I'm not an Osaka mama, but they are them and I am me (*yoso wa yoso, uchi wa uchi*). (M. Saitō 43)

Even though feminist epistemology has taught us that denying the impact of one’s embodied subject position is about as futile as the idea of a monolithic gendered perspective, Tanada is clear that her films are not intended to be overt expressions of such a stance or message. Moreover, *Tsuki* and *Oretachi*, follow the perspectives—formally backed by voice-overs, continuity editing, and POV shots—of their male characters. Any “female perspective” represented diegetically by the young women in these two films is slim at best. Rather, Tanada plays with the male subject position, reinterpreting and recasting the masculine role in a pink film: she treats her male characters with role-

reversing emotional vulnerability, body objectification, sexual incompetence, and a passive subservience to their domineering female counterparts.

Though *Tsuki* and *Oretachi* seem to have generated the most interest and press (in no small part, I would argue, to the sensationalized novelty of a woman director making sex films), but her other works have little to no graphic content. *Moru*, *Hatusko*, and *Hyakumanen* all follow the narratives of female protagonists who muster strength and perseverance as they struggle with the indifferent inequities of a society stacked against them. Sex scenes or no, there is a prevailing theme throughout Tanada's body of work: women get the short stick in a man's world. Despite what she may say about gender having little impact on her films, Tanada articulates moments and themes distinctly absent from the social male experience as well as the typical commercial film. *Moru*, for example, begins with the protagonist berating a male jumper atop a high-rise—remember her period begins with witnessing a suicide—with the argument that men know nothing about hardship because they never experience menstruation. This same film includes scenes with sanitary pads, the social ramifications of debilitating menstrual cramps (e.g. getting fired for calling in to work), vaginal suppositories, leisure drug use, and a rather unflinching depiction of domestic violence. In *Hyakumanen*, Tanada repeatedly depicts from the protagonist's point of view how annoying—not offensive or embarrassing, but just downright annoying—it is to be perpetually objectified by socialized, patriarchal sexualization. The most humorous instance of this within the film is when Suzuko moves to the countryside and gets a job picking in the peach orchards. Spellbound by her youth and beauty, the town mayor, with the full backing of the locals, tries to coerce her into

becoming the town mascot in a PR attempt to save the area from growing obscurity and economic decline. This strategy is a reverse mimicry of Lee Sang-il's *Hula Girl* also starring Aoi Yū (who plays Suzuko in *Hyakumanen*), a story about a troupe of high school girls who learn to hula dance in order to create a tourist industry for their ironically cold, northern village.

While Tanada's unusual moments and strong, independent, female protagonists are a refreshing intervention in contemporary Japanese cinema, her films lack a compelling visual aesthetic or inspired execution. This is as surprising as it is unfortunate; Tanada is a graduate of the Image Forum film school, an institution of prestige that is known for fostering experimental techniques and styles. There are some signs of this tutelage in her earlier films, particularly her *jishu eiga* (independent film) *Moru*: rapid fire graphic match shot-reverse-shots, intentionally choppy montages, slugs (black screen inserts), and nonlinear editing. However, the only technique she held onto throughout her oeuvre to date are visualized fantasy shots, where a character imagines a different outcome or situation than what takes place: think *Ally McBeal* without the frenetic whimsy. Even so, I would argue this is more a technique of screenplay than formal execution. Perhaps Tanada Yuki is not merely being modest when she says that, in regards to the technical operations on set, she “really can't do anything so generally speaking I can only receive the operations of [other] people (staff)” (Mika Ninagawa and Tanada Yuki 50). It is clear that she makes a few consistent art direction decisions, particularly in transforming some of Japan's most charismatic and attractive young celebrities into what seems to be a depiction of “average” people: unkempt and unstylish hairstyles, frumpy clothes, barely

there makeup, and physical features not typically embellished in films (e.g. buck teeth, weak chins, and BMIs at both extremes). So too does some of her visual content run against the grain of polished commercial cinema, particularly her preference for unapologetic, fully-disclosed eruptions of body fluids—in *Hatsuko*, we are so close to the father’s vomit that some of it splashes onto and drips down the camera lens.

Unfortunately, these rather politicized critiques of body politics and social performativity are lost in what is otherwise entirely prosaic filmmaking. If Tanada is relying on her crew to bring the cinema-specific elements of the film medium to light, then without the guidance of an auteur vision they are delivering only the most cut-and-dry perfunctory product. Instead of what could be compelling articulations of ugly pretty (e.g. Jean-Pierre Jeunet or Lars Van Trier), Tanada’s lack of film aesthetic results in ugly boring.

In addition to gender role reversals and deconstructions of normative standards about bodies and beauty, Tanada nearly always writes lines in regional dialects, if not for the entirety of the film than for large segments. This is also an opposition to standard commercial filmmaking and its preference for hegemonic Tokyo dialect (or the popular and edgy Kansai dialect). Unlike many working filmmakers who generally hail from the Tokyo or Kansai pop culture meccas, Tanada comes from Fukuoka, down on the southernmost island of Kyushu. Her choice to depict regional dialects can be read as a geographic decentering that disrupts the presumed dominance of Tokyo as cultural (and national) nucleus. Likewise, her depictions of rural places in Japan seem direct counter arguments to the idealized images of *furusato* (ancestral home) or *inaka* (countryside) so often used by metropolitan filmmakers to project idealized Japanese cultural values and

heritage on what they construct as less polluted (both environmentally and culturally) non-urban spaces (see Figure 55).

Considering the pros and cons, it is clear that Tanada Yuki clearly has very interesting things to *say*, the craft of a good screenwriter, if not the finesse to *show*, the purview of a good director. Which begs the following question: what would happen if Tanada Yuki paired her screenwriting talents to a director with a refined aesthetic and a keen interest in visuals? Hold on to that thought.



Figure 55. The paratexts for Tanada Yuki’s films are about as hodgepodge as her cinematic imagery, which suggests little visual dedication to overarching graphic themes or pictorial ideas. Which is to say, the designs of these posters accurately reflect Tanada’s visual shortcomings. On the one hand they succeed at star/cast delivery, but come up short in conveying a sense of the filmic world, a cinematic aesthetic, or even a tone or genre. While the poster for *Tsuki to cherry* does suggest the sexual power dynamics between the featured couple, the visual idea communicates that the story is in someway connected to photography. *Hyakumanen* highlights the re-imagined persona of Aoi Yū, who typically plays a cheerful and bright character, but generates an aura of whimsy through its hand-drawn elements that is a complete mismatch for the film. And other than the general depiction of youth—from the body language of actors clothed in school uniforms to the helter skelter, vaguely arts and crafts schoolyard punk lettering of the film title—the *Oretachi* poster is mostly a blank slate.

Ninagawa Mika

At a glance, Ninagawa Mika (see Figure 56) might seem like an odd addition to a “new generation” roll call. After all, she has, to date, released only one film³ and many women directors have been excluded from this introduction for their as yet small oeuvres. However, it would be remiss to exclude her: even the journal *Eureka* chose a promo still from her film *Sakuran* (2006) as a representative “Directors: girl’s file” image for their cover (*Kantoku-kei josshi fairu*). There are many good reasons why Ninagawa demands inclusion in a discussion of contemporary female directors: (1) *Sakuran* is the most visually stunning and ambitious film created by the directors represented in this

蜷川実花
(にながわ・みか)
Ninagawa Mika
Born 1972, Tokyo

Tama Art University, Graphic Design, 1997.
Celebrated commercial, editorial and art
photographer. Debut film: *Sakuran* (2006).

Filmography as feature-length director:

2006	<i>Sakuran</i>
2012	<i>Helter Skelter</i>



Shashin Hitotsubo Ten Grand Prize 1996
Canon 13th New Cosmos of Photography
Superior Prize 1996
9th Konica Awards Encouragement Award 1998
Kimura Ihei Photography Award 2001
Ohara Museum of Art Prize 2006

Figure 56. Self portrait of photographer and filmmaker Ninagawa Mika in her signature rainbow of supersaturated colors. Image source <http://ameblo.jp/ninamika/>.

dissertation; (2) Although it did not win any awards domestically or internationally, *Sakuran* is still the most commercially successful film by a woman director in Japan; (3) Of the films by contemporary female directors, *Sakuran* is the most well-known in no small part to Ninagawa's impressive and extensive self promotion savvy; (4) Ninagawa, in many ways the Japanese Annie Leibovitz, is one of Japan's most celebrated commercial photographers with a prominent career in contemporary Japanese visual media; and (5) The screenplay for Ninagawa's debut film was written by none other than Tanada Yuki.

Sakuran is the answer to the question previously posed: what would happen if accomplished screenwriter Tanada Yuki teamed up with an auteur who had a clear, refined artistic vision with a passionate flair for visual imagery? Aside from a lagging third act and a rather disappointingly cheesy ending, *Sakuran* is really everything a spectator could hope or want from a collaboration of these two artists. Based on the manga by Anno Moyoko, the film is an extravaganza of sight and sound. Although an adaptation (with some distinct departures from the original text), the screenplay is vintage Tanada Yuki. *Sakuran*, set extremely loosely in the Yoshiwara district of old Edo (now Tokyo), follows the travails of Kiyoha, played by effervescent and notoriously unruly actress Tsuchiya Anna. As a small girl, Kiyoha⁴ is sold to a brothel in the Yoshiwara pleasure quarter. There she is trained in the arts of the courtesan: dance, music, etiquette, and of course seduction. Unwilling to accept her new life as a high class prostitute, Kiyoha tries to escape. She is caught by her owners, beaten for her disobedience, and learns quickly that there is only one way out for a girl conscripted into sexual slavery: to

be bought by a wealthy client. Having an uncanny and mature understanding of the parameters of her situation, young Kiyoha is determined to outpace her contemporaries and become the most powerful courtesan in the Yoshiwara, but will do so on her own terms. As she climbs the Yoshiwara social ladder, Kiyoha is brazenly clear in her contempt for those around her and she makes no effort to maintain decorum. She swears, smokes, picks physical fights with other courtesans, rebukes the attention of clients she dislikes regardless of their status or import, expresses her opinions freely, and eliminates her rivals through some rather nasty backstabbing. She takes her resultant disciplinary beatings with a scowl and incorrigibly stiff upper lip. This is pure Tanada Yuki situational character writing at its best: a fiercely strong female protagonist with a give ‘em hell attitude who, trapped by patriarchy at its extreme, suffers through a series of unfortunate events, finds the strength within herself to push against her social prison, and redefines power despite and to spite containment. While the screenplay alone has the potential to be another Tanada downer despite the overt “girl power” at play, with Ninagawa at the director’s helm, *Sakuran* is pure fun.

Ninagawa’s depiction of the Yoshiwara district is decidedly, delightfully anachronistic. Many have made comparisons to another female-directed period piece released in the same year, Sofia Coppola’s *Marie Antoinette*. There are certain incidental similarities. Like Coppola, Ninagawa’s costumes and sets, while in keeping with the inspiration of the target era, are outrageously elaborate set pieces only possible on a sound stage in the 21st century. The kimonos are breathtaking and surreally resplendent, none more so than Kiyoha’s own debut ensemble. When promoted to the position of the

brothel house's *tayū* (top celebrity status courtesan), Kiyoha performs a debutante procession runway walk through a recreation of the district's main promenade *Naka-no-chō*, escorted by her house's staff and guards. The scene plays out in facsimile slow motion, set against one of popular girl rocker Shiina Ringo's electric guitar tracks—the anachronistic music video elements of *Sakuran* are another oft-referenced link to Coppola's *Antoinette*. Kiyoha, wearing a pair of preposterously fabulous foot-high *urushi* (laquered) *okobo* (platform shoes worn by *geisha* and *oiran*) and more than three layers of kimono (each with multiple, high-contrast patterns in crimson red, jet black, and snow white) all tied together with a luxe couture zebra-print *obi* (sash). Glittering gold *bira bira kanzashi* (thin metal strips attached to a chain such that they gently tinkle in movement) hang from her dramatically ensconced to the heavens *yoko-hyogo* butterfly-style coiffure. She is escorted by manservants, whose punchy white and black kimonos echo Kiyoha's *obi* zebra motif as metaphorical extensions of her social, gendered bondage: they are the guards that both protect and contain her. One of them, her only real friend Seiji, holds a red paper umbrella above her head—scarlet circle blazing above her in the inky darkness—as purely a design element: the scene takes place at night in the dark so there is no need for an umbrella other than the needs demanded by high fashion. In the near distance, impossibly saturated red lanterns float in ephemeral lines above the onlooking crowd. In short, words don't really do the vision justice.

Ninagawa's set designs are no less impressive. The walls of Kiyoha's bedroom are a solid crimson. Her outer *shoji* sliding doors are decoupaged with tissue paper cherry blossoms in pastel (but no less vivid) pinks, reds, and yellows. The tatami beneath her

lavish, vermilion bedding is a verdant green. Inner *shōji* doors boast elaborate, oversized and cartoonish paintings of chrysanthemums. On top of these splendid colors saturating the eye, the room is decked in the chaotic multi-layered textures wrought by the maelstrom of a teenage girl. Leisure accouterments clutter the floor spaces and bright material woven with vivid graphic patterns hang over every surface: in 21st century terms, clothes are everywhere. Yet none of this even compares to Ninagawa's most ambitious set piece borne of pure fantasy, the main gateway into the Yoshiwara district. Anyone entering or exiting Ninagawa Mika's pleasure quarter must pass between two red posts joined atop by a 12-foot long (at least) fish tank. In it, dozens of brightly colored goldfish—the film's metaphor for the courtesans—swim lazily to and fro overhead. Their orange, yellow, red, white, and black patchwork ebbs and flows like eddies of confetti in the wind, such that they are no longer merely fish, but a kaleidoscopic vision of amorphous, dynamic color.

To its very core, *Sakuran* is an unapologetic and unironic celebration of Japanese girl culture; all that's missing is Hello Kitty product placement. The key to this extravaganza lies in the origin of the director's stylized, super-saturated, rainbow-drenched photography. Perhaps surprisingly, it began in monochrome. Ninagawa was her own subject early on in her art, rendered in black and white, closely cropped self nudes. While experimenting with her own body, turning the outward gaze of the camera in on herself, she also experimented with processing techniques in true independent, low budget style. She played with her photos at a color copy machine at a convenience store near her house, adjusting the size and zoom of the images, as well as the primary print

color balances. These exploits in toner were the start of her trademark “Ninagawa color” (Iizawa 39), which she developed in her studies at the Tama Art School, enrolled in the Graphic Design Department. In 1996, she won the Grand Prize at the Shashin Hitotsuba Exhibit, her world debut, and won at the Canon hosted New Cosmos of Photography competition in the same year.

While her color exploitation is quite unique to Ninagawa, her choice of focused subject matter was not. Ninagawa spent five years engrossed in self portraits, from 1993 to 1998. During this time there was, in the photography world, a popular trend of so-called “Girl Photographs” (*onna no ko shashin*) which peaked in 1995 and 1996 (Iizawa 39) just as Ninagawa was studying at the Tama Art School. Nagashima Yurie, HIROMIX, Nakano Aiko, Shiratsuchi Yasuko—all women born in the 1970s like our new directors—were at the forefront of an image trend: seemingly transient, effervescent self portraits captured with Konica “Big Mini” compact cameras. Ninagawa’s own portraits developed in this context of young women reimagining themselves and their intimate spaces, more often than not their bedrooms, through fantasy photography. It was a image-based movement of young women, or “girls,” creating and living in their admittedly narcissistic dream worlds. *Sakuran* is an extension of this girl’s culture phenomenon. The cinematic world of *Sakuran* is not merely a film set brought to life, but a manifestation of Ninagawa’s own imagination, interiority, and gendered fantasy.

The side effect of this personal-made-public performativity and almost self-absorbed world creation that has been Ninagawa’s work for the past fourteen years (counting up to the press junket for *Sakuran*) is a strong assertion of Self. To begin with,

Ninagawa is a fierce self-promoter. There are most likely more promotional materials, many of which are self-created paratexts, for *Sakuran* and its director than any other contemporary film in Japan. *Sakuran* marketing included the standard fare: posters, *chirashi*, *panfu*, magazine inserts, trailers, and so on. Yet even after the film finished its first run, Ninagawa continued to milk the marketing magnet by means of interviews, self-authored magazine articles, fashion shoots for both magazines and gallery collections featuring *Sakuran*'s star Tsuchiya Anna (always in part signifying *Sakuran*), a personal blog, and even a published "director's journal" written by Ninagawa herself.

Remarkably, the original flash website, full of content, is still in complete working order online: <http://www.sakuran-themovie.com/> (Ninagawa-Film-Committee). These paratexts forefront Ninagawa as the dominant personality (quite a contrast from promotional materials created by distributors for the works of other women directors, as I will discuss later in the chapter) and this makes sense given Ninagawa's primary occupation. *Sakuran*, for her, is not merely a commercial film; it is a significant part of her artistic portfolio. Photographers, who work far more independently than directors, must rely on self-promotion in order to be seen. Perhaps this is why Ninagawa, practiced at assertion and with relatively little at stake in the world of motion pictures, suffers no restraint when it comes to talking about herself and her experience as a woman director.⁵

According to Ninagawa, taking on the role of director as a woman came with a set of gendered challenges. Before entering principal photography, what she was most worried about was her own positionality: a name outside the film industry; a woman; a relatively young person who enjoyed frivolity; and the daughter of a famous director and

actress with a “sickening royal story” (Ninagawa Mika and Tanada Yuki) (see endnote 9). In order to overcome this challenge, Ninagawa openly embraced a gendered subject position. Since she felt like she was the least knowledgeable person on the set (in regards to the mechanics of filmmaking) she rearticulated her ignorance through a performance of gender stereotypes.⁶ For example: she wore pink often, carried her work in a Sanrio Melody bag,⁷ and schlepped around set in Hello Kitty slippers (Ninagawa, 110). Her hope was that the ensemble would encode any mistakes or ineptitude as “part of her character,” thereby softening the potential criticisms or bad feelings that her more experienced staff might have (Ninagawa Mika and Tanada Yuki 49). During this performance, Ninagawa felt that she had never before been aware truly that she was labeled as “Woman” by others and was made to feel like it was an inconvenience (Ninagawa, 106). It was only in this precise environment, an environment structured by the physical presence of men from electricians to personal assistants as opposed to the more independent venue of photography (especially self photography), that she began to think that “it is difficult for women to take leadership” (106). Indeed, staff selection and communication proved to be a challenge. During the preproduction hiring process, many applicants found it surprising and unusual to work under a woman and there were many male crew members who flat out refused to work with her (83). Consequently, the selected staffers were mostly young and *Sakuran* was their first major motion picture. Moreover, many were women handpicked by her (male) producer, a scenario that removed Ninagawa from an important part of the filmmaking decision process: authority (84). And so Ninagawa felt that it was impossible for her to lead the way a man would

(although she doesn't describe how this would in fact be different, but one gets the sense that she means in terms of taking action and making decisions). Instead, she adapted to the preconceptions of others she herself perceived. In addition to her appearance, she embodied gender in a restructured habitus. In her director's diary Ninagawa revealed that after they completed a scene, she would put a cute sticker in the script to mark the occasion with a sense of accomplishment (123). She described herself later as being as peaceful, calm, and polite, never angry or gruff—an attitude she adopted specifically for the film out of concern that she would otherwise be perceived as hysterical or too emotional (110). And, although Ninagawa usually wears black, Western-style outfits, while on set she wore cute and colorful things to reflect her aesthetic for the film. In this way, Ninagawa explains, she took on the cute (*kawaii*) visual aesthetic of the film itself (110). “As a woman” she “expressed a visual sensibility” and so embodied this on set (110). This sense or essence even, Ninagawa explains, was the very foundation of her filmmaking and creativity:

Women have a way of portraying a particular feeling. No matter what setting I'm in, I am me as a woman. My way of making things is, of course, a woman's way of making things. Isn't that, then, the reality. In movies and photographs...you can only express your own experience and perspective of reality. I can only make things that revolve around my own experience. I can only make things that are within the reach of myself...That is how it is for women...That is my tremendous strength. (176)

Although Ninagawa Mika takes the exact opposite stance as Tanada Yuki on being a female film director, Ninagawa chose Tanada as screenwriter precisely because Tanada is also a woman. According to Ninagawa, there is a certain gendered cognizance (*wakaru wakaru kan*) embedded in screenplays written by women: something, she writes, that

“cannot be expressed with words, but can be sensed in the skin” (31). In order to convey this same ineffable understanding on screen, she sought out both source material written by a woman (Anno Moyoko) and a female screenwriter. In truth, Ninagawa found Tanada through her producer Uda Mitsuru (who would also cherry-pick her crew) who had been impressed by Tanada’s pink film *Tsuki to Cherry*. Ninagawa explains that although she doesn’t have many female friends, Tanada Yuki felt like a friend that she’d known for a long time (43). They had similar tastes and sensibilities, and similar interests in men, meaning, Ninagawa clarifies, that the things they *didn’t* like about men were the same (42). The pairing was such a good fit, she claims, that “there was never once when [the two of them] thought completely differently regarding the script” (42). If we take Ninagawa at her word, this certainly renders Tanada Yuki’s vocalizations on being a woman director elsewhere rather circumspect, although it is equally likely that Ninagawa enveloped Tanada in her own vision and Tanada complied out of respectful deference.

The main goal of the script and the film for Ninagawa was to make a movie where the women “stand on their own two feet”; Kiyoha was drafted as the type of woman Ninagawa wants to be (Ninagawa Mika and Tanada Yuki 53-54). Above all, it was important to her that her characters be relatable (*kyokan*) to female spectators (54) and in so doing she wanted to create “real” images of women.⁸ According to Ninagawa, if a man wants to create an image of a strong woman, she is a strong woman. But, because Ninagawa herself is a woman, she tried to create a “strong woman who was weak, who, knowing her weaknesses, wanted to live as if strong” (54). In other words, Ninagawa

sought to convey more psychological nuance and dimension to her characters than what she typically saw in film. To that end, Kiyoha was created as a “new kind of hero who is not a heroine” (M. Ninagawa 71). In the director’s description, she is fashionable and chic; a “modern woman” female spectators can identify with who places importance on her inner feelings over considerations of status or wealth, and has mastery over her actions; is a “pro” and seeks to be the best; is “cool” with a “sense of contemporary rock”; never cries; harbors a love that is pure; and is “strong without being too coarse” (71). Kiyoha’s rival courtesan and character foil Takao is meant, by contrast, to represent the various psychological complexes that women can have (52). She struggles with jealousy, worries about being incompetent, and feels like an underdog. While Kiyoha is the woman Ninagawa would want to be, Takao is meant to convey the more negative challenges contemporary women face (52). *Sakuran* was an attempt to picture the contemporary woman through a hyperbolized past.

Ninagawa’s frank account of her own experience as not just a director but a woman director reveals challenges and personal transformations that other female directors sometimes merely hint at in subtext. Unwittingly echoing the sentiments of historical precedents Sakane Tazuko and Takano Etsuko (see Chapter III), Ninagawa writes that she understands why there have been relatively few female directors. “It’s not that the film industry revolves around men so much as it doesn’t revolve around women” (173).

Ninagawa waited six years to make another film (*Helter Skelter*, 2012) (see Figure 57).



Figure 57. Marketing *chirashi* for Ninagawa Mika's films. Lipstick red is the dominant color in Ninagawa's paratexts as well as much of her photography. The two *chirashi* for *Sakuran* are an accurate introduction to the visual splendor that awaits in the film. On the left, Kiyoha (Tsuchiya Anna) coquettishly pretends to smoke while lying on her futon in her lavishly unrealistic bedroom. In the middle, goldfish seem to float through the sky above the Yoshiwara district. Together, they package a film of fantasy and sex. The poster for Ninagawa's newest film *Helter Skelter* (2012, not yet released at the time of writing) promises the same, but with an added element of rock and roll.

Iguchi Nami


Like many of the other filmmakers represented here, Iguchi Nami (see Figure 58) was celebrated in her year at the PIA Film Festival, winning the Best Concept Award (awarded by TBS) for her 8 millimeter film *Inuneko* (*The Cat Leaves Home*, 2001). However, her prize at PIAFF was not what led her to remake her own film almost three years later with professional production, casting, and distribution support. Like Tanada Yuki (although not contemporaneously) Iguchi studied at Image Forum, but was not keen on the school's exercises in short, experimental cinema. While there, she sought out extra film work on the school's bulletin boards, eventually landing a sound recording position with director Yazaki Hitoshi's crew on *Sangatsu no raion* (*March Comes in Like a Lion*, 1991). She continued to pick up work as a sound technician and scripter (script girl)

井口奈美
(いぐち・なみ)
Iguchi Nami
Born 1967, Tokyo

Studied filmmaking at Image Forum.

Filmography as feature-length director:

- 2001 *Inu Neko* (8 mm)
- 2004 *Inu Neko* (35 mm)
- 2007 *Hito no sekkusu wo warauna*



PIA Best Concept Award (TBS) 2001
Japanese Professional Movie Awards Newcomer Award 2001
Torino International Festival of Young Cinema FIPRESCI Prize 2004
— — Holden Award for the Best Script - Special Mention 2004
— — Jury Special Prize 2004
— — Prize of the City of Torino (Best Film) 2004
Directors Guild of Japan New Director Award 2004

Figure 58. Iguchi Nami discusses her films and career in film at the 32nd Image Libaray film lecture series in 2009. Image source: http://img-lib.musabo.ac.jp/event/event_32.html#txt001.

for a variety of directors (including Kurosawa Kiyoshi, Murakami Ryu, Yaguchi Shinobu, and Okuhara Hiroshi). Subsequently, her friend Suzuki Akihiko, cinematographer and sound recordist, encouraged her to make a film for herself; he would be her cameraman. In order to make the film, she borrowed a camera, cashed in favors, relied on a crew of friends, subsisted on *onigiri* (rice balls), and floated the project on money that her mother had optimistically saved for Iguchi's wedding. Iguchi justified repurposing the funds by telling her somewhat disappointed mother "I'm not getting married, and even if I did I

wouldn't have a ceremony" (Umemoto)—a sentiment that certainly gives us a taste of Iguchi's self-described "sassy" attitude ("Dai 45 kai 2004 nendo nihon eiga kantoku kyōkai shinjinshō: jushō kinen intabyū"). A year and half, 400 rolls of film, and an edited 84 minutes of screentime later, *Inuneko* ran as the late show at Nakano Musashino Hall for three weeks. Despite a slow start, the last screening sold out with a significant number of hopeful attendees turned away (Iguchi 56). However, after a substantial amount of pestering, persistence, and self-promotion on Iguchi's part—a story in and of itself—one of the people who was able to see the film was film critic Yamada Kōichi. It was on his recommendation and not the PIA win that producer and original owner of the Teatoru Shinjuku mini-theater Enomoto Norio contacted Iguchi three years later with the proposal to fund a 35 millimeter version of the film starring his own daughter Enomoto Kanako. The resultant and slightly revamped film (also called *Inuneko*) won four awards at the Torino Film Festival and earned Iguchi the prized New Director Award from the Directors Guild of Japan (see Figure 59).

Iguchi's background in sound recording and editing is central to her body of work: both versions of *Inuneko* and her later *Hito no sekkusu o warauna* (*Sex is No Laughing Matter*, 2007). Critics are quick to note her prevalence for extreme heightened sound levels (foley and effects) that dominate an often muffled dialogue track (K. Yamada "Chisana kessaku-Iguchi Nami kantoku "Inuneko"; Yokota; "Dai 45 kai 2004 nendo nihon eiga kantoku kyōkai shinjinshō: jushō kinen intabyū"; Umemoto). Take, for example, the opening moments of the 35 millimeter version of *Inuneko*: simple title credits in black lettering play across a burlap background⁹ while we hear a slow, slightly

hesitant rhythmic chopping of a knife on a cutting board. When the title cards give way to a domestic interior, we see Suzu, one of the two protagonists, chopping potatoes at the kitchen sink in the foreground, while her boyfriend sits at an electric *kotatsu*¹⁰ in the background. The two characters coexist in what appears to be an extended silence (she's cooking while he reads manga), except that it's not a true silence. The sound of the knife hitting the board and scraping the eyes and knots out of the potatoes speaks volumes. This is not a happy couple: whatever was whole between them has been severed and he now grates on her. Suzu serves Furuta the prepared curry, each bowl ringing clearly as she sets it gently on the table—an intentional audio mismatch where the visual movement is quite gentle and feminine, but the accentuated sound calls forth the emotions of a disgruntled woman taking out her frustration through nonverbal “silent” treatment. Without even looking at Suzu, Furuta, engrossed in his cheap weekly comic, pats the table for a spoon. Not finding any, he pats the table again with intent, this time looking at Suzu. She responds by mimicking his audio pattern with her spoon against her bowl. Furuta taps again and Suzu responds in kind. Finally, Furuta simply says, “Spoon...” (supūn wa...) Not entirely surprisingly, their domestic scene plays out with Suzu wordlessly leaving the apartment, suitcase in hand.

When Iguchi first put on a pair of headphones and held a mic as a sound recorder in 1991, her reaction was a single surprised thought: “Noisy!” (K. Yamada 120). She was shocked to be able hear all the minutiae that normally goes without notice, that the world was full of sounds that we habitually miss. For Iguchi, these sounds are voices and her

films' environmental sound is dialogue. In the previous example, what we literally hear is a back and forth exchange of tapping, but the foley takes on the role of conversation:

Pat pat pat: "Where's my spoon?"

Tap tap tap: "Whatever do you mean?"

Pat pat pat: "Spoon, spoon. I need a spoon."

Tap tap tap: "Hunh? What? A spoon like this?"

along with signified subtext:

Pat pat pat: I expected a spoon to magically appear with my dinner like always.

Tap tap tap: I did it on purpose because I'm trying to make a point here.

Pat pat pat: Get me a spoon and wait on me; it's your job.

Tap tap tap: Since when did I become your servant housewife, you lazy jerk?

Of course, the transcript of the projected dialogue is up for interpretation, but most viewers would come away with the same gist.

Iguchi's films are rife with these kinds of interactions. The two new roommates in *Inuneko* whose relationship is strained by a history of chasing after the same man spend a restless first night sleeping in the same futon head to toe (a reference to their exactly opposite personalities; *Inuneko* means dog cat, or dogs and cats). We see them in the dark, framed in an overhead shot, fighting over the shared *kakebuton* (comforter). Since there's little light, we mostly rely on the rustling sound of the *kakebuton* as it is wrested between them like a lover. One can hear the unvoiced simple exchange clearly, though fully:

Mine.

Mine.

No, mine.

No, *mine*.

They aren't really "talking" about the comforter.

Nor do the characters in *Hito no sekkusu wo warauna* work out their relationships in words. Instead, impatient revving of a motorbike and long drags on cigarettes or juice box straws do all the work of arguments, from instigation to reconciliation. In fact, when the characters do try to communicate with one another, and they do this predominantly via cell phone, they either can't get through or the connection is bad. Mirume, the central male character, solders his cell phone shut so that he can't possibly answer it. As a result, instead of phone conversations, we hear plaintiff cries of scorned lovers emoted via the ringtone of a phone that can't physically be opened. Spoken words are simply not an option.

Iguchi asserts that one of the biggest lessons she learned while making the 8 millimeter version of *Inuneko* was that she didn't know anything about film (Iguchi 29). This is a different sentiment than that expressed by Tanada Yuki and Ninagawa Mika who both confess that they are rather useless with the mechanics of shooting on set. Iguchi, by contrast, had a rather solid knowledge of filmmaking apparatus: before directing she was an experienced sound recorder, she reveals an erudite familiarity when speaking about film stock and camera selection, and she edited her own film back before digital software. Even so, Iguchi felt that she wasn't a studied filmmaker. She felt that her education at Image Forum emphasized *avant garde* cinema at the expense of canonical

world film history (Umemoto). That knowledge, she felt, is what separated a crew member from the role of director: a decision maker with a studied, cinematic vision (Yokota 96). In the three years between versions of *Inuneko* she devoured films, and it shows. She continued to do so between *Inuneko* and *Hito no sekkusu*, and it shows. Her cinematography and editing preferences bear strong signs of the French New Wave (particularly Eric Rohmer) and her homage to Ozu's strategic use of reds is hard to miss in *Hito no sekkusu*. Now a dedicated fan of classical cinema, she is most heavily influenced by silent films (Umemoto)—she even tries to incorporate the “raw cuts” of the early Lumière films (Yokota 96) and the abruptly placed *nengajō* (New Year's card) insert in *Hito no sekkusu* is a direct reference to intertitles (Umemoto)—in which sound itself becomes an ironic adaptation of the intertitle: dialogue is replaced by another cinematic signifier and her characters must express themselves through this technique via articulation of their bodies. Additionally, there are other signs of classic cinema increasingly in Iguchi's work, particularly her use of extreme long shots, graphic matches and narrative parallelism, and, in the case of *Hito no sekkusu*, a one-scene-one-shot approach *à la* Mizoguchi Kenji.

Iguchi Nami brings these techniques together, as critics are quick to point out, to convey a subtle cinematic realism. By tracing narratives through seemingly everyday scenes and environments (e.g. home, work, school), tasks, and private moments not normally featured in Japanese film or television that are meant, according to Iguchi, to add flavor to characters rather than provide narrative drive (Umemoto), she does create a believable and seemingly whole cinematic landscape. Some are keen to define this

cinematic realism as voyeuristic sneak peeks into feminine interiority. Director Sato Makoto was struck by what he felt was a “real” version of a girl’s life that he finally had access to:

‘Real’...I mean [when I watched *Inuneko*] I felt like, ‘Ah, so a girl’s room is like that and girls live like that.’ There were exciting (*dokidoki*) parts like when make-up is dropped and girl companion’s conversations aren’t about men. It was something like a number of detailed episodes changed into a mosaic that are the [actual] surroundings of Iguchi [herself].” (“Dai 45 kai 2004 nendo nihon eiga kantoku kyōkai shinjinshō: jushō kinen intabyū”)

Novelist Yokota Hajime found Iguchi’s sound levels, particularly environmental sound emphasized over the voice track, to be a solid representation of feminine cruelty (Yokota 88).¹¹ Critic Kimura Makoto claims, “Just like a female director, moments of cruelty characteristic of girls are sketched with a reliable realness...something that could not be sketched, written, by a man” (“Iguchi Nami 171”). Structurally, what these assessments have in common is the essentialist pitfall waiting for a female director when she makes a film about women.

However, like so many others, Iguchi resists the Woman Director label. In response to director Sakamoto Rei’s question about whether or not she thinks about her role in film as a woman director she replied, “No. I am not conscious of things ‘because I’m a woman’ and as in regards to the people around me I am not conscious of things ‘because they are men’” (“Dai 45 kai 2004 nendo nihon eiga kantoku kyōkai shinjinshō: jushō kinen intabyū”). And yet Iguchi is certainly conscious of the roles of women in film. In her director’s memoir *Inuneko* she reflects on an exchange she had with a “girl interviewer” (her words) at the Michinoku International Mystery Film Festival:

When I was asked why did I make a girl's film, when I said because there were a lot of times when I was fed up with the image of girls created by men so I wanted to unleash a more free existence, an existence where women aren't the supporting item for a man's romance, [the interviewer] listened to those words not as an interviewer, but responded with her whole body...[the interviewer listened with her] head nodding vigorously up and down...that was really impressionable. On seeing such a small moment so up close, I was happy that perhaps we could unite a common, shared feeling in the world by making and watching film." (107)

This response, to a female interviewer as opposed to a male interviewer (Sakamoto) clearly paints two different images. Moreover, like Ninagawa Mika, Iguchi experienced some challenges taking on the typical role of the director (although she does not overtly gender the experience). Feeling uncomfortable yelling or calling out directions, Iguchi, like Ninagawa, took a softer approach. A month prior to filming, she made it a custom to have the actors go through elaborate *taiso* (calisthenic routines) together in order to create a comfortable and easygoing atmosphere ("Dai 45 kai 2004 nendo nihon eiga kantoku kyōkai shinjinshō: jushō kinen intabyū").¹² Once the feeling of being a group set in, she was able to softly suggest to them that they start rolling film. Similarly, she didn't like to call out cuts and would instead let scenes play on until the actors themselves seemed ready to stop when they lost intensity (Umemoto). Like Ninagawa, Iguchi crafted a style of directing through the body. Like Ninagawa, her sets were known for having a predominantly female staff (Iguchi 101). And, like Ninagawa, it is quite clear in Iguchi's interviews and self narrative—from her 400 rolls of film resulting from a crippling inability to call shots to her continual paranoia that she is ignorant about film—that the whole process of filmmaking for her is fraught with a publicly performed insecurity.



Figure 59. Marketing *chirashi* for Iguchi Nami's films. While sound is difficult to convey in two-dimensional visual paratexts, the other important features of Iguchi's films are delivered quite clearly in the medium. All three films—*Inuneko*, its “remake,” and *Hito no sekkusu wo warauna*—emphasize relationships and the importance of environment established by domestic spaces. Her first handmade *chirashi* (left) forefronts the relationship between two polar opposites, which is repeated in the *chirashi* for the second iteration (middle). However, in the second version (2004), the role of the house as shaping and framing the narrative is brought into the image quite distinctly as the two characters are literally framed and suggestively contextualized by the house. The two characters featured in the poster for *Hito no sekkusu wo waruna*, clearly lovers, lie on the floor. Not only does this convey the raw sexuality of the film, but is true to the film's primary romantic space: the teacher's art studio that is devoid of both bed and *futon*. The alternative deviance suggested by lovemaking on the floor (in the image) backs the alternative deviance of the central relationship: a college student and a married professor.

Now that we have a brief familiarity with some of the key players, their career trajectories, their works, their reception, and their individual styles, I would like to focus on who I consider to be the two dominant figures—Nishikawa Miwa and Ogigami Naoko—and what their careers reveal about the place, or rather space, for women in Japanese cinema.

Selling a Female Filmmaker:

The Opposing Director Texts of Nishikawa Miwa and Oigami Naoko

Is there no need to question the politics and institutional history of the canon, to examine why certain works are either included in or excluded from it?

Yoshimoto Mitsuhiro (*Kurosawa*)

Like hopefully many other scholars working in Japanese cinema, I occasionally try to ask myself what the object of study in my field actually is. Simply put, what *is* Japanese cinema? This deceptively understated question, and its many implications, is something I have been grappling with throughout my own studies, particularly under the direction of Prof. Daisuke Miyao, and has been the revised subject of scholarly attention at large for several decades (see Chapter I). I echo the oft-voiced rhetorical questions put to me by Miyao here: what is the primary requirement or attribute that makes a film a Japanese film? Is it setting? Language? Source of production funding? Nationality or racial/ethnic identity of the director? Nationality or racial/ethnic identity of the actors? Or the content, imagery, and aesthetic style?¹³ Of course, the various debates in transnational cinema studies help us tease out and deconstruct these defining characteristics, but the more we interrogate the illusion of a national cinema style, the more the category falls apart, which is perhaps the agenda of transnational cinema theory after all.

However, what I find more interesting and less herculean than the perhaps impossible task of pinning down a definition of what Japanese cinema is or even isn't, are the persistent ideas about Japanese cinema that insist on a cohesive body of film that is representative of an assumed national character (again, see Chapter I). I argue that

conversations about Japanese cinema as a presumed *Japanese* cinema reveal not what it is, but what we would like it to be. This “we” is comprised of a global community of film scholars, critics, fans, and industry participants.

In my article *Japanese Cinema, Swallowtail Butterfly, and the Classroom* (Laird) I addressed the canon of Japanese film and what are considered the great classics by the great directors in order to tackle the image of an idealized Japanese cinema—aesthetics, authorship, and representation, particularly addressing the selectivity of scholars and critics in distinguishing the classics. The core of my inquiry was the problem (as I see it) of selectivity: what films are included and what films are not. At the time I was interested in the exclusion of contemporary, popular, box office grossing cinema (focusing by way of example on the work of Iwai Shunji), but the investigation opened other questions regarding canonical exclusionary choices including works by female film directors. As should be clear by now in the dissertation, part of this gendered elision stemmed from a lack of representative figures with a substantial body of work. But, as more and more women entered festival circuits and box office arenas in the late 1990s and early 2000s, it began to feel like in their omission larger practices of selectivity were at work, if only out of increasingly bad habit. In fact, while film criticism made room for male *zainichi* directors—permanent residents who are not Japanese citizens or are second generation children of mixed decent—such as Lee Sang-Il and Sai Yoichi, female directors were roundly ignored, Japanese or otherwise, if indeed the requirement for being a Japanese director is in fact being Japanese.

That said, perhaps the two most well known women currently making narrative fiction films are, Nishikawa Miwa, yes, and Oigami Naoko. However, their popularity exists in two distinct arenas of film spectatorship and the difference in their reception provides a revealing and convenient insight to how women are finding their footing in today's Japanese film industry and public recognition, particularly in the creation and maintenance of a director text or public persona.

In his work on film legend Alfred Hitchcock, Robert E. Kapsis challenged the idea that director reputations are generated by the "individualistic" or "masterpiece" theory in which reputations are based primarily on the director's works. According to this line of thought, "if an artist's stature improves during his or her lifetime, a major reason is that the artist's work got better, that is, more in line with the prevailing aesthetic standards of the art world" (16). To this end, the evaluation of the directors' work, according to scholar Howard Becker, evolves in a process of "consensus building in the relevant art world" (359); the evaluative voices in cinema generally belonging to reviewers, critics, and scholars. However, as Kapsis argues, this theory ignores factors that contribute to a director's public text. To begin with, sponsors have an active role in promoting or establishing the reputation of an artist since they profit from the exposure (16). I would add that this is true for both financial patrons (e.g. film producers and distributors) as well as critics and scholars who are meta-investors: it is far easier to attract a reading or listening audience (or grant funding) when the subject at hand is a well-known or "valued" topic or figure rather than, say, a new generation of as yet "obscure" women directors in Japan. Additionally, Kapsis adds, the artists themselves

are active agents in the construction of public personas and reputations, as owners of their own text. This engagement of an artist in their own star text is a central concept in star studies but is often overlooked when it comes to directors (imbued with sacrosanct auteur quality), who, if successful, are also stars themselves of publicity machines (both self-directed and otherwise).

Kapsis identified four key components involved in the creation of a director persona. The first is the creation of a “biographical legend” or “public reputation” that is a largely self-created personal life story (howsoever factual or fictional) that lends auteur credential to the director’s products that operate as a perceived extension or expression of self. This is important because in the practice of auteur theory, the public reputation of the filmmaker “can influence how viewers derive meaning from any given film” (11) and so the careful articulation of one’s own biography is central to constructing an atmosphere of legitimacy and gravitas. The second factor is “conventions of critical discourse about genre” (12) that interrogate and negotiate “genre meaning systems” in which a director, focusing on a particular genre and its conventions, establishes a body of work that provides metrics for comparison and analysis across film texts. This worked well in Kapsis’ study on Hitchcock, a director operating in a particular historical and industrial context, but does not work quite so neatly in a contemporary setting in which directors operate more independently from a studio industry (particularly in Japan) and are more influenced by a global environment of postmodern expression and experimentation. Rather, I would amend Kapsis’ point to meet contemporary conditions (and the more local context of Japanese genre deconstruction) by replacing consideration

of a director's genre with consideration of a director's oeuvre as a cohesive whole in which motifs, style, and production contexts span films (particularly for those directors that seem to defy genre classification like Oigami Naoko, Iwai Shunji, and Miike Takashi, for example). Third, Kapsis places importance on "the critical discourse on cinema, which refers to more general criteria affecting how reviewers from a particular time period evaluate current or past films" (12). He notes that in American cinema, "writers in general dismissed the vast number of popular entertainment films...their blatant commercialism was considered incompatible with artistry and seriousness" (12). This bears true in criticism of Japanese cinema as well (Laird) and divides directors into two opposing groups: commercial and high art. Lastly, a director's public text is defined by "marketing and publicity strategies developed by film companies and filmmakers to promote their films" (Robert E. Kapsis 13). In the case of Hitchcock,

the crusade to establish [his] reputation as a significant artist typically unfolded against the backdrop of the films Hitchcock was working on at the time. That is, the mechanism for creating publicity for his latest film became the vehicle for disseminating to journalists and critics the proposition that Hitchcock was a serious artist. (17)

As such, Kapsis primarily used the Hitchcock Collection for his study, a collection that "includes scripts, papers, production notes, publicity files, correspondence, and memorabilia" as well as taped interviews and correspondence with François Truffaut housed at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. I would bring Kapsis' argument and methodology up to date here by suggesting that we think of these kinds of texts as not just the career collection of a director, but as the texts that support the creation and maintenance of the director's reputation. As such, are these not actually a

director's paratexts? In which case a film's paratexts are not just a mechanism of meaning making for a particular film, but are also, especially so when combined across films, meaning makers for individual directors.

In addition to Kapsis' four factors, I add in the case of the Japanese cinema canon, a fifth component that elevates a director's reputation to critically acclaimed auteur based on my own observations and experiences: the director should not disrupt or challenge canonical foundations or expectations and may not threaten inherent mechanisms of the patriarchy found therein. The combination of all five factors together explains Nishikawa Miwa's success and high status among professional critics, scholars, publicists, industry insiders, and award panels.

To begin with, Nishikawa's biographical legend is one of pedigree. As opposed to other directors who have an educational background in small universities, art schools, or trade schools (such as Image Forum which for many is appealing due to its affordable price tag), Nishikawa is a graduate of Waseda University, Japan's most prestigious private school, with a degree in literature. This information is part of every Japanese language Nishikawa profile—educational background is more culturally significant in Japan than, say, in the United States—and crucial to her legitimacy. In just one line, she distinguishes herself as a cut above those with a technical background in commercial filmmaking: literature is already safely high art and Nishikawa aligns herself with other directors who historically excelled in both film and prose. Moreover, while at Waseda, she became the protégé of internationally renowned director Kore'eda Hirokazu (also a Waseda alumnus with a background in literature), working for his production company on his widely

acclaimed film *Wandāfuru raifu*. He later financed her first full-length feature film *Hebi ichigo*, lending an important voucher of credibility to her debut film. What this background and training creates for Nishikawa is the image of a literary (high art) filmmaker with the connections and support of already canonical legends. Her films are often praised for her attention to narrative craft, in no small part because reviewers come to her films with the knowledge that this is her background and are prepared for a literary auteur interpretation. Nishikawa sustains this part of her persona by not only writing her own scripts, but by writing novels and editing essay collections, a combo which effectively reinforces her high art auteur identity within literary and filmic traditions of both creative and intellectual authorship.

In her films, Nishikawa displays a studied practice of canonical technique, which reminds critics so strongly, and nostalgically, of classical Japanese cinema. In some cases she does this literally by adapting canonical literary texts for the screen: Nishikawa has both directed and written screenplay adaptations of works by authors Dazai Osamu and Natsume Soseki. But for the most part, Nishikawa's works are a cohesive display of conventional techniques, imagery, and motifs (as opposed to genre) that include direct allusions to prominent directors. Critics liken her style and cinematography choices—which emphasizes low lighting, long takes, methodical pacing, ambitious cutaways (elsewhere known as “pillow shots), jazz and blues soundtracks used ironically or discordantly, and a precise delivery of orchestrated silence that articulate projected psychological interiority—to the salad days of Japanese cinema (notably post-war New Wave), characterizing the dark content and dystopian psychology (particularly as it deals

with troubled masculinity) of the film as reminiscent of art house films of prior generations and in contrast to more recent trends of happy endings or saccharin melodramas. For example, critic Kimura Mariko writes that, rare for a young director, one of Nishikawa's traits is the "cinematography of classic Japanese cinema" (189). Or, as Nishikawa herself described her film *Yureru*, "The theme is extremely Japanese" ("Nishikawa Miwa kantoku, kannu wo hakate").

The above statement by Nishikawa has subtle implications. On the one hand, of course, to align her work within a cultural cinematic continuum; it's not just that the ideas in the film are culturally "Japanese," but that they are aligned with modes of expression coded as culturally Japanese that are found previously within the national film tradition. The other is that, simple as it may be, it is spoken from the position of analytical critic (howsoever reductive or presumptive). Nishikawa is asserting that her films mean something (even if that meaning is wrapped in vague shorthand), something rather inaccessible to a wide commercial audience perhaps (rarification), and that it should be taken into account accordingly. In this statement, Nishikawa speaks with authority from the position of critical discourse on film (Kapsis' third factor). This is unsurprising because Nishikawa herself is integrated into film criticism as an active member of the analytical and philosophical cinema community: she participates in published roundtable discussions, writes essays on film and literature, engages in discussions about the current status of Japanese cinema with other noted directors, and, quite unusual for mass marketing publicity materials, the designed *panfu* for her films include high brow critical essays in addition to more typical material including interviews, actor bios, and plot

synopses. Sometimes they even include poetry. This activity (and representation) casts Nishikawa as an intellectual director and one who is engaged in shaping currents in her field. While Nishikawa affects and performs this role in a variety of media, the media created about her such as the movie programs and so-called “press sheets” sold at theaters—Kapsis’ fourth criteria: marketing—similarly reinforces this position.

The paratexts for a Nishikawa film, and thereby for Nishikawa the director, are likewise Very Serious. The posters for her films convey dark melodramas, represented by star images in stern postures with dour expressions. But there are other paratexts to take into consideration as well. Like in the United States and elsewhere, Japanese films run through a promotional machine of trailers, posters, websites, magazine coverage, billboards, radio spots, star and director interviews and public appearances, opening night coverage, music video crossovers, etc. ad nauseum. Additionally, there are three kinds of paratexts not found in the United States. One, small advert cards distributed to commercial venues—ticket agencies (which are specialized booths usually in department stores that are something like an in-the-flesh version of ticketmaster), as well as actual box offices, convenience stores, books stores, music stores, and video rental shops. They sit in piles next to the register, are generally gimmicky, and usually include cross-marketing product information (see Figure 60 and 61).

Two, what are called *chirashi*, which has a wonderful double meaning of “leaflets” and “scattering” that works nicely when translated into English. These are on



Figure 60. An advert card for Oigami Naoko's film *Megane* (*Glasses*, 2007). The card is folded accordian style such that when flat, the film title and icon (a pair of illustrated glasses) is visible from the bottom-most layer and the topmost image of actress Kobayashi Satomi lies on top. In collapsed form as seen above, the advert is roughly 3.5 x 4.5 inches.



Figure 61. Advert card for Oigami Naoko's film *Megane* (*Glasses*, 2007). When unfolded and pulled to its full length, the frontside of the advert reveals portraits of the ensemble cast: Kobayashi Satomi, Mitsuishi Ken, Ichikawa Mikako, Kase Ryo, and Motai Masako (here rotated to fit image and not to scale with Figure 60). Bottom: The backside of the advert contains film information, gimmicky illustrations, and cross-merchandise product placement.

display in the hallways of movie theaters, rental shops, book stores, department stores, and convenience stores. They are take-home fliers, miniature models of a movie poster, free and collectible. Unlike a movie poster, however, they are double-sided with a scaled

image of the poster on the front with information and advertising on the back. In fact, *chirashi* is a common form of advertising and the medium is used to promote events, music, art, and books as well as films and theaters (see Figure 62).



Figure 62. Examples of *chirashi*, front and back. The two images on the left are the front and back sides (left and right respectively) of a *chirashi* advertising a double feature screening of Nishikawa Miwa's film *Hebi Ichigo* and *Yureru*. The two images on the right are the front and back sides (left and right respectively) of a *chirashi* advertising the theatrical release and Roadshow run of female director Yasuda Mana's film *Shiawase no suicchi*. *Chirashi* are generally uniform in size, measuring roughly 7x10 inches.

The third unusual paratexts are the *panfu*, short for *panfureto*, or pamphlet (see Figure 63). These are sold at movie theaters as a type of souvenir. They go for anywhere from seven to fifteen dollars. Fortunately for the fan and the film scholar, they are also sold after a film's run at movie memorabilia shops. *Panfu* are highly stylized and conceptual, and arguably do the most semiotic work to established a studio/distribution backed paratextual image of a film. So, too, do they promote the public persona of a director.

While many of these paratexts—cards, *chirashi*, and *panfu*—are designed with an element of play, particularly the ones targeting a young (or female) demographic, Nishikawa's are straightforward and professional. As described earlier, her posters (and

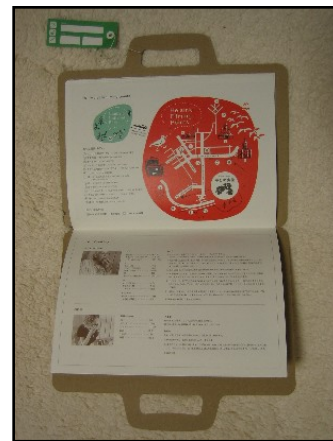
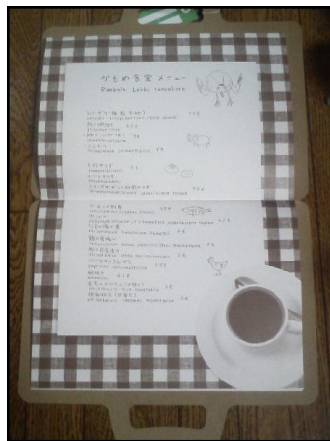


Figure 63. *Panfu* vary greatly in design. The one designed for Ogigami Naoko's *Kamome Shokudo* was shaped like a suitcase in a nod to the character Masako's missing luggage. Inside, the booklet contained film stills, bonus photographs, a mockup of the diner's menu, tourist information about Helsinki (including filming locations), and the standard fare (e.g. plot synopsis and actor interviews).

chirashi) are designed to promote serious, psychological dramas that boast big stars. Her panfu for *Hebi Ichigo*, although neon green, is simple and designed to resemble a book cover (thereby incorporating her literary background). So, too, does the panfu for *Yureru* appear to be a simple blue paperback with nothing but the film's title in white on the cover; the contents are uncharacteristically, predominantly text based (including written essays by critics and novelists) with few images. The panfu for *Dear Doctor*, again a

straightforward minibook this time with an image of star Shōfukutei Tsurube on the cover, is simply adorned with the title of the film; however, not the title in Japanese *katakana* characters as it appears elsewhere on posters and chirashi, but in roman characters. Font: typewriter. These authorial design elements that conjure up the figure of a literary auteur to be taken seriously are supported by video paratexts of Nishikawa, both interviews and making-of specials that appeared online (e.g. film official sites), on television, and in her DVD extras. In clips selected for marketing, Nishikawa cuts a strong and impressive figure. She is eloquent and thoughtful, no nonsense. Scenes of her leading meetings and giving orders, as opposed to cracking jokes or relaxing with the crew as you might see in promos for other directors, are impressive and not a little awe inspiring. But then again, they were meant to be.

Altogether, Nishikawa (and her support circle of producers, supporters, friends, and marketers) has crafted a director image, or text, that is decidedly auteur; Nishikawa is meant to be, and always was, a canonical director. At the heart of this persona is the fifth element: fitting in and not upsetting the status quo. Nishikawa, like many other women filmmakers, has said on many occasions that she wants to be considered a director and not a *female* director. As discussed previously, this is a strategic alignment: legitimacy involves—and in the view of many of the participants necessitates—disavowing a gendered subject position. Nishikawa, however, does more than just lip service in interviews. She sidesteps issues of gender identification by similarly sidestepping overt issues of gender in her films. While Nishikawa takes a favorably neutral position by embracing conventional imagery, representations, and style, she also forefronts

heteronormative male characters and male-oriented narratives, which is, ultimately, not a gender-neutral position at all, but a very safe strategy aligned with the staples of a dominant cinema.

Her first film, *Hebi ichigo*, features a female protagonist who must suffer the male foils in her family as they tear the family apart with their deceit and irresponsible decisions. The film questions the traditional roles in a family, particularly along gender lines. Since *Hebi ichigo*, however, Nishikawa has returned to more stereotypical gender roles in her films, seemingly more interested in storytelling than character development. Thanks to her high profile connections, she is able to cast high profile actors in her films; for example, the heartthrob Odagiri Jo and character actor Kagawa Teruyuki in *Sway* and career comic Shōfukutei Tsurube and idol Eita in *Dear Doctor*. These two films, *Yureru* and *Dear Doctor*, are fundamentally about the same thing: the grey area between truth and deceit played out in the relationship between two men. In *Sway*, the relationship comes to a head over the death of a woman that parallels the pre-story death of the mother; in *Dear Doctor* it is over a dying maternal figure. Two stories about relations between men that involve writing female characters out of the narrative during the actual film. And while *Dear Doctor* does have female roles, they are supporting cast and stock character tropes: a nurse, a mother, and the cold, career-minded Tokyo woman who has shirked filial piety and female-coded responsibility (reformed at the end). Moreover, when asked about her attention to male characters and male narratives, Nishikawa replied, “I didn’t particularly feel like I was making a story about men. I think all of us have masculine and feminine elements within us. I live my life as a woman but it was like

I was exploding those aspects of me that are male onto the screen” (Wilentz).¹⁴ In so saying, Nishikawa takes the disavowal of being a woman director one step further: she seems to have taken on the performative position of a male director.

Dear Doctor, the film in which Nishikawa exploded (explored?) her “male aspects” onto the screen, won over twenty domestic awards including the *Kinema Junpo* Best Film Prize and came very close to winning the Japanese Academy Award for Best Film, which would have made Nishikawa the first woman to receive the prize. Instead, she won the Academy Award for best screenplay. Although the Best Picture loss was undoubtedly a disappointment, the screenplay win only helps Nishikawa’s director text as a *bona fide* auteur.

While Nishikawa is the favorite of the highbrow circuit, Oigami Naoko seems to be the favorite of general moviegoers, particularly women (Schilling; Anon. "News Release; mussesow). In terms of consideration for high art candidacy, these are strikes against Oigami since, to paraphrase Kapsis, critics have a tendency to dismiss popular entertainment films because as commercial products, their very commercialism is considered “incompatible with artistry and seriousness.” And, as we have seen in regards to films that target women (see Chapter IV), there is a bias in criticism against what has elsewhere been decried as the “chick flick.” If Nishikawa is the manufactured image of high art, then Oigami does seem serve as her *fait accompli* character foil.

As outlined earlier in this chapter, after graduating from Chiba University, Oigami moved to the U.S. and earned a graduate degree in film production at USC. She chose to study abroad because she felt that the extant training curriculums at Japanese

film production schools were not a good fit for her (Lang). If nothing else, this decision, and in some ways it is a rejection of her native industry, placed Oigami outside the circles Nishikawa enjoyed from the get-go. Moreover, Oigami integrates her foreign training with thematic explorations of foreign environments that question or even poke fun at national identity (e.g. *Koi wa 5-7-5*). We see this obviously play out in *Kamome Shokudo*, in which a Japanese expat sets up a restaurant in Helsinki, Finland, and in her film *Toiretto* about three half-Japanese siblings living in Canada who have to adapt to the sudden arrival of their taciturn Japanese grandmother. We also see this metaphorically in her 2007 film *Megane*, in which characters escape the metonym of Tokyo as Japan and retreat to an otherworldly Okinawan-island in order to find themselves. Even in her closer-to-home early films set in the Japanese main island, she playfully questions and reinterprets the homogeneity of a presumed, essential Japanese cultural identity. What these iterations have in common is the re-imagination of space and culture, but without the angst or anxiety found in the cinema of many of her contemporaries, including the brooding style of Nishikawa. It should also be noted that beginning with *Kamome Shokudo*, Oigami has relied on a crew of foreigners assembled during her time in Finland. On the whole, Oigami certainly troubles the idea of a national cinema, particularly in regards to many of the questions I asked at the beginning of this section.

In terms of accolade, Oigami's first domestic short film *Hoshino-kun Yumeno-kun* (2000) won the Best Music Award, the Audience Award, and the Scholarship Prize at PIAFF. In other words, at a populist festival Oigami came away with populist prizes. Already, it is quite apparent how Oigami shapes up to be the antithesis of the Nishikawa

persona. Moreover, unlike Nishikawa, Oigami does not have the support of a film legend; rather, she has relied on support from small production companies who, in turn, garner funds from a product-oriented market. As such, Oigami is more overtly a commercial filmmaker, in terms of production assistance alone, and she often relies on cross-marketing with tourism businesses and product placements. These connections in turn have fashioned Oigami herself as not an auteur, as we have seen with Nishikawa, but as a product or even a brand.

Over the years, Oigami has developed quite a particular filmmaking style that departs from a domestic legacy of dark themes and tone, both thematically and visually. Her films are typically categorized as “*iyashi-kei eiga*,” or “films that provide emotional healing,” and are equally often characterized/criticized as being superficially atmospheric and environmental, with an emphasis on visual composition over narrative depth. While it’s true that her storylines are perhaps understated and that her films feature characters that transform from a state of ennui or dissatisfaction to personal acceptance and emotional peace through accomplishment or “healing,” I argue that her films are nuanced and express psychological depth and complexity, not to mention deft comedic timing, that her detractors overlook. However, it is the *iyashi-kei* healing image, of an Oigami film, the perceived aesthetic, that is alive in contemporary discourse and, more importantly, maintained by marketing.

With each film, Oigami develops an ever increasing preference for so-called pillow or environmental cutaway shots, the illusion of flat space derived from bright lighting and defined colors, deep focus long shots, carefully centered subjects, attention

to negative space, and frame-within-frame composition (hence the comparisons to Ozu). Her cinematography is at once calming and open—peaceful—while at the same time rigidly and meticulously composed to balance space and contrast color: a highly manufactured illusion that cultivates harmony and natural beauty. Additionally, her films feature a recurring ensemble cast, forefront the experiences and emotions of middle-aged women, and, yes, are concerned with her characters’ emotional relationship to themselves, to each other, and their, usually alien, foreign, or unusual surroundings.

While over the years Oigami has refined a cinematic style, her films have also been highly stylized by associated marketers through a variety of crafted paratexts. Early on in her career, before she became tightly associated with a production and distribution company, an advertised Oigami film looked casual and fun. Pictured (in Figure 64) are the posters for her first two feature length films after her PIA win: *Barber Yoshino* (2004), her scholarship film, and *Koi wa go shichi go* (2005). As is evident, particularly with *Koi wa go shichi go*, they are sold as youth-oriented cinema and borrow the aesthetics of the then dominant genre of *seishun eiga*, or “youth films.” Seishun eiga of the 2000s largely feature a group of ragtag school kids, each with a distinct stereotyped persona—often the smart go-getter, the pretty kid, the delinquent, the pervert, and the chubby, but terribly earnest, kid—who form an unlikely team or club, are terrible at their preoccupation at the start of the film, but then get better together through hard work and the bonds of friendship. These posters sell that genre. They are fun and quirky, bright and cute, light and playful. The poster for *Barber Yoshino* riffs on the school uniform, putting the group of boys who, in the film, all suffer from a uniform haircut, in matching



Figure 64. Poster and *chirashi* images for Oigami's films *Barber Yoshino* (left) and *Koi wa go shichi go* (middle and right).

choir vestments: a bizarre sight in a rural rice field. The font is stylized to resemble a barber's pole, and cartoony illustration lends the poster that certain *kawaii*, trendy element. The posters for *Koi wa go shichi go* sell the youth film aesthetic even more directly. One is an explicit allusion to an extremely successful *seishun eiga*, *Swing Girls* (see Figure 65), and the other captures the light hearted school club spirit by incorporating the whole team into the image, each equipped with their personal quirky props, against a bright yellow background.

And yet, it is hard to imagine the films themselves doing well with a youth market. Working our way backwards, *Koi wa go shichi go* is a parody of the seishun youth film. Oigami takes the seishun to it's absurd extreme, playing up stereotypes and deconstructing the formulaic inanity of the genre. Rather than electively joining a team, the students are mostly forced into a haiku club (or participate with ulterior, hormone-fueled motives). We have quite literally the smart go-getter, the pretty kid, the delinquent, the pervert, and the chubby, but terribly earnest, kid. Their goal is to win the national high school haiku competition, a ludicrous scenario that is most certainly not real

or plausible. There is a hint of parodic nature of the film in the paratext modeled after *Swing Girls*: a group of high school boys are looking up the protagonist's skirt, poking fun, I would say, at the sexualization of teen girls in uniforms as well at the oft-depicted raging hormones of teen boys. Likewise, *Barber Yoshino* is a comedy, as well as a commentary on vestigial cultural traditions and entrenched national identity— heady stuff for a teen market. Moreover, the protagonist, the barber Yoshino herself, is established actress and comedienne Motai Masako, an actress decades well outside a teen demographic. So, in fact, Oigami's early films themselves were not aimed at a youth audience, although depicted as such, but were rather films for and appreciated by adults. They were mismarketed and production company Paradise Café understood this.

Oigami is reluctant to go into detail about the changes in staff and crew that took place between her film *Koi wa go shichi go* and her next film, a large commercial success, *Kamome Shokudo*. She has simply stated that a key member of her Japanese crew bullied her and as a result she wanted to work outside of Japan:

The reason that I shot the film in Finland was that during the shooting of my previous film, my assistant director was a man and somewhat older than me, and he was so jealous that I was the director that he was really mean, always trying to bully me. So I told my producer that next time I wanted to make a film in some other country. And my producer, who had been to Finland several times, recommended that country to me. (Lang)

And so after *Koi wa go shichi go* Oigami once again left Japan. She broke with her staff and teamed up with production company Paradise Café, a young organization with experience in television production and commercial advertising, but only one film, a background that is not insignificant. The resultant film, *Kamome shokudo*, takes place on location in Finland and the production was a joint effort between



Figure 65. The poster designs for *Koi wa go shichi go* (left) and *Swing Girls* (right). The former is clearly a parody of the latter.

Japanese and Finnish staff with parent oversight by Paradise Café.

Since *Kamome shokudo*, Oigami has worked with Paradise Café and the company has crafted an entirely different image of the director's films, an iyashi-kei image. Incidentally, themes of iyashi, emotional healing and psychological soothing, are mostly relevant to stressed out, unhappy, socially trapped adults and ABD graduate students (synonymous, really), not the stuff of teen flicks or popcorn fluff action films. It is a very particular kind of catharsis for sale. While Oigami continued to develop the cinematic flavor established in her earlier films (high contrast, bright lighting and defined colors, deep focus long shots, carefully centered subjects, attention to negative space) Paradise Café, her production, distribution, and advertising company, created an Oigami brand through the creation and maintenance of paratexts with a hardened style.

Figure 66 shows the Oigami image that Paradise Café constructed for her back-to-back hits *Kamome shokudo* and *Megane*. There is a wealth of analytical material in these paratexts (and the many more created for the films not pictured here), but in the

interest of brevity it is worthwhile to focus on the dominant features relevant to the current inquiry. To begin with, the company devised a clear color scheme for an Oigami look: blues and whites. Secondly, the stars are an important element of the marketing, of course, particularly in the posters and chirashi. While this is true for most films, as I have covered previously in the dissertation, an Oigami film marketed by Paradise Cafe features the cast as a recurring ensemble lined up almost in a roll call configuration. This element of taking attendance or stock of the actors becomes increasingly important in subsequent Paradise Café films. This display of cast is established right away by the company: in the posters and chirashi for *Kamome shokudo* the actresses stand in a diagonal cluster, but the formation straightens into a frontal line that is iterated iconically in subsequent film advertisements. Which is to say that the promotional materials for *Kamome shokudo*, the first film, read a little like blueprints that are refined and solidified in *Megane*. Third, this star line up is balanced within the imagery such that the players are dominated by their environment. This reinforces, to some degree, Oigami's preference for high contrast long shots and deep focus photography, but also promotes an iyashi sensibility of human beings in harmony with their larger natural surroundings. Lastly, a central ingredient of an Oigami paratext is the depiction of food: of people preparing food, of people enjoying food, and of the places where food is made and consumed. While this makes sense in the promotion of *Kamome shokudo*—the film is, after all, about a restaurant—this makes less sense in Oigami's subsequent films that take place in other venues and feature other topics. There is a certain thematic reverence of food, including preparation and consumption, in Oigami's works to be sure, but the



Figure 66. A variety of paratexts selling the Oigami brand established by her two films *Kamome Shokudo* and *Megane*.

paratexts amplify this motif by including extensive imagery of food as well as recipes within the various marketing materials. It is not a stretch to suggest that Paradise Café is deliberately appealing to a consumer demographic that has an intimate, day-to-day relationship with food prep and kitchen spaces. This is not a coincidence. After all, this company that actively seeks and supports female directors and targets female audiences (beginning with Oigami as I will show momentarily) is itself named Paradise *Café*. That said, it is interesting to note that the emphasis of food in the paratexts has another intriguing, and I suspect intentional, side effect. In featuring imagery and information about food so prominently, the paratexts reinforce (and I would say create) the idea for spectators that food is of dominant concern in an Oigami film. This encourages interviewers and critics to develop an interest in the food imagery and the topic of cuisine comes up frequently in Oigami interactions. Of course, so much attention on a manufactured topic sidetracks interviewers from asking about other less scripted freeform topics such as, say, representations of gender or questions about the rather publicly shy director's personal life.

And Oigami is a shy director. In fact, within many of the promotional materials for her films, Oigami is not so much a wallflower as she just utterly disappears. While the paratexts establish distinct visual and thematic features of an Oigami brand (color palettes, ensemble cast, composition, and food as motif), they simultaneously remove the figure of Oigami as a director, as a laborer, as a decision maker, and as an artist. In other words, the marketing materials sell the film and the filmic world, but not the filmmaker. Unlike Nishikawa who is just as much a product of her paratexts as her films

are, it is difficult to find Oigami the director in her marketing materials. While she does hold press conferences and interviews for her films—appearing online, on television, and in journals (e.g. *Kinema Junpō* and *Cinema Journal*)—she does not seem to contribute to the mass-marketed paratexts themselves. Unlike Nishikawa and other auteur filmmakers, the panfu for Oigami films are curiously missing essays or production notes from the director. Rather, her presence, at best, is relegated to a few quotations in copy written by an anonymous someone else. Likewise in DVD extras, behind-the-scenes footage or bonus videos focus on the cast and, oddly enough, the crew. On rare occasion Oigami appears in the background briefly before slipping out of frame. The result is that Oigami becomes a commercial product and an idea—a style, an aesthetic, a collection of celebrities, a vehicle—rather than the figure of an auteur. The paratexts surrounding *Kamome shokudo* and *Megane* are not about the director; they do not reinforce the director image like the paratexts do for Nishikawa. Rather, they create the general atmosphere of the films and reinforce the identities of the central stars in order to create continuity with an internal logic and suspension of disbelief within the filmic fantasy.

After *Megane*, it took Oigami three years to make her next film. The director has said that personal reasons, namely the deaths of two of her cats, resulted in difficulties that hampered her filmmaking enthusiasm (Lang; Oigami in person at PIAFF, 2010). However, during a live interview following the debut special screening of her film *Toiretto* in the summer of 2010 at that year's PIA film festival in Tokyo, Oigami let slip that she was having a difference of opinion with her production company and wanted to take her films in a new artistic direction. This would break with the Oigami

brand. During her hiatus, however, between 2007 and 2010, Paradise Café and sister unit Suurkiitos (Finish for “thank you”—*Kamemo Shokudo* was a half-Finnish production) produced and distributed two other films: *Pūru* (Ohmori, *Pool*, 2009) and *Motherwater* (Matsumoto, 2010).

There is something quite odd about these two films. They look, meaning they appear from marketing paratexts generated by the production companies, like Oigigami films (see Figure 67). They sport the same blue and white color scheme, the same line up of protagonists, the actual same actors (albeit playing entirely different roles), the same high-contrast flood lighting, and the same visual dominance of setting and environment. It may not be obvious for the non Japanese-literate eye to see, but the titles of these films are even written in matching font. In fact, these films are described by spectators as being Oigigami-esque (e.g. Shinohara; pretty_kitten; cubismo; shokora). Tsutaya in-store blurbs read, “If you liked Oigigami Naoko’s *Kamome shokudo* and *Megane*, then you’ll love *Pūru*. Fans of Oigigami, *Motherwater* is a film for you.” In popular talk on fan blogs and press releases, there was even the implication that *Pūru* was a third act in an Oigigami series and that *Motherwater* was the fourth installment. There is often confusion by viewers as to whether or not the films might actually be by Oigigami (e.g. kaidōwoiku; poomaa_chen; pat03; kanon). In fact, however, *Pūru* is directed by TV screenwriter Ohmori Mika (discussed previously in this chapter) and *Motherwater* (followed by *Tokyo Oasis* in 2012) is directed by Matsumoto Kana, about whom so little

is publicized in connection with these films that in the public eye she almost doesn't exist: an extreme case of what we see happening to Oigami the person, not the name, because in this collection of films promoted by the same production and distribution companies, the directors are erased.

Oigami Naoko had absolutely nothing to do with either *Pūru* or *Motherwater*, and, subjectively speaking, the movies are not up to an Oigami standard. However, the association was created through an arsenal of marketing paratexts that enforced a visual repetition and fixed similarity. Through the construction of familiarity, it didn't matter that *Pūru* and *Motherwater* weren't Oigami films because they promised to bring the same sense of aesthetic, atmosphere, and iyashi healing delivered by an Oigami film. Moreover, the repetitive aesthetic of the advertising bred a familiarity, not just with the tone or feeling of the films but also with the acting troupe. By the time *Motherwater* came out in theaters, Oigami fans and promoters were beginning to think of the films as a *bona fide* series (emi; kumanezumi; chloe; maikazuki290; “Kamome shokudō shirīzu saishinsaku: Tokyo oashisu yokokuhēn kaikin! Tokyo wo butai ni yuttari to hirogaru kūkikan!; “Kamome shokudō, Megan Pūru, Mozāuōtā no sugi wa Tokyo oashisu”; Y. Saito) (also, see Figure 68). Promoters (including PR press releases) propagated a sense of familiarity that delivered a type of screen-to-viewer relationship, and this was reinforced thematically within the films: they largely emphasized the importance of friendship and the maintenance of a peaceful, domestic spaces. Food preparation, consumption, and the appreciation (bordering on art-form) of relaxing in a tastefully designed, comfortable space are the dominant fixtures of all four films. In fact,



Figure 68. Paratexts for the Oigami brand. Left, an online auction of film *chirashi* that groups Oigami's *Kamome shokudo*, *Megane*, and *Torietto* with Ohmori Mika's *Pūru* and Matsumoto Kana's *Motherwater*. The *chirashi* were sold together as a set. Right, a blogger's collection of paratexts from the "series." DVD box sets and novel adaptations of *Megane*, *Kamome shockudo*, *Pūru*, and *Motherwater*.

in both *Pūru* and *Motherwater*, food shopping, prep, and communal eating comprise more than 50 percent of the films' running times. Or, at least, it certainly feels that way while sitting through them.

After a couple of years hiatus, Oigami worked out an agreement with Paradise Café and Suurkitos; both assisted with her film *Toiretto* in the summer of 2010. As I said, she let slip that she wanted to go in a different direction and there is subtle evidence of this conflict in the film. The same Oigami staples are there: the sarcastic wit, the troubled family, the deep-focus camerawork with an emphasis on centered framing and high contrast coloring. However, this time, almost to break free out of her blue and white marketing box, Oigami went dark (see Figure 69). Moreover, *Toiretto*, filmed and set in Canada, featuring a cast of young non-Japanese Canadians, has one remnant of her former troupe: the original face from her debut film *Barber Yoshino* who is present in



Figure 69. Paratextual images promoting Oigami's film *Toiretto*. Oigami is still in these materials, but her color palette and atmosphere has changed. Thematically there is a similarity, but instead of finding *iyashi* in a natural setting, the characters must heal together in an enclosed domestic space. Her cinematography, while still centered and with high contrast, reflects the thematic confines of the narrative. In perhaps visual support of this transition, she swapped out her trademark pastels for shadows and rich, warm hues.

each film thereafter, Motai Masako. Only in this film, an English language film, the Japanese actress never says a word in Japanese. It is also entirely likely that if most on-set interactions and decisions took place in English, production representatives back home would be out of a linguistic information loop, though admittedly this is speculation on my part.

It is tempting to read *Toiretto* as an Oigami deviance, a resistance against a fully-armed and fine-tuned marketing machine. In the director's own taciturn way, just like the elderly grandmother played by Motai Masako who speaks volumes through silence, *Toiretto* is a stance against the Oigami brand. Not that it really mattered. After *Toiretto*, Paradise Café and Suurkiitos produced and released two more films: *Tokyo Oasis* (Matsumoto, 2011) and *Shiawase no pan* (Mishima, *Happiness Bread*, 2012). The paratexts are quite familiar (see Figure 70).



Figure 70. Poster designs for *Tokyo Oasis* (left) and *Shiawase no pan* (right). Neither of these films are by Ogigami, but they certainly feel like they could be.

Other than the creation and maintenance of a director brand that appears to be fully operational quite beyond the real presence of the signified director, the other very strange thing about *Pūru*, *Motherwater*, *Tokyo Oasis*, and *Shiawase no pan* is that they, like *Kamome Shokudo* and *Megane*, are all directed by women. In an industry still dominated heavily by men, this does not seem to be a coincidence.

Paradise Café and Suurkiitos are invested in two overlapping marketing strategies with the same focused goal. On the one hand, they are implementing the now quite popular and effective Japanese marketing system of lifestyle creation. On the other, they are creating and fostering female filmmakers in a direct attempt to target a very specific demographic: the F1-sou.

Gabriella Lukács writes on the phenomenon of lifestyle marketing in her book *Scripted Affects, Branded Selves* as it pertains to the Japanese television industry in the

1990s. Briefly, lifestyle marketing is the next level of product placement in media in Japan (which, full circle, is also what Tsutaya is trying to do in their own campaigns). Rather than individual products such as cell phones, food items, designer clothes, and pop songs strategically implemented into television and film narratives (that would be branded entertainment), the whole *mise-en-scene* as a manifestation of trends is what's for sale. In other words, the lifestyles of the characters are the important feature of the media and this lifestyle is the product placement: where the characters hang out, how they spend their free time, their living environment, what kinds, rather than labels, of clothes they wear the cuisine they eat, the kind of class they seem to embody and the associated attitudes they represent. It's not for a particular chair or light fixture, it's for every room design in the IKEA catalogue. Lifestyle marketing is effective and, perhaps understandably, it occurs at the expense of narrative in both Japanese television trendy dramas and the Ogigami brand films (but not, I would argue, in Ogigami's own films).

In the case of the Paradise Café brand of Ogigami-esque films, lifestyle creation takes the shape of *iyashi* healing in which known stars who feel like friends live in almost tenable atmospheres and domestic settings that spectators are encouraged to recreate in their own lives by recreating the lifestyle consumption habits of the characters on-screen. *Iyashi* healing happens through cathartic viewing pleasure, but the idea is that the films are also showing the spectators how to achieve personal prolonged *iyashi* in their own lives: through consumer practice.

Paradise Café and Suurkiitos deploy lifestyle marketing not just in the films they produce, but also through their paratexts, particularly the *panfu*, which, over the years,

read increasingly like lifestyle catalogues. The star interviews and informational essays emphasize the emotional journey of the filmmaking process and how the players and staff themselves incorporated the emotion of the film into their daily lives, such that the features read more like testimonials, personal diary entries, and even how-to guides. Selected film stills overwhelmingly feature imagery of the domestic space: food preparation, shared meals, and long shots of the characters enjoying relaxing moments, at psychological peace in their environments and content with their lifestyles. As stated previously, the panfu even include recipes of the food featured in the films. What is in many other cases a piece of movie memorabilia, the Ogigami brand of panfu crafted by Paradise Café is also a kind of instructional manual for lifestyle creation, and it is an instruction manual aimed at women.

According to Lukács, the shift to lifestyle marketing in television was “a response to women’s growing role as consumers” (37). This is also the goal of Paradise Café and its attention to female film directors. As discussed in the previous chapter, since 2000 women between the ages of 20 and 34 have outpurchased any other demographic at the box office. Distributors and producers like Paradise Café and Suurkiitos have been actively targeting this demographic as a result, and one method of doing so has been to produce works by female talent: in other words, films for women by women. Paradise Café’s investments in women directors is a strategy to attract women consumers, which means that first and foremost their films are commercial, as opposed to high art, products. The stories and characters for each film across directors are quite distinct, and yet the repetitive casting and art direction forges a union between works. This consistency is

conveyed to consumers through marketing paratexts that draw on carefully crafted female authorship (while simultaneously erasing that authorship in the creation of a line product) with an emphasis on women's special interests, hobbies, and experiences (especially depictions of the domestic sphere), from poster art and promos to cast interviews and panfu. The company maintains a consistent image of lifestyle and cinematic environment across texts, regardless of filmmaker and narrative, heavily tied to style and fashion trends in Japan's contemporary consumer market. This is the very antithesis of the director persona and oeuvre of Nishikawa Miwa.

While Nishikawa and Oigami clearly exist at opposite poles of cinema criticism—auterism pitted against commercialism—regardless of the actual quality or innovation of their individual filmmaking, there is that extra factor that also polarizes the two directors: representation of gender. Unlike Nishikawa, Oigami privileges female actors and female-oriented narratives. Whereas Nishikawa draws audiences with the combination of a young male star and a veteran male favorite, Oigami reuses an ensemble cast of older actresses. Career comedienne Motai Masako has appeared in every one of her films, and improv comedienne and actress Kobayashi Satomi is a recurring favorite. Together, her female characters find happy endings outside the staid confines of romantic ever-afters or maternal responsibilities. In fact, none of her characters are married, are rarely in romantic relationships, they don't live with their parents, and they don't have children. Instead, the women in her films form friendships with each other as they pursue their own interests and relish everyday sundries like sunsets, delicious food, and the art of relaxation. Every single one of Oigami's films

passes the Bechdel test. In so doing, however, Oigami creates something of a filmic “woman’s world” by literally creating a cinematic world in which mostly just women exist. While certainly not a perfect reinvention of cinematic gender roles—contingent as it is on utopian circumstances—Oigami’s works are certainly an important step in breaking down a legacy of rigid and tired on-screen stereotypes, particularly due to the inclusion of older actresses and new roles.

The comparison of Nishikawa and Oigami makes it very clear that there is more at work in the representative careers of these two women than merely the well-oiled mechanisms of a patriarchal industry. They also represent problematic dichotomies in film reception, especially of local versus global cultural representation, highbrow elitism versus mass culture popularity, and art film versus commercial film designation in addition to revealing which attributes are aligned with the preferred image of a Japanese national cinema. What these two directors do have in common is that they both adamantly insist that they do not set out to make films as *women* or as *female* directors; they want to be evaluated and received as just directors, period. What they also have in common is that, despite their protestations, they are both inevitably labeled as female film directors, although the one that adheres to the patterns of dominant cinema is clearly more palatable to critics than the other. It is not out of step to suggest, then, that the space for a women director in contemporary industry and indeed in the eyes of contemporary critics and scholars is a something akin to a tokenism that simultaneously requires rejection of the very identifying feature by which others define her. She must be a woman director but leave behind all that womanly stuff. In this way, although the

rubric of Japanese cinema as set by critical reception bends slightly in order to accommodate a new voice (Nishikawa), in reality, it does not bend very far at all. In conclusion, let me demonstrate how this operates far beyond the careers of these two specific directors.

Japanese Cinema: Strong Enough for a Man, pH Balanced for Working Women

In the spring of 2008, the Nihon Eiga Senmon Channel (Japanese Film Specialty Channel) television station ran a two-month long weekly feature on female film directors entitled *Dear Woman: Women in Film*. The series ran from March through April, highlighting the work of six prominent, contemporary directors: Nishikawa Miwa, Tanada Yuki, Tadano Miako, Ohmori Mika, Iwata Yuki, and Ogigami Naoko. The films showcased were *Hebi Ichigo*, *Takada Wataru teki* (Tanada, *Takada Wataru*, 2003), *San-nen migomoru* (Tadano, *Three Year Pregnancy*, 2006), *2 banme no kanojo* (Ohmori, *Number Two Girlfriend*, 2004), *Remon no koro* (Iwata, *The Graduates*, 2007), *Barber Yoshino*, and *Kamome shokudo*.

The series ran on Wednesdays (elsewhere known specifically as *Ladies' Day*) at 10PM, a time slot effectively targeting a working adult market. In truth, this was not the channel's first *Dear Woman* campaign. However, the previous year's campaign—*Dear Woman, Women in Film (Eiga no naka no kanojotachi)*—focused on images and representations of women in film, films with female protagonists. *Dear Woman, Women Who Make Film (Eiga wo tsukuru kanojotachi)* was the channel's first focus on female directors. In order to highlight the filmmakers, the channel included fifteen-minute pre-taped interviews with the directors in their program, screened on-air before their

respective films. Each was asked about why she became a filmmaker and asked to provide particulars about the trials and tribulations of working in the cinema industry. However, in some ways more interesting than the questions asked was the question not asked: despite the program's theme—Women Who Make Films—the directors were never asked about their experience as a woman filmmaker. Curious about the disconnect between content and context, I asked program director Yamazaki Momoko about the glaring omission. She informed me that the directors, as a stipulation to participating in the interview series, requested specifically not to be asked such questions. As a whole, they wanted to be seen as just directors and not specialized as women directors.¹⁵

When it came to publicizing the series, however, the station specifically targeted a gendered market and organized a gendered campaign. Regardless of what the directors had said or what the agreement regarding the interview had been, in the special feature of *Shinekon Monthly* called “Heroine,” the magazine cover, featuring director Nishikawa Miwa, read “Films made possible because we’re women” (*Onna dakara toreru eiga ga aru*). Unsurprisingly perhaps, director Nishikawa Miwa is the face for the station’s print ad campaign (see Figure 71), looking more like a model than a filmmaker—no telltale prop of camera or director’s chair was used for the publicity head shots. The word “heroine,” the insert’s title, is emblazoned in purple cursive font on her forehead, and the campaign succinctly links the filmmakers of the *Dear Woman* program to their supposed inherent femaleness. Indeed, although the whole issue of the *Heroine* insert is dedicated to the *Dear Woman* series, the last two pages of the insert are (1) a how-to guide for

applying fake eyelashes and eyeliner and (2) a horoscope chart for finding the right romance film best suited to your astrological sign.

In addition to the film-focused magazine *Shinekon Monthly*, the marketing director for the series also placed ads and organized campaigns with popular internet sites that are documented as browsed by F1-sou OLs, most notably cinemacafe.net.¹⁶ Cinemacafé is a film and media entertainment aggregate site produced by parent company Cafégroove, a media and IT production company and PR marketing firm. In addition to F1-sou targeted film news, gossip columns, interviews, photo galleries, reviews, popularity rankings, and user generated content, the site is also a direct platform for specific campaigns.

Cinemacafé acts as a host and portal for official web pages and PR campaigns such as the Japanese campaign for *Sex and the City 2* (King, 2010) as well as many of the films by contemporary female directors including Oigami Naoko, Ohmori Mika, and Mishima Yukiko. For the *Dear Woman* campaign, Cinemacafé (plugged as a marketing partner on print materials) steered its F1-sou consumers to the station's campaign site, highly gendered in design aesthetic. On the station's site, the ideology of the programming was framed in html by stereotypical constructs of femininity: flowers, butterflies, ombre color schemes, and smooth vector scrollwork (see Figures 72). In regards to the design of its web presence, series director Yamazaki Momoko explained that the station intentionally orchestrated a look that was cute (*kawaii*), adult (*otonappoi*), and something appropriate for women from 20 to 34.

When I asked why the series had been created in the first place, Yamazaki returned with a question of her own: "Have you ever heard of the F1-sou?" Why yes, I had. She



Figure 71. Images of director Nishikawa Miwa in Shinekon Monthly. Cover (left) and article intro page (right) of Issue 2 of Shinekon Monthly's special insert magazine *Heroine*. Posing more as a model and less as a filmmaker, director Nishikawa Miwa is the face of the station's *Dear Woman* program, a campaign that directly links the featured director's films with their embodied femaleness.



Figure 72. Screen shot of the website for Dear Woman: Women Who Make Film series website operated by the Nihon Eiga Senmon Channel. May, 2008. Website no longer active.

then went on to explain that the creative concept of the program was a marketing strategy to attract constituents of the F1-sou to the channel and address the station's gender (ergo profit) imbalance. The Nihon Eiga Senmon Channel typically features works by directors such as Kurosawa Akira, Ozu Yasujirō, Mizoguchi Kenji, Seijun

Suzuki, Ōshima Nagisa, Kurosawa Kiyoshi, Miike Takashi, Kitano Takeshi, etc.

Similarly, the special programs or campaigns have highlighted the works of “classic cinema” in something akin to the television programming of a *meigaza*. According to Yamazaki, the channel’s largest audience was (and undoubtedly still is) young adult males. In order to draw the larger, more profitable F1- sou, they devised the *Dear Woman* series on female directors. In regards to the group of filmmakers selected, the six women were chosen due to their schedule availability for interviews, their popularity, and, most significantly, their age. Each director is in her thirties and, as such, a member of the F1-sou and thought to be a representative of that demographic. In fact, the adverts directly appeal to the target consumer demographic by stating outright that all of the directors are women born in the 1970s. In a nutshell, the directors were chosen in order to draw and create a specific consumer market for, let us not forget how television really operates, the purpose of advertising and commercial profits: to sell ads.

Of course, the Nihon Eiga Senmon Channel is merely one example of calculated programming changes and niche marketing tactics in which female artists and creators are used to target female audiences. And in the interest of full and fair disclosure, it wasn’t easy. Profit strategies aside, Yamazaki was genuinely interested and invested in supporting the works of women in the media industries. Yamazaki herself *is* a woman and content creator in a media industry, and convincing male upper-management that the project was a valuable investment on multiple levels was not a simple or sure task. What convinced her superiors to green-light the project was the numbers.

Similarly, other programs and campaigns in media markets have fostered the profitable growth of women filmmakers. Of course the Tsutaya Girl's Style brand features movies by female directors, when available. Two of the three films featured in the aforementioned lottery giveaway hosted at the F1-sou paradise/spa theater Shinjuku Picadilly were specifically by women directors. And the second volume of *Kinema Junpō's* female targeting special issue *No Movie No Girl*, mooks¹⁷ that appear to be rather elaborate PR vessels for individual films (*Nana* for volume 1 and *Honey and Clover* for volume 2), features a 23-page spread entitled "Lets become film directors!" Among the (all) female directors featured in the issue are Nishikawa Miwa, Tadano Miako, Tanada Yuki, Iguchi Nami, and Ninagawa Mika. Even a few international circuits are picking up on and investing in the boom. While the DVD export business has so far failed to to capitalize on what has been already working at home in Japan—most of the works by female directors are not available outside the region 2, single language (Japanese) market (in other words, no foreign language subtitles)—film festivals, invested in their own way in the profit of the new and hip, are beginning to. The Thai-based 2010 Japanese Film Festival *Emerging Japanese Female Directors* featured an all-female director program (although some featured such as Kawase Naomi are well past the "emerging" stage) and the 2010 British branch Japan Foundation's touring film collection *Girls on Film* featured "Japanese cinema made for, about, and, in some cases, by women" (Foundation).

While it is the case that contemporary Japanese female directors are getting more recognition and more support from the domestic commercial industry (significantly less so from the international market), albeit to target a specific demographic, they find

themselves marketed by the very trappings of an industry undergoing a perceived and strategic “feminization.” Though these filmmakers may well want to be considered as gender neutral (or even genderless) film directors—a problematic and indeed impossible subject position—they, like F1-sou targeting paratexts and exhibition venues, undergo a process of mass-marketed feminization. In the *Dear Woman* series, the careers, experiences, and works by women directors were linked to visualizations of online cafes, blooming flowers, fluttering butterflies, cosmetics promos, and romance-rooted fortune telling. Tsutaya will wrap the films, as all Girl’s Style films, in a veneer of pink. The Shinjuku Picadilly linked female directors (and female-oriented fare) to casserole dishes, cosmetics, and tea product placement. *Kinema Junpō* explicitly forged a connection between female film directors and movies for “girls,” also making liberal use of pink codification. Thailand’s *Emerging Japanese Female Directors* film series relied on colorful blooming flowers (mostly red and pink) to convey their program’s theme. The Japan Foundation based in the U.K. outright cast female directors as making films for and about women (although they very problematically infantilized both Oigami Naoko and Yokohama Satoko under the moniker “girl” with the title *Girls on Film*).¹⁸ And, lastly, Paradise Café packages their female directors through pastels and domestic motifs.

By contrast, it is hard to imagine a collection of Western female filmmakers packaged in so much floral rosé, let alone being referred to collectively as “girls” (as in the case of the Japan Foundation’s advert and Eureka’s 2006 special edition *Film Directors Girl File (Kantoku-kei joshi fairu)*). Even a hodgepodge collection of Varda, Arzner, Deren, Campion, Ephron, Coppola, and Bigelow that bears little to no thematic

continuity *other* than gender would surely resist such overt feminine trappings in its advertising. Japanese female directors, on the other hand, howsoever resistant they may be, come prepackaged.

In light of this, it is in many ways understandable why contemporary women directors in Japan are resistant to a publicized gendered subjectivity (or, really, an objectification). One does come away with the sense that if they are talked about or presented as being *woman* directors in the commercial industry, they aren't taken as seriously as their male counterparts and in fact will rather be trivialized, a position that echoes the protestations of pioneer Haneda Sumiko (see Chapter II). Their legitimacy and any claim to power or authority within the industry dissolves in a solution of mass produced femininity. As I discussed in this chapter both in the individual director sections and the Nishikawa/Ogigami example, when cast as Women Directors, due to a heavy burden of preprocessed cultural baggage, these women directors run the risk of being easily dismissed, both at home and (maybe even more roundly) abroad.

And yet, it is equally understandable why they engage in PR campaigns and festivals that unapologetically corral them by gender: like any filmmaker they need and profit from the exposure. This is, in fact, quite unlike the political critique and movements found in Western Women's Cinema (meaning films made by women) and considerations of women directors in the canon of feminist study on Women's Cinema (see Chapter III). Within Western cinema circles, Women's Cinema "...has been one of both self-expression and communication with other women, a question at once of the creation/invention of new images and of the creation/imaging of new forms of



Figures 73. Images used to promote Japanese female film directors. Left to right: First page of the “Let’s Become Film Directors” spread in *Kinema Junpō*’s second volume of *No Movie, No Girl*; flier for the 2010 Japanese Film Festival (March 4th-7th) held at Thailand’s Paragon Cineplex in Bangkok (Directors featured: Nishikawa Miwa, Oigigami Naoko, Yokohama Satoko, Iguchi Nami, Tanada Yuki, and Kawase Naomi); the cover of poetry and literary criticism journal *Eureka*’s special edition on female filmmakers (*Kantoku-kei joshi fairu*); Tadano Miako poses with a hot pink film canister for her spread in *No Movie, No Girl* .

community” (de Lauretis). As feminist film scholar Teresa de Lauretis argued, this created an opposition between, on the one hand, feminist demands and concomitant politicized expectations (the goals of the women’s movement to deconstruct and even combat patriarchy) and individual desire for artistic production (the filmmaker’s own self expression) on the other (289). The result was two historical periods of filmmaking in Women’s Cinema: the first being a movement to challenge the stereotypical and codified content of standardized filmmaking (particularly the roles, images, and signification of women as seen in film) and the second being a concern with the formal elements of film production (the gaze, *mise en scene*, editing, etc.) and how they could either be reinvented or repurposed (289). However, the conversation about Women’s Cinema in the West, as a political project, has largely centered on independent and *avant garde* cinema made by women with a clear (although sometimes subtly subversive) feminist agenda. The same could be said for female filmmakers in Japan who, since the postwar period have been involved in experimental and expressive cinema (either *avant garde* or documentary in nature and often in short format). The same could not be said for contemporary commercial female filmmakers in Japan who, really, are both the first generation of commercial female directors and decidedly not part of an overt feminist movement or project (although in the concluding chapter that follows I will argue that they do in fact covertly exercise feminist methods and challenge dominant patriarchal patterns). Instead, they resist collectivism along gender alliances, seeking entry into a male-dominated industry. Their disavowals of a gendered subjectivity are in large part to avoid disrupting a patriarchal order that has, for the time being, let them in but could, at

any point, shut them out again. And yet, like the filmmakers of the Women's Cinema movement, these directors are absolutely concerned first and foremost with self-expression. As such, their plight is more akin to Western female commercial filmmakers operating on the outskirts of Women's Cinema where, as Robin Wood argued, "In Hollywood films—even the most determinedly progressive—there is no 'Women's Movement'; there are only individual women who feel personally constrained."

Notes

¹ In Japanese "*Shinema Janaru*," not to be confused with the University of Texas Press' *Cinema Journal*.

² Ticket Pia is a ticket sales agency with online and kiosk services throughout Japan. Think Ticketmaster, but in addition to theater and music events, the company also sells film, museum, gallery, zoo, and tour tickets.

³ At the time of writing, Ninagawa's newest film *Helter Skelter* (2012) was still in post-production.

⁴ At the beginning of the film, the girl does not have a name. She is given the name Kiyoha by the brothel owner when she graduates to courtesan status.

⁵ I argue that Ninagawa has less at stake than other female film directors. On the one hand, she is a photographer; cinema is merely a tangent to her primary focus. On the other hand, she is the daughter of film actor/director and stage director Ninagawa Yukio and actress Mayama Tomoko. As a member of entertainment "royalty"—her word (*Eureka* 50)—Ninagawa has little to lose compared to no-name independents.

⁶ This attitude is obviously quite problematic due to the equation of being female with being inept, but it is nevertheless how Ninagawa choose to perform a kind of utilitarian femininity.

⁷ Melody is a cartoon character with a series of commercial goods owned by Sanrio, makers of Hello Kitty.

⁸ Ninagawa is fond of this idea, of creating "real" characters, "real women," who convey a sense of a "woman's reality." Although Ninagawa uses the word "realty" (*riaritei*) across sources (e.g. interviews, articles, her journal), it is perhaps better to understand this word as actually meaning "feeling." Ninagawa certainly has no investment in *cinéma-vérité*—such is self evident in any still taken from the film or from her larger body of photographic work. Rather, what I believe she means is that she wanted to convey what a woman *feels* or what the experience of being a woman *feels* like.

⁹ Although Iguchi does not list Ozu as an influence on her work—rather she is quick to list auteurs such as Éric Rohmer, John Ford, Howard Hawks, Makino Shozo, Naruse Mikio, and Mizoguchi Kenji—there is little doubt that a taste of Ozu lingers on in Iguchi's studied practice of filmmaking.

¹⁰ A *kotatsu* is a small table that stands not too high off the floor. It is designed to accommodate sitting on the floor with one's legs tucked under the table. Many kotatsu also are equipped with an electric heater on the underside and two tabletop layers. When a blanket is sandwiched between the table tops, a person can tuck into the table with the warmth from the electric heater trapped under the blanket.

¹¹ Interestingly, when he says this during his interview with Iguchi, she is quick to point out that Kurosawa Akira also kept his dialogue levels low. Yokota, in turn, characterizes Kurosawa's technique as an intentional display of performed femininity

¹² This unusual habit is referenced in the 35 mm version of *Inuneko* when the protagonist Yoko goes through a *taiso* routine seemingly inexplicably. This is one instance of a production inside joke.

¹³ Personal communications with Daisuke Miyao and in-class lectures.

¹⁴ “Exploding” seems like an odd verb choice. This quote comes from an English language interview published in the New York-based Brooklyn Rail. While it may very well be that Nishikawa did in fact mean “exploding,” I suspect that she may have meant or even said “exploring.” It is easy to mix-up the d and r sound in going between Japanese and English. It is also a probable typo as “d” is close to “r” on the keyboard.

¹⁵ Personal communication with the series director Yamazaki Momoko, May 13th, 2008 at the Nihon Senmon Eiga Channel Production Office in Tokyo.

¹⁶ Personal communication with the series director Yamazaki Momoko, May 13th, 2008 at the Nihon Senmon Eiga Channel Production Office in Tokyo.

¹⁷ A Japanese portmanteau of magazine and book. The media format is exactly what it sounds like.

¹⁸ It is possible that the Japan Foundation was merely referring to the female characters within the films when they entitled their series “Girls on Film.” However, the characters in Oigami Naoko's film *Kamome Shokudo*, featured in the lineup, were middle-aged women. It is also rather unfortunate that the same branch of the Japan Foundation cited Toyoda Toshiaki as the director of *Yureru*, which they included in their 2007 film program, when in fact the film was directed by female director Nishikawa Miwa. This is an error more egregious than erasing Sakane Tazuko from film history as the first Japanese female director, since in this case Nishikawa is not only erased, but is replaced by a man. The error stands in print uncorrected on their website archives to this day (last accessed May 9, 2012). <http://www.jpffilm.org.uk/seasons/move-over-ozu>

CHAPTER VI

IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

Different explorations...should not be understood as summary expressions of Women and the Cinema. They are, rather, indications of how films by women can explore a terrain different from that of the traditional cinema.

Judith Mayne

I do hope that women are achieving at a rate these days that we can stop counting what number they are at things.

Tina Fey

While certainly a feminist intervention in the field of Japanese Cinema studies (see Chapter I), this dissertation has been organized around a central concern with the politics of looking as expressed in a variety of forms. Of primary focus has been the manners in which we, as an international community comprised of, at the most basic level, movie makers and movie spectators, look at women in the industry and how they, in turn, appear to us: how they and their works are packaged and contained by the trappings of commercialized and culturally constructed images of reductive femininity that is itself an effective method of containment. Although contemporary mechanisms were covered in Chapter IV, the stories and experiences of the pioneer filmmakers detailed in Chapter II reveal this to be a recurring historical trap for women in the commercial Japanese cinema industry and associated field of study. This is a kind of metacritical gaze that shapes these women and their works, defining their director personas through carefully managed paratexts as we saw in the comparative case study of Nishikawa Miwa and Oigami Naoko. While the early filmmaker's careers were often

shaped (or undone) by gossip and bullying—effective gatekeeping tactics, to be sure—these tools of power are replaced by marketing and criticism in the contemporary context. Moreover, as we have seen, this subversive use of patriarchal power is patterned and repetitive. Many of the contemporary directors experienced the same barriers and tactics experienced by their predecessors particularly in terms of confidence sabotage, reluctant (or refused) participation, and access (or preclusion) to free-range decision making. While this last consideration is a mechanism of rhetoric, and in journalistic and scholarly circles of discourse, it is a crafter of perception and of image (both of the inner industrial realms of the director on set and in selling the director's work to exterior audiences). It is a concomitant performance of the look.

The second form of looking concerned both the industrial perception and the experienced reality of how, when, and where female spectators look at films and what they are looking for. This was not a psychoanalytical inquiry into their subject positions (and subsequent projections and identifications) during the act of spectatorship, but rather an endeavor to show the industrial and historical presumptions and assumptions about the moviegoing practices of women: what they look at and what they want to look at. I approached this from a historical perspective, analyzing in Chapter III the exhibition spaces of Tokyo from the early, raucous days of the Asakusa Rokku, to the halcyon years of the Second Golden Age, and on to the decline of attendance in the postwar era. The paratexts of movie posters in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s proved invaluable tools for assessing the primary industrial mechanism for attracting moviegoing audiences to exhibition spaces, as well as revealing embedded mechanisms of gendered looking

engineered by hand within the posters themselves. As I suggested at the end of the chapter and reinforced in Chapter IV as I shifted into a more in-depth paratextual analysis, women between the ages of 20 and 34 prove to be a powerful demographic who shape commercial success and failure of the domestic industry through their own act of looking: where and at what. Simultaneously, I showed how the presence or absence of women in exhibition venues is related to the visual appearance of the theatrical setting itself, how a theater and its environment, in turn, looks. As women have become dominant figures in film reception, and venues continue to cater to them, social critics have looked at their shifting environs and encoded the transformation as a process of feminization, sometimes coded as crass commercialization—which is another form of rhetorical containment and social control by those who uncomfortably perceive a loss of power. And yet, as I discussed, they may not be wrong for, as I showed, marketers, distributors, and exhibitors are changing the outward face of their industry, what contemporary film looks like, to target the desired demographic. It looks quite pink.

Finally, to balance and counter the image constructed by marketing campaigns and hopefully change the way we might look at contemporary female directors despite all the overly charged pink packaging, I would like to focus attention to how a few of these directors themselves have orchestrated the act of looking in their own films by analyzing not only the role of the camera as an instrument of looking used to convey the aesthetic and figurative vision of the director, but also its role in composition, framed *mise-en-scene*, and storyworld creation.

I have selected three directors for consideration, each with distinct cinematic visions and each selected for their accomplishments in technical filmmaking that warrants formalist attention to their works. In addition to their role as director, one is a photographer, one is a sound recorder and one is a cinematographer. As we walk through their scenes, we will visit the major themes and arenas of looking established in the dissertation.

Looking Across Space and Time

This dissertation began with an archaeology of past pioneers, of women's experiences and status early on in a restrictive system that regulated their entry and participation. When women began making commercial cinema with significant success in the late 1990s and early 2000s, they encountered many of the same pitfalls and struggles as their predecessors. Both the experience of women pushing against the restraints of gendered confinement and the experienced repetition of history shared between generations is graphically articulated in Ninagawa Mika's 2007 film *Sakuran*.

Ninagawa's camera is an overtly voyeuristic camera, and as a director she is not shy about it. Perhaps the role of camera as conspicuous onlooker—there is no sense of the covert peeping tom here—stems from her early days in self portraits when she turned the camera on herself and her “private,” domestic space. To the extent that the fictive world of *Sakuran* is as much a projection of Ninagawa's own imagined personal world, as well as her vehicle to show her version of “reality” (see Chapter V) regarding contemporary (Japanese) women's experiences, Ninagawa's film camera is in equal parts voyeuristic and exhibitionist. She is looking in on her self (through the apparatus of the

camera) and her self is performing for the camera (through the apparatuses of her actors and her sets) in an orchestration of scopophilic narcissism. For the most part, *Sakuran* is a film about looking at women and the imagined women's world. In this case it is a confined social space (the Edo-period Yoshiwara prostitution houses) defined by a patriarchal power structure that shapes women as sexual servants, which is arguably her metaphorical rendering of contemporary society. In the film, there are no shortage of scenes designed around the act of looking at women's bodies, from bathhouse montage sequences sutured of objectifying close-ups of women's breasts to Kiyoha's promenade described in Chapter V. However, one early scene in particular, and its deviant echo later in the film, illustrates the mechanics of Ninagawa's vision both of and for women as cast in a generational framework.

Shortly after young Kiyoha¹ tries to run away from the Tamakiku brothel and is beaten for her insolence, she shares a meaning-laden exchange of looking with the then *oiran* (top courtesan of the house) Shōhi who has, rather begrudgingly, taken charge of her care (see Figures 74 and 75). The scene opens on a close-up of a circular goldfish bowl; picture a snare drum made of glass, banded on the edge by flowery red *wagami* (rice paper), and turned on its side. Enclosed *kingyō* (gold fish) swim across the foreground. The camera pans slowly to the left and we hear a woman's moans in the background: "No, I can't stand it," she sighs. The camera continues to pan with an additional shift downward to reveal the small figure of Kiyoha napping on her side on the floor just beyond the tank. She wakes to the erotics sounds and rubs the sleep from her eyes. The camera continues in a circular arc to the left as she sits up and the frame comes

to rest with Kiyoha sitting to the left and the fish tank on the right, with Kiyoha's line of sight composed in direct alignment with the round frame of the tank. Kiyoha looks at the fish in the tank before her for a moment and then through the glass walls of the tank and offscreen to the commotion beyond. Her eyes widen.

The second shot is Kiyoha's POV; the camera looks through the circular frame of the fish tank (now from the opposite side established in the first shot). While kingyō idly swim out of focus in the foreground, we can see through the glass to the defined set in the background. Two *shōji* doors stand apart, leaving a foot-long gap between them.

Through this second visual frame (the bedroom doors), is the *oiran*'s personal room and, though there was no doubt what was happening in the audio track, we now see the half-clothed upper torso of a man, his leg, and the hairpins of the *oiran* herself. As the man pulls out the hairpins one by one with his teeth, the camera pans slowly to the left, maintain the framing device of the fish tank in the foreground, but granting new angled lines of sight into the neighboring room. As the man's body slowly exits the narrow gap, we see a half-disrobed woman facing us who is clearly sitting in front of the man. His left arm is wrapped around her, grabbing her naked breast, and his right hand is between her legs, the details of which are obscured by a blurry kingyō in the foreground.

Suddenly the woman suddenly reaches up and grabs the man's face behind her. They kiss, her head twisted backward to reach his mouth.

Next is a reverse shot, from inside the second room, on the other side of the parted *shōji* doors. Kiyoha has crept forward, around the tank, and up to the gap in the doors. She peeks through the division, her head framed on either side by the *shōji* panels.

“Shōhi,” says the man. As the camera pans slowly to the right, Kiyoha inches closer to the gap between the doors, hands on either side of the shōji panels. Shōhi’s remaining hairpins on the back of her head come into frame from the right.

Returning to Kiyoha’s POV, although exaggerated and disembodied from Kiyoha’s physical blocking, the camera is now inside the room, beyond the shōji doors, and closer to Shōhi and her client. Now fully naked, she sits astride the man, her back to the camera. A deep focus shot, we see the accouterments of the foreground—her silk kimono layers strewn across the futon—as well as the background props—predominantly a paneled screen featuring bold, bright chrysanthemums and a purple kimono hanging over the right side. Shōhi undulates atop her client. A reverse shot cuts back to Kiyoha, now in a close up, still agape between the shōji doors. “A goldfish,” she whispers in transfixed awe.

The next shot is slightly chilling. We return to Shōhi, now in a medium close-up from the mid-torso up, still naked, atop her client, and with her back to the camera. Again she turns her head backward, this time looking into the camera, making eye contact with Kiyoha, the camera, Ninagawa, and the spectator. Her countenance is fierce, with a stern look, somewhat hateful and terrifying. After a moment she breaks into a twisted, malicious grin. “Shōhi,” moans the man out of frame in uncanny juxtaposition. In a quick cut, Kiyoha, in a close-up, backs away from the barriers, startled. She reaches up on either side of the door frames and closes them.

Now, on the other side of the doors, in the original room, Kiyoha in a medium close-up sits pensively, with her head titled down and eyes cast to the floor. She emotes

determination: “If I stay, I’ll turn into a horrible oiran!” She looks up, purses her lips, and has clearly made a decision. In haste she stands and we hear her knock over the fish tank next to her. Giving it but a glance, she runs past it to another set of shōji, opens the doors, and runs out into the hallway, exiting the scene.

The last shot returns to the fish tank, to a close-up where we began. The glass bowl lies overturned on the floor, now in a pool of water. A single kingyō struggles for life on the floor, fluttering fins and tail, painstakingly making movement *away* from the tank. Thus the scene ends, although the next begins with a graphic match coda: after the sound of a slap, Kiyoha falls to the ground and lies there while she is scolded by Shōhi who is upset over the wrecked tank and the death of one of its kingyō.

Kingyō, a recurring motif in *Sakuran*, are the film’s central metaphor for the women of the Yoshiwara pleasure quarters, and the goldfish bowl is a framing device (on many levels) for the metaphor. As the characters themselves discuss, the size of an ornamental gold fish is determined not by the fish’s age or diet, but in relation to the physical size of its habitat; they explain that ornamental goldfish kept in small bowls will retain their treasured petite size, but if released into the larger ponds of the wild will grow quite large in relation to their space. However, when released into the boundless wild, *kingyō* will lose the beauty and charm they had while protected and small. The parallel between the fish and the women of the pleasure quarter is explicit; a woman’s potential is coded and shaped by her socially determined confinement context. On the one hand, this potential is her sexual/exotic beauty and use value/social relevance: the woman of the Yoshiwara are renowned beauties precisely because they live in the



Figure 74. Frame grabs from Ninagawa Mika's film *Sakuran*. Young Kiyoha gets a good look at her future and the past in the role of Shohi.



Figure 75. Frame grabs from Ninagawa Mika's film *Sakuran*. Kiyoha relives this moment with her own apprentice, roles reversed.

Yoshiwara where almost their entire existence is invested in the construction and maintenance of femininity, elaborate aesthetic, and embodied beautification. On the other, it is also their potential as a human beings with the free will to follow their own desired pursuits and develop the breadth of their talents. In this scene, Kiyoha has quite obviously decided to leave the confines of her own fishbowl, the Yoshiwara, and we see this enacted bodily in her flight from the confinement of the room as well as figuratively

(and to some extent tinted with foreshadowing, with the visual device of the escaped fish fleeing the overturned tank even at the expense of its own life). The important message conveyed in the link to the next scene is that a fish cannot survive out of water in its current form. Something has to change.

To reiterate, the goldfish bowl is a framing device here on multiple levels. To begin with, it is a narrative framing device: the scene begins and ends with the image of the tank, its round shape bringing a nice visual element of circularity to the narrative repetition to come as well as a sense of generational inheritance as Kiyoha looks on to the prescribed female role that she is told she must become. It is also, as discussed, a social framework, particularly if we think of a frame as an enclosed physical space of containment, not just the boundary of celluloid. It is not merely the Yoshiwara, the pleasure quarters. It is also the idea of a woman's space closed off from larger society. The determined and dying kingyō is a signifier for Kiyoha, her suffocation, and the transformation required for her to survive "out of water," as it were. Moreover, when we consider the visual role the fishbowl as a frame of the *mise-en-scene* itself, and indeed a frame-within-a-frame and then again with another frame when paired with the shōji doors it divides the adult interactions on one side (women's past and Kiyoha's potential future) and Kiyoha's present reality and resistance to both the past and presumed future. Frames within frames in this scene are iterations of boundaries as well as representations of forged connections or gateways between ideas, personas, life histories, and, of course, physical spaces. The most recursive moment of this is when we share Kiyoha's POV as she looks through the fishbowl (her own metaphorical containment and stunted potential)

frame on through to the frame of the shōji. This act of looking through the tank and through the shōji gap into Shōhi's room joins the two spaces physically, visually, and thematically; Kiyoha looks from one space of confinement into another through the physical structures of confining boundaries. Moreover, these frames have temporal significance such that they (1) separate present (Kiyoha) from (her) own future, (2) link (her) future to an inherited past (embodied by Shōhi), and (3) draw a line of difference or conflict between one generation and the next writ by the fractious relationship between Kiyoha and Shōhi who despise each other.

It is in this sense, in thinking about the generational relationship between Kiyoha and Shōhi, that I read the composition and editing of these shots as not merely shot-reverse-shot sightline matches, but also as a shot-reverse-shot sequence between women's past and future in which the shots transverse one experience of binding social context into the next. With *Sakuran*, Ninagawa wanted to show the "reality of women's experiences," and even though her preferred vehicle is hyperbolic fantasy and bricolage, the themes resonate with the actual experiences of women across generations in past centuries. If the fishbowl is not just the Yoshiwara specifically but rather society at large as well as its incumbent institutions, then the fishbowl may as well represent the historical machinations of the studio system; the kingyō the women of the studio system who could only flourish when contained within film, as actresses, and who could not survive in the inhospitable environment beyond their prescribed roles.

While the scene suggests repetitive overlap between generations of women, it is not a complete or perfect circle. As shots bounce back and forth between the two rooms

— between Kiyoha and Shōhi, between past and present—they get progressively closer. Not only do the two characters come together as Kiyoha edges closer and closer to the gap in the doors, the shots between the two become tighter and tighter: long shots to medium shots to medium close-ups. Yet, in the moment where Shōhi makes eye contact with the camera, Kiyoha breaks this bond; she rejects this future and the shots rapidly return to long shots establishing distance between the two as Kiyoha ultimately runs out in escape, even severing the link by shutting the shōji doors. In this act of visual severance, it is clear that Kiyoha is going to break the cycle of containment.

This scene between two women, from one generation to the next, is echoed later in the film once Kiyoha has become a “horrible oiran.” Not a scene in and of itself, the recast images are couched within a montage of Kiyoha’s life after becoming the house’s top courtesan. In these shots, she is decidedly unruly. The sequence begins with the rejection of an important client that the house has chosen for her. In quick succession we then see her: dancing and laughing with an old impotent client (to whom she gives preference); playing *shogi* (Japanese chess) with another elderly client whom she defeats, throwing her hands up in the air, and in no semblance of a lady shouts, “Yatta!” (I did it!); throwing *sake* into another would-be client’s face and physically attacking him (the proprietor has to intervene and tear her from him); napping side-by-side with her apprentice in a slovenly and unfeminine sprawl; coyly taking a flower from a traveling florist who is both younger than her and not of high enough social class to ever afford a personal visit to the Yoshiwara; and playing hooky and eating candy with her apprentice while the rest of the household (other courtesans included) clean house. These brief

moments are interspersed with shots of sex, kingyō, and images of her portrait selling out in a local woodblock print stand. To conclude this montage of Kiyoha as successful oiran having things her own way—perhaps as the quintessential contemporary *shōjo*, Ninagawa revisits the scene of Kiyoha's first sexual voyeurism.

This time we see the back of Kiyoha as she sits astride a client in her bedroom in a direct graphic match of Shōhi. As before, kimono silks lay in the foreground and a folding screen stands in the back. However, it is not voluptuous and delicate flowers behind the oiran. Rather, tempestuous waves and wind-scattered blossoms adorn the panels. The camera cuts to a 180-degree reverse shot of Kiyoha's apprentice peaking through a gap in the shōji, following the same eye-line and visual scenario featured earlier in the film. We return to a close up of Kiyoha who, like Shōhi, looks over her shoulder. She smiles. But Kiyoha's smile is warm and reassuring, the knowing smile of someone who has conquered and is getting her way, who has altered her future by rejecting the typical feminine trappings of the past. Her apprentice, still framed by the shōji doors in a close-up, gapes, slack-jawed, but does not run away. On the contrary, it is Kiyoha who later runs away from the Yoshiwara with the lover of her choosing. In her wake, she has made space for a new kind of woman.

On the one hand, the imagery represents a generational shift according to Ninagawa, how women reshape their situation even in the same contexts, primarily through unruly conduct (heavily coded as consumption, self-serving leisure, and narcissism, although celebrated rather than pejoratively judged) that bucks the selfless and servile femininity of the past. It is also prescriptive. Ninagawa's heroine is the

woman Ninagawa wishes she could be, the woman she thinks contemporary women want to be, but can't. Recall that Ninagawa herself, uncomfortable and/or unable to assume a position of power, performed overt and embodied femininity during filming.

Ninagawa uses camera work and *mise-en-scene* to link her depiction of generational similarity and difference in highlighting the restrictions of women in society, the “reality of women’s situations” as *she* sees it (as the director with a vision) by linking the sight lines and *mise-en-scene* between Kiyoha and Shōhi (and later the deviation between Kiyoha and her own apprentice) *as well as* the spectators to the characters. It is safe to suggest, however, that Ninagawa’s expected audience was predominantly female.

Through the Looking Glass

In the second and third chapters of the dissertation, I investigated the role that gendered demographics have played historically in the Japanese film industry, particularly with industry assumptions about what certain groups of people are looking for in entertainment and the kinds of exhibition environments they are drawn to. As I argued, the films of the postwar era were unappealing to female audiences who, instead, preferred alternative entertainment outlets and venues such as music and travel as well as, yes, television in their own homes. Inattention to female demographics proved to be a disastrous oversight on the part of the studios and as a result the system crumbled due to lack of interest in cookie-cutter jōsei eigai that failed to meet the interests of a new, educated woman. However, in the late 1980s and on through the 1990s, the landscape of moviegoing changed in Japan, particularly in Tokyo. In a process categorized by some as “feminization,” the face of cinema—both its exhibition spaces and its marketed

packaging—began to cater to the missing female demographic, the F1-sou. Women began looking at cinema again and, in a feedback mechanism of production and reception, they simultaneously had access to increasingly more options of female roles and female scenarios to look at. In an expanding plurality of representations and perspectives, backed by the marketing strategy of niche fragmentation, films by women in particular incorporated themes and narratives about the personal lives of women that do not necessarily revolve around men. Instead, we see a rise in stories about women, their aspirations, their anxieties, their thoughts, their contemporary environments, and their personality conflicts with one another.

Iguchi Nami's film *Inuneko* explores the theme of the contemporary young woman and her domestic space divorced from the trappings of a, till-now, normative life pattern of adult female maturity contingent on marriage and childrearing. As discussed in the previous chapter, the film begins with Suzu, one of the two protagonists, leaving her lover and the traditional domestic space and patterns they have inherited/fallen into. Here again, as in *Sakuran*, we see the unruly woman who spurns traditional roles in favor of pursuing her own desires. Suzu goes to the apartment of her friend Abe, but discovers that her friend is bound for China. Instead, she has entrusted her home to another friend Yoko, who is at odds with Suzu over love of the same man, that same man who Suzu just left to fend for himself. Yoko and Suzu agree, somewhat begrudgingly, to take joint charge of Abe's place, living together in small quarters.

Yoko and Suzu, as the title of the film "Dogs and Cats" suggests, are polar opposites and, as such, represent two entirely different personas and possibilities for

contemporary young women. However, Yoko and Suzu also complete each other as yin and yang counterparts in a traditional coupling. Much of Yoko's personality is coded as socially masculine, whereas Suzu takes the feminine role. In some ways this is embodied: Yoko has a low, husky voice whereas Suzu has a cute, honeyed quip. Yoko is relaxed in manner and posture, often sprawling unladylike on the floor, whereas Suzu contains her body to traditionally feminine poses and concisely elegant mannerisms. The difference is largely performative. Yoko smokes, drinks beer, subsists on preprocessed food from the convenience store, works, shleps a perfunctory drawstring bag over her shoulder, and wears a daily uniform of loose jeans, Converse shoes, and an oversized men's blazer. That is, when she isn't wearing a men's *hanten* working-class overcoat at home. By stark contrast, Suzu cooks (often for Yoko), drinks wine, turns to cake for comfort food, does not work but takes charge of the household chores including laundry, plays with children and looks after animals, carries a purse, and typically wears tights, a grey, wool skirt, silver shoes with a slight heel, and a cute, red Paddington overcoat with barrel clasps. The combination of the two, though rocky at first, turns out to be quite complementary.

While *Inuneko* goes a tremendous way to represent a dichotomous pair of women refreshingly quite outside the historical good girl/bad girl—put differently in other studies virgin/whore—duality that matches the F1-sou's desire to see new and various representations of women to connect to. It does even more for opening up potential ways of thinking about cinematic space and camera gaze in Japanese cinema. Since Laura Mulvey's pivotal essay *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, scholars have contested

and reconsidered the camera's role in constructing and enforcing patriarchal systems of power, objectification, and meaning making. Likewise, feminist scholars, Mulvey included (*Riddles of the Sphinx*, 1977), have questioned how the gaze of the camera can change—or even if it can—when under the direction of a woman. I would argue that many of the films by contemporary, commercial female filmmakers in Japan do just that. In particular, *Inuneko* illustrates nicely the connection between a shift in camera gaze and a shift in cinema spectatorship.

Just shy of halfway through the film, three scenes in succession, all taking place on the same night, show the evolving relationship between Yoko and Suzu in their shared domestic space. In the first, Suzu comes home to a dark apartment, carrying groceries for the evening's dinner. However, the home is not empty; Yoko came home first and indulged in two tallboys of Kirin beer and an extraordinary amount of peanuts. Reduced to a rolling layabout on the *tatami* floor, Yoko greets Suzu with a series of drunken grunts and moans. Suzu, in the semblance of playing the dutiful wife, cleans up after Yoko, scolds her half-heartedly, and sets about preparing Yoko's favorite meal. After some time passes, dinner is ready, but Yoko is too far gone to raise from the sleep of the happily intoxicated.

In the following scene, which I will describe in detail in a moment, Yoko wakes up recovered, and engages Suzu in a roundabout interaction that addresses their conflict and, as we discover, long-term friendship. Shortly after the scene ends, a reconciled Suzu attends to Yoko's injured hand in a third scene—Yoko injured her hand prior to the film's

start. She has unwrapped the bandage to check on the wound, and Suzu tenderly helps her redress the wound.

It is the middle scene of the evening, in which Yoko and Suzu artfully address their differences and conflict, that is perhaps the most compelling and arresting scene of the film. It may also be the most understated. Yet in it, Iguchi explores interactions between women as articulated in their own terms in their own redefined spaces (this is a borrowed dwelling after all), and does so vis-a-vis a clever deconstructive repurpose of the camera as traditional device of the voyeur. In this scene, we can imagine, perhaps at last, the gaze as “female”—or at the very least, not strictly “male.”

The scene is short, less than three minutes, and involves only four shots. It begins with a closely-cropped shot of the house’s black cat “Bu-chan” who is cleaning herself. Bu-chan appears periodically throughout the film, although more often than not is a missing entity that the characters call out for, and is the equivalent of an animal mood ring for the relationship between Yoko and Suzu. When the two women get along, the cat is present, but when they are fighting, the cat leaves home.² Here, the cat signifies that the two young women are approaching good terms and are becoming something of a family, a healed and whole home. Bu-chan sets an intimate and close atmosphere.

The second shot is another low camera placement, nearly on the ground, presumably in the same room although we do not see the cat. Given Iguchi Nami’s dedication to studying film, particularly the classics, in the time between her first version of *Inuneko* and this, her second, it is safe to suggest that she invokes Ozu here and his famous tatami shots that captured natural, closed spaces of domestic intimacy.

Low to the floor, seemingly just inches from the tatami, the camera is on nearly equal level with the sleeping Yoko, who lies on her side under a blanket in a closely cropped medium shot, perhaps only just five feet away in the background. Between Yoko and the camera, also lying on the ground, are several dresses laid out in a line. Visually, they create horizontal layers of color and pattern between the bottom of the frame (or closest to the camera) and the sleeping Yoko. Suzu's black-stockinged legs (she is cut off just above the knees) walk back-and-forth across the frame between us and Yoko, gingerly stepping over the dresses on each pass. Her feet shuffle loudly on the tatami—recall that Iguchi, former sound technician, preferences foley levels over dialogue. Muttering to herself, Yoko reaches down and picks up a navy blue dress covered in white flowers and holds it in front of her, in profile to us. “How about this? Same as always.” She lays the dress down carefully and picks up a red one covered in white polka-dots. Again holding it up to herself she says, “I’ll try this one. Which way does it go, oh this way.” After a beat she decides, “This isn’t ‘piano teacher.’” Yoko wakes up to this, groggily raises herself to one elbow and asks, “What are you doing?” Isn’t it obvious to anyone who’s been in a position of worrying how they present themselves to the public eye? Suzu’s deciding what to wear.

Our perspective shifts abruptly 90-degrees to the right, now waist-high off the tatami, in a longer shot to accommodate the full height of standing Suzu. A foot-length of the dresses line the bottom of the frame, Yoko still groggily rests on one elbow off to the right, and Suzu, standing just off-center to the left, lays the polka-dot red dress back down on the floor. Between Yoko and Suzu, center frame, is a cheap six-foot tall mirror.

It rests against the not-far back wall, slightly tilted at an angle to the left most likely so that the camera and its operator are not caught in reflection. “I’ve decided to work part time as a piano teacher,” says Suzu in reply to Yoko. “Which should I choose?” she adds with a wave to the dresses in front of her. “I want to wear something ‘teacher-esque,’” she further explains with air quotes. This decision surprises the groggy Yoko who recalls that Suzu failed the entrance exam to music college “or was it high school...”, and that Suzu “cried and cried and cried” over it. “It was music college,” Suzu affirms, unfazed and remaining cheerful. “As long as it’s elementary school level, I can teach it,” she says as she holds up the red dress again, turns around, and looks at herself in the mirror. Yoko, with great effort, rises to her feet one step at a time, and joins Suzu in front of the mirror.

This brief exchange verifies what we, the audience, have suspected about Suzu and Yoko since almost the beginning of the film: despite meeting haphazardly, they have known each other for a long time. These two people are childhood friends, and we know by the subtle references that they drop throughout the film, that they used to be quite close. In fact, they are so close that they fell in love with the same man, Furuta, who Suzu left in the beginning of the film. Their rift is a classic case of jealousy and competition, and in many ways it is a timeworn narrative in cinema history. The departure from the nearly worn out scenario is that Iguchi Nami starts her story after the “ever after” (for one woman) ends, when it turns out that the man in the middle of the tug-of-war just wasn’t what he promised to be. The narrative, as Iguchi Nami recreates it, is of the past, both within the film *Inuneko* and, perhaps here suggested, within film history. It is in this scene where Yoko and Suzu get over the trope of being props to a

male protagonist that the Bechdel test comes to mind: these two women are talking to one another in a film, and they aren't talking about a man.³ That's a thing of the past. Instead, they are talking about each other and their lives set apart from romantic interests. The first component of the conversation here, in this long, static take, is to establish that they know intimate details about each other's personal life histories, that they *know* each other.

The next and final shot of the scene is the most striking and intimate in this domestic drama: it is both visually and, perhaps unsurprisingly given the director, aurally arresting (see Figure 76). The camera jumps 180-degrees and now occupies the position of the mirror at head height, framing the two women in a medium close-up. Yoko stands to the left and Suzu to the right; they both look directly into the camera. We, as their reflection, look back at them. Here, the audio track changes. The background white noise disappears and so too does the heightened foley. Instead, the vocal audio is crisp and clear, isolated from distraction. Clearly, more than any other moment in the film, what these two characters are saying (largely in subtext as in the opening scene with the curry and spoons (see Chapter V) and what they are doing (looking) is of primary importance).

What follows is mostly dialogue. Yoko, whose daily costume is jeans, converse shoes, and an oversized men's coat, has taken the red dress from Suzu and holds it up to herself. She peers closer to the camera (mirror) to see how she looks. She likes it, but when she asks for a second opinion and looks directly at her companion, Suzu, looking back at her, replies, "Wrong." Looking back at herself in the "mirror" Yoko asks, "How

is it wrong?” “You’re fighting with the polka dots,” answers Suzu and they both break into laughter.

“Really?”

“It’s because you’re fighting.”

“It’s because I’m wearing stripes now!” insists Yoko, turning her head to Suzu.

“No, no, no, no, no. You’re fighting.” asserts Suzu knowingly, looking back at her.

“Oh.” says Yoko, nodding.

“It doesn’t suit you.”

Yoko acquiesces and gives the red dress back to Suzu, but muttering, “But people often say that red suits me.” She leans down and picks up another dress, a white one, that Suzu did not try out previously.

“Yup, next,” agrees Suzu. As Yoko holds the white dress up to her, both women look into the camera and assess the apparel.

“How’s this one?”

Suzu leans in close to see in the “mirror” then leans back to look Yoko up and down. “It’s a good vibe!”

“Really?” asks a suddenly slightly shy and embarrassed Yoko.

“Turn here, let me see.” Yoko turns her body to Suzu who looks her directly in the eye and smiles. “It’s a good vibe, a good feeling. It suits you.”

Yoko smiles and turns back to the mirror, holding up the dress to look at it in front of her, “Really?” She looks in the camera again, beaming.

“Shall I give it to you?”

Yoko looks at her, “No way.”

“You want it, right?”

“It’s okay?”

Leaning in close to Yoko for a moment and squinting, “Your eyes want it, says your face, I mean, says your eyes!” They both laugh, facing each other, at the ridiculous turn of phrase. Getting serious again, “You like this, right?” asserts Suzu. “I know that you like it.”

“It’s cute, right?” replies Yoko in a low voice at opposites with Suzu’s saccharine pitch. “But I don’t usually wear [this kind of thing]...Is it okay?” She looks at Suzu.

“Yeah,” looking back at her.

“Thank you.” The two nod slightly, smiling, and the scene ends.

A couple of things are happening in this important take. At the textual level, the two characters have come to a moment of solace in their interpersonal conflict: one party offers a peace offering—an almost literal white flag—and the other accepts. Moreover, in the process of gift exchange, the two have actually managed to discuss their situation, their emotions displaced onto the objects between them. Red is Suzu’s color, established by her red overcoat throughout the film, and in fact she will decide to wear the red dress to teach piano. White, in this scene, becomes Yoko’s signifier. And it should be noted that these two colors are laden with extra-textual meaning: the combination of red and white, or *kōhaku*, as two parts of a whole—here the domestic balance of two dichotomous women—is often used to signify the nation of Japan and indeed they are the



Figure 76. Frame grabs from Iguchi Nami's film *Inuneko*. Suzu and Yoko indirectly discuss the emotional tension between them.

colors of the Japanese flag. Interestingly *kōhaku* can also take on gendered roles, as seen in the annual NHK production *Kōhaku Uta Gassen*, a New Year's Eve singing competition in which Japan's most famous musical talents and celebrities split into two teams by gender and sing it out in a battle of skill and performance, the winners decided via audience and professional judge vote tabulation. In the production, the women are the red team (Suzu) and the men are white (Yoko).

When Yoko asks how the red dress covered in white polkadots looks on her and Suzu replies “*mizutama to kenkashiteiru*” (fighting with the polkadots), in fact the subject/topic of her statement is missing and therefore open to interpretation. Yoko clearly takes it to mean that something about her, her character or her look, clashes with the polkadot pattern and therefore the dress doesn't “suit” her (*niawanai*). However, it could also be that the red of the dress itself is fighting with the white polka dots, an “open” acknowledgement finally that from Yoko's position—the dress is up in front of her—red and white, Suzu and Yoko, are fighting. From Suzu's position, who “suits” the dress, they are not. It is then after the recognition of the emotional conflict between the two that Suzu is able to offer the white flag to Yoko telling her that the dress (and all that it signifies) has a “good feeling” (*ii kanji*, emphasis mine). Yoko, in turn, accepts it even though she doesn't usually wear that “style:” white, a dress, reconciliation, femininity.⁴

At the level of formal analysis, we experience a re-imagination and repurpose of the camera gaze and its ownership. Although cinema is no stranger to mirror scenes, camera *as* mirror is an unusual set up: most mirror scenes are shot over the shoulder, even when they don't readily appear to be as in the famous scenes in *Home Alone* (1990) or

Taxi Driver (1976), and at least some semblance of the mirror's frame remains within the image. This shot is unusual for a reason; it's uncanny. The privilege and assumed dominance of our spectator position is thrown into question. Over the shoulder mirror shots, by contrast, protect the spectator from direct addresses that break the so-called fourth wall in cinema. However, the camera as mirror construction, as in *Inuneko*, has the potential to objectify the viewer.

When a camera takes the position of mirror, what we encounter, on the one hand, is a typical voyeuristic gaze—Iguchi Nami's vision shared by the camera operator—and by extension ours. On the other hand, as the image is a pseudo-reflection, this is also Yoko and Suzu's gaze, so long as they are looking at the camera. The gaze becomes something else entirely, and it is atypical. In these moments, the multiple layers of gaze flatten into one: director/filmmaker, character/actor, and spectator. It is undoubtedly scenes like this, where we unite with the actors and the auteur, that inspired filmmaker Sato Makoto to feel as if he were having a rare opportunity to see inside the "real lives" of women (see Chapter V). It is certainly an intimate moment. Moreover, since two thirds of the whole, characters and director, are women, it is tempting to interpret the shot as something akin to a female gaze. The shot suggests an assumption of female spectatorship, or at the very least manipulates viewers to try on the role.

Interestingly, there is yet another facet to this set up: a subject/object reversal. While the gaze has traditionally been argued as a patriarchal instrument of objectification, when the camera itself has been transformed into a diegetic prop, an object of the cinema space, the camera and those looking through it, have in turn been objectified. The two

characters before the camera/mirror have freedom of movement in this shot, but significantly they have freedom of looking: they look at the mirror/us, they look at themselves, and they look at each other. But we are transfixed in space. When the characters express such freedom of movement and mobility, of possibility and perspective, the confining prescription of our vantage point is brought into harsh clarity. More so than other shots where we may assume the anonymous position of voyeur, of onlooker, here we are condensed into an object of looking, and a flawed one at that. One that can only see the reflections of the world bound within its frame. We have become the mirror, we have become the object.

What Iguchi Nami's film represents is the opening up of cinematic possibilities for creators, talents, and modes of expression—but also for spectators. *Inuneko* is but a sampling of the potential now surfacing when non-dominant voices and viewpoints find their way into a system, restructuring it as they go to suit their needs. As argued in this dissertation, this is true for female filmmakers and female moviegoers alike who are partner to a change in the landscape and face of the cinema experience in Japan. In practical terms of markets and profits, this means increased consumer participation in the industry: women are once again active demographics in the film industry and likewise women are active labor constituents of the market. As interests and demographics shift, so too do stale, played out visions of those represented demographics crafted within the films themselves. In short, women are looking at something new and we have something new to think about.

In this close read, I focused on the instrument of the camera as having the ability to connect audiences to female characters in a way that subverts the typical subject/object power dynamic in cinema, but ultimately these moments are subject to the eye of the beholder. Indeed, it is possible to revert Iguchi's cinematography into a patriarchal perspective. For example, with regards to the scene described in Chapter V where Suzu and Fujita communicate nonverbally by tapping on a table (and subsequently break up), writer Yokota Hajime, when watching the very same scene, was drawn instead to the sound of Suzu's legs rustling underneath her "corduroy" skirt (87). Drawn to this sound, he found himself wondering what kind of tights Suzu was wearing and how her legs were moving under the blanket of the kotatsu. Ultimately, women in films and women who make films are viewed by the dominant critical gaze in a particularly gendered and, I would argue and have argued, diminutive way. Despite access to success in film industries, women directors must find a way to reframe their presumed femininity.

Woman as Mise-en-scene, Fixed in Post

In addition to lines of sight that signify more than literal voyeurism (e.g. *Sakuran*) and repurposed camera positions that restructure spectator roles (e.g. *Inuneko*), of equal importance in understanding pluralities and possibilities of looking is the part played by *mise-en-scene* and composition. As evidenced above, ultimately the gaze of the camera is subject to the perspective of the spectator. In grappling with the power dynamics of looking and being looked at, Oigami Naoko and her *iyashi-kei* cinema bring to the table the ironically often overlooked importance of *mise-en-scene* de-centered from the

dominance of the human figure in narrative cinema. Even when human figures may be in the middle of the frame, it is not always the characters that deliver the tone or experience of a film, or even the primary feature to look at. Let us consider the opening scene to Ogigami's 2007 film *Megane* (see Figure 77).

The film begins with the sound of a jet engine fading in over the production company credits (Paradise Café, to be precise), white lettering on a black background. The sound bridge carries us to a shot of azure sky, trace cirrus clouds provide a scant impression of texture in an otherwise empty blue space. After a second or two, a plane enters from left of the frame and makes a direct diagonal to the upper right. Once it exits frame, we remain static with the blue sky, listening to the engine's receding roar.

The next shot is of Yuji, the primary adult, male character in the film, sitting on the beach with Koji, a female Akita breed, in his arms. It is a long shot in deep focus, with Yuji and Koji in center frame, but in equal focus with the detailed texture of their surroundings: porous and calcified rocks, tan sand, verdant beach vegetation, a concrete boat ramp, and, once again, the pale, blue sky. While holding Koji, Yuji looks off-screen at the lolling waves beyond, seemingly deep in thought. As the camera slowly pans to the right in a subtle arc, Yuji suddenly sits up straighter, and comes to attention as if the very atmosphere around him has changed. "*Kita,*" he says out loud to himself.

We immediately cut to a new location and a new character composed in a graphic match of the previous shot. Haruna, the young science teacher, is sitting on a school bench in the exact center-frame position as Yuji in the previous beach shot. Again, it is a deep-focus long shot. She sits on a wooden bench, similar to the same color tone as the

rocks on the beach, sipping at a juice box, swinging her feet and looking, in seemingly deep thought, at the ground. The terrain of the school yard is a light sandy dirt, almost exactly the same color as the beach sand of the previous shot. In the background is a typical Japanese school edifice: tan, concrete walls and boxy, institutional windows. As the camera continues in the same slow moving arc from left to right in seamless transition from the previous shot, Haruna, too, is aware of an sudden invisible change in her environment. She lowers the juice box, furrows her brow, looks up in the sky and says, “*Kita.*”

The next shot is an abrupt shift. The camera begins static, in low position. We are on a blacktop tarmac, a small jet plane before us, and the six embedded steps of the plane’s lowered passenger door are just left of center. We hear the sound of the plane at an idle, somewhat halfway between the sound of the engine in the first shot and the lolling waves in the second. Step by step, a woman enters the frame as she exits the plane and descends the gangway. Actress Motai Masako comes to a decisive stop, one-two, on the asphalt and as the camera now retreats in an opposite arc, right to left, she looks with intent up into the sky. She too senses something, but, true to both her character and her star persona’s famous taciturn demeanor, she says nothing. With intent, she marches offscreen to the right.

The fourth shot is a simple exterior of the local airport, one that is repeated throughout the film, and is one of the few distinct establishing shots of the island locale. Here we see it for a few seconds in long shot and deep-focus—as most shots in the film. The somewhat mod architecture of the building is of little importance other than to

convey that it is indeed a small airport and that it is consistent with the film's pale pastel palette. The building's only set of visible doors open automatically, and our determined Motai walks through them, pivoting on heel, moving off screen down the street to the right with the stride of someone who knows where they are going and what they are about.

The next shot is another establishing long shot in deep focus; by now these establishing shots have set not only the mellow tone of the film, but also the formal style. However, establishing shots though they may be, as an audience we are still unable to piece these locations together in a coherent spatial continuum. Rather, these shots will serve as almost visual postcards which we hang on to for atmospheric reference (rather than spatial layout) throughout the film, and later in our own post-screening recollection as if they are vacation snapshots shared between us and the characters on holiday. In this next shot, we are back at the beach, and at center frame is a one-room wooden structure—something more dignified than a shack, but certainly not qualified to be a dwelling. It has a four-walled central room and a covered porch, all raised on supports above the sand. It is obvious that the structure has been boarded up; both Yuji and Haruna, still in the same clothes as the previous shots, are in the process of removing the window barriers from the main structure and setting up benches and chairs on the porch. Together they carry a wooden bench from within the edifice, down the porch steps, and out to the sand in front. Once they set the bench down, they suddenly catch sight of something offscreen to the right, first Haruna and then Yuji.

We cut to their POV: a long shot in deep focus of the rocky beach (ocean still not visible, but present in sound as it is throughout the film), of nearly the same vista depicted in Yuji's opening shot: rocky terrain, a concrete boat launch, and low, green beach vegetation. From a distance, walking towards us in center frame, is Sakura, played by Motai Masako, making her way through the sand with the same sense of dedication and purpose as when she left the airport. We pause on her for several seconds as she approaches us and the film's recurring cello solo queues: melodic, almost sonorous, deep-belled tones. The camera then moves even father away from the players in the penultimate extreme long shot of the scene. We see an expanse of sand in the foreground, the low trees and shrubbery in the background, and the wooden building slightly in front of the treeline, but still a feature of the backdrop. Along the central axis are the players: Yuji and Haruna stand in profile, hands at their sides, before the small shack to the left of the frame, and Sakura enters in from the right. She comes to a halt likewise in profile easily two dozen feet away from the pair and stands still, clutching her green hand bag (her only piece of luggage) in front of her with both hands. She bows modestly at the waist to Yuji and Haruna.

In the final shot of the scene we cut 180-degrees to the ocean in deep focus pastels. The cello continues to serenade us to a harmony of rustling waves; clear, jade water stretches out in front with a low horizon and an impossibly cornflower blue sky lingers beyond, dotted with marshmallow clouds. For a few seconds we enjoy this utopian depiction of paradise as gently serene waves roll in to the swell of the cello before the title in white fades in across the sky: *Megane*.

It should be fairly apparent from the opening sequence why Oigami's films are described as "atmospheric" cinema. Of course, establishing the environment of the Okinawan island is important to setting the general tone of the film: a remote vacation getaway. Each moment of the opening sequence, virtual postcards in long shots and deep focus, forefront the dominance of place and setting, while minimizing the figure and role of the human. They invoke the sentiment "Wish You Were *Here*," as opposed to, say, "Wish You Were *Her*" (*a la* the "men want her, women want to be her" construction of female stars and characters). This is particularly so when the characters are stationary or move in just a small portion of the frame. With little activity in a long take, our eyes have a tendency to wander away from the (in)action, taking in the setting and larger *mise-en-scene* which, in turn, seems to take on the role of a character in the film.

Megane is a simple story about a Tokyo university professor named Taeko, played by Kobayashi Satomi (not introduced in the opening sequence), who comes to the island for vacation. A cold and distant personality not well suited to the laid back, environment of her guest house and its community (Yuji, Koji, Haruna, and Sakura), Taeko struggles to relax and enjoy the simple surroundings. Over the course of the film, Taeko eventually learns to unwind and enjoy the passing of time. More importantly, she learns to unravel the ego of self as she, like the other island regulars, fades into the environment. This process unfolds in the narrative as we watch Taeko's understated yet humorous encounters with island living. The primary cultural difference lies in the residents' seemingly sole past time—*tasogareru*—which is as much an construct of plot as it is of *mise-en-scene*.



Figure 77. Frame grabs from Oigami Naoko's film *Megane*. Oigami's films feature long shots and deep-space photography.

After she arrives, Taeko quickly grows bored with the lack of tourism activities, or, in keeping with the tone of the film, perhaps manufactured distractions. She asks guesthouse owner Yuji what there is “to do” on the island. Slightly puzzled by this perspective, Yuji doesn’t have a response. Taeko reframes her question, “What on earth do people do around here?” “*Tasogareru*,” replies Yuji who, according to Haruna later is a “genius” at it. In English, *Tasogare* translates to “dusk” or “twilight.” *Tasogareru*, the verb form, means on the one hand ‘to fade into dusk/twilight,’ an action of the natural environment. On the other hand, applied figuratively, it can also mean “to decline” or “to wane.” It is understandable, then, that Yuji’s reply is met with considerable surprise by Taeko (an undoubtedly moviegoer). When, several scenes later at dinner, the ensemble discuss the island’s *tasogareru* pastime, Taeko states that she usually does *tasogareru* by watching the sunset and thinking about the day’s events. Clearly, to Taeko, when the *tasogareru* verb is applied to a human action, it means to unwind from the day and settle into the night, a transition that mimics the passing of day into evening. When she hears Taeko’s description, Haruno is in turn surprised. “*Tasogareru* while watching the sunset...how...unexpectedly simple,” she says with evident disdain. Clearly, to Haruna and the others, *tasogareru* means something a little different.

We never get a literal explanation of what *tasogareru* means to the characters, even as Taeko learns to do it herself. However, we do develop an pictorial understanding of the (in)action. When the film opens and we see Yuji on the beach and Haruna in the schoolyard, they are in the act of *tasogareru*. Both are obviously inert, lost in the thought, but as spectators we have no access to what their thoughts might be, nor do we ever

explicitly know. Perhaps they are not even thinking at all. All we have are visuals: Oigami's flat, deep focus, environmental cinematography. Everything in the *mise-en-scene* is in equal focus and of equal importance; the human figures decentered from visual dominance such that they become a feature of the scenery. *Tasogareru*, one could say, is the process of the human figure fading into the environment, into the storyworld. And is that not, too, what we are doing as spectators? We spend a few hours in the artificial twilight of a movie theater, the halflight of the projector in a dark room neither true sunlight or true night, losing ourselves in the environment of cinema.

While Oigami's cinematography is the visual manifestation of *tasogareru*, her preference for long shots and deep focus combined with high contrast crispness throughout all her films decenters not only the human's dominant role in *mise-en-scene*, but it also decenters the idea of fixed gender dynamics of the camera gaze. When women and men are featured equally in the exact same kind of composition and lighting, doing the same kind of activities—for example, all characters prepare and eat food, clean, exercise, drink beer, go to work, *tasogareru*, talk to each other about ideas and mutual interests—gendered power dynamics are flattened right in step with the planes of visual depth. However, unlike Iguchi Nami's *Inuneko*, this does not present the characters or (somewhat nonexistent gender roles) with the possibility of subjectivity. Rather, all characters seem to become equally (nonsexually) objectified as components of a visual scape. I believe that this is as much an element of *iyashi* as the themes of Oigami's films; her cinematography does relieve and heal many of the injurious visions of the camera played out on both men and women throughout cinema history. However, it is

important to note that this effect may only be possible within certain utopian parameters and at a cost of a self-selected censorship. As detached as Oigami's characters are from sexual politics, indeed because sexuality *in toto* is erased in her films (a problem for many moviegoers), they also are untroubled by issues of class, race, and nationality (likewise a sticking point). It is thus that Oigami's style should not be read as a *solution* to solving gender troubles in film cinematography, but rather as yet another possible way to look (or not) at them.

I read Oigami's cinematography as a method to neutralize the familiar mechanics of a gendered gaze by recentering the camera gaze from human subjects to *mise-en-scene*. But the mechanisms of film industries and film markets haunt Oigami's films as they haunt most commercial female filmmakers. In the latter half of the dissertation, I discussed how the industry of cinema, from production to exhibition to spectatorship, has packaged the works of female directors as being engendered films for and engendered market. In the process, to some critics, the idea of the film itself becomes feminized by both marketing and patriarchal assumptions. It is worth considering that *Megane* begins not with Oigami's cinematography, but with the audio track laid over a production credit: Paradise Café. As I discussed in Chapter V, the production company has invested in an artificially sutured oeuvre, beginning with Oigami's films, of *women's* films and they do so by constructing the films as gendered products, from packaging to aesthetic, from narrative to casting. The combination of Oigami's deep space photography and asexual framing with an investment in pastel color tones and the fore-fronting of domesticity, both in spaces and in habits, renders the

film itself as the representation of the feminine. When the characters, predominantly female, fade into the environment, so too does the *mise-en-scene* itself become a signifier for woman when the films are then processed as a product *by* women *for* women. This is precisely due to the serialization of aesthetic across texts that are specifically crafted as for-woman products. On their own, Oigami's films present another possibility of looking. Subsumed into a gendered product lineup, whether by a distribution company or by a film festival, significantly less so. This, I have argued, is a current struggle for Japanese women directors in the commercial industry.

Kita

When I began the dissertation process, I originally conceptualized the project to be about contemporary female filmmakers in Japan. Even to this day, it still seems the easiest shorthand in answer the question, “What is your dissertation about?” But this is a convenient half-truth. In the process of researching the various contexts behind the contemporary boom—economic, historical, socio-cultural, etc.—it soon became impossible to detangle this advancement for women from these important and indeed inexorable influences. What resulted was an investment in understanding and unearthing Japanese women's experiences in their domestic cinema industry, with the obviously unwieldy and necessary exclusion of actresses. To the best of my knowledge, this dissertation is the only English-language—or for that matter Japanese—concerted attempt to do so. As such, it can only be but a beginning.

In humble recognition of that, I would like to bring this project, a first step, to a close by returning to the opening scene of Ogigami Naoko's *Megane*. When Yuji and Haruna look to the sky and utter the word "*kita*," which I left untranslated, there is an intentional ambiguity in these scripted moments. *Kita* is the past tense form of the verb *kuru*, meaning "to come," and as such it means "to have come" or more figuratively "to have arrived." However, on its own the subject/topic, *who* or *what*, is unclear. Pairing Yuji and Haruna's glances at the sky with Sakura's arrival to the island by plane, we can possibly assume that they mean the arrival of their companion. Indeed, fan subtitlers have taken this meaning and subbed the line as "She's arrived," referring to Sakura. However, the word *sakura*, Motai Masako's character's name, means "cherry blossom," the flower in Japan that signifies the advent of Spring. In fact, this series of actions, the island residents looking up at the sky and saying to themselves "*Kita*" is repeated at the end of the film suggesting a cyclical repetition. Indeed Sakura, and now Taeko, come to the island every year. But, it is worthwhile to note, they come in spring. They leave again with the onset of *tsuyu*, the rainy season of early summer. So, while *kita* signifies Sakura's almost magical arrival to the island, it could easily also mean that spring has arrived, an atmospheric and environmental change. Even Sakura herself, when she deboards the plane, looks up into the sky in suit with Yuji and Haruna. Though she does not herself say the line, it is obvious that she recognizes that something greater than herself has arrived.

Looking off-frame as they do, the characters could be referring to either Sakura or spring, a character or the environment, both of which are conflated throughout Ogigami's

film: one fades into the other. Personally, I read this look off-frame even farther, a look beyond the film itself to its creator and her generation. In this sense, I, too, have noticed a change in atmosphere and environment. I, too, have noticed that something new and refreshing has arrived. *Kita*.

Notes

¹ The protagonist played by Tsuchiya Anna has a series of names throughout the film, each one given to her as a condition of her station within the brothel. At the beginning of the film, she is sold to the brothel nameless and upon purchase is given the name Tomeki. When raised to the position of *hikkomi* (apprentice courtesan) she is renamed O-rin. Once elevated to the house's oiran (the highest rank courtesan), she becomes Kiyoha. For sake of simplicity, I have referred to her throughout as Kiyoha.

² Although *Inuneko*, the film's title, translates to Dog Cat (perhaps Dogs and Cats figuratively), a popular English-language title for the film is, in fact, *The Cat Leaves Home*.

³ If we compare Iguchi's *Inuneko* to Ōtani Kentarō's 2005 film *NANA*—another film about polar opposite women in their twenties (both named Nana) who cohabit a shared apartment—the role that romance and men play in each is perhaps the most glaring difference. In *NANA*, the two unlikely girls become friends, but spend much of their time agonizing over and pursuing boyfriends.

⁴ It may be tempting to read this moment as an attempt to “feminize” Yoko. However, I would argue that the film resists this interpretation. When we see Yoko in the white dress in subsequent scenes, she wears it over her baggy jeans and pairs it with her frumpy, oversized jacket. Very little “feminization” takes place.

APPENDIX A

NISHIKAWA MIWA DIRECTOR FILMOGRAPHY

Year	Japanese Title	Transliteration	English Title	Type of Work
2002	蛇イチゴ	Hebi ichigo	Wild Berries	Film (108 min.)
2005	フィーメール	fīmeiru	female	Film Segment
2006	ゆれる	Yureru	Sway	Film (118 min.)
2007	ユメ十夜	Yume jūya	Ten Nights of Dreams	Film Segment
2009	ディア・ドクター	Dea dokutā	Dear Doctor	Film (127 min.)
2010	太宰治短編小説集 ／駈込み訴え	Dazai Osamu Tanpen Shousetsu Shuu 3	Dazai Osamu Short Story Collection 3	TV Series
2012	夢売るふたり	Yume uru futari	Dreams for Sale	Film (134 min.)

APPENDIX B

OGIGAMI NAOKO DIRECTOR FILMOGRAPHY

Year	Japanese Title	Transliteration	English Title	Type of Work
1999			Ayako	Short (11 min.)
2001	星ノくん・夢ノくん	Hoshino-kun ・ Yumeno-kun	Hoshino and Yumeno	Film (68 min.)
2003	バーバー吉野	Bābā Yoshino	Yoshino's Barber Shop	Film (96 min.)
2005	恋は五・七・五！	Koi wa go shichi go!	Love is 5-7-5!	Film (105 min.)
2006	かもめ食堂	Kamome Shokudō	Seagull Diner	Film (102 min.)
2007	めがね	Megane	Glasses	Film (106 min.)
2010	トイレット	Toiretto	Toilet	Film (109 min.)
2012	レンタネコ	Rentaneko	Rent a Cat	Film (110 min.)

APPENDIX C

TANADA YUKI DIRECTOR FILMOGRAPHY

Year	Japanese Title	Transliteration	English Title	Type of Work
2000	モル	Moru	Moru	Film (76 min.)
2003	タカダワタル的	Takada Wataru teki	Wataru Takada	Documentary
2004	月とチェリー	Tsuki to cherry	Moon & Cherry	Film (82 min.)
2005	世田谷 リンダちゃん	Setagaya Linda-chan	Setagaya Linda	Internet Short
2006	タテタカコ「春風」	Tatetakako “Shūnpū”	Tatetakako’s “Spring Breeze”	Music Video
2006	子ぎつねヘレンと ゆかいな仲間たち	Kogitsune Heren to yukai na nakamatachi	Little fox Helen and the Happy Companions	Film Segments
2006	ハヴァ、ナイス デー	Haba naisu dē	Have a Nice Day	Film Segment
2007	赤い文化住宅の 初子	Akai bunka jūtaku no hatsuko	Hatsuko of the Red Culture House	Film (100 min.)
2008	百万円と苦虫女	Hyakuman-en to nigamushi onna	One Million Yen Girl	Film (121 min.)
2008	俺たちに明日はないッス	Oretachi ni ashita wa naissu	Ain’t No Tomorrows	Film (79 min.)
2008	カムフラージュ 蒼井優 x 4つの嘘	Camouflage: Aoi Yū x yottsu no Uso	Camouflage: Aoi Yu x 4 lies	TV Series
2008	週刊真木よう子 「蝶々のままで ♥」	Shūkan Maki Yōko “Chōchō no mama de ♥”	Weekly Maki Yōko “As a Butterfly ♥”	TV Series

Year	Japanese Title	Transliteration	English Title	Type of Work
2012	ふがいない僕は空を見た	Fugainai Boku wa Sora wo Mita	The Cowards Who Looked to the Sky	Film (2012)
2012	向田邦子 イノセント	Mukōda Kuniko Innocent	Mukōda Kuniko Innocent	TV Episodes

APPENDIX D

NINAGAWA MIKA DIRECTOR FILMOGRAPHY

Year	Japanese Title	Transliteration	English Title	Type of Work
2006	さくらん	Sakuran	Sakuran	Film (111 min.)
2012	ヘルタースケル ター	Herutā sukerutā	Helter Skelter	Film (127 min.)

APPENDIX E

IGUCHI NAMI DIRECTOR FILMOGRAPHY

Year	Japanese Title	Transliteration	English Title	Type of Work
2001	犬猫	Inuneko	The Cat Leaves Home	Film (8mm)
2004	犬猫	Inuneko	The Cat Leaves Home	Film (35 mm)
2007	人のセックスを 笑うな	Hito no sekkusu wo warauna	Don't Laugh at My Romance	Film (137 min.)

REFERENCES CITED

- 2banme no kanojo*. Dir. Mika Ohmori. Nagai Publishing, 2004. Film.
- The 7th Voyage of Sinbad*. Dir. Nathan Juran. Columbia Pictures, 1958. Film.
- Abe, Kashō. *Nihon eiga Ga sonzaisuru*. Tokyo: Seidosha, 2000. Print.
- Aikenbashi*. Dir. Akira Nobuchi. Shōchiku, 1951. Film.
- Ai no korīda*. Dir. Nagisa Oshima. Argos Films, 1976. Film.
- AKB48. *Namida sapuraizu*. You! Be Cool/King Records, Tokyo, 2009. CD.
- Akahige*. Dir. Akira Kurosawa. Tōhō, 1965. Film.
- Akai bunka jūtaku no hdatsuko*. Dir. Yuki Tanada. Victor Entertainment, 2007. Film.
- Akiko-aru dancer no shouzō*. Dir. Sumiko Haneda. Jiyu Kobo Company Ltd, 1985. Film.
- Alexander the Great*. Dir. Robert Rossen. United Artists, 1956. Film.
- Altman, Rick. *Film/Genre*. London: British Film Institute, 1999. Print.
- Ama no senritsu*. Dir. Toshio Shimura. Shin-Tōhō, 1957. Film.
- Ame ni saku hana*. Dir. Yoshitsugu Nakajima. Nikkatsu, 1960. Film.
- Amélie*. Dir. Jean-Pierre Jeunet. Miramax Films, 2001. Film.
- Anai, Fumihiko. *Meigaza jidai: kieta eigakan wo sagashite*. Tokyo: Iwanamai Shoten, 2006. Print.
- Anderson, Joseph L.; Richie, Donald. *The Japanese Film: Art and Industry*. Princeton University Press, 1960. Print.
- Ani imōto*. Dir. Mikio Naruse. Daiei, 1953. Film.
- Ankokugai no bijo*. Dir. Seijun Suzuki. Nikkatsu, 1958. Film.
- Aparajito*. Dir. Ray Satyajit. Epic Productions, 1956. Film.
- Apur Sansar (the World of Apu)*. Dir. Ray Satyajit. Epic Productions, 1959. Film.
- Atsui suna*. Dir. Shunkai Mizuho. Daiei, 1960. Film.
- Bakushū*. Dir. Yasujiro Ozu. Shōchiku, 1951. Film.

- Barber Yoshino*. Dir. Naoko Ogigami. EuroSpace, 2003. Film.
- Bare Buehrer, Beverley. *Japanese Films: A Filmography and Commentary*. University of Michigan, 1990. Print.
- Baskett, Michael. *The Attractive Empire: Transnational Film Culture in Imperial Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008. Print.
- Bayside Shakedown the Movie*. Dir. Katsuyuki Motohiro. Tōhō, 1998. Film.
- Becker, Howard S. *Art Worlds*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982. Print.
- Bernardi, Joanne. *Writing in Light: The Silent Scenario and the Japanese Pure Film Movement*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2001. Print.
- Big Fish*. Dir. Tim Burton. Columbia Pictures Corporation, 2003. Film.
- Bingham, Adam. "The Romance of Certain Old Clothes or They Don't Make 'Em Like That Anymore." *CineAction* 34.13 (2008). Print.
- Bordwell, David. *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*. BFI Publishing, 1988. Print.
- Borggreen, Gunhild. "Gender in Contemporary Japanese Art." *Gender and Power in the Japanese Visual Field*. Ed. Graybill, Joshua S. Mostow; Norman Bryson; Maribeth: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003. Print.
- Bourne, Chris. "Japan Cuts 2010: Electric Button (Moon & Cherry) Review". 2010. Twitchfilm.com. June 24 2012. Website.
- Bowyer, Justin. *The Cinema of Japan & Korea*. Twenty-Four Frames. Vol. 2: Wallflower Press, 2004. Print.
- Bridget Jones's Diary*. Dir. Sharon McGuire. Miramax, 2001. Film
- Bull, Brett. "Historic 'Pink' Theater Hopes to Put Ladies on Seats, Not Just Screens." *The Japan Times Online* August 1 2010. Print.
- Burch, Noel. *To the Distant Observer: Form and Meaning in the Japanese Cinema*. University of California Press, 1979. Print.
- Caballero, Jorge Almanzán; Tsukamoto, Yoshiharu. "Tokyo Public Space Networks at the Intersection of the Commerical and the Domestic Realms (Part Iii): Study on Transit Urban Centers." *Journal of Asian Architecture and Building Engineering*. 468 (2009): 461-68. Print.
- Canby, Vincent. "Experimental Shorts from Japan at New Cinema Playhouse." *New York Times* May 3 1968. Print.

- Cazdyn, Eric M. *The Flash of Capital: Film and Geopolitics in Japan*. Duke University Press, 2002. Print.
- Chichi koishi*. Dir. Takeshi Ogura. Shōchiku, 1951. Film.
- Chiekoshō*. Dir. Noboru Nakamura. Shōchiku, 1967. Film.
- chloe. "Motherwater". 2010. personal blog. paperboy&co. August 02 2012. <<http://travel-camera.jugem.jp/?eid=189>>. Website.
- Chi to ai no shuppatsu*. Dir. Buichi Saito. Nikkatsu, 1958. Film.
- Chibusa yo eien nare*. Dir. Kinuyo Tanaka. Nikkatsu, 1955. Film.
- cinemajournal.net. "Cinema Journal". Tokyo, 2008. May 9, 2012. <cinemajournal.net>. Website.
- Clover, Carol. *Men, Women, and Chain Saws. Gender in the Modern Horror Film*. London: British Film Institute Publishing, 1992. Print.
- Commons, Wikipedia. "Ebisu Garden Palace from Tokyo Tower". December 24 2011. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Ebisu_Garden_Palace_from_Tokyo_Tower.jpg>. Website.
- Communications, Ministry of Internal Affairs and. "Statistics Bureau, Director-General for Policy Planning and Statistical Research and Training Institute". 2011. May 23 2011. <<http://www.e-stat.go.jp/SG1/estat/List.do?bid=000001007702&cycode=0>>. Website.
- cubismo. "Customer Reivew of Pūru". 2010. Amazon Japan. August 02 2012. <http://www.amazon.co.jp/review/R2RZ7CGHLFT52V/ref=cm_cr_dp_title?ie=UTF8&ASIN=B0033VBYM6&channel=rw-dp&nodeID=561958&store=dvd>. Website.
- Cybriwsky, Roman. "Changing Patterns of Urban Public Space: Observations and Assessments from the Tokyo and New York Metropolitan Areas." *Cities* 16.4 (1999): 223-31. Print.
- "Dai 45 Kai 2004 Nendo Nihon Eiga Kantoku Kyōkai Shinjinshō: Jushō Kinen Intabyū". Tokyo, 2004. Directors Guild of Japan. July 4th 2012. <<http://www.dgj.or.jp/feature/2005/0702.html>>.
- Daigaku wa detakereda*. Dir. Yasujiro Ozu. Shōchiku, 1929. Film.
- Danshun*. Dir. Noboru Nakamura. Shōchiku, 1965. Film.

- Davis, Darrell William. "Reigniting Japanese Tradition with Hana-Bi." *Cinema Journal* 40.4 (2001): 55-80. Print.
- Dead Man Walking*. Dir. Tim Robbins. Gramercy Pictures, 1995. Film.
- Dear Doctor*. Dir. Miwa Nishikawa. Asmik Ace Entertainment, 2009. Film.
- Densha otoko*. Dir. Shosuke Murakami. Tōhō, 2005. Film.
- dnbdx959. "Osharena Tokoro Desu. Yoru No Raitoappu Mo Saikō!!". 2011. *Ebisu Garden Place: Traveler Reviews*. TripAdvisor. Decemeber 24 2011. <http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g1066456-d1373781-r121536949-Ebisu_Garden_Place-Shibuya_Tokyo_Tokyo_Prefecture_Kanto.html>. Website.
- Domenig, Roland. "A Brief History of Independent Cinema in Japan and the Role of the Art Theatre Guild". 2009. *Shinjuku Ecstasy: Independent Films from the Art Theatre Guild of Japan*. Japan Society. July 12 2011. <www.japansociety.org/shinjuku_ecstasy>. Website.
- Dyer, Richard. "Don't Look Now--the Male Pin-Up." *Screen* 23.3/4 (1982). Print.
- . *White*. Routledge, 1997. Print.
- Dym, Jeffery A. "Benshi and the Introduction of Motion Pictures to Japan." *Monumenta Nipponica* 55.4 (2000): 509-36. Print.
- "Ebisu Garden Cinema, kyūkan". 2011. *Okini Culture*. Elle Japan Online. December 26 2011. <<http://blogs.elle.co.jp/okini-culture/2011/01/%E6%81%B5%E6%AF%94%E5%AF%BF%E3%82%AC%E3%83%BC%E3%83%87%E3%83%B3%E3%82%B7%E3%83%8D%E3%83%9E%E3%80%81%E4%BC%91%E9%A4%A8%E3%80%82-2/>>. Website.
- emi. "Pūru to tai no gurīn karē". 2011. personal blog. nifty.com. August 02 2012. <<http://natural-eating.cocolog-nifty.com/blog/2011/08/post-20d5.html>>. Website.
- Emma*. Dir. Douglas McGrath. Miramax, 1996. Film.
- Emmanuelle*. Dir. Just Jaeckin. Parafrance Films, 1974. Film.
- The Facts of Life*. Dir. Frank Melvin. United Artists, 1960. Film.
- Freaky Friday*. Dir. Mark Waters. Buena Vista, 2003. Film.
- Forbes.com. "Japan's Richest #39 Muneaki Masuda". 2009. *Forbes*. (February 18, 2009): October 28 2010. <http://www.forbes.com/lists/2009/73/japanrich09_Muneaki-Masuda_6O5T.html>. Website.

- Foster, Gwendolyn Audrey. *Women Film Directors: An International Bio-Critical Dictionary*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1995. Print.
- Foundation, Japan. "Girls on Film: Females in Contemporary Japanese Cinema". 2010. Japan Foundation. May 9 2012. <<http://www.jpff-film.org.uk/seasons/girls-on-film>>. Website.
- Fujiki, Hideaki. "Benshi as Stars: The Irony of the Popularity and Respectability of Voice Performers in Japanese Cinema." *Cinema Journal* 45.2 (2006): 68-84. Print.
- Fujiwara Yoshie no furusato*. Dir. Kenji Mizoguchi. Nikkatsu Uzumasa, 1930. Film.
- Furukawa, Kaoru. *Hana Mo Arashi Mo: Jyoyū Tanaka Kinuyo No Shōgai*. Tokyo: Bungei shunjū, 2002. Print.
- Futari de aruita iku haru aki*. Dir. Keisuke Kinoshita. Shōchiku Ofuna, 1962. Film.
- Futari de mune wo hare*. Dir. Kinya Sakai. Shōchiku, 1963. Film.
- Futari no hitomi*. Dir. Shigeo Nakaki. Daiei 1952. Film.
- Gaines, Jane. "White Privilege and Looking Relations: Race and Gender in Feminist Film Theory." *Screen* 29.4 (1988): 12-27. Print.
- Genroku onna*. Dir. Hotei Nomura. Shōchiku Shimokamo, 1924. Film.
- Germain, David. "'Sex and the City' Box Office Doubles Expectations." *Huffington Post* (2008). <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/06/01/sex-and-the-city-box-offi_n_104569.html>. Website.
- Gerow, Aaron. "Homelessness of Style and the Problems of Studying Miike Takashi." *Canadian Journal of Film Studies* Spring (2009). Print.
- . "Japanese Film and Television." *Routledge Handbook of Japanese Culture and Society*. Ed. Bestor, Victoria; Bestor, Theodore C.: Routledge Taylor & Francis, 2011. 213-25. Print.
- . *A Page of Madness: Cinema and Modernity in 1920s Japan*. Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies at the University of Michigan, 2008. Print.
- . "Recognizing "Others" in a New Japanese Cinema." *Japan Foundation Newsletter* 14.2 (2002). Print.
- Gion bayashi*. Dir. Kenji Mizoguchi. Daiei, 1953. Film.
- Girl, Interrupted*. Dir. James Mangold. Columbia Pictures, 1999. Film.
- Gone in Sixty Seconds*. Dir. Dominic Sena. Buena Vista Pictures, 2000. Film.

- The Graduate*. Dir. Mike Nichols. Embassy Pictures Corporation, 1967. Film.
- Gray, Jonathon. *Show Sold Separately: Promos, Spoilers, and Other Media Paratexts*. New York and London: New York University Press, 2010. Print.
- Hakuchi*. Dir. Akira Kurosawa. Shōchiku, 1951. Film.
- Hana yori dango*. Dir. Yasuhara Ishii. Tōhō, 2008. Film.
- Hanes, Jeffrey E. "Urban Palnning as an Urban Problem: The Reconstruction of Tokyo after the Great Kanto Earthquake." *Policy Science* 7.3 (2000): 123-38. Print.
- Harney, Alexandra. "Case Study: Tsutaya, a Tokyo Video Store, Goes Mobile." *CIO: Insight* (2002). October 28, 2010. Print.
- Harris, Sue. "Sex, Comedy, and Sexy Comedy at the French Box Office in the 1970s: Rethinking *Emmanuelle* and *Les Valseuses*." *Contemporary French Civilization* 35.1 (2011): 1-18. Print.
- Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. Dir. Chris Columbus. Warner Bros. Pictures, 2002. Film.
- Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. Dir. Chris Columbus. Warner Bros. Pictures, 2001. Film.
- Haru kourou no hana no utage*. Dir. Keisuke Kinoshita. Shōchiku, 1958. Film.
- Haruoka, Yūji. "Shinema Sanbu Monogatari: Kansai Eiga Gaido." *Kinema Junpō*. 1205 (1996): 125-42. Print.
- Haskell, Molly. *From Reverence to Rape: The Treatment of Women in the Movies*. University of Chicago Press, 1973. Print.
- Hatamoto taikutsu otoko: nazo no gurentō*. Dir. Sadatsugu Matsuda. Tōei, 1957. Film.
- Hatsusugata*. Dir. Tazuko Sakane. Daiichi Eiga, 1936. Film.
- Hebi ichigo*. Dir. Miwa Nishikawa. Xanadu, 2002. Film.
- Heroine*. Vol. 2: Shinekon Monthly, 2008. Print.
- Hi mo tsuki mo*. Dir. Noboru Nakamura. Shōchiku, 1969. Film.
- Hibari no komoriuta*. Dir. Koji Shima. Daiei, 1951. Film.
- Hibari no yōkina tenshi*. Dir. Ei'ichi Saito. Shōchiku, 1953. Film.
- Hidaka, Seiichi. *Natsukashi no nihon eiga posutā korekushon Part 2*. Vol. 2. Tokyo: Kindai eiga sha, 1990. Print.

hideki. "Yebisu Garden Cinema". 2011. *Sakura Hotel Ikebukuro*. Decemeber 26th 2011. <http://sakura-hotel-ikebukuro.com/blog/2011/02/yebisu_garden_cinema.html>. Website.

High Fidelity. Dir. Stephen Frears. Buena Vista Pictures, 2000. Film.

High, Peter B. *The Imperial Screen: Japanese Film Culture in the Fifteen Years' War 1931-1945*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005. Print.

Hiroku onna kura. Dir. Kazuo Mori. Daiei, 1968. Film.

Hitogui ama. Dir. Yoshiki Onoda. Shin-Tōhō, 1958. Film.

HoneyRoasted. "Tired of Fighting the Crowds to Have Fun? Then Drop by Garden Place.". Tokyo, 2011. *Ebisu Garden Place: Traveler Reviews*. TripAdvisor.com. December 23 2011. <http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g1066456-d1373781-r121536949-Ebisu_Garden_Place-Shibuya_Tokyo_Tokyo_Prefecture_Kanto.html>. Website

hooks, bell. *Black Looks: Race and Representation*. Boston: South End Press, 1992. Print.

House of Usher. Dir. Roger Corman. American International Pictures, 1960. Film.

Hud. Dir. Martin Ritt. Paramount Pictures, 1963. Film.

Hula Girls. Dir. Sang-il Lee. Cine Quanon, 2006. Film.

Huysen, Andreas. "Mass Culture as Woman." *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, and Postmodernism*. Indiana University Press, 1986. Print.

Hyakumanen to nigamushi onna. Dir. Yuki Tanada. Nikkatsu, 2008. Film.

I Love You Phillip Morris. Dir. Glenn Ficarra and John Requa. Lidell Entertainment, 2009. Film.

Iguchi, Nami. *Inuneko*. Tokyo: Free Style, 2004. Print.

Iizawa, Kōtarō. "Ninagawa Mika no shashin hisutorī." *Ninagawa Mika sōtokushū: Portrait of Life & Herself*. Tokyo: Kawade Shobo Shinsha, 2009. 38-47. Print.

Ikehata, Miho. "Haneda Sumiko kantoku intabyū." *Cinema Journal*.66 (2005): 60-62. Print.

Iles, Timothy. "Female Voices, Male Words." *Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese Studies* (2005). Print.

Ima, Ai ni yukimasu. Dir. Nobuhiro Doi. Tōhō, 2004. Film.

- Inuneko*. Dir. Nami Iguchi. Onna kodomo firumuzu, 2004. Film.
- Inuneko*. Dir. Nami Iguchi. Tokyo Theaters Company, 2001. Film.
- Ishihara, Ikuko. *Jyosei eiga kantoku no koi*. Tokyo: Fukuin, 2001. Print.
- . "Segregation and Participation: A Female Perspective on Pink Films and Romantic Porn." *Planet Eros: New Japanese Independent Cinema*: HKIFF, 2002. 42. Print.
- Itakura, Fumiaki. "Eigakan ni okeru kankyaku no sahō." *Nihon eiga wa ikiteiru*. Ed. Kurosawa, Kiyoshi. Tokyo: Iwanami-shoten, 2010. Print.
- Iwamoto, Kenji. *Eiga No Tanjō*. Shashin Egashūsei Nihon Eiga No Rekishi. Vol. 1. 3 vols. Tokyo: Nihon Tosho Center, 1998. Print.
- "Iwanami Hall". Ed. itot. itot.jp. December 28 2011. <<http://itot.jp/13101/62>>. Website.
- "Iwanami Hall nitsuite". Iwanami Hall. August 23rd 2010. <<http://www.iwanami-hall.com/contents/hall.html>>. Website.
- Iwanami, Ristuko. "Iwanami hōru no ayumi". Tokyo, 2009. *Kanda zatsugaku daigaku teinei kōza*. Kanda Zatsugaku Daigaku. December 21 2011. <<http://www.kanda-zatsugaku.com/090109/0109.html>>. Website.
- Izawa, Jun. "Eiga kankyaku ron no teishō." *Kinema Junpō*. 466 (1968). Print.
- Japan-Society. "Electric Button-Moon and Cherry". 2010. Japan Society. June 24 2012. <http://www.japansociety.org/event_detail?eid=69b57969>. Website.
- JETRO. "Japanese Film Industry." *Japan Economic Monthly*. May (2004). Print.
- Jingi naki tataikai*. Dir. Kinji Fukasaku. Tōei, 1973. Film.
- "JK Rowling Outs Dumbledore as Gay." *BBC News* Saturday, October 20 2007. Print.
- Johnston, Claire. "Women's Cinema as Counter Cinema." *Sexual Strategems: The World of Women in Film*. Ed. Erens, Patricia. New York: Horizon Press, 1979. 133-43. Print.
- Junjō Nijyūsō*. Dir. Meiji Umetzu. Shōchiku, 1967. Film.
- kaidōwoiku. "Amazon Customer Review". 2011. Amazon Japan. August 02 2012. <http://www.amazon.co.jp/product-reviews/B0033VBYM6/ref=cm_cr_dp_synop?.ie=UTF8&showViewpoints=0&sortBy=bySubmissionDateDescending#R1TWDEC42GB5IP>. Website.
- Kame, Mkimpo. "Shiatā imēji fōramu". 2007. December 28 2011. <http://file.mkimpo.blog.shinobi.jp/IMG_9061s.jpg>. Website.

- Kamome shokudo*. Dir. Naoko Ogigami. Media Suits, 2006. Film.
- "Kamome shokudō projekuto saishinsaku Tokyo Oashisu yokokuhen kaikin! Tokyo wo butai ni yuttari to hirogaru kūkikan!". 2011. Cinema Today. August 02 2012. <<http://www.cinematoday.jp/page/N0034269>>. Website.
- "Kamome shokudō shirīzu saishinsaku: Tokyo Oashisu". 2012. Tokyo Carendā. August 02 2012. <<http://www.tokyo-calendar.tv/cinema/2011/10/17/>>. Website.
- "Kamome shokudō, Megane, Pūru, Mozāuôtā no sugi wa Tokyo Oashisu". 2011. Nikkei. August 02 2012. <<http://www.nikkei.co.jp/category/offtime/eiga/special/article.aspx?id=MMGEzt000026042011>>. Website.
- "Kankyaku chōsa." *Eiga geijutsu*.271 (1970). Print.
- kanon. "Motherwater". 2010. Blog.livedoor. August 02 2012. <http://blog.livedoor.jp/baron_na8c/archives/52086413.html>. Website.
- Kantoku-kei joshi fairu*. Eureka. Ed. Yamamoto, Jyu. Vol. 38, 15. Tokyo: Seitosha, 2006. Print.
- Kaplan, E. Ann. *Women and Film: Both Sides of the Camera*. New York: Methuen, 1983. Print.
- Kapsis, Robert E. "Reputation Building and the Film Art World: The Case of Alfred Hitchcock." *The Sociological Quarterly* 30.1 (1989): 15-35. Print.
- Kapsis, Robert E. . *Hitchcock: The Making of a Reputation*. University of Chicago Press, 1992. Print.
- Karatsu, Rie. "Questions for a Women's Cinema: Fact, Fiction and Memory in the Films of Kawase Naomi." *Visual Anthropology* 22 (2009): 167-81. Print.
- Kato, Mikiro. "A History of Movie Theaters and Audiences in Postwar Kyoto, the Capital of Japanese Cinema." *CineMagaziNet* 1 (1996). Print.
- Kawabata, Yasunari. *The Scarlet Gang of Asakusa*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005. Print.
- Kawahara, Tetsu. *Meigaza Bangaichi*. Tokyo: Gentosha, 2007. Print.
- Kawakita, Kashiko. "Jyoyū•kantoku•eiga." *NFC Newsletter* 1.1 (1971): 4-9. Print.
- Kawamoto, Saburō. "Garagara no "Basue Shinema" de pinku wo miteita koro." *Kinema Junpō* 1211 (1997): 52-53. Print.
- Kaze no bajyō*. Dir. Noboru Nakamura. Shōchiku, 1970. Film.

- Kazoku*. Dir. Yoji Yamada. Shōchiku, 1970. Film.
- Kill Bill Vol. 2: The Love Story*. Dir. Quentin Tarantino. Miramax, 2004. Film.
- Kill Bill: Vol. 1*. Dir. Quentin Tarantino. Miramax, 2003. Film.
- Kimi no na wa*. Dir. Hideo Oba. Shōchiku, 1953. Film.
- Kimura, Mariko. "Iguchi Nami." *Yuriika: shi to hihyō. Tokushū: kantoku joshikei fairu* 38 n. 521 (2006): 171. Print.
- . "Nishikawa Miwa." *Yuriika: shi to hihyō. Tokushū: kantoku joshikei fairu* 38 n. 521 (2006): 189. Print.
- Kimura, Tatsuya. "Eiga wa onnanoko-tachi no mono." *Yuriika: shi to hihyō. Tokushū: kantoku joshikei fairu* 38 n. 521 (2006). Print.
- KineJun. "Tanaka Kinuyo." *Nihon eiga kantoku zenshū*. Tokyo: Kinema Junpō, 1976. Print.
- Kinema, Junpō. *No Movie, No Girl Vol. 1*. Vol. n. 1437. Tokyo: Kinema Junpō-sha, 2005. Print.
- . *No Movie, No Girl Vol. 2*. Vol. n. 1464. Tokyo: Kinema Junpō-sha, 2006. Print.
- Ko, M. "The Break-up of the National Body: Cosmetic Multiculturalism and Films of Miike Takashi." *New Cinemas* 2.1 (2004): 29-39. Print.
- Koi wa go shichi go*. Dir. Naoko Ogigami. Cine Quanon, 2005. Film.
- Koibumi*. Dir. Kinuyo Tanaka. Shin-Tōhō, 1953. Film.
- Koizora*. Dir. Natsuki Iami. Tōhō. 2007. Film.
- Konyaku yubiwa*. Dir. Keisuke Kinoshita. Shōchiku, 1950. Film.
- Kōshōnin: mashita Masayoshi*. Dir. Katsuyuki Motohiro. Tōhō, 2005.
- Kuhn, Annette; Radstone, Susannah. *The Women's Companion to International Film*. University of California Press, 1994. Print.
- Kuiru*. Dir. Yoichi Sai. Music Box Films, 2004. Film.
- kumanezumi. "Motherwater". 2010. [blog.goo.ne.jp. August 02 2012. <http://blog.goo.ne.jp/barriosmangre/e/d9218c1d665cf889503d9054ae177043>](http://blog.goo.ne.jp/barriosmangre/e/d9218c1d665cf889503d9054ae177043). Website.
- Kurutta kajitsu*. Dir. Ko Nakahira. Nikkatsu, 1956. Film.

- Kusayanagi, Daizo. "Nihonsei josei eiga ga miotoshiteiru mono." *Kinema Junpō*.435 (1967): 16-18. Print.
- Kyōshitsu no kodomotachi*. Dir. Susumu Hani. Iwanami Eiga Seisakusho, 1954. Film.
- Laird, Colleen. "Japanese Cinema, the Classroom, and Swallowtail Butterfly." *Jump Cut*. 52 (2010). Print.
- Lang, Doris; Nordstöm, Johan. "For Foreigners the Japanese Toilet Really Must Be Something Amazing: And Interview with Ogigami Naoko". 2011. Film International. August 1 2012. <<http://filmint.nu/?p=348>>. Website.
- Last Samurai*. Dir. Edward Zwick. Warner Bros. Pictures, 2003. Film.
- de Lauretis, Teresa. "Rethinking Women's Cinema: Aesthetics and Feminist Theory." *Issues in Feminist Film Criticism*. 1985. Ed. Erens, Patricia. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990. Print.
- Lee, Sang-Woo. "Film Trade in Japan since the 1950s: Government Policies and Media Development." *Keio Communication Review*.26 (2004): 53-76. Print.
- Legally Blonde*. Dir. Robert Luketic. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Distribution Corporation, 2001. Film.
- Leung, William. "Misogyny as Radical Commentary—Rashomon Retold in Takashi Miike's Masters of Horror: Imprint." *Jump Cut*.51 (2009). Print.
- LiLiCo. *Eiga-Teki Seikatsu*. Tokyo: Goma Books, 2007. Print.
- Limit of Love: Umizaru*. Dir. Eiichiro Hasumi. Tōhō, 2006. Film.
- Linda Linda Linda*. Dir. Nobuhiro Yamashita. Visual Audio Project, 2005. Film.
- Liotta, Salvator-John A.; Miyawaki, Masaru. "A Study on the History of "Cinema-City" in Asakusa, Tokyo: Analysis of Land Use and Landscape Transformations Based on Cadastral Maps and Photos." *Journal of architecture,planning and environmental engineering. Transactions of AIJ* 47.637 (2009): 617-25. Print.
- Little Miss Sunshine*. Dir. Jonathan Dayton Faris. Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2006. Film.
- "Lostpedia: The Lost Encyclopedia". 2005-present. April 25 2011. <http://lostpedia.wikia.com/wiki/Main_Page>. Website.
- Love Actually*. Dir. Richard Curtis. Universal Pictures, 2003. Film.
- Lukács, Gabriella. *Scripted Affects, Branded Selves*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010. Print.

- Machi-Log. "Ebisu Garden Cinema". 2011. So-net Media Networks Corporation. December 24 2011. <<http://machi-log.jp/spot/102125>>. Website.
- Madamu to nyobo*. Dir. Heinosuke Gosho. Shōchiku, 1931. Film.
- maikazuki290. "Kantoku Wo Oigami Naoko Ni Modoshitekure". 2011. user review. Yahoo! Japan. August 02 2012. <<http://info.movies.yahoo.co.jp/userreview/tyem/id340239/rid17/p0/s0/c0/>>. Website.
- Marie Antoinette*. Dir. Sophia Coppola. Columbia Pictures, 2006. Film.
- Markus, Andrew L. "The Carnival of Edo: Misemono Spectacles from Contemporary Accounts." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 45.2 (1985): 499-541. Print.
- Maruyama, J. "Ninagawa Mika's "Sakuran" Review". 2007. Twitchfilm.com. June 26 2012. Website.
- Mary Poppins*. Dir. Robert Stevenson. Buena Vista Pictures, 1964. Film.
- Masuda, Muneaki. *Jyōhō rakuen - Tsutaya no sōgyō to direkuto TV no kigyō* Tokyo: Tokuma shoten, 1996. Print.
- Matsuda, Eigasha. *The Benshi: Japanese Silent Film Narrators*. Tokyo: Urban Connections, 2001. Print.
- Matsumoto, Yumiko. *Eiga wo tsukutta onnatachi*. Tokyo: Cinema House, 1996. Print.
- Mayaku 3-go*. Dir. Takumi Furukawa. Nikkatsu, 1958. Film.
- Mayne, Judith. "The Woman at the Keyhole: Women's Cinema and Feminist Criticism." *New German Critique* 23.Spring - Summer (1981): 27-43. Print.
- Mazā Wōtā*. Dir. Kana Matsumoto. Suurkiitos, 2010. Film.
- McDonald, Keiko I. *Reading a Japanese Film: Cinema in Context*. University of Hawaii Press, 2006. Print.
- Mean Girls*. Dir. Mark Waters. Paramount, 2004. Film.
- Megane*. Dir. Naoko Oigami. Nikkatsu, 2007. Film.
- Mes, Tom. "Sakuran". 2007. Midnight Eye. June 26 2012
- Mes, Tom; Sharp, Jasper. *The Midnight Eye Guide to New Japanese Film*. Berkeley, California: Stone Bridge Press, 2005. Print.
- Mikirō, Katō. *Eigakan to kankyaku no bunkashi*. Tokyo: Chūōkōron-shinsha, 2006. Print.

- Miyao, Daisuke. *Sessue Hayakawa: Silent Cinema and Transnational Stardom*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007. Print.
- Miyazaki, Yuji. "Nanajyū nendai, meigaza." *Kinema Junpō*.1211 (1997): 54-55. Print.
- Mizuno, Junko. *A-ko-chan no beautiful ♥ Cinema*. Tokyo: Beam Comix, 2007. Print.
- Mochidzuki, Mamoru. "Eiga no taishūsei." *Yume to omokage: taishū goraku no kenkyū*. Ed. kenkyūkai, Shisō no kagaku. Chūōkōron-shinsha: Chu, 1950. Print.
- Morimoto, Lori Hitchcock. "Some of Us Are Looking at the Stars: Japanese Women, Hong Kong Films, and Transcultural Fandom." Dissertation. Indiana University, 2011. Print.
- Moru*. Dir. Yuki Tanada. JVC Entertainment, 2000. Film.
- MPPA, Motion Picture Producers Association of Japan. "Kako Dētā Ranhyō". December 16 2011. <<http://www.eiren.org/toukei/data.html>>. Website.
- Mr. & Mrs. Smith*. Dir. Doug Liman. Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, 2005. Film.
- Mulvey, Laura. "Afterthoughts on "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," Inspired by King Vidor's *Duel in the Sun* " *Visual and Other Pleasures*. 1981. London: Macmillan, 1989. 29-37. Print.
- . "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Film Theory and Criticism*. 1975. Ed. Cohen, Leo Braudy; Marshall. New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. Print.
- Muneaki, Masuda. *Jōhō Rakuen Kaisha - Tsutaya No Sōgyō to Direku Tv No Kigyō*. Tokyo: Tokuma shoten, 1996. Print.
- Munekata kyōdai*. Dir. Yasujiro Ozu. Shin-Tōhō, 1950. Film.
- Mura no fujin gakkū*. Dir. Sumiko Haneda. Iwanami Eiga Seisakusho, 1957. Film.
- Murakami, Nobuhiko. *Taishōki No Shokugyōfujin*. Damesu shuppan, 1983. Print.
- Murasaki ukyō nosuke gyaku ichimonji-giri*. Dir. Yasuto Hasegawa. Tōei, 1964. Film.
- mussesow. "Kokoro No Anaboko Ni Wa, Neko Inerugī Wo Dōzo". 2012. user review. Yahoo Japan. August 1 2012. <<http://info.movies.yahoo.co.jp/userreview/tyem/id341733/rid39/p0/s0/c0/>>. Website.
- Nakamura, Keiji. *Eiga Sangyō No Dōkō to Karakuri Ga Yoku Wakaru Hon* Tokyo: Shūwa System, 2007. Print.

- NANA*. Dir. Kentaro Ohtani. Tōhō, 2005. Film.
- Neale, Steve. "Masculinity as Spectacle." *Screen* 26.4 (1983). Print.
- Neko no ongaeshi*. Dir. Hiroyuki Morita. GKids, 2002. Film.
- "News Release." Ed. Tower, The Prince Park. Tokyo2012. Print.
- Nihon eiga posutā-shū: Nikkatsu eiga eshū-hen*. Tokyo: Wise-shuppan, 2003. Print.
- "Nihon no eiga senden dezain." *Kinema Junpō*.284 (1961). Print.
- Nijūshi no hitomi*. Dir. Keisuke Kinoshita. Shōchiku 1954. Film.
- Nikutai No Mon*. Dir. Seijun Suziki. Nikkatsu, 1964. Film.
- Ninagawa, Mika. *Kantoku nikki*. Tokyo: Kodansha, 2007. Print.
- Ninagawa, Mika; Tanada, Yuki. "Makase makasarete ikiru no sa: kantoku kagyō, sono terentekuda no miwaku." *Eureka tokushū: jyoshikei no fairu*.12 (2006): 46-59. Print.
- Ninagawa-Film-Committee. "Sakuran the Movie". 2007. Ninagawa Film Committee. June 28 2012. Print.
- Ninomiya, Mitoshi. *Nihon eiga posutā shū: shin-tōhō e shū-hen*. Tokyo: Wise-shuppan, 2002. Print.
- "Nishikawa Miwa kantoku, kannu wo hakate." *Kinema Junpō*.1460 (2006): 43. Print.
- Nishimura, Tadao. *Nihon eiga posutā-shū: Daiei eiga-hen Shōwa 30 nendai*. Tokyo: Wise-shuppan, 2000. Print.
- . *Nihon eiga posutā-shū: Daiei eiga-hen Shōwa 40 nendai*. Tokyo: Wise-shuppan, 2000. Print.
- Non-chan kumo ni noru*. Dir. Fumindo Kurata. Shin-Tōhō, 1955. Film.
- Nornes, Markus. *Forest of Pressure: Ogawa Shinsuke and Postwar Japanese Documentary*. U of Minnesota Press, 2007. Print.
- . "Haneda Sumiko." *Dokumentarī eiga wa kataru: sakka intabyū no kiseki*. Tokyo: Miraisha, 2006. Print.
- . *Japanese Documentary Film: The Meiji Era through Hiroshima*. U of Minnesota Press, 2003. Print.
- . "The Postwar Documentary Trace: Groping in the Dark." *positions* 10.1 (2002): 39-78. Print.

- Nygren, Scott. *Time Frames: Japanese Cinema and the Unfolding of History*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007. Print.
- Ogin-sama*. Dir. Kinuyo Tanaka. Shōchiku, 1962. Film.
- Ojōsan shachō*. Dir. Yuzo Kawashima. Shōchiku, 1953. Film.
- Okada, Yutaka. *Eiga sōzō no bijinesu*. Tokyo: Chikumashobo, 1991. Print.
- "OL Market Report: Eiga ni tsuite". 2003. Sankei Living Shinbun Inc. December 31 2011. <<http://www.sankeiliving.co.jp/research/ol/007.html>>. Website.
- "Ol Market Report: OL no shōhi kōdō ni tsuite". 2009. Sankei Living Shinbun Inc. December 31 2011. <<http://www.sankeiliving.co.jp/research/ol/078.html>>. Website.
- Ōnishi, Etsuko. *Mizoguchi Kenji wo aishita onna*. Tokyo: Sanichi shobō, 1993. Print.
- Onna bakari no yoru*. Dir. Kinuyo Tanaka. Tōhō, 1961. Film.
- Onna kyūketsuki*. Dir. Nobuo Nakagawa. Shin-Tōhō, 1959. Film.
- Oretachi ni asu wa naissu*. Dir. Yuki Tanada. Slow Learner, 2008. Film.
- Ōtaka, Hirō. "Minishiata tankan no haikai." *Kinema Junpō*. 1143 (1994): 93. Print.
- Ōya, Takahiro. "Asakusa meigaza". December 28 2011. <<http://www.cinema-st.com/classic/c019.html>>. Website.
- . "Cine Saison Shibuya". December 28 2011. <<http://www.cinema-st.com/mini/m024.html>>. Website.
- . "Ebisu Garden Cinema". *Minatomachi Cinema Street*. December 24 2011. <<http://www.cinema-st.com/mini/m002.html>>. Website.
- . "Image Forum ". December 28 2011. <<http://www.cinema-st.com/mini/m011.html>>. Website.
- Parker, Helen. "Japanese Women Film-Makers in the Second World War: A Study of Sakane Tazuko, Suzuki Norkio and Atsugi Taka." *Japanese Women: Emerging from Subservience, 1868-1945*. Ed. Tomida, Hiroko; Daniels, Gordon. Vol. 1. Women in Japanese History. Folkestone, Kent: Global Oriental, 2005. Print.
- Pather Panchali*. Dir. Ray Satyajit. Government of West Bengal, 1955. Film.
- pat03. "Ohmori Mika kantoku Pūru nitsuite". 2009. oshiete goo. August 02 2012. <<http://oshiete.goo.ne.jp/qa/5254271.html>>. Website.

- Phillips, John. "Catherine Breillat's Romance: Hard Core and the Female Gaze." *Studies in French Cinema* 1.3 (2001): 133-40. Print.
- poomaa_chen. "Kantoku ga chigau". 2009. yahoo question and answer webpage. Yahoo Japan. August 02 2012. <http://detail.chiebukuro.yahoo.co.jp/qa/question_detail/q1030667175>. Website.
- pretty_kitten. "Pūru". 2010. Excite Blog. August 02 2012. <<http://kittenish.exblog.jp/15333248/>>. Website.
- Pūru*. Dir. Mika Ohmori. Suurkiitos, 2009. Film.
- Rashōmon*. Dir. Akira Kurosawa. Daiei, 1950. Film.
- Remon no koro*. Dir. Yuki Iwata. There's Enterprise, 2007. Film.
- Rentaneko*. Dir. Naoko Ogigami. Suurkiitos, 2012. Film.
- Richie, Donald. *A Hundred Years of Japanese Cinema*. Tokyo: Kodansha International Press, 2005. Print.
- . *A Lateral View: Essays on Culture and Style in Contemporary Japan*. Stone Bridge Press, 1992. Print.
- Ringoen no shōjo*. Dir. Koji Shima. Shōchiku, 1952. Film.
- Rogge, Michael. "Japan in the Fifties 日本昭和: Photos from the Fuji Film Exhibition in Tokyo in 2008." 2009. Website.
- Russell, Catherine. *The Cinema of Naruse Mikio: Women and Japanese Modernity*. Duke University Press, 2008. Print.
- . "Naruse Mikio's Silent Films: Gender and the Discourse of Everyday Life in Interwar Japan." *Camera Obscura* 20.3 (2005): 57-89. Print.
- . "Too Close to Home: Naruse Mikio and Japanese Cinema of the 1950s." *Global Cities: Cinema, Architecture, and Urbanism in a Digital Age*. Ed. Krause, Linda; Petro, Patrice: Rutgers University Press, 2003. 87-114. Print.
- . "Women's Stories in Post-War Japan: Naruse Mikio's Late Chrysanthemums." *Japanese Cinema: Texts and Contexts*. Ed. Phillips, Alastair; Stringer, Julian: Taylor & Francis, 2007. 124-36. Print.
- Ruten no ōhi*. Dir. Kinuyo Tanaka. Daiei, 1960. Film.
- Sakuran*. Dir. Mika Ninagawa. Asmik Ace Entertainment, 2006. Film.
- "Sakuran". 2007. Rotten Tomatoes. June 26 2012.

- Saikaku ichidai onna*. Dir. Kenji Mizoguchi. ShinTōhō Film Distribution Committee, 1952. Film.
- Saito, Ayako. "Reading as a Woman: The Collaboration of Ayako Wakao and Yasuzo Masumura." *Reclaiming the Archive: Feminism and Film History*. Ed. Callahan, Vicki: Wayne State University Press, 2010. Print.
- Saitō, Makoto. "Hyakuman-en to nigamushi onna: Tanada Yuki kantoku intabyū." *Spoon*. 2008: 36-43. Print.
- Saito, Yoko. "Koizumi Kyōko Kamome Shokudō No Shirīzu Ni Herushinki Kara Itayouna Kao De Sansen". 2010. Cinemacafe.net. August 02 2012. <<http://www.cinemacafe.net/news/cgi/report/2010/10/9315/>>. Website.
- Saitoh, Morihiko. *Who'll Kill the Japanese Movies?* Tokyo: Diamond Publishers, 2007. Print.
- Sakai, Yoshiko. *Shōwa shoki no atarashii shokugyō to shūshokusensen*. Hakodateshi Shi. Vol. 5: Hakodate-shi, 2008. Print.
- Sakamoto, Rumi. "Pan-Pan Girls: Humiliating Liberation in Postwar Japanese Literature." *Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies* 7.2 (2012): 1-15. Print.
- Sanbiki no onna tobakushi*. Dir. Shigeo Tanaka. Daiei, 1967. Film.
- Sandakan hachibanshokan bōkyō*. Dir. Kei Kumai. Tōhō, 1974. Film.
- Sangatsu no raion*. Dir. Yazaki Hitoshi. UPLINK Company, 1991. Film.
- San-nen migomoru*. Dir. Miako Tadano. Tōei Video, 2006. Film.
- Sanshō dayū*. Dir. Kenji Mizoguchi. Daiei, 1954. Film.
- Sasaki, Jyunichirō. *Nihon eiga postā-shū: Tōei jidaigeki-hen*. Tokyo: Wise-shuppan, 2001. Print.
- Satō, Tadao. *Nihon no dokyumentarī*. 3 vols. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2009. Print.
- . *Nihoneiga shi*. Vol. 1. Tokyo: Iwanami, 1995. Print.
- . "Tanaka Kinuyo ron." *NFC Newsletter*.2 (1971): 4-9. Print.
- Schencking, Charles J. "The Great Kanto Earthquake and the Culture of Catastrophe and Reconstruction in 1920s Japan." *Journal of Japanese Studies* 34.2 (2008): 295-331. Print.

- Schilling, Mark. "Rentaneko: Warm Humor within a Whisker of Loneliness". Tokyo, 2012. Japan Times. August 01 2012. <<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/ff20120511a2.html>>. Website.
- Sekai no chūshin de, ai wo sakebu*. Dir. Isao Yukisara. Tōhō, 2004. Film.
- Sen to chihiro no kamikakushi*. Dir. Hayao Miyazaki. Ghibli Internationa, 2001. Film.
- Sex and the City*. Dir. Michael Patrick King. New Line Cinema, 2008. Film.
- Sex and the City 2*. Dir. Michael Patrick King. New Line Cinema, 2010. Film.
- Sharp, Jasper. *Behind the Pink Curtain: The Complete History of Japanese Sex Cinema*. Surrey, UK: FAB Press Ltd., 2008. Print.
- . "Tanada Yuki". 2009. Midnight Eye. June 24 2012. <http://www.midnighteye.com/interviews/yuki_tanada.shtml>. Website.
- Shiawase no pan*. Dir. Yukiko Mishima. Asmik Ace Entertainment, 2012. Film.
- Shibano, Joshia. "Onabys Blog / Iceland". 2011. December 28 2011. <<http://onabys.jugem.jp/?month=201105>>. Website.
- Shimotsuma monogatari*. Dir. Tetsuya Nakashima. Tōhō, 2004. Film.
- Shimura, Miyoko. "Kikuchi Hiroshi No tsūzoku shōsetsu to renai eiga no henyō." *Kazoku No shōzō hōmu dorama to merodorama*. Ed. Iwamoto, Kenji. Tokyo: Shinwa-sha, 2007. Print.
- Shindō, Kaneto. "Interview with Sakane Tazuko: sukuriputā karamita Mizoguchi enshutsu." *Aru eiga kantoku no shūgai: Mizoguchi Kenji no kiroku*. Tokyo: Eijinsha, 1975. Print.
- . *Shōsetsu Tanaka Kinuyo*. Tokyo: Bungeishunjū, 1986. Print.
- Shinohara, Konta. "Hōga Pūru". 2011. user blog. Rakuten Blog. August 02 2012. <<http://plaza.rakuten.co.jp/rkproject/diary/201108260000/>>. Website.
- Shitamachi taiyō*. Dir. Yoji Yamada. Shōchiku, 1963. Film.
- Shizuya, Hiroharu. "Ebisu Garden Place Joel Robuchon". Tokyo, 2007. December 24 2011. <<http://www.360cities.net/image/ebisu-garden-place>>. Website.
- "Shō sābisu to goraku". Tomakomai Minhō Co. December 29 2011. <<http://www.tomamin.co.jp/kikaku/05/aeon/aeon0406.htm>>. Website.
- Shōjo*. Dir. Kiyoshi Hori'ike. Nikkatsu, 1961. Film.

- shokora. "Customer Review of Motherwater". 2011. Amazon Japan. August 02 2012. <http://www.amazon.co.jp/product-reviews/B004JKNRES/ref=cm_cr_dp_synop?ie=UTF8&showViewpoints=0&sortBy=bySubmissionDateDescending#R2NCRQI07HQJ5L>. Website.
- Short Cuts*. Dir. Robert Altman. FineLine Features, 1993. Film.
- Shunpu Den*. Dir. Seijun Suzuki. Nikkatsu, 1965. Film.
- Silverberg, Miriam Rom. *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense: The Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times*. University of California Press, 2006. Print.
- Silverman, Kaja. "Masochism and Subjectivity." *Framework*.12 (1980): 2-9. Print.
- South Pacific*. Dir. Joshua Logan. Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, 1958. Film.
- Soup Opera*. Dir. Tomoyuki Takimoto. Prénom H Co. Ltd, 2010. Film.
- Stacey, Jackie. "Desperately Seeking Difference." *Screen* 28.1 (1987): 48-61. Print.
- Standish, Isolde. "Mediators of Modernity: "Photo-Interpreters" in Japanese Silent Cinema." *Oral Tradition* 20.1 (2005): 93-110. Print.
- . *A New History of Japanese Cinema: A Century of Narrative Film*. Continuum, 2006. Print.
- The Stepford Wives*. Dir. Frank Oz. Paramount Pictures, 2004. Film.
- Stevens, Chuck. "Japan's New New Wave." *LA Weekly* August 02 2001. Print.
- suadade77. "1960 Nendai No Tokyo". YouTube. May 29th 2011. <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KPtk-HnC4DI&feature=related>>. Website.
- Suwingu Gāruzu*. Dir. Shinobu Yaguchi. Tōhō, 2004. Film.
- Tada hitori no hito*. Dir. Ren Yoshimura. Nikkatsu, 1956. Film.
- Taiyo no kisetsu*. Dir. Takumi Furukawa. Nikkatsu, 1956. Film
- Takada Wataru teki*. Dir. Yuki Tanada. Altamira Pictures, 2003. Film.
- Takano, Etsuko. *Watashi no shinema sengen: eizou ga josei de hiraku toki*. 1st ed. Tokyo: Asahi Shinbun-sha, 1992. Print.
- Takase, Susumu. *Omoide no eigakan*. Tokyo: Tosei-sha, 2004. Print.
- Taki no shiraito*. Dir. Kenji Mizoguchi. Shinko Uzumasa, 1933. Film.
- Takizawa, Osamu. *Tanaka Kinuyo kiki kaki*. Kyoto. Print.

- Tanaka, Chiseko. "Haneda Sumiko kantoku to shūmatsukiiryō." *Kinema Junpō* 6.1484 (2007): 148-51. Print.
- Tanaka, Kinuyo. "Jyoyū seikatsu gojyūnen - eiga wo otto toshite erabu " *Watashi no rirekisho joyū no unmei*. Tokyo: Nihon keisai shinbun-sha, 1975. Print.
- Tange Sazen Yōtō Nre Tsubame*. Dir. Sadatsugu Matsuda. Tōei, 1960. Film.
- Tazawa, Ryūji. *Tokyo meigaza gurafitei*. Tokyo: Heibon-sha, 2006. Print.
- Tenka No Igagoe Akatsuki No Kessen*. Dir. Sadatsugu Matsuda. Tōei, 1959. Film.
- Teppo denraiki*. Dir. Kazuo Mori. Daiei, 1968. Film.
- TicketPia. "Baka dakedo kakkoi yatsura wo toritakatta: Tanada Yuki kantoku ga saishinsaku wo kataru". 2008. PIA Corporation. June 24 2012. Website.
- Titanic*. Dir. James Cameron. Paramount, 1997. Film.
- Toeda, Hirokazu. *Eigakan*. Korekushon: Modan Toshi Bunka. Tokyo: Fuji ripuro kabushikigaisha, 2006. Print.
- Toiretto*. Dir. Naoko Ogigami. Showgate, 2010. Film.
- Tōjin Okichi*. Dir. Kenji Mizoguchi. Nikkatsu Uzumasa, 1930. Film.
- Tokyo kiddo*. Dir. Torajiro Saito. Shōchiku, 1950. Film.
- Tokyo monogatari*. Dir. Yasujiro Ozu. Shōchiku, 1953. Film.
- Tokyo oashisu*. Dir. Kana Matsumoto. Suurkiitos, 2011. Film.
- "Tokyo odekake gaido: Ebisu Garden Cinema". <http://park.tachikawaonline.jp/theater/10_ebisu.htm>. Website.
- Tokyo orimpikku*. Dir. Ichikawa Kon. Tōhō, 1965. Film.
- Tokyu. "Ranking Ranqueen". October 5 2011. <www.ranking-ranqueen.net>. Website.
- Tonbo kaerimichi-chū*. Dir. Torajiro Saito. Shōchiku, 1950. Film.
- Totman, Conrad D. *A History of Japan*. Blackwell History of the World: Wiley-Blackwell, 2000. Print.
- Tsuchiya, Haruno. *Yōkoso, Tsuchiya meigaza he*. Tokyo: Studio Cello, 2007. Print.
- Tsuki to cherry*. Dir. Yuki Tanada. Open Sesame Company, 2004. Film.
- Tsuki wa noborinu*. Dir. Kinuyo Tanaka. Nikkatsu, 1955. Film.

- TSUTAYA. "Tsutaya hatsu no karucha sapuri! Josei no tame no jōhō saito "Girl's Style" Open!". Ed. Online, TSUTAYA. Tokyo2007. Print.
- Uchida, Hiroko. *Eiga ni ikiru onnatachi*. Tokyo: Bad Women's Press, 2007. Print.
- Ugetsu Monogatari*. Dir. Kenji Mizoguchi. Daiei, 1953. Film.
- Umemoto, Yōichi. "Chisana eiga to ōkina sekai no tūro: Iguchi Nami no sekai". 2009. *Dai 32 kai imēji raiburarī eizō kōza*. Image Library. July 4 2012. <http://img-lib.musabi.ac.jp/event/event_32.html#txt001>.
- UNI JAPAN. *The Guide to Japanese Film Industry & Co-Production*. Tokyo2009. Print.
- . "Sukurīn Sū". 2011. UNI JAPAN. December 16 2011. <<http://unijapan.org/statistics/screen.html>>. Website.
- Uriu, Tadao. "Eiga fukkō wa josei no dōin kara: josei kankyaku genshō no donsoko wa sugita." *Kinema Junpō*.450 (1967): 88-91. Print.
- Ushida, Ayami. *Atg Eiga + Shinjuku*. Tokyo: Shinsei-sha, 2007. Print.
- Usuzumi no sakura*. Dir. Sumiko Haneda. Fuji Productions, 1977. Film.
- Uwasa no onna*. Dir. Kenji Mizoguchi. Daiei, 1954. Film.
- Venuti, Lawrence. *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*. Routledge, 1994. Print.
- Vertigo*. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Paramount Pictures, 1958. Film.
- The Village*. Dir. M. Night Shyamalan. Buena Vista Pictures, 2004. Film.
- Wada-Marciano, Mitsuyo. *Nippon Modern: Japanese Cinema of the 1920s and 1930s*. University of Hawaii Press, 2008. Print.
- Wakaki hi wa kanashi*. Dir. Tsuruo Iwama. Shōchiku, 1954. Film.
- Wandafuru raifu*. Dir. Hirokazu Koreeda. Artistic License, 1998. Film.
- What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?* Dir. Robert Aldrich. Warner Bros. Pictures, 1962. Film.
- Wilentz, David. "Dream So Real: And Interview with Miwa Nishikawa". 2007. The Brooklyn Rail. August 1 2012. <<http://brooklynrail.org/2007/10/film/dream-so-real>>. Website.
- Yamada, Kōichi. "Chisana Kessaku—Iguchi Nami Kantoku "Inuneko"." *Inuneko*. Slowtrain, May 10, 2002. Tokyo: Free Style, 2002. 108-13. Print.

- . "Yamada Kōichi X Iguchi Nami." *Inuneko*. Tokyo: Free Style, 2004. 114-25. Print.
- Yamazaki, Madoka. *Girl's Cine Bravo: Tokimeki No Gāruzu • Mūbi*. Tokyo: Kodansha, 2006. Print.
- "Yebisu Garden Place". Yebisu Garden Place Ltd. December 25 2011. <<http://gardenplace.jp/index.html>>. Website.
- Yopparai tengoku*. Dir. Minoru Shibuya. Shōchiku, 1962. Film.
- Yokoborigawa*. Dir. Hideo Oba. Shōchiku, 1966. Film.
- Yokota, Hajime. "Eiga no mae de wa subete ga tōka." *Yuriika: shi to hihyō. Tokushū: kantoku joshikei fairu* 38 n. 521 (2006): 86-96. Print.
- Yorokobi mo kanashimi mo ikutoshitsuki*. Dir. Keisuke Kinoshita. Shōchiku, 1957. Film.
- Yoru no chō*. Dir. Kozaburo Yoshimura. Daiei, 1957. Film.
- Yoshida, Mayumi; Hayashi, Fuyuko; Matsumoto, Yumiko; Takano, Etsuko; ōtake, Yōko; Kotōda, Chieko. *Jyosei kantoku eiga no zenbō*. Tokyo: Bad Women's Office, 2001. Print.
- Yoshimoto, Mitsuhiro. "The Difficulty of Being Radical: The Discipline of Film Studies and the Postcolonial World Order." *boundary* 18.3 (1991): 242-57. Print.
- . *Kurosawa: Film Studies and Japanese Cinema*. Duke University Press, 2000. Print.
- . "Melodrama, Postmodernism, and Japanese Cinema." *Melodrama and Asian Cinema*. Ed. Dissanayake, Wimal: Cambridge University Press, 1993. Print.
- Yūki, Etsuko. "Ebisu Garden Cinema heikan". 2010. *Entertain Your Day*. December 24 2011. <<http://movie.etsukoyuuki.com/article/42781154.html>>. Website.
- Yukiguni*. Dir. Hideo Oba. Shōchiku, 1965. Film.
- Yukimaru. "Zunōsen kara miru anata no koi no keikō." *TSUTAYA CLUB MAGAZINE* 2008: 22-23. Print.
- Yumuru futari*. Dir. Nishikawa Miwa. Asmik Ace Entertainment, 2012. Film.
- Yureru*. Dir. Miwa Nishikawa. Bandai Visual Company, 2006. Film.
- Zooka, Little Wolf. "Rollei Giro 28m in Tokyo". 2010. December 26 2011. <<http://littlewolfzooka.blogspot.com/2010/01/rollei-giro-28m-in-tokyo.html>>. Website.