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Reproduction Without End: The Gendered Labor of Japanese High Growth Cinema

DISSERTATION

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by

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DEDICATION

To

My Grandmothers—
Dorothy, Rosemary, and Virginia

For filling me with your love
and so, too, your love of language and letters

I wish you could have lived to see this

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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To refer to the Japanese postwar collapses multiple postwars into a single entity. This dissertation works to further distinguish Japanese *cinema*'s postwars by advocating for attention to "high growth cinema." High growth's political economy, especially at its peak in the *Shōwa Genroku*, reorganized Japanese social life, nowhere more so than within the labor paradigm. I argue that the patterns of reproduction—where reproduction is understood both as a social technology and a cinematic technique—that proliferate in high growth cinema implicate the sexual division of labor not as secondary or supplemental, but as fundamental to the reorganization of life in Japan at this moment. It is these reproductions that articulate a shift in conceptualizations of "life" itself, which move from a biological notion of survival toward a social investment in the "good life."

Each of the dissertation's four chapters develops high growth's reproductive techniques. Following a discussion of the postwar and the fixation on its ends, Mikio Naruse's *When a Woman Ascends the Stairs* (1960) models the reproductive labor articulated in the rehearsals of the film's returns to the scene of ascension. The second chapter looks at pink film director

Hamano Sachi, in whom pornography and autobiography's desire for visibility collaborate to reproduce her problem of being woman in the Japanese film industry. A third chapter on Tōei's *ninkyō* films attends to their technique of seriality, and the serial star figure in Takakura Ken in particular, as a mechanism to stage a defense of male labor. The final chapter turns to the collaborations of art film director Yoshida Kijū and his actress-wife Okada Mariko to draw together the threads across the dissertation that link direction to male authority, implicating the reproduction of Yoshida's dialectics and his associations with "transformation" in the affirmation of a male labor force, even in the active reproduction of its disavowal.

Chapter I Reproduction Without End

Defending Life, Imagining Ends

We now sit on the other side of Y2K and the world still has not ended.¹ Our machines have, for better and for worse, not failed us. “Surviving” has not, however, quelled our sense of precarity²; rather, the last fifteen years have resulted in an amplification of the discourse and experience of precarity, anticipating a sure end or the announcement that the end is the perpetual present of our time.³ Starting with this reference to Y2K is more than gimmick—instead it points to a moment in critical theory, Japan Studies, and, another foundational node of this study, film studies, when we became fixated on ends. For Japan Studies, that moment that came to be spoken about as “millennial Japan,”⁴ raised the question of whether the long postwar was finally coming to an end.⁵ The fin-de-siècle also brought with it increasing anxieties over the obsolescence of the materiality of cinema, of *film*, with the proliferation of digital technologies for production, exhibition, and consumption.⁶ Critical theory responded, on the other hand, to an entire series of events that suggest a paradigm of endlessness: to the global financial crisis, the ecological disasters that seem now never to stop, the expansion of the prison-industrial-military(-agro-entertainment-) complex (including, in the “War on Terror,” more and more apparatuses to indefinitely detain) and the privatization of the university system, all of which continue to shape the precarity.

What the imagining of ends and the choruses of precarity signal most of all is a paradigm of crisis. However, the crisis of this critical literature, arriving at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st, no longer marks—if it in fact ever did—an extraordinary condition, but has come to represent what Lauren Berlant refers to in her *Cruel Optimism* as the “crisis ordinary,” a systemic crisis that she describes as “a process embedded in the ordinary that

unfolds in stories about navigating what's overwhelming" (10). For Berlant, the impasse of the crisis ordinary arrives at the moment when the failure of the "social democratic promise of the post-Second World War period in the United States and Europe" (3) to materialize makes it impossible to disavow the good life as anything other than "fantasmatic [...] dreams" (196).⁷ This dissertation returns to that postwar context in pursuit of the narratives that construct the good life in Japan to demonstrate that crisis is not that which appears at the moment when the promise has disappointed us, but instead is constitutive of that very promise.⁸

In "The 'End' Of the Postwar: Japan at the Turn of the Millennium" Carol Gluck explains that the postwar is "the most common term for present-day Japan and has been so since 1945" (3). She identifies, in fact, multiple postwars for Japan: "the mythic postwar" that marks a historic break that started at war's end in 1945; the "inversion of the prewar" that she calls the "anti-past" (4); the cold-war postwar; the progressive postwar of the Left; and, finally, the middle class postwar—"the postwar of private life" (8). Her deconstruction of these five postwars speaks, across each variation, to the ideological investments that desire a break—that desire an end to a time that is not working. She attributes the persistence of these postwars, save for the progressive postwar that she argues did see its ends, to a lack of vision for the future (23). Harry Harootunian, too, calls "Japan's Long Postwar" a crisis of the future (119). He focuses on the postwar as trope, one that "condenses the temporality of a duration into an endless spatial scape and present." Ultimately he argues that that "spatialization of the postwar and its refusal of temporality [...] reveals its wider complicity with the forces of global capital" (99).

While there are many sites through which we might trace the relationship of desire that maps the persistence of a discourse that evades more than it explains, cinema as that privileged medium of desire condenses, in the scene of fantasy, the machinations of capital the imaginaries

that serve it. At the millennial moment, in association with Japanese cinema, a powerful discourse emerged defending its life. In 1997, director Aoyama Shinji staged a conversation with critic Inagawa Masato for the magazine *Yurika* that asked “Why does Japanese cinema avert crisis?” Film critic Abe Kashō then published his *Nihon eiga ga sonzai suru* [Japanese Cinema Exists] in 2000. More recently, a set of academics, critics, and film industry professionals assembled to publish the *Nihon eiga ha ikite iru* [Japanese Cinema is Alive] over eight volumes from 2010 to 2011. The prominence of the critics, academics, and filmmakers involved in these titles raises the question: why, *now*, at this millennial moment, did Japanese cinema suddenly need to stage a defense of its life? What is at stake in these emphatic protests? While the immediate answer points to two crises—the very same crisis of cinema’s general demise and the question, suspended as such, about where Japanese cinema stands in the world following its boom at the millennial moment⁹—we would benefit from looking at this claim to life within the context of the Japanese postwar to ask how the frame of postwar Japanese cinema produces a defense of life. This, too, I argue, will help us to understand what life it is that we defend.

Parsing Postwar Japanese Cinema

Postwar Japanese cinema has operated with much of the same copiousness that we encounter with the Japanese postwar more broadly. It too has collapsed into a single entity multiple postwar cinemas, overlapping but distinct from those outlined by Gluck. Japanese postwar cinema can refer to cinema produced or distributed over the long duree, at any point from 1945 through the present. It can refer more locally to what I will call the “immediate postwar,” the postwar of Japanese reconstruction. That postwar could have an end with U.S. occupation’s conclusion in 1952 or in 1955, a turning point in Japan’s political-economic history that marks its stabilization.¹⁰ Postwar cinema can be characterized by its Golden Age in the

1950s.¹¹ The Sixties, or their much-contested New Wave,¹² too can exemplify postwar cinema. Across these postwar cinemas, we see a struggle over overlapping temporalities that challenges periodization.

Even more than the war itself serving as referent for the periodization of postwar cinema, the language of the postwar indexes a dialectic of crisis and stabilization. In this way, it calls out to political economy as the domain that marks its distinctions. This helps us to think about the investment in framing the 50s as the Golden Age: the “Golden Age” marks the moment of Japanese cinema’s fiscal flourishing.¹³ It marks too, with that 1955 moment, the transition toward stability and Japan’s entry into high growth. Likewise the over-determined explanation for 60s cinema in terms of the political demonstrations that bookended the decade—the Anti-US-Japan Security treaty protests that implicated domestic politics and the place of Japan in the world—returns us to that sphere of contestation.

Within this paradigm of crisis-stabilization, the end of Japanese cinema, too, has been an obsession, one that exceeds the millennial moment, bleeding back into its past.¹⁴ Prior to the threat of the digital age, the introduction and mass consumption of the television set was framed as Japanese cinema’s greatest threat over the long postwar.¹⁵ The television recurrently structures a break in the narrative of postwar Japanese cinema, distinguishing cinema’s Golden Age from all that follows. Two details are critical to the over-determined narrative around this break: first, the television meant the steady decline of theatrical audiences from their peak in 1958¹⁶ and, second, the television’s mass consumption resulted in the gendering of space, media, genre and taste.¹⁷ However, this threat, rather than figuring cinema’s end, encouraged cinema’s capitalization on the signifiers of systemic-industrial flourishing. Following in the wake of the Golden Age’s celebration of great directors like Ozu Yasujiro, Mizoguchi Kenji, and

Rashomon's Kurosawa Akira, studios like Shōchiku sought out young and fresh talent to inject life breathe new life into the dying business. Other studios took a page from the Golden Age's marketing of the program picture and, combining it with the television's serial form, birthed new genres like Tōei's *ninkyō* yakuza films. The weakening of the studio system also proved generative insofar as it made space for other models of production. Independent filmmaking, including both art film (the Art Theater Guild is the great example of this¹⁸) and the pink film that would come to represent a parallel industry,¹⁹ arose in dialogue with the anti-establishmentarianism that ran through the politics of the period.

If we connect this moment of the threat of cinema's death at the hands of the television set with the death threatened at the millennial moment, we see more clearly that the claim to life signals a flourishing premised not so much on technological as it is on political economic claims—claims that cinema is *working*. Under the guise of a desire to *live on* in the mode of survival—of evading death—what cinema works to achieve is productivity. This drive toward productivity, this demand and labor of cinema's, marks the decided shift in what constitutes life. It moves away from the immediate postwar's investment in the body,²⁰ both in terms of understanding life in terms of biological survival (that living on) and its recruitment of the carnal body to serve that survival.²¹ Moving away from the carnal body, the one that survived the annihilation of the postwar fall out, that was engaged in the *kasutori* culture that John Dower's famous study of the postwar, *Embracing Defeat*, describes, meant that the social world took on new life, one that as prosperity accelerated was increasingly organized around work. Within this, that second detail above about television's impact on audiences, gendering, recall, space, media, genre, and taste, can no longer be relegated to a secondary detail. The sexual division of labor and its normative paradigms, even those that manifest in the narrative of how the gendering

maps, are instead integral to the vision of life and indeed Gluck's absent future. This sexual of labor implicates, too, the life that Japanese cinema claims at the millennial moment.

Social and Cinematic Techniques of Reproduction in the Shōwa Genroku

This dissertation thus prioritizes the cinema of Japanese High Growth, especially at its peak in the period known as the *Shōwa Genroku*.²² In doing so, it does not disregard the significant implications of the 1955 system nor the politics of the 60s, each clearly informs this configuration. However, it finds that the frame “High Growth” implicates a more robust political economic network, particularly in the socio-cultural field, than either the 1955 system or the 60s have, at least in their uses until now. This has everything to do with the labor and consumption practices in the shifting landscape of capital that accompany the language of high growth. Within high growth, I focus in particular on the *Shōwa Genroku* because its prosperity encompasses the promise of the good life I referenced earlier—it is the locus of the good life that demonstrates its always already vulnerability. That said, you will notice that my examples are not exclusive or contained either to the *Shōwa Genroku* or high growth. That is not because I make an argument about timelessness nor conceive of high growth as an endless present. Rather what I find around this moment is a movement in and out of the multiple postwars I have referenced, and the articulation of folds, cycles, and reproductions of time that extend beyond high growth or what, in my third chapter, I develop as serial time.²³

High growth cinema modeled its version of life by calling on reproduction, not as a tool to reproduce bodies (in a biological mode of reproduction), but as both social technology and cinematic technique.²⁴ While I will elaborate on these notions throughout the dissertation, this language should retain echoes of Teresa de Lauretis' “The Technology of Gender” and its Foucauldian influence. Intervening in understandings of gender premised on a universal sexual

difference, de Lauretis emphasizes gender as construction, “not a property of bodies or something originally existent in human beings, but the ‘set of effects produced in bodies, behaviors, and social relations,’ in Foucault’s words, by the deployment of ‘a complex political technology’” (de Lauretis 3). De Lauretis reminds us too of Foucault’s description of the technology of sex in *The History of Sexuality* as “a set of techniques for maximizing *life*” (qtd. on 12, emphasis mine). Of course, for Foucault, sex is one example of a technology of knowledge and power (*HOS* 123). My use of the language of technology here²⁵ shares this interest in the complex relations of gender, knowledge, and power—so too, of reproduction as a technology of life. However, where Foucault will go on after *The History of Sexuality* to develop his theory of biopolitics,²⁶ my dissertation develops a distinction, through the technology of reproduction that I highlight in the Japanese postwar, that reflects a move from biological understandings of life toward an understanding derived from the social, or towards the good life.

Cinema, as a reproductive technology (as apparatus)²⁷ and social technology (given the cluster of effects listed above), is a privileged medium through which reproduction can be studied. Given that cinema is a medium too of *moving* images, of animation, it already enjoys an overwhelming association with the rhetoric of life.²⁸ While each of my chapters describes a different cinematic technique of reproduction, what I mean by this is that high growth cinema, relied on an extraordinary repetition of devices, returns and rehearsals of visual and aural tropes. Because prodigious patterns of proliferation performed such an emphatic labor, I argue that it is much more accurate to speak of them as reproductions. In this sense, cinema’s operation as social technology cooperated with the cinematic grammar of reproductive technique I give attention here. You will notice that my account of reproduction takes the form of attending to the narrative reproductions that structure history and the ideologies of the sexual division of labor

whose long shelf life were, I argue, set into place within this period. By tracking the intersection of technology and technique I hope to make an argument for cinema, neither reflecting nor refracting history, but for participating in it.

Though Karl Marx would develop the concept of reproduction in *Capital*, it is his collaborator Friedrich Engels who frequently serves as the referent for reproduction in Marxist feminist literature.²⁹ He would assert in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* that “according to the materialistic conception, the determining factor in history is, in the last resort, the production and reproduction of immediate life” (35). Indeed, this serves as epigraph to the edited collection of Silvia Federici’s key writings, *Revolution at Point Zero*. Federici, an academic who was also active both in Italy and the United States in the wages for housework movement, reflects on her participation in the movement noting, in alignment with Engels, that it was this work that demonstrated to her that “the reproduction of human beings is the foundation of every economic and political system” (2). Though Federici does, at points in her work, concern herself with “women’s labor” of procreation,³⁰ she understands reproduction more broadly as “the complex of activities and relations by which our life and labor are daily reconstituted” (5). This initiates Federici’s intervention in Marx and her development of the concept of reproductive labor, that social labor to “prepare the goods the workers consume or to restore physically or emotionally their capacity to work” (93), to make their work possible at all. Federici’s reproductive labor more directly informs the notions of reproduction that I track here than anything else. This dissertation does not limit itself to women’s reproductive labor, but instead asks after how the reproductive labor of cinema genders.³¹ In that it asks, what is cinema’s work and how does it participate in constructing labor? In this I consider cinema, not merely in terms of the film reel but as an apparatus, as participating in a materialist history of the

Japanese postwar. That is, I consider cinema's images *as material*, the stuff in and through which ideology congeals.³² This is especially so in high growth, when paradigms of consumption invest life across the object world, such that images make up one piece of the consumable, value laden universe.

This too is why examining high growth cinema is so critical—because those images consumed within this moment structure the very vision of what the good life looks like. It for this reason too that my dissertation looks at popular materials. It looks at pink cinema to think about a saturated consumer market—if pink makes up the stuff that enormous volumes of people are watching, what values circulate in and through it, especially when it is a spectatorship that hides away, that happens in the dark and in secret, with only a virtual mass to speak to it? When we look then at the gangster films of my third chapter, that genre of mass appeal par excellence, how do we make sense of the conflicts of its consumption by a newly formed and highly contested mass? Especially when what it promotes is an exceptional heroic individual. Then, too, when in the fourth and final chapter I look at art film and the claims to ownership with it, how does this genre of the bourgeoisie engage itself? How does it make itself through its self-critique? In each of these three examples there is a tension, not resolved, between the mass and the individual, between the thing and life. The vision of gender the films provide likewise is full of this tension—how do we think categories like “man” and “woman” when they demand aspirational narratives of exception that lay forever ahead in a horizon of impossibility (within that structure of promise I have referenced above) while also being figured through collectives both within cinema and outside of it, permitted and excluding from participation within an increasingly commodified world?³³

In the section that follows this, I develop a reading of Naruse Mikio's *When a Woman Ascends the Stairs* (1960) as a model of what cinematic techniques of reproduction look like. The film, indeed, is organized around a reproduction that I argue structures and communicates the gendered demands of labor within a paradigm that *will not end*. This loop, the infinite reproduction of, indeed, a moment of reproductive labor—as what is cinematically reproduced is the work necessary for the film's protagonist, Keiko, a hostess, to return to her work in support of the Tokyo salaryman's work which is recognized as such—figures the cinematic techniques of reproduction the rest of the dissertation will track.

In the chapter that follows this reading, “When Hamano Sachi Makes Movies: The Problem of Reproducing *Onna*” I look at the competing structures, the tensions of reproductive labor, through the example of pink filmmaker, Hamano Sachi. As I will describe, Hamano's calling card is the more than 300 pink films she has made since starting her career in the late 1960s. It begins from this figure of 300 to address a mode of proliferation that understands itself as work, or to be working. To frame the significance of the claim to accumulation through the volume of films she makes, the chapter examines the reproductive techniques of pornography and autobiography together. It does so to look at how the structures of narrative and film both collaborate and compete in Hamano's response to the impossible task of identifying as a woman in the film industry not just at the moment that she began working during high growth moment, but following its tail into the present.

Because pink film, as a genre of independent and cheaply made adult films, put sex at their very center they occasion a fruitful conversation about the sexual division of labor at the time. The case of Hamano Sachi, whose career in as a film director was made possible by that collapse of the studio system and the development of the pink industry, is particularly interesting

for what it teaches us about social reproduction in the long postwar. Where pornography and autobiography comes together is around a desire for visibility that is at odds with an industry in Japanese cinema, by no means exclusive to pink, that envisions women as objects *to be looked at*.³⁴ While Hamano reproduces herself in an effort to answer to this problem, her desire to be seen keeps her enmeshed in a dynamic of reproduction that will not end as long as it is invested in a propertied relation to her images. This propertied relation, organized around a technique of accumulation *for herself*, cannot see the work her pink images are already doing. It is the sexual division of labor's value on the position of director, imbuing the position with authority and an authority naturalized as male, that has Hamano forever seeking her solution in production and productivity, within the very same paradigm that has psychically alienated her.

The third chapter, "*Otoko ga otoko o otoko to shite mitomeru: Serial Reproductions of Masculinity in Tōei Studios' Ninkyō Films*" focuses on the reproductive technique of seriality through a set of *yakuza* films released from roughly 1964-1972. It understands seriality first as a structure of production, exhibition, and consumption that cinema borrows from television but it also uses this as a model of a serial relation to time that provides a structure for the serial reproduction of images—or, what could be thought of as a mechanism for recall and association that catapults images into futures. Whereas Hamano's story is one of working to manufacture room for herself in an inhospitable industry, the technique of seriality works to affirm more of the same. Seriality provides a sequence of reminder that recruits its participants into pleasure circuits that defend a heroic narrative to support hegemony, even what it is at odds with its consumers.

Tōei's *yakuza* films built on a strategy of the program picture, entertainment films well-suited to double features and all-night screenings. By being release as series of 8-12 films, they

also manufactured a paradigm of expectation that builds on genre's expectations, but promises to quickly sate. Though the romance of the films would reportedly become unbearably by the early 70s moment of the so-called death of politics, during their reign, they held such mass appeal that they were said to have saved the industry. My chapter also demonstrates, that through the films' resuscitation of the rhetoric of chivalry and their capitalization on the star apparatus, the films would not, in fact, die in 1972 but structure a series that would have yielded for in what its image could carry with regards to the symbolic weight of male persistence, to defend male labor not just as it was compromised by a changing postwar family structure, but into our present today that now longs nostalgically for the masculinity Takakura Ken offered then and renewed in very death—a male subjectivity that could make moral claims (even while being unspeaking).

The fourth and final chapter, “Reproducing *Impasse*: Yoshida Kijū's Techniques of ‘Transformation’” moves us into the domain of Gluck's middle class postwar via the 60s art film director Yoshida Kijū. In this chapter it is the reproduction of the figure of the director that marks its opening and around which its tensions coalesce. Yoshida's discursive reproduction as director is one marked through a disavowal of the director's power, a deconstruction of that power. This he calls his self-critique. This chapter situates his theoretical writings as reproductions that speak to his direction, even when he does not directly over it to his actors. The technique thus returns us to the tensions between the exceptional individual and the mass I described above—while Yoshida makes ostensible claims to giving his materials over to the audiences that consume them, his theoretical productions work incessantly to shape (indeed, *to direct* that viewership). Critical to this paradigm is Yoshida's fashioning of himself, again through both narrative reproduction in his writing and in cinematic reproduction through the avatar of his actress-wife Okada Mariko, as that critical director who gives the world real

women. However, in reproducing this narrative of heroism and having the relation in production with his wife that maintains, through professionalism, his role as director, he demonstrates his remaking of a gendered relation of hierarchy that suits the new tastes of the middle class, even while it detests them.

By reading one of the often-dismissed “delicate melodramas” of Yoshida Kijū’s mid-1960s independent cinema I identify the grammar of his politics of self-negation and a dialectic that demonstrates reproduction’s impassive challenge to ideological transformation. Yoshida’s diffuse anxiety about treating cinema or life as mere “things,” which organizes that self-negation draws a direct line between the carnal postwar and the shifting paradigm that I have been discussing as Japan’s high growth social life.

Together these examples only begin the process of understanding this privileged moment in history. Though we might think about crisis in Japan in the context alternately of the recent triple disaster or of the war’s nuclear end, I work here to demonstrate crisis’s constitutive presence within and perpetuated by prosperity, that crisis called life.

Again and Again (When) a Woman Ascends the Stairs³⁵

The title of Naruse Mikio’s 1960 *When A Woman Ascends the Stairs* alerts viewers to the importance of those moments when the woman ascends the stairs even before the film begins. It is no surprise then that most writing on the film makes note of its structuring motif: the visual repetition of the mama-san Keiko rising up the stairs to enter her hostess bar.³⁶ Most critics render this repetition a sign of her resilience,³⁷ a reminder of the gendered battles she confronts, coded within the film’s melodramatic form.³⁸ After all, despite Keiko’s confession upon her first ascension of the stairs that it is the time of day she hates the most, she always returns and, once she has reached the top, takes each day with whatever it brings.

In reading the film and its repetitions as symbolic of Keiko's perseverance, critics have bought Keiko's performance (and, really, the incomparable Takamine Hideko as Keiko) as much as any of the salarymen who patronize her bar, seduced by the warmth of the same smile that greets us each time she reaches the top, replacing in the process the labor rehearsed in each of its reproductions with a narrative of victory. This repetition's function is generally taken as transparent, structured around the title—organized around the *fact* of ascension and return, rather than the *work* its reproductions cinematically code. Where resilience assumes a telos of resolution, a relief, these reproductions promise always to return.³⁹ There is in them no geometry of linear progress, no moment when Keiko's work will be finished. There is no promise of rest, no reassurance or amelioration—no moment of relief—awaiting her, having endured.

This framework of resilience points to a paradigm invested in the individual, presuming thus that the film is about Keiko—about one woman, an individual case, rather than about systems and structures. Ostensibly, of course, the film is entirely about Keiko and the dilemma she faces as a thirty year old hostess: whether at this crucial juncture, she will choose the path that leads toward the security of her status as (good) woman in marriage⁴⁰—represented within the film as the holy grail for hostesses—*or* proceed toward a different sort of propriety, that of running her own bar (which would come at no small cost, nor would it be entirely her own).⁴¹ This dilemma presents two versions of the good life, each assumed to be desirable *and* achievable.⁴² Naruse spends the film deconstructing this promise, however, and the economic system that recruits gendered labor on the basis of this promise by articulating the forms of reproductive labor demanded of women under high growth capital. Despite the circulation of these signifiers of the good life, the film demonstrates for us its great fallacy: marriage prospects alternately disappear or marriage itself fails to deliver on the luxuries it promises, placing women

in the same cycle of labor and debt in which the hostess who owns her own bar so often finds herself.⁴³

In this way, the ascension of the stairs serves as a trope that reminds us of the promise not of relief from labor, but the return to it, condensing and concentrating into a cinematic moment all of the work Keiko and women like her are called upon to perform. While that labor resolutely includes the public labor of her occupation (i.e. her work as a hostess within the space of the bar), I refer more broadly to the constellation of activities Keiko engages in to make not just her work possible but, through her work, the public work of the salaryman—work seen nowhere yet indexed everywhere—legible *as work*. Each ascension thus adds another layer to what constitutes reproductive labor: the beauty regimen, the emotional regimen, the preparation necessary to absorb the projections of clients' desires, the cultivation of an image that will be accessible enough to marry, the business knowledge that gets you ahead in the trade.

Within this world, Naruse explains via Keiko, when the OLs go home for the day, when they depart the office buildings of Ginza, the work of the hostess begins.⁴⁴ While this suggests a



Figure 1.1 Our work is just beginning

splitting of women's public labor into day and night, neither the day and night nor public and private labor prove to be simple dyads within this world.⁴⁵ After all, even before night falls, the hostess must begin her preparatory labor, a labor brought proximate and parallel to that of the OLs' in the suture that ties Keiko's reference to their imminent departure as she enters the beauty parlor to her first climb up Bar Lilac's steps at the twilight that marks the changing of the guard.⁴⁶ Though the space of Ginza shared by the OL and the hostess appears to split their labor into day and night, it also unites them according to another temporality: that of age. Though we may not see or learn much about the OL apart from Keiko's passing reference to her, she too faces the same fork that Keiko confronts, where, if successful, she will by age 30 depart what in her case was only ever intended to be the *temporary* occupation of the workplace to marry.⁴⁷ In contrast to the hostess, for whom the resolution of work in marriage is slightly unbelievable—demonstrated in the film by the chatter on the street about Keiko's engagement to Sekine—the OL's assumption of this narrative is not nearly as difficult to imagine, representing as it does her normative telos. This manifests cinematically in the OLs occupation of the light, the same light that is otherwise associated with the wife and mother, creating a continuity between these kinds of women.⁴⁸

Encountering as we do the mothers and wives of the film by daylight (including Keiko's own mother, as well as the wives of Sekine and Fujisaki), Keiko's *disruption* into the day makes clear how the economic paradigm recruits women's reproductive labor in both the domestic and public spheres by suggesting a division between them that never was. Though there is nothing out of keeping with the mama-san traversing the public space of the light in, for instance, debt collection, carrying out the beauty regimens necessary to appeal to her customers, or socializing with others from the water trades⁴⁹—that is, in the execution of the reproductive labor proper to



Figure 1.2 The hostesses' beauty regimen

her occupation—when she moves outside these forms of labor, traversing the light in her own self-interest, and not in support of the salarymen she serves, problems arise.

This violation is demonstrated in the third of four iterations of Keiko's ascension of the stairs. In each of the four reproductions of the ascension, we are prepared for her entrance into the bar by an establishing shot of the narrow alley cramped with bars that highlights the competition of the district.⁵⁰ The first of four iterations of the ascension overdetermines this space as proper to the night through its match of Keiko's voice-over narration announcing the bars as a business of the night with the establishing shot of the street by night.⁵¹ However, once Keiko has accepted a marriage proposal from her client Sekine, the third iteration of her entrance into the bar has her walking this alley by daylight. The music that plays as she ascends the stairs is singular in the four iterations as well, expressing the buoyancy that accompanies the promise that she herself will be cared for. However, it is from the moment that we watch her walk that alleyway by light, an *engaged* woman rather than a hostess, that we know that something must be amiss with her suitor Sekine, who indeed proves to be a fraud. While on the one hand, the fact of her engagement, her impending exit of the system thanks to Sekine's recognition and assertion that she should not have to cater to drunk salarymen (as if this would disappear if she were to marry, an idea as fantastic as Sekine's own enterprise of proposing for game all around the city),

carries with it the potential to draw her into the daylight (as she is on the precipice of being rewritten as a family woman), the repetitions of surprise that lead up to this moment and its disruption of a sequence that has been coded so emphatically in its first two iterations as not only of the night but cramped and imprisoning, underscore its deviation. Already this suggests the problem to come, and the impending correction of her occupation of this chronotope, before Sekine has ever been revealed as fraud.

When Keiko goes shopping for a gift for Sekine immediately on the heels of receiving one from him alongside the proposal he couches in a joke, the too-soon-ness of her reciprocation too flags the vulnerability of the proposal. It is too much. While shopping for something second-hand to give to her suitor,⁵² she is spied from the street by an older hostess who has learned, via the fortuneteller who predicted it, of the engagement. While the older hostess congratulates her, the triangulation of the gossip back to the fortuneteller suggests also the instability of the proposal, for the fortune teller, throughout the course of the film, has been the medium that connects the hostess to a telos of death.⁵³ Nevertheless, in demonstration of her understanding of the symbolic codes of domesticity (which remind us that Keiko is, after all, a widow⁵⁴), Keiko purchases Sekine a tie, which she presents to him at a cafe. This ordinary object carries all the symbolic weight of the reproductive labor of the wife—to facilitate and make possible her husband's successful work life by positioning him within the proper constellation of signifiers of professionalism, that perfect marriage of wife and tie (dressed by the wife as a reflection of her moral support of him). Keiko's own anxiety over the engagement's fragility betrays itself when Sekine catches her speaking to him with too much formality at the cafe and she expresses her surprise at herself, contextualizing it with the explanation that she never imagined marrying a factory owner. The too-good-to-be-trueness of not just the luck of marrying and leaving the

water trade behind but marrying *well* manufactures in Keiko a new kind of vulnerability that her speech hopes to shield her from by respecting its promise. The lie this turns out to be, that is the lie of Sekine's proposal as well as his profession, is prefaced not just by her presence in the light, but by meeting *him* in the daylight, daring, like the wife tasked with the reproductive labor of the household, to traverse into it. This is thus a problem of shifting modes of gendered labor that her occupation otherwise excludes her from.

Both the lie and the problem of Keiko's digression is confirmed when Sekine's wife phones Keiko to explain—and apologize for—her husband's scheme. Keiko goes out to visit Mrs. Sekine at her home in the outskirts of town. Lest we think that the wife is privileged in the taxonomy of the film, Keiko arrives to Sekine's house to see a wife worn by caring for the two children who run around while her unemployed husband is nowhere to be found. She cares for the house, the children, and is even called into the labor of cleaning up after her husband's messes: recovering stolen cars to their rightful owners and disappointing women all around town who have been fooled into believing his marriage proposals are genuine. Mrs. Sekine reaps none of the luxurious benefits of the life of the hostess—her clothes are tattered, her hair is askew, and she appears markedly older and rougher than the woman paid to appear delicate and refined for the businessmen, like the one her husband masquerades as, who visit the hostess bars.⁵⁵ The contrast drawn here between Sekine's wife and Keiko as hostess suggests a system of exchange where, for her labor, the wife and mother is promised social legitimacy and the hostess material goods, yet neither offers the women security or satisfaction. Neither the wife nor the hostess—nor, we should also recognize, Sekine himself, whose charades reflect a similar aspiration for a gendered version of the good life—reaps the benefits the prosperity of high growth promises.

Surrounded by the good life—a good life that appears everywhere, but everywhere appears as an elsewhere—it nevertheless eludes them.⁵⁶

The division of gendered labor, especially in the contrast between wife and hostess, is elaborated in Keiko's interaction at Tokyo Station with Fujisaki's family, which introduces also the intersection of class with gender and gendered labor position. Abe Kashō has read this scene as Keiko's revenge on Fujisaki for sleeping with and then leaving her, but this scene is much more about the two women's encounter with one another's labor, and its circulation around this man. Together the two form the scaffolding for his work, even if they are never otherwise meant to meet. Though Keiko's profession is of course one that trains her not to betray her emotions on her face, the train station interaction between the two women, the lack of *displayed* tension or passive aggressivity, speaks to the two women's complicity in and acknowledgment of their dual roles in supporting the bank manager Fujisaki. Any potential audience shock of witnessing the mistress greeting not her paramour but his wife, of gifting sweets to his children for their train ride to Osaka—essentially, of Keiko once again transgressing the family space (though this time, by evening⁵⁷)—is mitigated by the two women's interaction, which reveals them to participate in the same matrix of service, care, and labor. However in contrast to the interaction with Sekine's wife, this *tonai* (within the city center) interaction between two women at the train platform, between the wife of the bank manager and his mistress, is pregnant with its own disavowals. Not only does Mrs. Fujisaki thank Keiko, *even if* simply out of custom, for looking after her husband,⁵⁸ but Keiko returns Fujisaki's investment in her future bar not to him, but to his wife. Though the wife may ask his permission to accept it, that Keiko elects to give it to her rather than him communicates her relinquishment of *him* by virtue of the bond's return to the (economic) manager of his household: his wife. She thus gives him back to his wife and recircuits the

exchange amongst women. While Ginza itself is marked as a space of competition, with each hostess undercutting the other for the same customer pool, in this case, as in the case of Sekine, the two women complement one another (nonetheless positioning the hostess as supplement), telling of the work they perform in different spheres to support the same project. Mrs. Fujisaki's intrigued remark to her husband once they depart that Keiko is a beautiful woman makes explicit what she—the hostess—is expected to deliver on: she is to look good so that he looks good (something accentuated by the crowd of men assembled at the station to bid Fujisaki farewell who, by virtue of their presence, also bear very likely knowing witness to Keiko's adieu).⁵⁹ Whether Fujisaki's wife experiences hers as the good life, we cannot say or know—we are given no access to that space. Whether or not she understands the extent of her husband's relation to Keiko, we likewise cannot say, but we do bear witness to the propriety of her performance, which says as much about her labor as anyone else's. She too, in the very privileged position that she is in, moves through the reproductions necessary to uphold her husband's work, knowing better than to ask questions of it or of how his time has been spent. She, like Keiko, must make him look good before the world, by not saying much at all.

When, in the next scene, Keiko returns to her bar, the reproduction of her ascension of the stairs seems much like the first time we saw it early in the film; however collapsing the two would negate all that has congealed to produce this final iteration. As in the first case, and much like the second, we see mama back in Ginza, walking among the sea of bars. On this occasion, she narrates the resilience commentators extract from the film's end, announcing: "It had been a bleak ordeal, like a harsh winter. But the trees that line the streets can sprout new buds no matter how cold the wind." As she arrives at her bar, the Bar Carton, the camera cuts from the medium close up that had allowed us to register the transformation of her expression from vacancy to

muted smile as the voiceover narrated the bleakness of the ordeal (that is from her broken engagement to becoming what Abe, following Keiko's own narration of the three categories hostesses can be split into, calls "the worst"—one of those hostesses who has gone home with her client, Fujisaki, only to be tossed away).⁶⁰ Suddenly, in medium long shot that takes her entire body into view, her voiceover declares that she too must be strong at the very moment that her face and its expression is obscured by the distance of the framing. The Japanese line that are rendered as strength in translation, instead literally commands (to herself, of course) that she must *live*, undefeated by those ordeals.⁶¹ Where the camera in other reproductions would bring us into the interior of the staircase, straight into Keiko's internal process, and remain within that space until she enters the bar, here once it captures the winter-coat-clad mama in a low angle shot, it cuts back outside to accentuate and isolate the prison-like bars that line the staircase that usher her into Bar Carton. This is a truncated version that reflects Keiko's resignation to her position. The replication of the capture of the railing behind her in the background, recalls the first time she ascended the stairs while still at Bar Lilac, and the first shot that framed her within the stairs in a medium close up of her face, with railings lining the background of a full third of



Figure 1.3 Behind Bars

the frame coding the imprisonment of the night she had spoken of moments before. It is in that first scene that we also see Keiko first pull her face together as she looks up at the bar. She does a version of this in each reproduction, but this final scene, following the many trials and tribulations she has faced over the course of the diegesis, makes clearest that what her labor consists of, above all, is giving good face. This too is communicated when the trope of labor, the close up that Naruse focuses in on in the first two ascensions, of her *feet* moving over each step,

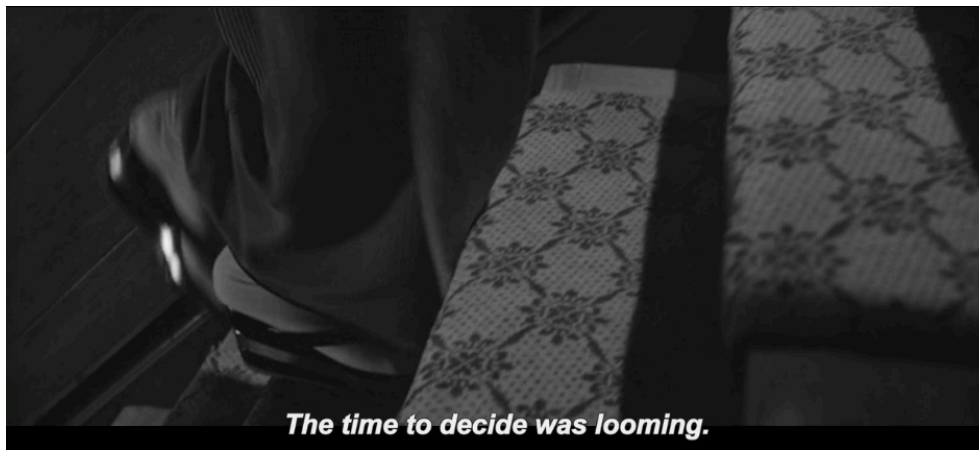


Figure 1.4 Foot work

is the image elided in this final reproduction. When she enters the space of the bar, rather than being greeted by eager hostesses and customers (as we saw in the first iteration), she herself breaks into the biggest smile we have seen all film. With all of her gusto, she delivers what appears to be the most genuine welcome one could imagine and we, the audience, are confronted with an image evocative of Norma Desmond's announcement that she is ready for her close-up, even if it is devoid of that moment's grotesquerie saved, as both films make clear, by Keiko's relative youth. What makes this moment jarring is not so much the fact of her smile, or the build of its performance, but the absence of response. Her welcome ends the film, denying us the reverse shot that would allow us to see who is present in the bar. We are provided with no reaction. It is an auto-performance that, like *Sunset Boulevard* (1950), implicates *us*, that

positions the viewers in the place of the salaryman expecting to see that smile, expecting that warmth, demanding the resolve. We are left alone with our own satisfied reactions. Mama has returned to the beginning: to a different bar, a different set of events, with eyes wide open, but she is still in the same place, only all the more sedimented within its structures, delivering to us, as to the salaryman, the full energy of her supporting labor.

Even if Fujisaki's wife declares Keiko so beautiful that she does not "seem like she works in a bar" or Sekine deems her too lovely to cater to a bunch of drunken salarymen's desires, this final scene—which, for Keiko, unlike Yuri, leaves her corporeally alive, if existentially dead (a difference, which is significant)—maintains her place within the status quo.⁶² If we are to read one other difference in the representations of the first and final reproductions of her ascension, the absence, at Bar Carton and in the fourth iteration, of the silhouette of a woman who appears to be the very model of discipline and poise that adorned the glass entrance to Bar Lilac demonstrates the completion of Keiko's transformation into her: her command of the vacuous but ideal image of the unspeaking, uncomplaining woman with perfect poise, with nary a hair out of place—an utter shadow. In this way, in the reproduction of her entrance to the bar, the promise of its return, the exceptional logic of the individual is over-written by the machinations of a greater system where Keiko represents one shadow of many. While the body of writing on the film does not ignore this economic system, what it fails to recognize is that it is this economic system that *produces* the repetition of this moment. It is the economic system itself—the institutions that engender the labor of support and at great cost—that reproduces the vignette; it is the system that solicits these reproductions, that forever circles back to this moment, demanding the pause, whether it be at the bottom of the stairs, midway through ascension, or at the top, so that she can take it all once more. Marxist feminist Silvia Federici understands

reproduction as “the complex of activities and relations by which our life and labor are daily reconstituted” (5). The reproductive work in this moment, the reproduced ascension of the stairs, is the inception of that labor, the return that enables the support of others’ lives, which actively and insistently demands the burial of the self. To arrive at an understanding that Keiko has effectively demonstrated her resilience or self-preservation ignores the mummification qua encryption that is already present in the language of preservation.⁶³

¹ The ‘we’ I invoke here indexes a claim to universality that undoes itself from its very utterance. I include it, because of rather than despite the fictions it reproduces, to address, as I will across this dissertation, hegemonic ideas that circulate in discourse to make totalizing claims. “We” is not universal. “Our machines” do not belong to all of us. The inhabitants of this earth are resolutely and definitively *not* impacted by the proliferation of technology and discourse evenly. That said, this dissertation *will* give attention to dominant articulations in an effort to understand and respond to them.

² Surviving is an idiom that the literature on the philosophy of life (to which I refer, though not exhaustively, to Foucault’s “Life: Experience and Science,” Deleuze’s “Immanence: A Life,” Agamben’s “Absolute Immanence,” and, in its incarnation in the field of cinema, Louis-Georges Schwartz’s “Cinema and the Meaning of ‘Life’”) associates with organic life, or what Agamben describes as coming to “coincide[] with the biological heritage of the nation” (162). Survival within this mode of life is aimed at warding off death or operates as a term that stands in opposition to it—it is the biologically living on (and fits within the paradigm of biopolitics that are not not the focus of my invocations of life in this study, which grow instead out of cultures of consumption associated much more with what Lauren Berlant writes across her work about as “the good life” or what the discourse of *seikatsu* in Japan flags as “lifestyle” claims).

³ The discourse of precarity now indexes far more texts than I could do justice, but within the sphere of my analysis, particularly relevant are Berlant’s *Cruel Optimism* (2011), Judith Butler’s *Precarious Life* (2004), and Anne Allison’s *Precarious Japan* (2013). Each of these, we should note responds to this “millennial” moment and concerns itself likewise with a situation of the elongation of the present and the affect of hopelessness.

⁴ C. f. Gluck’s “The ‘End’ of the Postwar,” Yoda’s “A Roadmap to Millennial Japan,” and Anne Allison’s *Millennial Monsters*.

⁵ While there are many texts that engage this question of the postwar, of particular note are Gluck’s “The ‘End of the Postwar” and Harry Harootunian’s “The Long Postwar.” See generally the Andrew Gordon edited collection *Postwar Japan as History* and Yoda and Harootunian’s *Japan After Japan*.

⁶ See Paolo Cherchi Usai’s *The Death of Cinema*, Laura Mulvey’s *Death 24x a Second*, D. N. Rodowick’s *The Virtual Life of Film*, Deb Verhoeven’s “What is a Cinema? Death, Closure and the Database,” Niels Niessen’s “Lives of Cinema: Against Its ‘Death’” and Mary Ann Doane’s “The Indexical and the Concept of Medium Specificity.”

⁷ While the good life is a concept that Berlant develops in *The Female Complaint* and will elaborate on in *Cruel Optimism*, its predecessor, “having a life” (in Berlant’s introduction to the special issue on “Intimacy” for *Critical Inquiry*), reveals its frequent ties to the intimate sphere and to visions of love in particular. Berlant understands intimacy as “an aspiration for a narrative about something shared,” where that thing shared is having a life. In *The Female Complaint* the version of the good life she references is one predicated on love—a love, though, that so often disappoints or evades those she studies in that book. By *Cruel Optimism*, the aspiration for the good life becomes that which exhausts, which “is for so many a bad life that wears out subjects who nonetheless, and at the same time, find their conditions of possibility within it” (27).

⁸ Though Japan is beyond the scope of Berlant’s work and her analytic does not always and everywhere apply to Japan, considering the predominance of the discourse of lifestyle (*seikatsu*) in the discourse of Japanese everyday

life and the various crises of global economic proportions, thinking about the good life is a worthwhile pursuit here. (See the mention of *seikatsu* in Gluck “The ‘End’ of the Postwars” and Irokawa Daikichi’s *The Age of Hirohito*.)

⁹ This boom involves both the distribution and popularity of animation and the enthusiasm outside Japan for “Extreme Asian” cinema, a genre that the British distribution company Tartan played a significant role in shaping. See Oliver Dew “‘Asia Extreme’: Japanese cinema and British hype.”

¹⁰ For an elaboration of the 1955 system, see John Dower’s “Peace and Democracy in Two Systems.” Michael Raine’s dissertation, *Youth, Body, and Subjectivity in the Japanese Cinema, 1955-1960*, supports this distinction.

¹¹ The Golden Age is language used to mark the prosperity of Japanese cinema, where cinema attendance reached its peak. Eric Cazdyn convincingly problematizes this concept in his introduction to *The Flash of Capital* (11-12) (and Noel Burch before him contested the Golden Age’s periodization in the 50s arguing instead for the Golden Age occurring 1930-45), but I invoke it still here to reference its discursive reproduction, that works across the literature on Japanese cinema to suggest a break in cinema history related to the loss of audience (where the height of film audiences comes to map onto the production of an auteur system of cinema and the industrial context of the studio system). This use can, for instance, be seen across Daisuke Miyao’s recent edited collection, *The Oxford Handbook of Japanese Cinema*.

¹² While this will be discussed in greater detail in my fourth chapter, the debate about whether what has been referred to as the Shōchiku New Wave can be called a new wave involves questions about the cohesiveness of those associated with it. Though it is generally associated with directors who worked at Shōchiku studios (including Yoshida Kijū, Ōshima Nagisa, and Shinoda Masahiro), there was not a movement nor did they have a shared vision for their filmmaking. See See Yuriko Furuhashi’s *Cinema of Actuality*, Patrick Noonan’s “The Alterity of Cinema: Subjectivity, Self-Negation, and Self-Realization in Yoshida Kijū’s Film Criticism,” and Yoshida in interview with Alexander Jacoby and Rea Amit.

¹³ Which is also to say, why the rhetoric adheres despite the critiques.

¹⁴ In *The Flash of Capital*, which devotes itself to thinking about problems of historiography of Japanese cinema broadly, Cazdyn makes the argument that there’s nothing exceptional about crisis, but that it is built into “the very logic of capitalist and cinematic development” (39).

¹⁵ Though televisions had already made their way onto the market the first color tv broadcast occurred in 1960 and over the course of the 60s the majority of Japanese households would acquire television sets, privileged objects within the object world that made up the consumer capitalism of high growth.

¹⁶ The Motion Picture Producers of Japan (Eiren) provides box office data (“Japanese Film Industry Statistics—Table of Past Data (1955-2014)”) on their website that shows a steady increase in film audiences until 1958. From 1959, though no significant decrease is registered in revenue, the numbers of spectators decrease in 1959 and plummet dramatically from 1960.

¹⁷ I will return to this idea throughout the dissertation but a critical moment that has become emblematic of how this gendering was imagined can be found in Sato Tadao’s *Currents in Japanese Cinema*, which asserts that at the time, “in movie theaters, where real women could not be found, erotic and violent stimuli escalated and aggressive and self-destructive impulses ran amok” (236).

¹⁸ For more on the Art Theater Guild (ATG), see the *minikomi* (a genre akin to the zine though it does not always have the focus on a DIY aesthetic) that came out of the 2003 Austrian symposium on ATG in 2003. ATG emerged as an independent production and especially exhibition force in the late 1960s, catering to cinephiles and making it possible to see an incredible amount of previously unseen foreign art film. Roland Domenig contextualizes that “From 1968 onwards, ATG became the major experimental laboratory of Japanese film” (9). Yoshida Kijū, the subject of the fourth chapter, discourages thinking about ATG as a distribution company in an interview with Hasumi Shigehiko (450) and problematizes within it some incredible cherished, romantic notions of ATG.

¹⁹ While pink will be described in detail in the next chapter, know that it is a genre of independent and cheaply made adult films, often described through the language of softcore, that emerged in the mid-60s in Japan.

²⁰ See especially Douglas Slaymaker’s *The Body in Postwar Japanese Fiction*.

²¹ Pink’s emergence, for one, speaks clearly to the continued relevance of the carnal body in the 60s, that era, as I will discuss in greater detail below, that shares a saturated association with sex and politics. However, the carnal body of this later moment is involved in the production of pleasure—or, a non-productive production. That, I am hastily asserting runs in opposition to the carnal body and sex’s use value in the reconstruction moment.

²² The high growth of Japan’s economy tends to be dated 1955-1991, ending with the burst of the economic bubble. Within this the *Shōwa genroku* codes the *Shōwa* period’s golden age, appropriating *genroku* from its use in a much

earlier period of prosperity in the 17th century. Perhaps owing to the logic of metaphor, it described generally as occurring around the late 60s. I suggest 1964 as its start because of the incredible development and infrastructural change that occurred to prepare the nation for the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games. The end of *genroku* is marked by the 1971 Nixon Shock within the frame of the State, but if we are to consider the social life of the nation it might also be marked by the 1972 Asama Sansō incident that has come to represent so much of the epistemic shift in the sociopolitical foment of the period. Certainly I am making the argument to see these events in conversation with one another. In his *A Defense of Culture* (1969) Mishima Yukio invokes the *Shōwa genroku* to decry its “culturalism,” which he elaborates as “the tendency to separate culture from the vitality of the bloody womb and sexual intercourse which gave it life, in order to evaluate culture according to humanitarian and humanistic achievements. In this context culture is made into something harmless and pretty, a common property of humankind—like a fountain in a public plaza” (28; trans. Matsui 155).

²³ In his *History and Repetition* Kojin Karatani writes that Francis Fukuyama’s call to the end of history, read with or against Marx’s *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, demonstrated history’s “repetition compulsion” (1). While Karatani and I are not so far apart in our thinking about history and historical time in this particular moment, and I am sympathetic and interested in his reminder that what is repeated in history is “not the event itself but rather the structure” (vii), I find reproduction more pertinent to thinking about the labor of these repetitions, the work of their returns, and useful for triggering the association with Marxism, yes, but even more so with Marxist feminism.

²⁴ When I describe reproduction in this context, I am not referring so sexual or biological reproduction. Instead I am developing social reproduction in distinction to biological reproduction. There are two works that have come before mine that deal with reproduction in Japan in this moment: Takeda Hiroko’s *The Political Economy of Reproduction in Japan* and Mary C. Brinton’s *Women and the Economic Miracle*. While Takeda’s does address paradigms of reproduction broadly defined, including the social reproduction that will be a large part of my focus here, her overriding interest in state policy and the centrality of population to her study mark the great difference of our projects. Hers is one invested in Foucault’s analytic of governmentality, concerned with the management of populations, and my interest lies less with the state than the values that circulate with it. Brinton, too, comes out of Sociology and offers an incredible account of the institutions that participate in gendering labor in the postwar. This does a lot to explain, as she is concerned to do, with “why women play the economic roles they do” (15). However, from my interdisciplinary location in the Humanities, I have perhaps a different version of this question and the why that is left unanswered that has less to do with the structures of institutions and more to do with how those structure recruit the sentiments that invest in them.

²⁵ This invocation of technology is opposed to the earlier invocations of technology within discussions of the film medium, in the context of comparisons to television and digital technologies.

²⁶ While this is developed over the course of Foucault’s later career in his lectures, see especially “The Birth of Biopolitics.” Foucault’s biopolitics deals largely with how the state manages bodies, but my focus, as indicated in the previous note, lies not on the power of the state but instead the power that circulates within it.

²⁷ See Walter Benjamin’s “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.”

²⁸ See Akira Mizuta Lippit’s *Electric Animal* and the Karen Beckman edited *Animating Film Theory*.

²⁹ Engels himself explains that he took up the torch in the 1884 preface to *Origin of the Family*. Silvia Federici explains the reason for this in her critique of Marx in “The Reproduction of Labor Power in the Global Economy” where she articulates that “in Marx’s account,” which she compares to neoliberalism, “all that is needed to (re)produce labor power is commodity production and the market” (93). Marx thus neglects the work needed to “prepare the goods the workers consume or to restore physically and emotionally their capacity to work” (93).

³⁰ She includes procreation in a list of things constituting women’s reproductive work (94). While I am in solidarity with Marxist feminists’ labor to have domestic work recognized as work, I take point with the blind spots of the mobilization of a politics based around an essential and universal “women’s labor. I am concerned thus with the gaps that deny difference, whether of race, class, sexuality, or other social indices, in the reification of an essentialized version of woman in the literature, which naturalizes and affirms, alongside its critique, the idea that domestic work is women’s, that childbirth is a property of being woman, and upholds a definition of woman that arises from embodiment. I worry thus about the heteronormativity affirmed in this version of feminism (its compulsory heterosexuality). Monique Wittig’s indictment of this part of materialist feminism in her “One is Not Born a Woman” is particularly apt here (relevant too is Gayle Rubin’s foundational text of feminism, “The Traffic in Women: Notes on the ‘Political Economy of Sex’”). With women of color feminists, too, I worry about how this

upholds whiteness as the unmarked feminist case (See, for example, Evelyn Nakano Glenn's "Racial-Ethnic Women's Labor," Lisa Lowe's "Working, Immigration, Gender" and the Combahee River Collective Statement).

An examples of the Marxist feminist literature I referenced above is Heidi Hartmann's "The unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism." Combining a psychoanalytic and feminist response to reproduction is Nancy Chodorow's *The Reproduction of Mothering*. Faye Ginsburg and Rayna Rapp write about "The Politics of Reproduction" from anthropology.

³¹ To further parse my distinction from Foucault, Brinton, and Takeda, I am interested more in this dissertation in forms of social participation than I am in social control.

³² This idea of the image dialogues with Jacques Khalip and Robert Mitchell, who see images as "something other than representations, simulations or copies of other things, and interpret them as aesthetic modes of manifestation that can be understood only with reference to both that which becomes invisible in the image and that which is simultaneously rendered invisible" (4). This is influenced also by Victor Burgin's definition of the film in his *The Remembered Film*, that moves away from an understanding of film based on the idea of it as a whole (that is where a single film, for example in its 90 minute to two hour duration, is what we call "a film") or as a set, and instead is made up of those pieces that linger with us, that remain. That too, I am considering a form of materiality. This hinges both on the relation of the image to the category of experience and these images as lived experience and it also has everything to do with with this language of congealing, which more than metaphor talks about the real adherence of ideas to and around images. This is a use adapted to the cinema context from Stuart Hall's invocation of "congealing" within his discussion of articulations of ideology in "Signification, Representation, Ideology." This is thus slightly different from the life of images that WJT Mitchell's *What Do Pictures Want?* Imagines, which is more about what images want, what they are willed toward, as opposed to the life I am finding *in* them.

³³ A note here about methodology: you will find across this dissertation what one interlocutor early in graduate school referred to as a "promiscuity" in my critical engagements, in my theoretical arsenal. Though the incorporation of marxist, feminist, queer, psychoanalytic, deconstructionist, postcolonial, and occasionally phenomenological theory may sometimes veer toward the vulgar, it reflects methodological practices that are part of the genealogy of feminist critique, cultural studies, film studies, or comparative literature. It calls on this eclectic set of theory to work at questioning discipline, taking up Mituhiro Yoshimoto's call at the end of his essay "Japanese Cinema in Search of a Discipline" (a discussion reinvigorated by Eric Cazdyn in "Japanese Film without Japan" in the recently published *Oxford Handbook of Japanese Cinema*) to be political by intervening in the "structures and practices of the established disciplines" (49).

Because "the extended or corporate family is a socioeconomic (indeed, on occasion political) organization which makes sexual constitution irreducibly complicit with historical and political economy" Gayatri Spivak makes the case that a theory *needs* each of the vectors I described above: it needs an eye "to the literature of the world[...]not tied by the concrete universals of a network of archetypes[...]but by a textuality of material-ideological-psycho-sexual production" (109). Edward Said, too, in his *Culture and Imperialism* (which also provides a history of the discipline of comparative literature that I come out of, including its imperialist origins), notes that "no one theory can explain or account for the connections among texts and societies" (318)—the goal of the contrapuntal reading practice he develops in this text.

³⁴ This is, of course, the idiom of Laura Mulvey's female gaze, language she calls on in her "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema."

³⁵ I am grateful to Jim Fujii for reminding me of the reference that Hamano Sachi's autobiography, *When a Woman Makes Movies*, makes to *When a Woman Ascends the Stairs*. Without our conversation this reading might never have materialized.

³⁶ While it has become a thoroughly naturalized process to refer to the female master of the bar as *mama*, it does of course embed within its very nomenclature the demand for this role to offer the care that characterizes reproductive labor. The male counterpart to this language does not refer to fathering, but instead to mastery (or sometimes the "neutral" language of the head of shop).

³⁷ See, for instance, Acquarello's "Unsentimental Journey: A Glimpse into the Cinema of Mikio Naruse," Donald Richie's *A Hundred Years of Japanese Film*, Catherine Russell's *The Cinema of Naruse Mikio: Women and Japanese Modernity*, and Joan Mellen's "Late Ozu, Late Naruse."

³⁸ At the same time, Abe Kashō's argument in his chapter on the film in his book *Naruse Mikio: Film Femininity* is worth noting: that, while Naruse is of course the great master of melodrama, we would do better to understand this film as hard-boiled for its reality claims with respect to the hostess industry (266). Perhaps what the film best

exposes is that a picture about women is neither necessarily a woman's picture (reminding us of Abe's assertion that the middle class housewife viewers who the film ostensibly targeted were unlikely to be taken in by its content [265]) nor melodrama. Keeping in mind Peter Brooks' arguments in *The Melodramatic Imagination* that melodrama aspires to resacralization in a world evacuated of the sacred, relying on a starkly Manichean order to hope to restore what is clearly good, we can see that this is a film that, like the late 20th century world of Lauren Berlant's *Cruel Optimism*, has no delusions about assurances of the delivery of any good life.

³⁹ In a footnote in my third chapter, I note my use throughout this dissertation of the language of "rehearsal" within the chain of associated words I invoke to talk about reproduction. In that footnote, I describe the debt rehearsal pays to Butler's performativity and my particular interest in the illocutionary force of the rehearsal of discourse. The promise is bound up in the same matrix. Shoshana Felman in her *The Scandal of the Speaking Body* helps us to understand the paradox and problem of the promise, illustrating that the promise as a construct is always deconstructing itself, always prefacing itself with the threat of the broken promise already.

⁴⁰ Mary C. Brinton's *Women and the Economic Miracle: Gender and Work in Postwar Japan* (1993) accounts for this temporality of women's labor, its emergence in high growth, and what she refers to as Japanese women's "indirect" participation in the economy with an explanation of "lifecycle" as the determinant of that participation.

⁴¹ The former would put an end to her labor as hostess, affirming marriage as the desirable endpoint for a female public labor proper only when it is temporary (and subsequently willfully forgotten).

⁴² For more on the concept of the good life see Lauren Berlant's *Cruel Optimism*. While Berlant's book takes as its starting point the US in the 1990s and early 2000s, at a moment she describes as that when disavowal is no longer possible—that is, when it has become impossible to believe in the fantasy that the good life will ever arrive—it provides a framework still worth learning from and adapting for this context. My argument with this dissertation is that that crisis, the impasse, of that moment is not something that arrives after it is no longer possible to believe in the fantasy, but an anxiety and a crisis present from the very inception of its promise. Thus, it is not only the failures of the postwar to deliver on its promises in the long duree, but already within the short term of the postwar. Or, we could understand this too as dividing the postwars and distinguishing them temporally as well as geographically.

⁴³ Marriage is signaled as the telos that delivers on the good life in an early scene featuring the group of hostesses who work under Keiko discussing its benefits, to establish an emergence of a normative trajectory and a narrative of desire simultaneously. Within the same sequence, the precarity of the independent hostess is underscored when, just after Keiko is reminded that she works to make money for her benefactor not herself, a siren announces the suicide of an independent hostess. This thematic—which draws a direct line between the debt of the independent hostess and her telic end in death—is then reproduced within a short duration when Yuri, ostensibly successful, flush with customers and bedecked with cars and luxurious clothing, commits suicide due to an insurmountable debt. All of this is foreshadowed when the crisis announced by that first siren is paired in that earlier scene with an association with the fortune teller, who had predicted the death, an association that will return to spell doom at critical junctures throughout the film.

⁴⁴ OL is an acronym that stands, to this day, for office ladies—the gendered moniker for all manner of administrative support in an office. C.f. Brinton 151-2.

⁴⁵ In his book, *Naruse Mikio: Film Femininity*, Abe Kashō also makes much of the night-day dyad that structures the film. In Abe's reading, within the world of the film, night and its interior spaces are coded as normal, while the day, in its vast openness, comes to code alienation, isolation, and anxiety (synonymous as the day is with Keiko's ulcer and her discovery of the lies of Sekine, one of her suitors).

⁴⁶ This is reinforced by Keiko's announcement that the hostesses' "work" is only just beginning even though the OLs' has finished.

⁴⁷ The jeers that met 35-year-old Tokyo assembly member Shiomura Ayaka's presentation on the challenges facing mothers who desire to continue in the workplace speak to how little things have changed in the last 50 years. Despite widespread outrage in the media and activism around the event, the heckles that asked why she was not married or that told her to go have a baby, reinforced the very structural obstacles Shiomura spoke of, even if they were recognized as violations in public discourse. Statistics—for instance those cited by the "Womonomics" report first published in 1999 and revised in 2005 and again in 2010 by Goldman Sach's lead investigator in Japan, Kathy Matsui, reveal the persistent drop-off of the female labor force from women's late 20s through their 40s. See also Brinton for the history of this across the postwar.

⁴⁸ It is interesting, however, that the OL's labor is most invisible within the space of the film as we do not see her represented in the diegesis, but merely referenced by it.

⁴⁹ *Mizu shōbai*, or the water trade, while referring to all manner of business of the night (i.e., bars, etc), has also been used as a euphemism for the sex trade.

⁵⁰ This is a competition that exhausts and extinguishes. The overdetermination of the ascension of the stairs with reproductive labor is made clear insofar as it is only in one other spatial context that we see her ascend the stairs: when she departs the new and hopping bar of her competitor and former employee, Yuri, just before she bumps into her poached client Fujisaki (she is not, in contrast, shown ascending stairs when she enters her own home). This sequence is shot in a sort of inverse of the usual ascension: the establishing shot of the staircase comes from within the club and is largely obscured, save a glimpse into the bars that line one side of their walls, otherwise shrouded in shadows. Where the sequences at her own bars always feature shots of her climbing the stairs, shot from their bottom and top, in this sequence, she is only shown before and after entering the stairs and not from within them (another significant distinction is that whereas her bars are always located on the second floors of buildings, such that she ascends up into them, in this case, she ascends from below ground to the street level. This case communicates an emersion from a subterranean world, whereas her ascension above the street seems to suggest that she somehow rises above it all). That the sequence is included at all works, I would argue, to remind us of the necessary labor involved in her visit to Yuri's bar, the demands made within it and outside of it—the need for her to maintain the same composure that would be the mark of her success at her own establishments. On the other hand, the only woman who *descends* the stairs is Keiko's mother, in her own home in the outskirts of town when Keiko convalesces in recovery from the ulcer induced by Yuri's death. This desension prefaces the mother's critique of Keiko's extravagant life, which Keiko protests with the claim that her fancy clothes and apartment represent necessities for her profession. To descend down to Keiko, literally consumed by her profession, from this space peripheral and apart from Ginza, unseen by it, reinforces how utterly outside of its economy of exchange the mother is as an older, uncoupled, non-urban, impoverished woman. Finally, it is noteworthy that just before Keiko takes Fujisaki home, in the final bar that the drink in, her proposition to him happens with a staircase framing them in the background. This staircase too codes this moment as well as work, a work always lingering in Keiko's background.

⁵¹ Before Keiko will ever ascend the stairs, the film offers as its opening the cramped alley of bars by daylight, coding this as a strange scene with a voice-over that compares the scene to a woman without make-up. While of course it is left to the viewer to make what s/he will of the analogy, it is not merely bareness that is referenced, but a scene that has not yet proceeded through its preparatory rituals of reproductive labor—it is not yet ready for work, it is not ready to be seen.

⁵² The second hand economy is one we see returned to repeatedly in the world of the hostesses, first introduced around the apparently successful Yuri's debt-induced suicide when we learn she had resold all of her fine kimonos prior to the execution. Just as the siren of the film's first sequence calls on a wartime signifier of crisis to remind us that in 1960 the war is still not so distant, this secondhand economy too creates a continuity with the alternative markets, that is the black markets, of the postwar. Here, of course, they have been transformed—the secondhand market, after all, is no longer illicit—but the genealogy is embedded before us. What seems important about the hostesses' reliance on it in particular, however, is not the fact of its second-handness but the Ginza hostess's ability to conceal that it was ever anything but hers or firsthand. This supports her overall project, demonstrating the deep imbrication of concealment in her performance.

⁵³ That the fortune teller can be so closely associated with Yuri, who appears initially to be the very model of success of a hostess who chooses to open her own bar, but whose debt-induced suicide—a debt which follows her beyond the grave to demonstrate the impossible bind and cost of that independence—ties the fortune teller to the economy of death of the hostess. Remember too, the fortune teller's prediction of the suicide of the other hostess at the film's beginning.

⁵⁴ Abe's reading of her aptitude in gift giving is rather that it demonstrates her knowledge base as a Ginza hostess her capacity for transformation to the office of wife (281-2), in contrast to my reading here that connects this to her own past.

⁵⁵ It is based on this scene (as well as the representation of her mother's home) that Abe makes the argument that interior spaces are the norm of the film and open spaces are those coded as alienating (270).

⁵⁶ While the good life is a concept that Berlant develops in *The Female Complaint* and will elaborate on in *Cruel Optimism*, its predecessor, "having a life," in Berlant's introduction to the special issue on "Intimacy" for *Critical Inquiry* reveals its frequent ties to the intimate sphere and to visions of love in particular. Berlant understands intimacy as "an aspiration for a narrative about something shared," what would be defined as having a life. In *The Female Complaint* the version of the good life she references is one around love, but a love that so often disappoints

or evades those she studies in that book. By *Cruel Optimism*, the good life becomes that which so often exhausts, that which “is for so many a bad life that wears out subjects who nonetheless, and at the same time, find their conditions of possibility within it” (27). In *When A Woman Ascends The Stairs*, love is not available to anyone—it is not for Keiko to have, but equally Komacchan—Nakadai Tatsuya’s manager, whose name provides a fantastic pun as it sounds as if he’s called, affectionately, a worrier—cannot have it, and it clearly does not lie between any of the married couples. If the conceit of the Shōwa Genroku is that the object world should provide the good life—we must of course remember we operating in a very different paradigm from Berlant, though the film goes to great pains to engage the problem of love—the film equally shows us how vacant, and in fact how full of debt and death, this object world is.

⁵⁷ With her transgression of the light being marked by Fujisaki’s morning departure from her house that very same day.

⁵⁸ While Keiko does not hide her profession, in her introduction she identifies herself as a customer from the bank, rather than identifying her bar as one that Fujisaki frequented.

⁵⁹ Anne Allison’s ethnography of a hostess club, conducted in the 1980s but not published until 1994, despite its temporal distance from the Naruse film, still works to explain the dynamics of the enterprise. Of the hostess’ role in corporate workings, for instance, she describes that “the hostess provide a useful ‘service’ for the business encounters between men (15). Her job, she writes, “is to make customers feel special, at ease and indulged. Or, as one Japanese man told me, the role of the hostess is to make a man ‘feel like man’” (8).

⁶⁰ Abe’s reading is mobilized by Keiko’s description at the beginning of the film that there are three types of hostesses: those who go home in a car, those who walk home and the third type, identified as “the worst” (*saitei*): those who go home with their clients. He uses this to describe the way that, ultimately, Keiko herself is transformed into the worst (265-266).

⁶¹ She says: “*Watashi mo sore ni makenai yō ni ikite ikanakereba naranai.*” This, of course, returns us to that narrative of resilience. The concept is thus embedded into the film itself, however, what is at contention here is whether she succeeds or even has the possibility of succeeding in this pursuit.

⁶² This is a death without event, however, to demonstrate, it seems, the challenge of locating a life anywhere within its world.

⁶³ While Abe reads her as self-preserving, he also talks about these scenes as demonstrates of the way she becomes other to herself. In my reference to encryption here, I refer to Maria Torok’s discussion of the crypt in her response to Freud’s “Morning and Melancholia” in *The Shell and the Kernel*.

Chapter II

When Hamano Sachi Makes Movies: The Problem of Reproducing *Onna*

This chapter examines the problem of Hamano Sachi. By this I mean both the problems that afflict her—the complaints she rehearses across the literature she has written—and the problem qua disruption she has posed to the Japanese film industry. Both of these fundamentally return to the problem posed by Hamano’s status as *woman* in film. Hamano entered the film industry in the late 60s, interested exclusively, as I will return to below, in working as a director. Direction offered Hamano the opportunity, she thought, to control images and controlling images in turn promised her the authority to create images of women as subjects. This logic reveals a desire for herself to be able to make claim to subject, despite being bombarded by an image landscape that communicated that Japanese women were images rather than subjects.

Surrounded thus by reproductions of dissatisfying images, Hamano’s answer was to construct, via an enormous arsenal of reproductions, her film vision. Despite the hundreds of films she made in response to this problem, the publication of her autobiography testifies to the authority she still desired, an authority not automatically bestowed by the mechanism of authoring images.

I begin with a close reading of Hamano’s autobiography to deconstruct Hamano’s conflicted relationship to being woman and to being woman director—a conflict driven by the overdetermined messages on both the narrative and cinematic levels that “women” are supplemental to men. In the process, my analysis uncovers Hamano’s attachment, communicated in the persistence of her reminders that she has made *300 films*, to the promise of visibility. That visibility, too, is a desire we can locate in pornography—a desire Linda Williams has written

about in her *Hard Core* to make sex *visible*—a logic important because Hamano, for the better part of her 300 film long career has made pink films,¹ or softcore pornography.

Pink for Hamano both represents the condition of her possibility—as it allowed her to become a director and author images at a time when there were almost no female directors—and her problem, in its structural desire to make visible. This very paradigm of visibility reproduced in Hamano a desire that conflicted with the image system she encountered and produced.

The second half of this chapter turns to Hamano’s pink films examining what they offer the field of vision that Hamano seeks promise in despite hiding them away. Just as “woman” represents a category impossible for Hamano to identify with and impossible to escape, pink too carries a contradiction of desiring visibility while remaining in the dark. While Hamano assumes the films are not what the public wants, looking at their cinematic strategies of reproduction—that is the audio-visual tropes they return to, their techniques for engaging sex—the conflict between vision and visibility suspends their politics in an other space.

While the autobiography and at least one of the films I look at here were distributed outside of the zone of high growth, both Hamano’s assumption of the strategy of reproduction and the narratives of the film industry that she rehearses to construct her own narrative reach back into that past. Avowing the changes the industry has seen since she began her career, Hamano nonetheless, remains caught in the rhetoric and the strategies born of that moment, internalized and encrypted and, yes, continually reproduced. It is perhaps for this reason that Hamano has declared she will not stop making films until she has died.

When prolific pink film director Hamano Sachi published her autobiography in 2005 as *When a Woman Makes Movies*, its title indexed a powerful intertext in Naruse’s *When A Woman Ascends the Stairs*.² More than coding a woman’s perseverance in a phallogentric world, the

reference to Naruse explains how reproduction comes to so fundamentally structure Hamano's negotiation of her world. It also anticipates the impasses she encounters.³ The problem of Hamano Sachi is, in fact, a convergence of problems around reproduction and one of its most representative technologies: cinema.⁴ While Hamano's extensive filmography devotes itself to combating normative investments in reproductive sexuality and its supporting structures—the couple form, monogamy, marriage, compulsory heterosexuality—we see the problem of reproduction manifest even more in the ways that she reproduces herself, in that impossibly voluminous film output and in the rehearsal and framing of her story. What becomes clear in Hamano's reproduction of herself is her desire to render herself *visible*: to give evidence to her own existence.⁵

Nowhere is this more pronounced than in the autobiography, which first broadly publicizes her (as) problem.⁶ Here she articulates her response as writing: authoring her life both in the autobiography and in cinema, thus understanding presence as an authorship that controls the image.⁷ Given her identification with her chosen medium, a medium already stacked against presence as Benjamin instructs us,⁸ an industry in the Japanese film world that has itself insistently reproduced and protected patriarchy,⁹ in no small part through its valorization of the auteur,¹⁰ and a genre in pink film that has presumed a predominately male, and thus limited, audience¹¹ while structured around a system of production anathemic to the auteur,¹² she has faced systemic limits that have cooperated not only to circumvent recognition of her presence but to promise the perpetual desire for it.

Even while pornography has provided a vehicle for sexual expression that Hamano ties directly to having a life and subjectivity,¹³ pornography's structuring desire for visibility¹⁴—a visibility that echoes the same one she desires for herself—has the effect of compounding this

crisis of the self, weaving together as it does the problem of presence with the problem of visibility. Which is to say, pornography, that genre which desires to make visible, has colluded to guarantee her invisibility at the very same time that it has made possible an incredibly prolific career and her career as a director at all. While Hamano has presumed that pink's adult content stood in the way of her visibility—premised on the reproduction of moral assumptions about who adult films are thought to be for¹⁵—I am arguing instead for a return to the grammar of pornography to understand how visibility has become Hamano's problem.¹⁶ Even while Hamano's cinema transforms paradigms of representation (as I will discuss below), challenges to the recognition of her presence arise from the genre's own investment and interest in making visible. Where hardcore may wish to make the sex act visible—that is, genitally via the money shot¹⁷—what Hamano, and perhaps pink, makes visible in simulating sex (and simulating it again and again) is the desire to render a form of subjectivity via sexual expression—a form of self, as we see in her autobiography and again in an interview conducted with the author—otherwise not seen as viable, visible, present, there.¹⁸

Even more than the signature black John Lennon sunglasses Hamano dons at all times,¹⁹ there is no greater identificatory marker for Hamano than the ubiquitous reminder, always attached to her name, that she has made more than 300 films.²⁰ The film and film studies communities often respond suspiciously to Hamano's autobiographical account, all the more so to this untraceable figure of 300 films,²¹ and in doing so miss that what is important about it is not its value as truth but rather as *claim*, a claim which, especially in its relentless reproduction, discursively indexes the organization of her problem in visibility. **[insert image here]** That the rehearsal of the number, in the autobiography especially, is so consistently accompanied by numerous figurations of “counting” reveals that what matters much more than the number itself

is its function as an indicator of volume and, as such, a marker of activity expected to register.²² It thus functions as announcement that speaks to the double bind of her labor with each reproduction of its articulation—of the frustration of the count still not counting, of persisting in invisibility despite the reproduction of a visible marker.²³

Hamano's Autobiographical Complaint: Disentangling Women

When Hamano frames and reframes her story as arising out of the twin originary traumas of, first, encountering a film industry always already structurally set up to shut her out because she is a woman and, then, failing *despite* a (300 film) long career to find recognition as a woman filmmaker, in her view, because she worked in pink film, what she narrates is a problem of her existence as *woman* in the industry. Even while her autobiography ostensibly attempts to correct this exclusion, writing herself into the history she feels neglected from, *through* its protest it reinforces her subjectification rather than the subjectivity she so desires. In the process, she narrates her deeply conflicted relationship to being a woman in the industry to illustrate, as in *When a Woman Ascends the Stairs*, how the industry's organization produces these returns. This has everything to do with the way structures systemically cooperate together to exclude her such that, i.e., an initial exclusion that operates out of ideological assumptions about public work—that the work of cinema is men's work²⁴—morphs into moral assumptions about who the content of pink film best suits (men), which becomes hard to separate from architecture and practice's cooperation in fashioning the space of the pink theater and the consumption of the pink film as a male space,²⁵ thus producing the spectator of pink cinema. In each of these spheres—in work, in film production, in exhibition, and again in spectatorship—Hamano draws attention to the ways that subjectivity is redefined and, most importantly, reread as a property of being male.²⁶ When she attempts to make claim to the role of director, when she makes films, when she works to

write from a woman's perspective, to give women space to be desiring, she comes up against a matrix of impasses that she attempts to traverse, which she is called upon to revisit over and over again.

Lee Edelman has recently written in his dialogue with Lauren Berlant, *Sex, or the Unbearable*, that telling a story, telling one's story, "implies a direction; it signals, as story, a movement that leads toward some payoff or profit, some comprehension or closure, however open-ended" (3). By launching the story that she will come to reproduce not just in the autobiography, but in countless interviews and magazine articles, with trauma signals the reparative desire that in its very status as story "leading toward" can only approach and never be arrived at. More critically, it positions her story as problem and even as crisis, a crisis that revolves around her occupation of the category of woman. It is fair to say that the problem of visibility for Hamano in fact begins with the problem of being woman. This is first announced by the advice she receives early in her career to drop the gender marking final syllable "ko" from her given name "Sachiko" lest male audiences be turned off by a female director (41). It is also raised by the title of her autobiography, which embeds an ambiguity around woman that is not readily apparent in its English translation. Namely, the Japanese *Onna ga eiga o tsukuru toki* leaves suspended whether the title's subject is a singular or plural entity because Japanese nouns do not express number, raising the question of whether the book makes claims for the *onna*, the woman, at the individual or systemic levels. While Hamano herself has clarified that she intended it in the singular (*When a Woman Makes Movies* rather than *When Women Make Movies*)—*When She, Hamano, Makes Movies*—this ambiguity is revealing of the centrality of Hamano's deeply held ambivalence about women in her story.²⁷ That is to say, the ambivalence

of the title is symptomatic of the conflict that moves her in and out of identification and disidentification with being woman.

Hamano's career was born of this tension, a problem of the *image* of women. Raised by a cinephilic salaryman father who brought the family along to weekly full day Saturday screenings, by the time she reached high school Hamano was watching at least six films a week (Shimazaki 85). In reproducing her origin story, Hamano reminds us how dissatisfying she found the images of women she encountered in Japanese film at the time: either mothers or whores, they were represented as the sex which "took it" (*uketomeru sei*) (85).²⁸ These images hardened her resolve to become a filmmaker, to generate the sort of images she wanted to see: of active, desiring women. Neither the visions of screen women nor the path laid out for women in Shizuoka resonated with her—it was not, she describes, the *kind of woman* she was—so, upon graduating from school, she went off seeking something else, something more.²⁹ In this Hamano articulates a problem which is neither restricted to the realm of representation nor to lived experience and which does not allow for easy distinctions between the two. Through her negative identification with the "aesthetic modes of manifestations"³⁰ surrounding women—*I am not her. She is not me.*—Hamano also identified a call to answer to them *aesthetically*. If the problem with each of those women was that they followed a pattern, that they reproduced old and stale ideologies, that they represented male fantasies and were oversimplified, she could not possibly identify with them. She could not possibly be them.

In each reproduction of her story, recurring figures of trauma mobilize, and attempt to justify, her cinematic response.³¹ While in the autobiography these are intercut with figures of identification, in the other representations of her story—in interviews and in magazine articles—she avoids these identifications altogether, preserving her focus on the inhospitality of the

industry and the demand it creates for her response, underscoring her individual and exceptional position *to* respond. There is a tension embedded in this, where Hamano issues a criticism of the system that manifests these moments of crisis, but where she can only speak to her individual experience of crisis—crises because they surprise, and surprise perhaps because they touch her³²—and only her individual response can answer to them. The images she encountered in film demanded a revision, a revision only she could issue. That said, the answer was not to be found in collective action, but in the action of her exceptional breakthrough. Her concern is thus not to change the system, but to find ways to proliferate images that add to the image landscape, to carve a space in which *she* could live.

When she narrates the first of two pivotal traumas, it occurs somewhere between seeing sexism's presence in the industry and her personal experience of it, where what ultimately issues a call to response—to make a different kind of cinema—in both is woman's treatment as vessel.³³ When she traveled from Shizuoka to Tokyo at 18 to attend photography school with the intention of becoming a filmmaker, she went with the awareness that she was already shut out from the industry, requiring as the major studios did that new hires be college graduates and male (*Onna* 9).³⁴ This only hastened her desire to become a filmmaker, however; even when the jobs available to women in the industry were limited to scriptwriter and hair and make-up, she was solely interested in the office of director (10). She later explains that this was because, “no matter how much you might say that a producer is in charge on set, a film is a director's *thing* (31, emphasis mine).³⁵ This desire to have film be hers was at direct odds with her complaint, on her introduction to adult film while hanging out in Shinjuku amidst the frenzy of the anti-Japan-US Security treaty protests in 1970, that women were being treated as “things,” as “mere sex organs” (Shimazaki 86).³⁶ Perhaps for this reason the anecdote does not make it into the

autobiography, which instead describes discovering in Wakamatsu Productions a model for radical and independent filmmaking that presented an alternative to the major studios and thus offered her the promise of a career in filmmaking.³⁷ It makes only brief reference to the months she spent at 20 trying to convince them to hire her. In the autobiography there is no large crisis in being told that they had no need for a *woman* assistant director (10), and such things as: “since women have periods, they can’t put their hands on the sacred clapperboard” or “can women even get film stories?” (11). Instead, these unpleasantries transform into testaments to her commitment to becoming a filmmaker to eventually earn her selection as third assistant director for Adachi Masao’s *Sex Jack* (1968).³⁸ This exceptionality paves the way for her popularity in the industry (for becoming an *urekko*) just a few years later.

In her telling, the unendurable arose once she was on set because the sexism she encountered there not only positioned her as the *image* she disidentified with, but in doing so, it disregarded her position as image maker, the position she understood herself to be in as staff.³⁹ The problem thus was that the association her colleagues had with women did not trump the authority she anticipated coming once on staff; the crisis was one of being stuck between visions of women that she could not make commensurate because, once again, they were not her. This climaxes into a crisis she will reproduce again and again, when, one day shooting on location of *Sex Jack*, having no other female staff members on set, she was assigned to share a room with the film’s lead actress. This in itself is presented as a problem—that she should not have been equated with the actress, the only other woman on set.⁴⁰ However, the real violation—what she describes in a turn she will invoke in other moments of crisis as “the unthinkable event” (13)—comes in the middle of the night, when the actress and the film’s leading actor started sleeping together in front of her. Asking them to stop because it was late and they would have to work

again early in the morning, they simply laughed at her and, teasing her, continued. She slept in the hallway and found this so injurious that when she awoke she complained to Adachi who scolded her for interfering with the actors and demanded she apologize. She was so shocked at his response that she fled, walking eight hours by her account to get back to Wakamatsu Productions' Harajuku offices. Scolded again by Wakamatsu himself once she returned, she quit (14-15).

This story has become central to Hamano's criticism of Wakamatsu and, by extension, the pink industry she came into in the 1970s. There is, however, a significant difference between the extracurricular sex she encountered and the symbolic use of women in Adachi-Wakamatsu collaborations.⁴¹ That gap can perhaps be explained by her elaboration in the earlier *Fujin Kōron* piece of still more direct assaults—of men exposing themselves to her on set, of medication taken to cease menstruation (86).⁴² The recapitulation of this moment as traumatic signifier is much more significant for what it says about the subjection she met in that moment. It is reproduced *because* it is a small moment, because in that small moment, she felt small. The presence of a direct injury also issues a demand for defense, justifying its presence and production.⁴³ Yet, what we cannot overlook in it is that it is not the litany of rejoinders she received from her colleagues in production of all the reasons that a woman did not belong on set which traumatize her; instead, the trigger for the crisis, explained away through the lack of recognition of the problem of sexual harassment by Wakamatsu and Adachi, is the *actress* laughing at Hamano—it is the figure otherwise naturalized as the image of woman who nevertheless subjects Hamano who creates the problem.⁴⁴ When Hamano's surprise—at being subjected to the actors' liaison, at Adachi and Wakamatsu's lack of support of her position—and its trauma come to explain her political commitments in filmmaking, especially her resolve to

make a woman-centered cinema, the contradictions of the day on Adachi's set becomes more pronounced. Which is to say, when, out of this moment, she articulates her vision of creating a woman-centered cinema that opposes Wakamatsu and Adachi's reliance in this period on the trope of rape to stage their politics, determined instead to represent women as active, desiring sexual subjects, that sounds much like the actress in her anecdote. The industry's evaluation of the actress as material to use bears on Hamano's incredulousness, foreclosing not only her recognition of the actress' enactment of the very sexual subjectivity Hamano aims to represent, but also burying the actress as Hamano's problem, when she redirects the problem toward Wakamatsu and Adachi—toward the directors with authority. At the same time, the actress must be buried in order to make way for Hamano's defense, a defense necessary to justifying the telling of her history.

When Hamano thus takes aim at Adachi and Wakamatsu's representational politics, she does so in an attempt to make claim to her own subjectivity. Hamano's fantasy of a woman-centered cinema—a cinema that does not *punish* women as this scene did her—works to critique the way violence to women's bodies was not only foundational to an industry, central to pink at its very inception, but also to structuring a radical politics in the 1960s.⁴⁵ She makes the case that her individual experience must be answered to systemically, industrially, to suggest that the problem she encountered was produced by the system. At the same time, Hamano fails to recognize the actress as an embodiment of the image she commits herself to producing not because of her inability to accept the actress as subject but because the actress's too-proximate, too-private pleasure promises to disrupt her authorial *work*. Hamano's subsequent affiliation in her filmmaking with a "soft" eros she associates with femininity thus arises out of the intersection of the violence of representation with the violence of her experience of production.⁴⁶

Even when this femininity is as much a projected image as that of the patriarchal one she combats, contrary to its hegemonic associations with accommodation and divorced from the archetypes of film woman Hamano finds uninteresting, it offers Hamano a starting point to reimagine a femininity that would not do *her* a violence. In her narrative, rather than representational strategy resolving the problem, it is finding a way to put herself in a position of being in demand in the industry,⁴⁷ becoming visible as film author and gaining control over film images, enhanced for her when, in 1984, she started her own production company.⁴⁸

The Public Problem of Hamano's Life as a Director

The second pivot that Hamano rehearses arrives years after she has gained this feeling of establishment and operates much like the first: its crisis is indexed through surprise, resulting in Hamano being brought into consciousness of her own invisibility, which issues a call to response. Like the first, this event is tied to her status as woman, but, this time, more explicitly to the problem of being a woman filmmaker. While the first trauma emerges out of a paradigm unaccustomed to women filmmakers,⁴⁹ in this case, the problem arises because of the transformations within the industry in the intervening years that made being a woman filmmaker categorically possible, despite Hamano's failure still to be seen.⁵⁰ This second crisis is provoked when the inaugural Tokyo Women's Film Festival (at the time, the Kanebo International Woman's Film Week) recognizes Tanaka Kinuyo as Japan's most prolific filmmaker in 1996, though she had only made six films.⁵¹ Hamano once again describes herself as being flabbergasted."⁵² Of course, if it is prolificness being rewarded, Hamano is in a class unto herself.⁵³ For her the announcement meant that her *existence* as a Japanese female director was decided—that is, it was decided that she did not *exist*: that her 30 year, 300 film history in pink film did not *count* (43). Hearing this, she knew she would “not remain” (“*nokorenai*”) in

Japanese film history (“*Kanreki*” 34), that she would not imprint herself in it (*Onna* 43). That, she sees as a problem of *life*.⁵⁴ Having the feeling that as long as she continued making pink film she would continue to be overlooked, “as evidence of [her] existence” (43),⁵⁵ it was with intention, that in that moment, it was decided: she would write her way into existence through non-pink cinema and by telling her own story in the autobiography, writing herself into a history that otherwise threatened to forget that she was ever there at all.⁵⁶

The great upset of the Tokyo Women’s Film Festival not recognizing her as the woman film director who had made the most films in Japanese film history was confronting that she might not be recognized as a director at all. Since the beginning of her career, her very admission to the industry had come at the price of acquiescing to her qualified existence, to accepting, for instance, that she be called “Mother” as a twenty-something AD and then director on set (24).⁵⁷ Having spent a career reminded she was a woman director and asked to absorb all the injuries of that qualification (of being a *woman* director)—called useless and a bother, discriminated against, sexually harassed by other staff, and bullied by actresses⁵⁸—and having nevertheless, since the 80s, been in a position to make the films as and that she wanted by virtue of having started her own production company and thus writing, directing, and producing the majority of her films (and thus assuming that she had arrived as author), this event erased her existence because it took away the unique position she thought she had carved out for herself within the industry.⁵⁹ She may have been working at the margins of Japanese cinema insofar as pink was located outside of the major studio system, but the guerrilla style filmmaking demanded by its brisk shooting schedules and small budgets had also given her a sense of being particularly skilled—with no money or time to waste and shooting on 35mm film stock, pink directors could

not afford *not* to get things right (*Onna* 9)—and the lack of recognition was stripping her of her craft.⁶⁰

More than this, the event presents a problem of publicity. It is not that Tanaka Kinuyo *was* the most prolific Japanese woman director, it is the *announcement* of this, as if to make it real, which creates a problem for Hamano.⁶¹ It is the possibility that through publicity a life—Hamano's—could be erased that flabbergasts her: the confrontation with the glaring contradiction that her aggressive proliferation of cinematic production does not equal a form of legible publicity, even when the thing being recognized is prolificness itself. This event makes problem of the cinematic reproduction that Hamano had seen as her solution, making clear that there is no number of films she could make within the pink industry that would add up to publicity, that would publicize her existence. It thus makes problem out of the logic that writing cinema as director will make what's hers *her* before a seeing public. The possibility of public recognition manufactures a desire *to be seen*, but most importantly it redefines who she seeks to be seen *by*, what public she aims to reach. If her earliest motivations for filmmaking came out of a desire to transform images to write into existence a viable life for herself as woman, this event, a crisis of post-feminism, collapses those desires, forcing Hamano to confront her desire for her own life in cinema. Rather than transform the image of woman to render it human, this event requires her to reconfigure the frames of woman to allow herself to be seen as one in order to be seen at all. It forces her to confront that even if she reproduces images of desiring women, if she delivers them for consumption to the dominant pink audience, she cannot upset the hegemony of the economic system that limited that life in the first place—it both forces her to become *onna* and it is a reproduction without end.

Recurrently resistant to forms of solidarity or consensus, disidentifying with feminism and women's liberation, and making claim to being woman only when it is figured as solitary,⁶² in this moment, Hamano recognized her need to render this audience—the audience of the Tokyo International Women's Film Festival—hers in an effort to make visible her labor and herself.⁶³ Of course, having made 300 films, having been in a position to have all of those films financed, meant that Hamano had long since had an audience. However, it was not simply a consuming public, a public desiring of the sex in her films, that she needed, but a public desiring *her*, a public who could publicly make claim to her and would recognize her in the films. Pink, that moment revealed, guaranteed her anonymity because it was built on anonymous viewing—on viewing in the dark, an architecture that exceeds the space of the theater.⁶⁴ Though Hamano would come to find once she went on the road with her *ippan* films, much to her surprise, that women were not only watching her pink films all along but desiring them,⁶⁵ the slight by the *Tokyo International Women's Film Festival* suggested to her that the only way she could be seen publicly would be to make a non-pink film—a film that could be shown to a broad audience at the festival.⁶⁶

Just as announcement marked the crisis, the announcement of her plans to make an *ippan* film comes to represent a critical turning point in her career because, out of this, she is able to identify a public, or what Lauren Berlant has described in *The Female Complaint* as an intimate public, which carries with it a promise of belonging that offers the “relief” of encountering others assumed to “*already* share the same worldview” (viii-ix). Critically, Berlant's intimate public is built around the consumption of texts that mediate members' negotiation of feeling “collectively and structurally unprivileged” and the desire to feel as if they are not alone (ix). Critical, that is, because Hamano both narrates her own very similar negotiation and, with her foray into *ippan*

film, aims to manufacture a text that will hail a public to share in this process. Though Berlant's focus lies with consumers rather than producers, her description of that mode of consumption offering "a way of experiencing one's own story as part of something social, even if one's singular relation to that belonging is extremely limited, episodic, ambivalent, rejecting, or mediated by random encounters with relevantly marked texts" (x) helps illuminate how producers too can be enmeshed in the same web of desires, and with mixed parts intentionality and accidental discovery. It is telling that Berlant initiates her discussion of intimate publics by addressing the role of the autobiographical, suggesting both that autobiography is a privileged genre of the creation of the intimate public and that the autobiographical, while assumed to be about the private life, is like Hamano's reproduction of her own story, rather about the public in its solicitation of a community to which you, the writer, can belong. For Hamano, the autobiography is a late arrival to secure, or to renew, her intimate public through the proliferation of more textual material testifying to her disenfranchisement.

Prior to publishing the autobiography, Hamano taps into her intimate public thanks to the suggestion of her longtime collaborator, screenwriter Yamazaki Kuninori, to whom she more comfortably attributes feminism,⁶⁷ that for her first *ippan* film she consider the life and literature of the early 20th century writer Osaki Midori.⁶⁸ That Hamano solicits her public through the process of rewriting the biography of another prolific female writer threatened by obscurity for her first *ippan* film is revealing of an identification she otherwise resists but strategically deploys, ostensibly in the service of *correction*, to bring both women to life.⁶⁹ Hamano's achievement of this public should be attributed in no small part to her identification of the availability of an already existing and *extendable* intimate public: those invested in women's literature who have an investment in seeing it disseminated and who see particular advantage in

cinematic adaptation and distribution. That this cooperates with regionalism in Japan—that she can go to an area in Tottori, the home of Osaki, that likewise shares an investment in seeing its citizens represented on the big screen—not only expands this eager and ready audience, but ultimately provides her with the material support essential to its production.⁷⁰ It is likewise one of her backers, a woman originally from Tottori, who ends up organizing groups of mostly female supporters from around Japan to micro-finance and provide volunteer labor to make possible *In Search of a Lost Writer: Wandering in the World of the Seventh Sense* (1998). In this way the intimate public not only promised Hamano an infrastructure for reproducing the psychic support she sought but a stream of reproducible capital resources that made possible the production and distribution of her films. Explaining her resistance to feminism up until this point through a single, reproduced anecdote about a young feminist shaming her on the train (*Onna* 56),⁷¹ this material support comes to be converted into Hamano’s understanding of the “sisterhood” with which she could not previously identify (59).⁷²

In a narrative (Hamano’s) otherwise laden with claims of intentionality, what appears to be her very strategic decision to select as the subject of her first regular film not only a woman writer, but a woman writer on the verge of having her collected works (or, her *zenshū*) published is presented as a happy accident, rather than a convenient synergy of free PR and intertextual momentum.⁷³ Intentionality enters this narrative instead in her conviction, mobilized not by a desire but a *demand* for correction—a trope of the autobiography, that the canonical understanding of Osaki Midori had it all wrong.⁷⁴ Central to the error of Osaki’s story was the idea that her decision to retreat into obscurity and, even more centrally, not to marry, arose out of her depression—that she had died mad—rather than her own decisiveness or desire. Hamano thus inserts into Osaki’s story a narrative of subjectivity that aims to not allow Osaki to be

“forgotten” precisely by rewriting her story as one of resistance to the dominant literary trends of her time, refusing its romanticism. Equally, Hamano rewrites the mythologized narrative of Osaki’s sad loneliness in her singledom by framing it, too, as a resistance to the mores of the time, rejecting the notion that a woman’s role in life was to marry and instead deciding to live as she desired (54-55).⁷⁵ However, in narrating how she came to feel called to the story and reproducing her own concerns about being forgotten, about not being able to live as she wished, about others not seeing her subjectivity, Hamano betrays herself in the rehearsal of the same language that elsewhere marks her crisis. If writing Osaki Midori’s story is meant as solution to the problem of not being seen, the recapitulation of the codes of the crisis demonstrates its continued existence even alongside competing narratives of intentionality, exceptionality, and the heroics of saving another from misunderstanding and disregard.

Even when *In Search of*’s screening at the 1998 *Tokyo International Film Festival* announced to Hamano that “at last” she would remain in Japanese film history (*Onna* 75), ostensibly achieving what had long been denied her, the idiom she invokes in discussions of her next *ippan* film, *Lily Festival* (2001), both underscore the stakes of her work and the terrain that ensures it cannot be finished. It is here that she reinvigorates the sale of her cinematic politics of agentive sexuality, extending it by carving out representational space for the sexual expression and exploration of the elderly, infrequently the subject of cinema, let alone within narratives involving sexuality.⁷⁶ With *Lily Festival*, Hamano moves through motions evocative of her first independent production: she aims to make space for, but simultaneously capitalizes on the elderly, instrumentalizing them as a new frontier that provides her with the territory to which she can stake claim to offer something different as a filmmaker.⁷⁷ At the same time, this arises in response to the violences of the misogynist discourse that refers to older women with the

pejorative *babā* and the larger cinematic culture that disappears older women, even while it reveres and continues to feature actors like Clint Eastwood and Takakura Ken, as Hamano reminds us (*Onna* 84). The gravity and timeliness of her intervention is demonstrated in the proximity of the infamous incident, occurring in the same year as *Lily Festival*'s production, when notorious Tokyo governor Ishihara Shintarō made incendiary comments that

the worst and the most harmful creatures that civilization has brought about are *babā* (derogatory term for middle-aged and elderly woman). It is a waste and a sin for women without reproductive capacity to live on. Men can reproduce even in their 80s and 90s, while women are not able to do so after menopause. And for these women to live long has an extremely harmful effect on the earth.⁷⁸

Even if Ishihara were to be dismissed for occupying an extreme position, as he has been both juridically and in popular discourse, his comments still speak symptomatically to deeply held anxieties about Japan's aging population and low birthrate and the desire to hold someone responsible for the failures of biological reproduction.⁷⁹

As Hamano herself articulates, what the *babā* discourse maintains is the idea, that she writes in *Kurashi to kenkō* "no one thinks anymore": that sexuality is equivalent to (biological) reproduction ("*Jinsei*" 35). Although her pink career had been built on combatting this understanding of sexuality, outmoded in the films she watched in the 60s with her father and still outmoded today, as she herself aged, she discovered a desire to explore sexuality of women of the same generation, people no one wanted to see (*Onna* 84). Doing so meant following her conviction that "people don't wither, women don't wither either" (*Hito ha karenai, onna mo karenai*) (*Onna* 85). She makes clear, thus, that her project with *Lily Festival* remained about finding a way for women to also count (that additive "*mo*") as people. Her vision of this humanity is not only having a life, but *continuing* to have one, having one in the future. Representing septuagenarian sexuality, a sexuality that she defines explicitly as "life" (「性＝

生」) and as the “power of life” (“*sei ha ikiru chikara desu*”), a sexuality she argues via the language of rights that “people have the right to enjoy until they die” (“*Jinsei*” 35), provides a future for her own life. This is not only thus a life in cinema, a life as director, but her human life. It is a right to pleasure that she claims, and a pleasure that cannot be written away by the unconscious, disavowed investments of a tenacious and persistent patriarchy. It is for this reason that she queers the source text to make *Lily Festival* not only about the sexual awakening that Mickey Curtis’ lothario inspires but about the reawakening to female sexuality and discovery of the pleasures of female bonds to recruit the value of older women, to show they still have life left in them. All this said, while Hamano’s autobiography is structured as a narrative of progress, beginning with traumas that prove generative, each in turn overcome so that the largest violations seem to have the cleanest solutions, the achievement that becomes all the more pronounced around *Lily Festival*, which travels around the world screening at festivals from Torino to Montreal to Hong Kong and garnering attention and awards throughout, her confidence⁸⁰ even, speak, through their protest and through their incorporation of the language of the life, to the persistence of the crisis of being woman in the film industry and in Japanese society, of the presences of the crisis amidst the supposed comforts of success and prosperity.

On Seeing Pink/Not Being Seen: The Disappointment of Accumulation

On June 23, 2013, I met Hamano at the screening of a young female documentarian’s work as part of Musashino-city’s Gender Equality Week Project.⁸¹ Hamano was present to participate in a *taidan* with the filmmaker Negoro Yū about her short film *her stories* and working as women in the Japanese film industry and had invited me to observe and interview her there.⁸² Because Hamano’s autobiography constructs a causal relationship between her lack of recognition as a pink filmmaker and her decision to make *ippan* films, assuming that pink *could*

not produce recognition, I was eager to ask Hamano which films she wished to be known for. Her response was revealing: “That’s very simple...regardless of whether it’s a pink film or a regular film, Hamano Sachi is Hamano Sachi. That’s how it is. I am me.”⁸³ Not only does this make explicit and reflect an awareness that what she reproduces with each film is a desire for her *self* to be known, but it simultaneously resists distinctions between the pink and *ippan* films, distinctions she herself constitutes in her autobiography and elsewhere, rendering the filmography as a totality unified by her mark—the mark of an auteur.

Her response does more than announce herself as auteur, however; by branding her films as her, she also deploys a logic of interchangeability that participates in the same erasure of the pink films that her autobiography and her *ippan* films ostensibly aim to combat. This became clearer when I asked Hamano, given the extensiveness of her filmography, which of her films she thought I *should* see. Although she immediately responded with *Lily Festival*, prior to going on, she asked after my sexuality, suggesting an assumption of a correspondence between one’s sexual identification and viewing practices, or the idea that what one desires to see maps neatly onto one’s sexual desires.⁸⁴ Ultimately, when I pressed her on whether she could recommend a pink film, she proceeded to talk about her desire to make films about sexuality and to shoot what interested her regardless of whether it was pink or *ippan*. Still, the only films mentioned by name were among her four *ippan* titles, replicating the structure of her autobiography, which devotes a chapter each to the two *ippan* titles she had made at the time of its publication and omits any mention of individual pink films apart from the first film she directed. However, those were the titles I was interested to hear more about; her *ippan* films are more easily located and more information is available on them. With her earliest films lost to a lack of preservation culture in pink’s infancy⁸⁵ and in a sea of 300 hundred some odd films, of which perhaps only 60 to 100

can be accessed, which should a person see, which are most representative of Hamano? If sexuality was what she aimed to represent and what interested her, why wouldn't she direct me to those films she wrote in her autobiography best positioned to take sex "head on" (*Onna* 40)?⁸⁶

Whether it was the narrative of my sexual identification or my academic gaze I cannot say but the pinks were once again rendered unmentionables, even if pink as an entity, industry, and index of sexuality could be broadly discussed, as it is in the autobiography.⁸⁷ Though Hamano contends that her films ultimately are always equally her, arguing that the only thing that distinguishes them are the economics of their production, her elision of the pinks and the slippage that comes in asking after my sexuality, maintains early assumptions made even within the industry that pink films are both commodities for consumption and disposal and for men (and women, for Hamano) desiring women.⁸⁸ Her response also reinforces that pink films are neither for speaking about nor films *to be seen*.⁸⁹ At the same time, in reproducing this understanding of the pink apparatus, the absence of an expectation of the films' contents being seen does not negate her desire for them still to *count*—that is, she wants them to be seen as a unit, as that number of accumulated works.⁹⁰ The ubiquitous rehearsal of the reminder that she has made more than 300 films, this moment makes even more clear, rather than inviting a discussion of their specificities, instead figures them as evidence of her continuous presence in the film world, working to craft a temporality of presence that is reinforced by her perpetual use in the autobiography of the compound verb that she *continued*, i.e., making films (as opposed to simply writing that she made films).⁹¹ While the language of continuing makes claim to persistence, tenacity, perseverance—marked by her ability to go on and containing the promise of making more films into the future—the logic at work here is one of accumulation, which assumes, even while incorporating its own disappointment at an equally recognized always already failure, that

an aggregate of labor, by taking up space, by being reproduced, should result in recognition, that *it* should be seen.

In the autobiography, while Hamano refers to her beginnings in pink film, she devotes several chapters to detailed discussions of the production of her *ippan* films. She does not, however, give space to any one of the hundreds of pink films that make up her filmography. In displacing the better part of her career within a desire for recognition for herself, she betrays her investment in the power of the author-function of the director, a power supported by the logic of accumulation. This helps explain why, despite her investment in possessing the film, in the films being her, she neglects a discussion of the technique that so often gives evidence to auteurship: it is not about *how* she authors, but *that* she authors. While Miryam Sas describes Hamano's recognition that pink directors play "contract" roles (296), Hamano's identification with the films conflicts with this notion—a contract film never does belong to its director, nor could it ever be her or at least ever show her. Hamano's screenwriting partner, Yamazaki Kuninori has laughingly described her as an absolute ruler on set, armed with megaphone, and she, in turn, articulates her desire to be in charge (Kameyama 118). When I asked her about the role of the director, she explained it was that person who bears the brunt of *responsibility* for a film, which follows a liberal understanding of the contract role involved in property ownership.⁹² Rather than a function of aesthetics or narrative, the role of the film director is rather imagined as fundamentally reproductive in ways that are both gestational and genetic: with her job to deliver the film into the world, but to put something out there that "most importantly will not embarrass her" (that will bear her stuff, her DNA, in a way she can bear).⁹³ While these reproductive metaphors are not Hamano's, they reveal how even, or perhaps because of, conceiving of her job as a contract role, she envisions making films constituted by and which constitute her.

The tension that arises around the competing claims that, on the one hand, a director's role is one of responsibility for getting a work made, a non-medium specific frame, and her insistence on making films shot from a woman's perspective, featuring a female gaze and subjective heroines, is resolved for Hamano in part by positioning her technique as correction.⁹⁴ Throughout the autobiography, she makes arguments that she was uniquely positioned as a female director to make a different kind of film, imagining technique as something arising out of her embodiment.⁹⁵ Indeed, much of Hamano's argument for her place in the industry arises out of her claim that male directors get—and have gotten—it wrong when they represent their fantasies of female sexuality (c.f. 40).⁹⁶ There are films that, for Hamano, cannot be made by male directors and films that could only be made by her (i.e., *Lily Festival*). Her career was motivated, she articulates, by a desire to correct the representational logic that rehearsed the same tired archetypes of women—as solely wives, mothers, and daughters in reflection of the nationalist ideology of the “Good wife, Wise Mother”⁹⁷—that the Golden Age of Japanese Cinema of the 1950s reproduced, women who were sexless and subjectless.⁹⁸ She equally wants to correct the notion of woman as vessel—the toilet deconstructed by woman libber Tanaka Mitsu in her manifesto “Liberation from the Toilet”⁹⁹—onto and through whom, through the trope of rape, all kinds of political fantasies were projected in early pink cinema. It is not merely a function of the telos of autobiography that has Hamano associating herself with correction; through correction Hamano indexes a cinematic origin within the mythos of sixties cinema tied to auteurship.¹⁰⁰ It is thus critical to recall the retrospective gaze with which Hamano constructs her story in 2005 and her investment most of all in imprinting herself into that very history. Still, however much she makes discursive claims to correction within the autobiography, readers are

given little opportunity to learn *how* she executes these corrections within her most prolific field of production: the pink films.

Even if, for her, it is the fact of making films which seems to most matter—allowing Hamano to make claims to thematic investments and outcomes (content, not form)—and her claims to representing subjectivity and the female gaze are more about making *her* through the medium of film, both the consistency and suppression of the cinematic stuff of her films remain symptoms that call out for attention to the visual reproductions that structure her pink film and, if we are to take Hamano’s claims seriously, herself. Both the form and content that make up her signatures as pink director (techniques not present in her *ippan* films, decidedly more anonymous in their form) speak to her reproductive work and, those techniques, offer more to the political project of her cinema than she yet sees. Her attachment to a paradigm of cinema premised on the film being the director’s thing—premiered, that is, on ownership—is precisely what creates the dissatisfaction of accumulation: she will never produce enough for her ownership to validate her person.

Hamano’s Pink Challenge to the Visual Regime

That Hamano disengages from discussions of her cinematic techniques does not mean her films lack them. Her pink films, after all, have a developed visuality and narrative practice that are not only recurrently reproduced but which create a systematic engagement with the very problem of reproduction, grounding reproduction as the sexuality and subjectivity that Hamano has discussed as representing the core of her cinema.¹⁰¹ In the year end issue of *Women’s Review* for 2012-2013, journalist Kameyama Sanae identifies three techniques as characteristic of

Hamano's pink films: 1) close-ups of women's crotches (*kokan*),¹⁰²

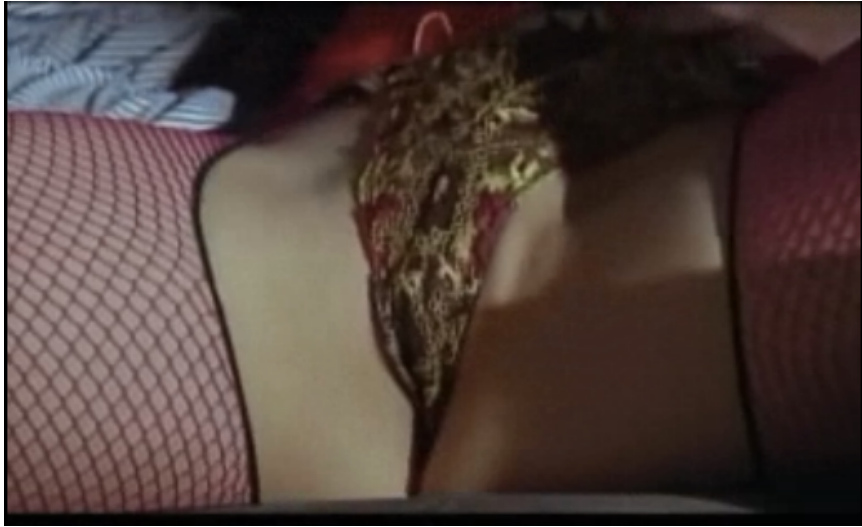


Figure 2.1 Kokan



Figure 2.2 Panfera

2) over-underwear fellatio (*panfera*), and 3) semen return (122). While providing substantially more detail about Hamano's visuality than the director provides in even her autobiography, Kameyama merely lists these signatures to paint Hamano the pink rebel, rather than to heed Michael Arnold's call "to look closely at Pink Film itself [...] to ask how Pink is invested in problems of visuality, visibility, representation, and cinema" (370). The questions remain: how

are these close-ups delivered? How are they framed? What is the work in the reproduction of these scenes of fellatio? What are the specificities involved in Hamano's return to this moment of semen exchange that she jokes has a bad reputation among actors, despite being manufactured goods (122)? How are each of these visual, cinematic signatures delivered? What paradigm of visuality do they construct? Ultimately, it is still worth asking what manifests in these images.

Linda Williams' 1989 *Hard Core* established what continues to be held up as *the* canonical explanation for pornography's visual field, for its desire for what she refers to as "maximum visibility" (48). In hard core pornography, she describes, the emblem of this desire is the meat shot, which, in endeavoring to show all, focuses on rendering the body—the genitalia and in particular the phallus—visible. Hard core, she argues, "tries *not* to play peekaboo with either its male or its female bodies. It obsessively seeks knowledge, through a voyeuristic record of confessional, involuntary paroxysm, of the 'thing' itself" (49). That tends to manifest in the display of erection and ejaculation, which constructs and reinforces a truth of sexuality within a phallic order. Despite William's delimitation of her earlier study to hardcore (American) cinema, "the frenzy of the visible" that she borrows from Jean Comolli—that desire to generate knowledge by making "more and more" visible—has been used to describe pornography broadly. However, as Arnold explains, the meat shot has *never* been a founding image of pink cinema, which likewise has not focused on showing genital sex, and thus operates within a visual economy still in need of its own set of theoretical tools (366).¹⁰³

For Miryam Sas, the explanation for pink's visual grammar arises out of its censorship by *Eirin*, the Japanese film regulation body that resembles the MPAA.¹⁰⁴ The presence of *panfera* and the proliferation of, i.e. dildos rather than hard core's *honban* (or, "actual"—language that Hamano is fond of playing with, as Sas indicates in her anecdote about visiting Hamano's set)

penises, prompt Sas to argue that rather than understand pink as softcore, we would do better to read its obsession with making visible as what she terms “censored hard core” (301).¹⁰⁵ For,

the organization of the sexuality portrayed is aimed at maximum (allowable) visibility and a “thrusting, jabbing” form of sexuality for the most part in a direct line from hard core[...] This remains a phallic, “thrusting,” teleological form of sexuality: sex acts include numerous instances of (usually over-underwear) oral sex, and (simulated) penetration (often with the woman on top). (302)

While I agree that we should understand the continuities between hardcore and pink, and Hamano’s cinema in particular, there are key differences between the phallic images that support Williams’s analysis and what a closer examination of Hamano’s visuality will yield that render the narrative of censorship inadequate to explaining Hamano’s visual reproductions.¹⁰⁶

Even if, for instance, the over-underwear fellatio seen in so many of Hamano’s films draws insistent attention to the phallus, which Sas is right to say is encouraged by the crispness of the white briefs that so often cradle the penises of Hamano’s actors, when we consider the list of trademarks Kameyama assembled *together* with related visual (and, critically, aural) motifs they press upon us that the phallus being lovingly caressed is the *contained* phallus.¹⁰⁷ It is the phallus that Hamano refuses to show us. Her heroines take pleasure in a phallus that has no recourse to exposure. It has no possibility of displaying itself before us. It will not emerge, nor will it ejaculate for or before our eyes. Even if the white of the underpants flags the presence of the penis, it is rarely displayed erect. The *active* restriction of its movement, controlled by the hands of her actresses, undermines its phallic power. Not only is its caged form caressed, but, in scenes of heterosexual fellatio, stains of red lipstick frequently come to cover the penis, evocative of the menstrual blood that so often codes gendered pollution, blood that disrupts the phallic order presumed of hardcore and that Sas locates in Hamano’s cinema. Attributing all of



Figure 2.3 Tainted love

this work to the power of the bureaucratic body of *Eirin* does a disservice to the cinema that Hamano has crafted.

Her most popular and well-known series, *Greedy Housewives*, provides an exemplar of Hamano's collective use of these techniques.¹⁰⁸ In the first of these films (2003), Kei (accomplished AV actress Kagami Reiko), coded as the guide to sexual exploits for her domestically frustrated friend Aya (played by an actress known only as Yuki), not only stains the white underwear of one recipient of fellatio, but she, and later Aya as well, hold down the penises they fellate, controlling and driving whatever movement the member is permitted. One could argue, like Sas, that the effect of the placement of the hand frames the penis to highlight it, precisely by showing what the underwear conceals. However, the lack of emergence of the penis or its substitute in these scenes represents a directorial decision that demonstrates Hamano's strategy to materialize the penis to emphasize that containment. Elsewhere in the film, in the paranoid fantasy sequences of Aya's husband that first imagine the horrors of Aya pleasuring herself (and thus not requiring him) and later of providing fellatio to not one, but two men together, we do see, albeit with flesh-colored dildos substituted for actual penises, underwear-

free fellatio. The phallus' freedom of movement is figured as its threat, made clearer by the rare prominence of ongoing male vocalizations of pleasure in only the husband's projection.

Otherwise, a great deal of the film's sex is sutured together through the recurrent soundtrack of the women's trills of pleasure, dominant in every other scene of fellatio, exceeding, blocking out, and rendering irrelevant the occasional sounds of breath or climax of its recipient. Even fellatio in Hamano's universe happens in the service of female pleasure, with actors used, as Hamano writes in her autobiography, as props and supplements.

We could even say that Hamano's is a cinema *actively* disinterested in the phallus, which puts it away rather than showcasing it. This explains why Hamano emphasizes shots that peer up at women's crotches, with angles that elevate and centralize the crotch, and represents one piece of a broader paradigm throughout Hamano's pink cinema that places emphasis on erogenous zones of the female body. While the focus on breasts can cooperate with a phallic visual regime or according to a heteronormative structure that imagines male desire as oriented toward that emblem of women's *to-be-looked-at-ness* that coalesces around eroticized and objectified body parts like the breasts,¹⁰⁹ Hamano's soundtracks gain significance for what they communicate about the films' investment in the pursuit and experience of female pleasure.¹¹⁰ Close-ups of breasts, framed to reduce as much distance as possible from the kino-eye, are always overlaid with the frequencies of female titillation, coding the valued pleasure centers. Furthermore, while we are not delivered the phallus, we are, again and again, brought into close proximity to the buttocks. Insistently approaching the genitalia, but reminding us over and over—Williams' "more and more"—that it is not the penis that the camera seeks. This is the problem of Hamano's intervention in pink cinema, prompting Jasper Sharp to identify hers as a "leering brand of porn" that makes it hard to detect a woman's presence behind the camera,¹¹¹ because *Housewives*

“offer[s] a view of female sexuality that is so over-the-top that it comes across as threatening” with “sensuous, imposing man-eaters clearly in control over their desires [...] writh[ing] on top of their partners, lying prone and exhausted between their thighs, while the camera remains fixed on the ecstatic expressions on their faces and the near-impossible gymnastics of their bodies” (298). Hamano’s cinema does endeavor to show all, but this is not the visual grammar pink (and perhaps cinema) is prepared for. This *is* a woman’s world.¹¹²

The unpopular “semen return” likewise works to refashion the grammar of the money shot. Where Williams’ hard core takes great pains to visualize the explosive ejaculation from the penis, not only does Hamano’s camera disregard the penis and the display of its ejaculation, but Hamano has developed a structure where, after denying not only the image but the vocalization of male pleasure on climax around fellatio, instead reproduces women’s pleasure and the return of the fluids of male pleasure. It is not the mere fact of return that matters, but instead the slow, deliberate return creates a circuit within the sexual exchange that counters phallic sex’s telos. Silencing the climax negates orgasm as sex’s main event (supported by the soundtrack’s emphasis not on a moment of female orgasm, but instead on a *sustained* spectrum of noises of female pleasure) and the return of the semen insists that fellatio is not a gift for a woman to receive, but an exchange she *participates* in. In the silence, i.e., of Kei returning the sex volunteer-providing “sensei” his fluids,¹¹³ which are of course already intersubjectively mixed with hers coming as they do from her mouth, drawing a trace from his lower abdomen up to his mouth as the camera tracks her movement until he himself received the fluids he can hardly mask his discomfort with getting back, we are asked to deliberate on the grammar not just of sexual representations of fellatio in adult cinema, but also on the constitution of paradigms of

sexuality off-screen as well. This is a leaky, seeping, quiet fluidity and one that does not stop at a telos of explosion but sticks around.

This liquidity is in fact a larger fixture of Hamano's cinema and persistent in her soundtrack, often to do the work of making bodies and movement come more proximate than the image can take us. Thus, while Sas reads a studious distance maintained between the two women in a group sex scene involving Kei, Aya, the sensei, and the sex volunteer, instead this distance echoes one that is maintained visually amongst most bodies, whether coupled or in groups, in Hamano's cinema. Even in a scene of penetration or fellatio, we may not be shown the phallus, but we are shown, regardless of the players or the sex act as much of the surface area of the tongue as the camera can capture of it outside of the mouth, such that the tongue comes to stand in as emblem of sexual labor, necessitating a distance in image between the body of the tongue and the tip which makes contact with the body it reaches out for. To bridge the distance of this making visible, Hamano's pink films are filled with salivary enunciations, emphasizing the liquid productions coming from all orifices, underscoring what passes between membranes in the sexual encounter as well as its sloppiness, its spill over. This liquidity, it is important to note, is as tied to investment in female sexuality as the other registers of the soundtrack previously described. We see evidence for this in the sounds of liquidity that insistently and equally emerge in scenes of the auto-erotic, central to Hamano's conception of "female sexuality."

Though the auto-erotic figures both as nightmare (as in the first of the husband's imaginings of where Aya could be while not with him) and as corrective (to the sex-volunteer's assumption that he could ever be the one to show Aya a woman's true pleasure) in *Housewives*, in other films like *Chikan Densha: Ecchi ga ippai* (1988)¹¹⁴ it is positioned as foundational: the root not only of self-knowledge, but knowledge itself.¹¹⁵ This iteration of *Chikan Densha*, which

centers on a young female manga artist who writes erotic manga featuring a protagonist known affectionately as *Vibe-chan*,¹¹⁶ is bookended by scenes of the artist clad in pastel lifting dumbbells in the park. It is a quintessentially 80s image, not only because of the color palette and accompanying wrist and head-band, but because it offers a Jane Fonda-esque aerobics coding female empowerment, an empowerment achieved and communicated through the command of the body, one afforded by the prosperity of the bubble economy.¹¹⁷ This announces the film's pretense in both a campy and utterly softcore manner, which the soft focus of the film's opening image aspirationally looking up through trees reminds us. In doing so, though, it announces something interesting within Hamano's oeuvre, which takes a very different shape than in the autobiography: the investment in the individual woman and in her prosperity.

These bookending scenes communicate this most of all by focusing on *her*. In the introduction, the sequence proceeds as follows: following the soft focus shot through the trees, the camera pans down, pausing as an arm and dumbbell shoots into it. It is motion and mobility that is introduced even before we meet the arm's caretaker. This motion produces her, who once we have met her in full view, we, with the camera circulate, before the camera finally rests on her a medium long shot, centered in the frame, working out, with no other person present in what otherwise appears to be a public park. She is silent as is the scene, apart from the music and she appears content. There is no explanation offered for this, no engagement otherwise within the diegesis with exercise, but the segue in the next scene to a shot of a Nakano-bound train works not only to affirm that the film will fulfill its titular promises, but also that this is a train, a motion, that the protagonist is driving. When the camera moves from outside of the train to within it, revealing the manga-artist, it shows her bobbing her head in time with the rhythm of the music from the previous scene, but we are not permitted its soundtrack, instead provided with

only the steady reverberations of the train. This opening is crucial to understanding how the film deals with the violent and thoroughly phallic fantasy of being groped on the train, a significant public social concern of the 1980s and 1990s.¹¹⁸ We can glean a great deal about how Hamano negotiates the phallic visual economy when the manga artist's publisher, a few scenes later, sends the eponymous train groper after her (after admonishing her with reminders that her work is not an art, but a business). This scene appears to have it both ways—the groping and its approach are long, appearing to occupy the pleasures of such a fantasy, before the punishment arrives to correct the violation. The duration is significant and labored: we watch in real time as the groper, referred to by the publisher as “sensei,”¹¹⁹ slowly approaches her and touches her, initially under her skirt then, as the camera shifts to an impossibly low angle shot of her crotch, removes her undergarments to go in closer. When the camera intercuts to her face, her expression is not so clearly discernible and she moans as if inviting the attention. In this way the film permits, through the duration and the rendering visible of her body (as described previously, rotating between a shot of her crotch from the front and close-ups of her caressed buttocks), the male gaze. However, the quite literal punctum that arrives as she slowly, mid-moan, pulls out a pin from her purse and stabs him (quite precariously, in fact) in the hand that touches her, punishes him with the same stigmata that the discourse of the *chikan* carries. He walks around from that point on marked, bleeding, with bandages covering wounds that can nevertheless not be hidden away because they ooze. What this moment, in a film otherwise interested in the sexual discovery of the publishing company's secretary, prompted by an accident of delivery that sends her a box full of vibrators intended for the manga artist and her research,¹²⁰ demonstrates is the way that in Hamano's cinema, the phallic order is not erased. Instead, by coming up against it, she renders it visible. In punishing it, she cannot undo it, but she manufactures a pause, a

break that questions its stability. In the rest of the film, which focuses so much discursively on the business apparatus of providing pleasure, Hamano takes on that part of reproduction that Federici critiques Marx for glossing over: that arsenal of experience and objects required to keep labor working—the care, leisure, and release that makes it possible to go back to work. Most critically, in the moment of the market’s normalization of the OL, Hamano reminds us that she needs her auto-erotic pleasures. Just as her personhood gets coded through an over-determined image of aerobic self-reliance, the glass of wine that codes the working girl’s relaxation is the object that enables the extended scene of her exploration of the box full of vibrators (vibrators intended for the manga artist, but in an “error” of delivery, they end up with the manga publisher’s secretary, leading to happy accident of her discovery of auto-eroticism).

The convergence of the economy of sex and the reproductions demanded by the market are nowhere more pronounced than in the 1999 *Kyonyū Sanshimai Nikuasari* (*The Three Busty Sisters’ Meat-hunt*). With this film, Hamano directly implicates the state in reproductions of gendered labor with an opening low angle establishing shot that looks up at the unmistakable monolith that is the Tokyo Metropolitan Government complex in Shinjuku. At the base of



Figure 2.4 The Tokyo Metropolitan Office Buildings

Japan's most recognizable phallic emblem, the three sisters sell meatball bento lunch boxes by day that provide the salaryman-bureaucrat not only with the victuals necessary to continue his labor, but, via the smiles of the warm and pretty women serving him, also supply the apparatus of fantasy necessary to motivate his work. The easy slippage between the woman serving food and the fantasy of her fulfilling sexual desires makes possible another economic opportunity for the three sisters who reveal to their most valued customers their "night work," running the "Mona Lisa" bar.¹²¹ When the men do use their discount coupons to visit the Mona Lisa, they appear ill-equipped to confront the three sisters availability to them *as women*, sweating profusely and rendered speechless. When the women do present their bodies to them, in the service room, the men flop about like fish, immobilized and infant-like.¹²² As I have described above, here too the soundtrack works to corroborate this vision of the men: messy, slobbery, leakily out-of-control. Even while they offer the women very little, this does little to deter the two older sisters' enthusiasm for their collaboration in sexual service. Any suggestions of the kind of distance between women that Sas noted with regards to *Housewives* is removed here as this film's treatment of the semen return finds the two sisters performing fellatio, each in turn, then kissing one another, swapping their client's semen. This is not merely in the service of

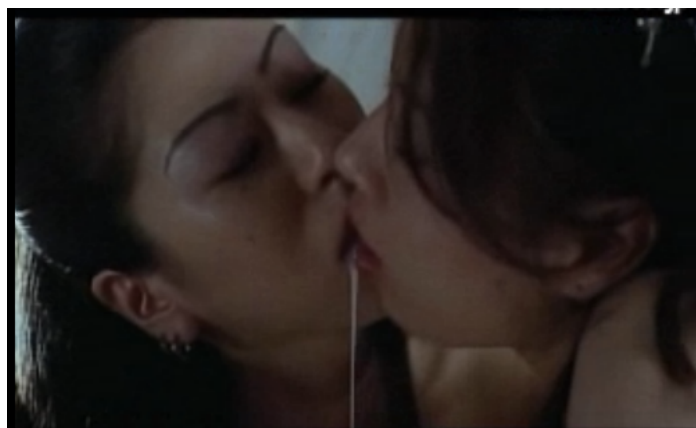


Figure 2.5 Recircuiting the liquid exchange

delivering salacious imagery vis-à-vis the breaking of the incest taboo (and occupying the fantasy not only of sex with more than one woman, but with beautiful and, as the title reminds us, busty sisters), but it works to create a sticky viscosity of the reproductive flows that keep each (for both the men as well as the women) of their public-private labors circulating.

In the scene that follows, the youngest of the three sisters, who sits out the sex scene, uncomfortable, dreams that her genitals glow as a light source. Visually this scene shares a grammar with the *Housewives*' husband's anxious dream sequences: she is unspeaking, isolated within darkness and spotlighted. That this belongs to her, a conscientious objector to the circuits of sexual and reproductive labor that she and her sisters are engaged in, is indicative of the scene's polemical stakes: the light emanating from her genitals is positioned as heavy-handed life- and knowledge-source, and, though they too possess it, one that her sisters have yet to



Figure 2.6 Sexuality as Life Source

recognize and perhaps never will.¹²³ Hamano codes the primal scene when Kyoko mid-dream calls out for an absent mother (whose absence, the narrative will later explain, necessitates the sisters' public work¹²⁴). The dream serves as Kyoko's impetus to go out in pursuit of her dream, a dream of self-reliance, though one enabled by her lover Daiitsu's gift of the 100 million yen (roughly the equivalent of one million dollars) that had gone missing from his company (designated for investment in the expansion of Mona Lisa). Rather than understand this as an economic exchange, we are instead invited to understand both the fellatio Kyoko offers and the money he in turn gives to her as participating in an alternate economy of the gift, where having *righteously* wielded her sexuality Kyoko is deserving of the material means enabling auto-reproduction. Seizing this righteousness seems to provide a general consciousness raising as the film returns at its conclusion to the Metropolitan Office buildings, with the oldest sister, the ringleader, arriving at the same place that the film began, this time with the businessman as her partner in selling bento. What the film offers, then, is a fantasy of the reform of the reproductive process, one that could result in relations of partnership rather than exploitation and consumption. This is sentimentally sealed with the film's ultimate ending not at the center of Tokyo, and so Japan's, bureaucracy, but instead returned to the private space of the suburban *danchi*,¹²⁵ where we see Daiitsu (who the older sister and her partner have imagined is off somewhere talking it easy ('*nonbiri*'), approaching the building, and thus it is implied, Kyoko, with a few dozen red roses. Value itself has been reconfigured and placed outside of the market, or so the desire is constructed (as the roses, the *danchi*, etc. all reflect gendered scripts, i.e., of courting, of domesticity).

While discussions of these films offer only a small glimpse into Hamano's cinema, the story they collectively generate is one of women's *presence*, subjects not exclusively by virtue of

having desire or by being shown to be alive, but instead by being given space to be three dimensional figures, figures who feel, who vocalize, and who are central rather than supplemental. Rather than undo the phallic economy, Hamano creates a visual economy from within the existing one, a visuality which relies on many of the same components, but which strings them together in a seamless enough form as to go undetected, even to herself. This has everything to do with why the films and Hamano go unrecognized: a new system of relating images, generating a new image cannot be seen, let alone heard.¹²⁶ Hamano thus intervenes in discussions of the image that understand it both as that which “becomes visible in the image and that which is simultaneously rendered invisible” (Khalip 4), to illustrate that as important is what the invisible in the image renders *visible*. That is, when Hamano provides us with an adult cinema that does not fulfill the phallic regimes that viewers not only of pornography broadly but even a pink acculturated to the absence of the meat shot, that she is showing us how the technology of *cinema* relies so thoroughly on a phallic visuality. She does not locate this in an utterly different space and we can thus also see traces, relics of that economy both on the visual register and in Hamano’s own narrative of desire for herself. She does, however, locate what Teresa de Lauretis has referred to as the space/off: she locates that part of the apparatus, present but not yet seen, which, when found, enlarges the spectrum of representational and experiential possibility.¹²⁷ However, given the space/off’s location in the elsewhere, Hamano’s work of social reproduction is maintained, necessitating an infinite return to the cinema to re/create images that make (her) life livable at all, work unfinished and unfinishable within a logic of capital that privileges the producer.

¹ Pink films, though often described as softcore pornography, are a genre of adult films that Jasper Sharp has argued in his *Behind the Pink Curtain* are more defined by their production and exhibition contexts than by their contents. As Hamano herself explains, these are films made on a shoestring and, for this reasons, are also sometimes called 3

million yen films, approximately 30,000USD, reflecting the average budget for a single film as the industry established itself in the 1960s (*Onna* 8). Because of the budgets, the films are shot very quickly, typically on 35mm. Though many theatres have been closing in recent years, pink films continue to be shown, as they were when they emerged, in specialized theatres devoted to pink. Pink films are often compared with Nikkatsu Roman Porno films, which Anne McKnight has called the “bourgeois lady of adult films” (8), owing to their comparatively large budgets, which allowed for sleek productions. Hamano herself has said that where pink films were a genre, roman porno should be instead thought of as a brand (*Onna* 35-6). In contrast to their slickness, pink for her represents an “outsider independent cinema,” “a guerrilla industry” (*Onna* 9). See also Nornes’ recently published *The Pink Book*.

² There is at least one more important intertext embedded in Hamano’s title: the autobiography of one of her predecessors in the film business, Takano Etsuko, titled *Women Make Movies*. The resemblance of the two titles becomes clearer in Japanese: Takano’s *Josei ga eiga o tsukuru to iu koto* alongside Hamano’s *Onna ga eiga o tsukuru toki*. The difference between the end of each title is critical. Where Takano’s will make reference to the thing of it—the thing (that activity) of making films, Hamano retains Naruse’s reference to time. In this way, I argue, she embeds the figure of reproduction and reproductive recurrence it carries with it.

³ Impasse is a concept I am developing both through Lauren Berlant’s engagement with the concept in the political field, especially in her *Cruel Optimism*, but also through my fourth chapter here and Yoshida Yoshishige’s 1967 film *Impasse*.

⁴ I am thinking here, of course, of Walter Benjamin’s “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.”

⁵ This desire for visibility aims to give evidence to her own existence, to gain what Joan Scott refers to in “The Evidence of Experience” as “a sense of political power” (774). While Scott contends that “the evidence of experience”—the very sort that Hamano works to produce in the autobiographical form—“reproduces rather than contests ideological systems” (776), Hamano’s autobiography shows us how, through the reproduction of the problem, through ambivalent and often conflicted negotiations of the ideological assumptions of a system, the foundations of contestation can be laid. Hamano asks us to revisit and rethink visibility politics, to stop thinking them in terms of an achievement of an end (which in media studies, both in critical race and queer interventions, has demonstrated convincingly since the 90s that visibility—in those cases, of social minority positions—does not necessarily, and often not at all, reflect social transformation). Instead Hamano demonstrates how visibility politics can also operate as an ongoing project of rendering the invisible—invisible labor, invisible desire, invisible existence—visible. It is for this reason, too, that I make recourse to the language of reproduction rather than repetition in my study. Repetition—i.e. in repetition compulsion—is the mark of undifferentiated pathology. It is a symptom of the hysteric. Reproduction, on the other hand, codes labor, it codes work.

⁶ That said many of the thematics that her autobiography takes up were covered in an article published much earlier in *Fujin Kōron* [Women’s Review], one of Japan’s oldest and most widely circulating women’s magazines, on the occasion of the release of her first *ippan*, or regular (that is, non-pink), film in 1998, *In Search of a Lost Writer: Wandering in the World of the Seventh Sense*.

⁷ Jane Gallop’s book on the death of the author focuses on that various relations of death that can structure a desire for the author—from the reader and also too from the author desiring another author or encountering the possibility of his death through the act of writing. While Hamano may not invoke the language of death directly, her efforts from her earliest days to give evidence to her existence by writing film attest to her desire to ward off death, particularly social deaths. Foucault and Barthes’ respective pieces, “What is an Author?” and “The Death of An Author” drew attention to the power claimed by and through authorship. We should note, however, the correspondance between the affirmation of the film auteur in global 60s New Wave cinema and the publication dates of their pieces (1968 and 1969).

⁸ In “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” Benjamin positions the problem of mechanical reproduction as a problem of presence, writing that “even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be” (220).

⁹ While this takes many forms that this dissertation will explore across its pages, the dedication of Joseph Anderson and Donald Richie’s *Japanese Film: Art and Industry*, to “that little band of men who have tried to make the Japanese cinema what every cinema should be: a director’s cinema,” is striking in its naturalization and reinforcement of cinema as a man’s world (and one should note: one organized around the male director as head).

¹⁰ Hamano signals this through her frequent mentions of the film industry as a man’s world (*otokoshakai*). The near enshrinement—in the *Fujin Kōron* piece, Hamano mentions that in the late 60s director Wakamatsu Kōji was known as the master (*teishu*, as in, ‘master of the house’) of the industry—of directors is also supported, as Hamano

frequently notes, by Japan's pyramidal labor structure that in the case of the film industry maintains the director at top. While the Hollywood establishment—and numerous other national cinemas—may appear rather similar (if we consider, i.e. such measures as the Academy Awards, which has nominated only four women for best director over its history, awarding only one of those the honor), the Japanese film industry reflects one iteration of Japanese labor, remarkable globally, as noted in the first chapter, for its low participation rates among women in their late 20s through their late 40s. In the autobiography, Hamano recounts her exceptionality not just as a director, but even as production staff in the late 60s and early 70s and provides an account for the shifts she witnessed by the time she was making *In Search of a Lost Writer*, when she could work with an almost entirely female staff. It remains true that an exceptionally low number of women works as directors and thus have limited access to function as producers within the film industry system. At the same time, as Takano Etsuko explains in her interview with Hamano in the fifth chapter of Hamano's autobiography, the industry has historically, and all the more so during its Golden Age in the 50s, been all too amenable to female screenwriters, allowing as they did for a female perspective that paid dividends in box office but which nevertheless could be shaped by male directors (*Onna* 162).

¹¹ In her opening to the section of her autobiography on her film *Lily Festival* (2001), Hamano describes the pink audience as “composed of a majority of men over 50. They're of the generation who can't watch adult videos, with their wives and daughters at home. For those men, having women to look at who are 'young' and 'cute' is essential; even better if she has large breasts—then there are no complaints” (83). She further comments on that dominant audience's hostility to seeing women over forty.

¹² While Miryam Sas's contribution to *The Pink Book*, “Pink Feminism? The Program Pictures of Hamano Sachi,” assesses that “Hamano seems to depart from an 'auteurist' model” of production because of her acknowledgement of pink director's contract status (296), Hamano's persistent reproduction of her desire to imprint herself on cinematic history through her films, her assertions that a Hamano film is always a Hamano film (for instance in an interview with this author in June 2013), and the tireless reproduction that aims to rescue herself and her films from anonymity, rehearse signifiers of the authorial force of the auteur and her desire to be recognized as one.

¹³ She indicates her admiration for and desire to represent this subjectivity when she uses the language of subjectivity (*shutai/shutaisei*) in her writing, saying that she wanted to make “*shutai to suru sakuhin*—“films characterized by subjectivity,” discusses her enthusiasm to work with liberated Adult Video (AV) actresses who were “*shutai to natte sekkusu suru onnatachi*” [women who have sex, having become subjects], and argues that her films would make as their foundation heroines who “subjectively desire” (“*shutaiteki ni yokujō shi*”) (34). That she often pairs this subjectivity with the description that the women were “*iki iki*”—an onomatopoeia literally meaning “lively” which repeats the root word for the verb “to live” to construct its atmosphere—is revealing of the equivalence Hamano draws between subjectivity and having a life. Here, her use of the language of *shutai* indexes the subjectivity debates of the postwar, a discourse that documentarians of the 1950s returned to and that was engaged again by figures of the New Wave in the 60s (c.f. J. Victor Koschmann *Revolution and Subjectivity in Postwar Japan* (1996)).

¹⁴ C.f. Linda Williams, *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure, and the “Frenzy of the Visible.”*

¹⁵ I will elaborate on this audience in greater detail below.

¹⁶ In this I am not interested in the sort of anti-pornographic feminism that Catharine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin advocated for in the 1980s—I am not arguing that the genre is irrevocably misogynistic. That is to say, I do not implicate pornography for moral reasons, but instead for its imbrication with desire.

¹⁷ For this also see Williams' *Hard Core*.

¹⁸ These ideas converse with much earlier ones documented by Oshima Nagisa in 1976 following the wrap of *In the Realm of the Sexes*, documented in his “Theory of Experimental Pornographic Film” essay. There he writes: “I forget who said that films are desires visualized, but for me, at least, film is the visualization of the director's desire. But the director's desire doesn't appear in the film directly. It appears in all kinds of convoluted forms. My fear that my desire will appear in my films has always caused me to be extremely wary of making films, hasn't it? Haven't I made films to hide my desires instead? Trying to hide them made them appear even more vividly” (Michelson 257).

¹⁹ Shimazaki's 1998 article makes explicit the sunglasses' use, “in lieu of make-up,” as a mask that Hamano began wearing from her earliest days in the industry to guard herself against the rampant sexual harassment she encountered (86).

²⁰ This number, repeated as a chorus in everything you could read about Hamano, has subsequently morphed into, in one instance, a count of 350 (in the pamphlet advertisement for an August 2013 retrospective of her work in Tokyo) and at least on one other occasion (in a year-end 2012/2013 issue of *Fujin Kōron* released prior to the pamphlet) just

under 400 (118). That the number would increase from 300 is not unexpected, as her career and her accounting for herself have progressed since the publication of the autobiography and she refers to making some 20 films per year. It is thus the number's fluctuation, especially given its insistent repetition as signifier and its citational weight, that seems most surprising.

²¹ Untraceable because the pink industry did not have a consistent archiving practice in its earliest days, assuming the quick and cheaply made adult films would have little cinematic value. It is thus difficult to find any of Hamano's films from much earlier than 1984, around the time of video's introduction (but also in proximity to the start of her own production company, *Tantansha*). Hamano herself claims not to have access to those films.

²² This is supported by her mention that she has probably made enough films to set a Guinness World Record.

²³ That is, in persisting in invisibility even when the films are accumulated and when she is presented for the audiences of the wide readership of the popular periodicals *Fujin Kōron* and *Aera*, the narrower consumers of her autobiography and lower-circulation magazines, and at each and every one of her public appearances.

²⁴ An idea that Hamano raises in her autobiography in its final chapter, titled [sic] "Is being a film director a man's world?" ("*Eiga kantoku ha otoko no sekai ka?*"). It is the director Fukusaku Kinji (known alternately for the 1970s yakuza series *Battles without Honor and Humanity* and for the more recent cult favorite *Battle Royale*) who serves as the mouthpiece for this position, uttering on a panel he shared with Hamano in 1994 at the Director's Guild of Japan that the reason their Newcomer's Award had never been given to a woman in the history of the prize (dating to 1960) was that "cinema is men's work" (189).

²⁵ While it would be a mistake to assume the pink audience is, or ever has been, exclusively and empirically male, that does not prevent the space of the pink theater from being a radically gendered space. That is not only to say that the space reflects the circulation and practice of the male gaze, but that it materially manages bodies within a masculinist paradigm. In the first of the three monthly columns she wrote consecutively for *Kurashi to Kenkō* [Life and Health] in 2008 on the occasion of approaching sixty, Hamano describes this polemically, writing: "When I started in pink film, sexuality was a things represented 100% according to male fantasies. For example, rape was represented for the pleasure of men, raped women received it with sexual pleasure—for me as a woman I was overwhelmed by these completely unbelievable male delusions" ("*Josei*" 42).

So, while Markus Nornes advocates in the introduction to *The Pink Book* that a student of pink will not have "seen" a pink film unless he has seen it in the theater because of the all the drama involved in the viewing process (14), he disregards that not all bodies are privileged to observe the scene at a distance. On my own approach of an Osaka pink theater that was screening a Hamano film in May 2013, I was forced to turn away from taking a photograph of the hand-painted marquee when a spectator exiting the theater approached me, gaze fixed on me, laughing as he raised and lowered the fly of his trousers. This was enough to communicate to me my violation of the space of theater. Fellow pink researchers have subsequently volunteered to escort me to the theater and Hamano suggested I might go to the theater with a group of her fans, queer and/or female, who I met briefly on interviewing her in June 2013, in acknowledgement not of a conservative view of the theater but instead that the space is not hospitable to all bodies.

I am grateful to Elena Gorfinkel and Michael Arnold for encouraging me, at the Sex, Media Reception Conference held in February 2014 at the University of Michigan, to include my thoughts on the gendering of this space, particularly with regard to the dynamics of exclusion and permission around it.

²⁶ While the literature in film studies, particularly from feminist film theorists taking a psychoanalytic approach, is extensive, Hamano's intervention within the world of Japanese film and on the side not of a visual or cinematic grammar alone, but in a film exhibition and production context are important interventions for expanding the gendered politics of labor. For the aforementioned literature see, as a start, Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," Jacqueline Rose, *Sexuality in the Field of Vision*, Kaja Silverman, *Male Subjectivity at the Margins*, and Teresa de Lauretis' *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema*.

²⁷ The intention of the title was clarified in an interview with the author in Tokyo in June 2013, to be discussed below. Its resonance with the Takano Etsuko *Women Make Movies* (*Josei ga eiga o tsukuru to iu koto*) is noteworthy because Hamano devotes the fifth chapter of her autobiography to her predecessor, who she identifies as a pioneer in the film world. Hamano's use of *onna* rather than *josei* too is worth noting. While Hamano remains committed to disavowing any relation to women's liberation, the discourse and reclaiming of *onna* was at the very center of liberation's 70s politics. Per Shigematsu, Lib's "deliberate use of *onna* signaled the politicization of what was widely considered a pejorative term, with sexual or lower-class connotations. *Ribu*'s reclamation of *onna* was linked with its rejection of legitimacy of the 'gender conforming roles of *shufu* (housewife) and *haha* (mother) that were

rooted in the family system” (4). For lib, much as it is for Hamano, *onna* became “the subject who would turn to her sex as a form of power and means of liberation” (68). For more on the politics of *onna* see Setsu Shigematsu’s *Scream from the Shadows*.

²⁸ This too shares resonances with the rhetoric lib combatted, as one of lib’s founding documents was the “Liberation from the Toilet” pamphlet attributed to Tanaka Mitsu, which Vera Mackie reminds us, directly implicates the dyad Hamano references here of offering women only the option of being mothers or whores (Mackie 144). The document issued by the *Tatakau Onna* (Fighting Women) group that Tanaka participated in rejects the very notion of woman as the one Hamano rejects within her frame of the *uketomeru sei*. That said, in our interview, when I asked Hamano about this text she said what distinguished her from lib, in addition to her resistance to the logic of the collective (*rentai*), was that lib wanted, per her, to *escape* the toilet whereas she claimed to want to dive into it. Previously, when I first met Hamano in January of 2011, she had described her fascination with the women of the European New Wave, who she put into contrast with the de-sexed image of women she had seen in Japanese cinema with her father. Because she was very much a New Wave (anti-)heroine, I asked her at that time about Okada Mariko, to be discussed in the fourth chapter of this dissertation. The comparison did not inspire much response, though in her interview with Shimazaki, she had mentioned that when talking about “strong” women in 60s Japanese cinema you might think of figures like *ninkyō* star Fuji Junko (discussed in the third chapter of this dissertation), albeit expressing even that with some disappointment (“*Tsuyoi onna ga egakeba, Fuji Junko ni natte shimau n desu*”) (86).

Her framing of Japanese film women at this time resonates with the way Yoshida will talk about women, and speaks to their shared motivation in creating a corrective to the Golden Age’s two-dimensional archetypes of women.

²⁹ This location of promise in an elsewhere proves to be a trope of her work, where in addition to locating desiring women in European New Wave cinema, Tokyo offers her more than Shizuoka, Mickey Curtis, the male lead of her *Lily Festival* (2001), has more sex appeal because he is half foreign (*Onna* 95).

³⁰ To borrow language from Jacques Khalip and Robert Mitchell’s framing of the image in their *Releasing the Image* (4).

³¹ She describes these moments, which shaped her commitments as a filmmaker, as “turning points” (*tenki*) rather than traumas.

³² In fact, Hamano repeats with consistency throughout her story phrases representing her surprise, ranging from the “flabbergasted” (in situations of trauma) to the regular expressions of surprise that things were not as she anticipated (*omoigakenai*, for example). This returns, for instance, when she is in pre-production of her Osaki Midori film and meets with the editor of Osaki’s collected works, whose dismissal of her and her interpretation of Osaki, especially in his insistence that woman’s one happiness is in marriage and therefore Osaki never could have been content with her life, once again flabbergasts her (*gakuzen* returns as well as the related *azen* (54)). Her response, as with her own life, is to write intentionality into Osaki’s narrative, saying that it was by her own intention that she put down the pen: “*Osaki Midori ha, mizukara no ishi de fude o otta no da*” (54).

³³ Her *uketomeru sei*, Tanaka’s toilet.

³⁴ The language she uses to describe this is tight, both figuratively and literally. Which is to say, there are two figures which repeat in her description of being shut out—*shimidasu* (締め出す), which incorporates into the fabric of its shutting out locking and tightness as well as *monzen harai*, an expression for being shut out before a (closed) gate. Both expressions repeat throughout the autobiography as well as in her writings elsewhere.

³⁵ In Japanese: *Ika ni purodyūsā ga eiga seisaku no ba de no saikō kenryoku to ha ie, sakuhin ha kantoku no mono da*” (*Onna* 31).

³⁶ Elsewhere Hamano will claim not to have been introduced to pink film until after she made efforts to work at Wakamatsu Productions” (“*Ichihenshu*” 178). The conflict I see here is that both things are predicated on ownership. Hamano wants the films to be hers, to own them, so that she has ownership over their vision. I see in her critique of the use of actresses as mere thing, however, a logic of ownership that is not so distant from the ownership she herself desires.

³⁷ Wakamatsu Productions was run by filmmaker Wakamatsu Kōji, who started the company after leaving a stint at Nikkatsu Studios, where he first began making the sex- and violence-fueled films for which he would come to be known. He gained wide notoriety after being called “a national disgrace” for his submission to the 1965 Berlin Film festival, *Secrets Behind the Wall*. Wakamatsu was a frequent collaborator with political filmmaker Adachi Masao, who was integral to Wakamatsu Productions’ identity from its inception.

³⁸ Indeed, enduring this earned her the appeal of one of the core members of Wakamatsu Productions staff, director and screenwriter Yamatoya Atsushi, who advocated on her behalf, saying to Wakamatsu: “Waka-chan, wouldn’t it be good if from now on if in the Japanese film world, there was just one female director?” (11).

³⁹ This can be read even in the way she narrativizes the exclusion. Because she was “shut out from the start” (“*onna no watashi ha saisho kara monharai datta no desu*” (42)), once she is able to move beyond that beginning place, to get beyond the threshold of the gate, she enters a different game, a different playing field.

⁴⁰ Despite volunteering to stay with another staff member, she reports being “ordered” (*meijirareta*) to stay in the same room as the actress (13). For the rest of the staff the very fact that she was a woman and therefore did not have a de facto roommate presented evidence that having a woman on staff was a pain (*mendokusai*) (13).

⁴¹ See also Yuriko Furuhashi’s discussion of *Sex Jack* and Wakamatsu in her “The Actuality of Wakamatsu: Repetition, Citation, Media Event” in *The Pink Book: The Japanese Eroticism and its Contexts*. Furuhashi acknowledges that “Wakamatsu’s work shares the narrative tendency in classical Hollywood cinema to sadistically punish women who assert their sexual desire and agency” but argues that “in spite of its apparent endorsement of male dominance, his work often oscillates between the representations of the violated female body and those of the male body that gets ‘perversely eroticized through exploration of its weakness and vulnerability’” (borrowing language that Linda Williams used in *Hardcore* to read Oshima Nagisa’s *In the Realm of the Senses*) (159). Most interestingly, she argues that it is the male protagonist’s “physical struggle against [being coerced into having sex with a female activist] and his ultimate refusal to enter into sexual relationships with women [which] becomes pivotal to the film’s allegorical depiction of another kind of violence: the violence inherent in the purportedly democratic structure of consensual politics” (159-60). Ultimately she quite generously reads the films as revealing that “the student activists in *Sex Jack* are in fact complicit with the dominant police order that forecloses the participation of those who have no political voice in representational politics, and who are excluded from the media’s theatrical staging of political dissent” (163). This reading would almost suggest that Wakamatsu and Adachi are already doing the work that Hamano felt compelled to undertake. While I find interesting Furuhashi’s arguments, especially in terms of the films’ political ambivalence, I worry, with Hamano, about the investments in both reading and producing such an allegory and the ethics of putting such images out. Moreover, an examination of interviews Wakamatsu gave for *Wakamatsu Kōji: Sex and Violence Revolution (Wakamatsu Kōji—Sei to boryoku no kakumei)* (2010), he seems rather clear in his admiration for the student movement and their violent actions (see especially the discussion of the Asama Sansō Incident, 187-88).

⁴² In the autobiography, too, she describes subsequently sleeping with a knife to ward off sexual advances of other staff members on set and regulating her periods long before the pill was legally available in Japan to prevent menstruation on set (16). Still, it is this first experience working for Adachi which she rehearses and which she gives space to explaining at length in the book and in other interviews and magazine articles about her career.

⁴³ Which is to say that it is easier to respond to something she has felt as a direct injury, to her as an individual, rather than systemic forms of violence built into images and filmmaking paradigms. This too is a question of authorship and when and where she is permitted to exercise that.

⁴⁴ That said, she consistently positions this as in opposition to the representational environment of Wakamatsu Productions’ films and *not* in response to the event of being tortured with the actress’s exploits. This is related to the paradigm of correction and Hamano’s investment in it that I will discuss below. Though she writes later in the chapter and elsewhere about the bullying she received from actresses on set, she claims it is not this actress’ behavior which is insurmountable or traumatic, but rather Adachi and Wakamatsu’s.

⁴⁵ She further writes that it was when she started making her films that for the first time that she felt she could love screen women and that in her fight against the male-centered sexuality of pink that she had the feeling she was “caressing” the women, i.e. with the kino-eye (41).

⁴⁶ This explanation, of her investment in a soft eros, is more compelling than one that is interested in “softness” because of an essentialist association of softness with femininity. I see her in this working “to construct the terms of reference of another measure of desire and the conditions of visibility for a different social subject,” what Teresa de Lauretis identifies in “Desire in Narrative” as “the project of feminist cinema” (155)

⁴⁷ In her terms this is marked by becoming popular (an *urekko*) (*Onna* 39). Her explanation for her theatrical popularity does have to do with representation, but more than framing her popularity around her production of agentive figures, she attributes it to her ability to shoot women’s bodies in an appealing way for her audience (citing the influence of her mentor Honki, and referring specifically to her close-ups of breasts and crotches (23)). If we are to follow the narrative progression of the text, that she follows up the description of her popularity with the anecdote

about being advised to drop “ko” from her name, suggests that her popularity with audiences is predicated entirely on the erasure of herself and her gender, undermining the social capital presumed by the flaunting of the popularity.

⁴⁸ That said, when she describes her switch to *ippan* films, she often refers to them as independent productions (*jishu seisaku*) because, in distinction from the pink films made for her own production company, these films have been made entirely through micro-financing and government grants (whereas the pink films included some form of sponsorship).

⁴⁹ An earlier draft of this chapter erroneously suggested that pink as an industry was unaccustomed to women outside of their presence as actresses. Alex Zahlten was kind enough to remind me of the similarly prolific career of pink producer and Hamano contemporary, Sato Keiko, who generally went by the less gender-marked alias, Asakura Daisuke.

⁵⁰ When, in her chapter on narcissism in *Imagine There's No Woman*, Joan Copjec describes that “the superego [...] maintains a rigorous division between the satisfaction available to us and the one that lies beyond” (47), it suggests that the crisis of this moment in Hamano’s narrative is a crisis both of the superego *and* of the confusion of this separation: a crisis manifests because that which Hamano understands to be out of reach, lying beyond, is advertised as in fact being of the category available to her and yet it still is not.

⁵¹ There is a bit of false equivalence in Hamano’s interpretation of what this means. Hamano evaluates that it is pink that had rendered her invisible, assuming their sexual content to be the problem. However, Tanaka Kinuyo was not only a well-established actress before she began making films, but she made films during Japanese cinema’s “Golden Age,” doing so squarely within the studio system and with some of Japan’s most recognized cinematic giants (including Kinoshita Keisuke as screenwriter and Teruo Ishii and Imamura Shōhei as assistant directors). Tanaka was already thus firmly located within the film establishment (and on multiple registers) and thus set up to be seen. Thus, rather than think of pink’s content as a problem, we should instead consider its organization, recalling Hamano’s invocation of it as a guerilla cinema, not just in the methodology of capture, but also in its *industrial structure*, a system *outside* of the establishment, *outside* of the studio system.

⁵² In Japanese she writes: “*watashi wa sore o kīte, gakuzen to shita*” (43). In a subsequent magazine article, she repeats the language verbatim, except that she writes *gakuzen*/flabbergasted in hiragana instead of kanji, to have the effect of emphasizing, with each syllable, her shock (“*Kanreki*” 34).

⁵³ Hamano was so prolific, even among pink directors, that she took on a second name as director, Chise Matoba. While Jasper Sharp writes in *Behind the Pink Curtain* that she “hid behind” the pseudonym “in order to detract from criticism from fellow filmmakers who saw her vast output as lowering the general standard of the industry product” (297) she explains in Shimazaki’s *Fujin Kōron* piece that “Of the 150 or so adult films made each year about 20 were Hamano’s films, which were in such demand that they were set up for screenings in Golden Week and New Year’s [the only two dependable periods of working holidays in Japan]. Because it’s very common for pink theaters to be adjoining, if they were the same director’s, guests would be split. Two names became necessary, whether I wanted them or not” (87).

⁵⁴ In Japanese, “*kore ha watashi no jinsei no mondai de mo atta*” (43). Life here is thus understood also as your posthumous memory.

⁵⁵ The language she uses here is interesting because the word she uses for “evidence” aligns itself with what’s used in other contexts for identifying paperwork—for an ID, essentially. I find this compelling for the way it involves the juridical, calling on the metaphor of a system that not just manages, but actually offers authentication of existence.

⁵⁶ Although the autobiography will not be published until 2005, her decision to draw the line in the sand and make an *ippan* film in response to the festival, is already reflected by the publication of Shimazaki’s piece and seen in its title: “To her 301st ‘Nudity Free’ Film: Female Filmmaker Hamano Sachi’s Pink Wanderings” (“—301 *honme no hadaka ga nai eiga*’—*Jyosei kantoku / Hamano Sachi no pink hōkō*”) with a summary that speaks volumes: “Single-handedly persisted in making 300 adult films in an all male film world. Just finished shooting her first work for women, representing author Osaki Midori” (“*Otoko dake no sekai datta eiga no genba de kogun funtō, toritsudzuketa seijin eiga 300bon. Sakka Osaki Midori no shōgai o egaki, Hajimete josei ni mitemoraeru sakuhin o torioeta*”).

⁵⁷ Both in the case of the hostesses’ *mama-san* and Hamano’s mother, the references to mothering index the regime of reproductive labor. They serve thus as the call that hails, that demands that each offers her supporting labor to those surrounding her.

⁵⁸ This list reflects a progression within the narrative of her autobiography, culled from subtitles within it, which imply an inevitability of moving through in this way, of progressively being abused in these ways.

⁵⁹ It her continuation within the industry that most matters to her and that I will demonstrate matters—as an investment—for each of my examples in this dissertation. The *fact* of existence is not enough, but to exist is to continue, to reproduce and be reproducible. The persistence of the verb “to continue” (*tsudzukeru*) is marked in her narrative and, it is worth noting, not only in her story, but in the stories of a number of other libbers and feminists, including her mentor Takano Etsuko.

⁶⁰ That pink films were also known by the moniker *San-byaku-man* (300-man, or 3 million) *films* after their early budgets seems suggestive when she cites 300 as the number of films she has made. While she may not have made 300 films, the reproduction of the number 300 seems to work to code pink itself.

⁶¹ Though writing of technocultures, Jodi Dean’s contextualization of the process of publicity remains relevant here: “publicity establishes the ideological matrix within which individuals in mediated, capitalist technocultures subjectivize their condition. People’s experience of themselves as subjects is configured in terms of accessibility, visibility, being known. Without publicity, the subject of technoculture doesn’t know if it exists at all” (114).

⁶² I.e. the only (mere) woman on set (*tatta hitori*), of her single-handed battles as the only woman in the film world—and in this it is almost always accompanied by references to the man’s world (*otokoshakai*).

⁶³ In this, it demanded a public that could be public.

⁶⁴ Though it is fair to say that the digital age is having its toll as pink theaters continue to shutter at an alarmingly rapid rate.

Also, even if scholars like Nornes encourage watching others in the theater and Michael Arnold has explained that pink spectators are often watching anything but the screen (364), the disavowal of that looking is perhaps the most fundamental investment of pink, and probably adult film, viewing.

⁶⁵ While it might seem strange for Hamano not to know that women were seeing her films, Michael Arnold explains in his “On Location: Pink Photography and the Possibilities of Representation” how rare it is for even pink filmmakers to go to the pink cinema: citing that in nearly a decade of research, I have spoken with very few Pink Film professionals who would openly admit to visiting a Pink theater for an occasion other than a special event” (370). In conversation Arnold has also conveyed the warnings he received from filmmakers about pink theaters’ unsavoriness.

⁶⁶ Where, indeed, her film would screen the following year.

⁶⁷ It is his feminist influence to which she credits founding her production company (*Onna* 38).

⁶⁸ Though Hamano does not really address it, Osaki is a particularly noteworthy figure for the film world, having devoted considerable ink to writing essays that offered critical and theoretical commentary on cinema in its early days. Of these, one of her most noteworthy was “Film Foolosophy” or *Eiga Mansō* (1930).

⁶⁹ Hamano’s identification with Osaki emerges from the text in spite of herself, coded through the same sorts of intentionality that she claims for herself and especially the reproduction of the attribution that Osaki was, contrary to popular belief, not depressed because she did not *choose* to marry, but she was living her life as she wished—something Hamano is explicit about valuing. Hamano writes that Osaki “decided to live true to herself” (“*jibun rashiku ikiyō* (生きよう) *to shita*”) (55).

⁷⁰ This support was so diffuse and significant within Japan that Hamano even complains about her experience traveling with films to festivals outside of Japan in terms of the lack of volunteer support that so readily was available to her domestically. In Tottori, the prefecture that Osaki was from and returned to later in life, Hamano was provided with lodging, transportation, and other forms of volunteer labor.

⁷¹ Referenced also in the magazine literature, Hamano reproduces an anecdote about a young feminist who scolds her on the train when she spots her casting with the admonition that she really ought to read Ueno Chizuko to understand the implications of her work in pink film. This single incident comes to stand in for how feminists must understand Hamano and adult cinema.

⁷² Even while, it is critical to note, she continues to be suspicious of the collective (“*rentai*”), as she conveyed to the author in interview in June 2013.

⁷³ The significance of this, for those not familiar with the Japanese publishing industry, is that the *zenshū* operates as a de facto announcement that an author has had a body of work worth noting.

⁷⁴ She writes of her desire to tell, to communicate, the reality of Osaki Midori’s life, getting away from this *man’s* understanding: “*Kono otoko kara Osaki Midori o tokihanachi, Osaki Midori to iu josei no shinjitsu o tsutaetai*” (55). This puts into binary opposition *his* understanding and suggests, by virtue of her own gender, her ability to access to that “truth” of Osaki Midori’s life *as a woman*.

⁷⁵ This is justified, it should be noted, through interviews she conducted with family members, teachers, and other associates of Osaki Midori's.

⁷⁶ It is for this reason, I would venture to editorialize, that this is the most successful, compelling, and charming of her *ippan* films.

⁷⁷ When I interviewed Hamano in 2013, she drew a parallel between her desire to continue making films until she died and her desire to keep making films about the sex between older and older people.

⁷⁸ English translation quoted from Naoko Takemaru's *Women in the Language and Society of Japan: The Linguistic Roots of Bias* (82-3), originally published in Japanese in the November 6, 2001 edition of the magazine *Shūkan Josei* [Women's Weekly].

⁷⁹ There is a history of disavowal and reproduction around Ishihara and his political power, which secured his governorship despite these and other regular incendiary comments (including hate speech about resident Koreans), which bear far more attention still. The popular explanation for his retention of Tokyo's highest office for thirteen years was that even if his politics were problematic and alienating to the very people voting him into office, his sense of conviction, otherwise presumed absent from Japanese politics, made him a good leader. In this what has been expressed was a preference for form over substance. Since leaving office in 2012, Ishihara has been busy starting a new political party with Osaka governor, Tōru Hashimoto, called the Japan Restoration Party (*Nippon Ishin no Kai*), which seeks to return Japan to its pre-War glory.

Ishihara's own cinematic history is likewise worth noting: prior to his political career he would write many of the novels that were then adapted into screenplays for the popular 50s youth films known as the "sun tribe" films.

⁸⁰ A confidence that Markus Nornes was right to remind me of after I presented sections of this chapter at the "Sex, Media, Reception" Conference at the University of Michigan in February 2014.

⁸¹ Following the 1999 implementation of the "Basic Act for a Gender Equal Society," the Japanese Cabinet established a Gender Equality Bureau in 2001 that declared June 23 through June 29 would be recognized annually as Gender Equality Week.

⁸² A *taidan* is a genre of event that is a conversation or an interview. It is generally a public event that stages a formal dialogue between at least two parties and often results in publication. For more on the genre see Harry Harootunian and Naoki Sakai's meta-reflection on the form in "Japan Studies and Cultural Studies."

⁸³ In Japanese her response was: "Sore ha, ne. Mō, hijō ni tanjun de, pinku eiga nado ka ippan eiga nado ka, Hamano Sachi ha Hamano Sachi. To iu koto desu ne. Watashi ha watashi."

⁸⁴ This reading derives from Hamano's reproduction of the idea that her *ippan* films are suitable for "women" and the pink films are alternately for her older male viewership or for women who love women. The idea of correspondence between one's identification and the images they are attracted to (let alone the idea that we could disassociate intersectional identities) is one that the history of sexuality and psychoanalytic feminist film criticism from Mary Ann Doane to Jackie Stacey has questioned.

⁸⁵ Jasper Sharp has explained in his *Behind the Pink Curtain* that "aside from the films of Kōji Wakamatsu, the first two decades in which pink film proliferated are particularly poorly served [...] Put simply, the early *eroductions* were simply not made to be kept for posterity and viewed decades after their original runs. Often produced by small fly-by-night companies in operation for only a short number of years, many older titles can be considered forever lost, the negatives junked by their production companies long ago" (16).

⁸⁶ What, too, could my sexual identification say about my screening practices?

⁸⁷ In both *Hard Core* and her more recent *Screening Sex*, Linda Williams, under a Foucauldian influence, thinks of sex as a discourse, where the discourse constructs the object. Hamano's case is instructive about the importance of pressing further on what it is we are thinking and talking about when we refer to, for instance in Williams' case, "speaking sex," a phenomena that accompanied the emergence of sex cinema, together with images discursively constructing its object: that is, sex. After all Hamano demonstrates that being seen is not necessarily speaking. Or, she demonstrates, even once coming on/scene, the power of obscenity to both remain and interpellate the image maker. It shows the ideological stickiness of the obscene, which may also explain why Michael Arnold has referred in his "On Location" and in personal conversations with the author to pink filmmakers warning him away from the pink cinema, suggesting that it is a dirty place for dirty people. This is the importance in *Screening Sex* of what Williams writes about as the two valences of screening; understood both as projection and as protecting or shielding, or Khalip and Mitchell's understanding of the image as both that which is visible and what is rendered invisible by it. I am making the case here, too, for the importance of the field of pornography studies to continue to press itself

on what it is referring to when it speaks of sex, not allowing ourselves to take for granted what is meant by that object.

⁸⁸ Despite frequently identifying as queer herself, in Hamano's vision, viewing seems still to map onto identity positions without much adjustment for flexible identification in viewing or pleasures or desire that exceed identity positions. It is likely for this reason—that is, in perpetuity of the imaginary of the pink spectator, in spite of her representational commitments—that Miryam Sas has noted the films often preserve a phallic visual economy. With respect to the dynamics of ready consumption and disposal Sas refers, via Hamano, to pink's "junk treatment" (295). For more on the pink spectator, see above and Michael Arnold's "On Location: Pink Photography and the Possibilities of Representation" in *The Pink Book*.

⁸⁹ C.f. Arnold's "On Location." While he discusses this problematic throughout, he responds to the foreign imaginary of pink by explaining that: "Domestic adult cinema audiences hardly watch the films at all, instead either sleeping in their seats or cruising for male-male sexual action with other audience members. Pink's reputation as a unique and essentially cinematic pornography industry is undermined by a theatrical exhibition context that caters to regular audiences who are interested in anything but the films that are playing" (370).

⁹⁰ This is also exacerbated by Hamano's earliest films—virtually all of the films made during the 1970s and into the early 80s—being extant. This creates a problem for those who were not watching Hamano's films in real time, demanding that we rely only on Hamano's brief plot descriptions, offered in her autobiography and referenced obliquely in the interview with the author, to evidence that they existed at all. This is a problem that Sas also confronted when she set out to write about Hamano, and like the author, found that she could not see the early films. She discusses this as a problematic in the context of the aforementioned "junking" in the introduction to her essay in *The Pink Book*.

⁹¹ Recall that throughout her writings we find her consistency in articulating that rather than simply make films (*toru*), she *continued* making films (*tori-tsudzukeru*). The same tendency (to construct compound verbs with the verb *tsuzukeru*, "to continue X"), as previously mentioned, can also be found in the writings of Takano Etsuko.

⁹² C.f. Robyn Wiegman "Intimate Publics: Race, Property, Personhood."

⁹³ Quoted from interview with the author.

⁹⁴ I would go so far as to argue that the language of *jitsuroku*, or *vérité*, has been invoked over Japanese film history precisely to signal this mode of correction and that, the mode of correction, since the 60s, has been one of the great signifiers of claims to auteurship. We see this not only in the *jitsuroku* yakuza films, but also in Wakamatsu's own invocation of the *jitsuroku*, i.e. in the full title of his *United Red Army* (2007): *Jitsuroku/Rengō Sekigun Asama Sansō e no michi*. The Japanese leads with *jitsuroku* to signal Wakamatsu's project with this film, which he had contextualized as his attempt to correct oversimplified understandings of the violence of the URA. He similarly declared at a Nippon Connection Film Festival that earlier cinematic adaptations of Edogawa Rampo's *Caterpillar* had similarly gotten the point of the story so wrong that he felt no other choice but to make his 2010 adaptation (as relayed to the author by Alexander Zahlten).

⁹⁵ This is central to Miryam Sas' discussion of Hamano's technique and her politics, which she describes as "queer materialist" (313), where her participation in the industry is the beginning of shifting the material conditions of production.

⁹⁶ The corrective as mode is also presented as decisive, with Hamano writing (framing it in terms of intentionality): "I was resolved. Isn't Pink film the only genre that takes sex head on (*matomo ni muki aeru*)? I can clearly (*kichin to*) represent female sexuality there" (40),

⁹⁷ For more on the ideology of the good wife, wise mother (or, *ryōsai kenbo*), especially in its historic transformations, renewals, and resistances to its currency, see Kathleen S. Uno's "The Death of 'Good Wife, Wise Mother'?" Hamano discusses these archetypes both in the July 2008 issue of *Kurashi* as well as in the autobiography (32). In our interview, Hamano also made certain to confirm that I was familiar with the ideology of the good wife, wise mother in a discussion of women's liberation and her filmmaking.

⁹⁸ She describes her desire, through representing sex from a women's perspective, to "restore sexuality to the hands of women" ("Josei" 43). Director Yoshida Kiju, the subject of the fourth chapter of this dissertation, has also positioned this commitment as central to his ethos as a filmmaker: in his idiom, a desire to show *real women*.

⁹⁹ In this pamphlet, Tanaka and the Fighting Women Collective were responding to a long discourse that treated women linguistically and practically as receptacles. While Hamano has consistently distanced herself from Lib, as I have suggested above, their investments are often more overlapping than she recognizes. Her stance, however, is

that it is not from the space of the toilet which she seeks liberation, but rather that she wants to occupy that degraded space.

¹⁰⁰ In the era known as Japan's "season of politics," correction imbued the auteur with his *raison d'être*. From the Japanese New Wave, a formation which has been contested because it did not represent a movement (c.f. Yuriko Furuhashi's *Cinema of Actuality*, which proposes an alternate structure in the "political avant-garde"), whose associated figures (from Yoshida to Oshima) nevertheless projected a rhetorical investment in correcting the errors and limitations of their forefathers, to figures like Wakamatsu and Adachi who have operated for much of their long careers in a mode of correction, and *jitsuroku* gangster films coming in to correct the romance of chivalry films of the 60s—correction has come to guarantee a place in the record of Japanese film history.

¹⁰¹ This is still *not* a biological reproduction premised on the sex act. Instead, what I mean here when I write that reproduction is sexuality, I refer instead to the modes of engagement that structure a relation.

¹⁰² Hamano does make brief mention of this technique in her autobiography.

¹⁰³ However, Adult Video (or AV), which came into being in the 1980s, "dared to capture the meat shot, but could not show it, instead turning the porn's visual evidence into a blur of moving shapes and colors that were overexposed, deliberately left out-of-focus, or abstracted into flickering squares" (381-3). This, a problem of censorship, prompts Arnold to argue that what AV does is demonstrate the unrepresentability of the sex act. There is in addition, one other important distinction between AV and pink cinema. That is, while the boundaries of pink have blurred since the technology of video was introduced, pink cinema maintains a discursive attachment to the material difference of shooting on 35mm, a difference that enables claims to taste and higher quality, essentially to being cinema.

¹⁰⁴ Indeed, the predecessor for Eirin, an abbreviation for *Eiga Rinri Inskai* (or, "Film Classification and Rating Committee") was a product of the Occupation and came about on the advice of the Occupation government. That much of Eirin's early regulation resembled the work of the MPAA and the Code in particular is not mere analogy. For a history of *Eirin* and the censorship of pink see Kristen Cather's chapter in *The Pink Book*, "Policing the Pinks." Therein she explains that, like its model in the MPAA, "*Eirin* was intimately concerned with policing the social, moral, and ethical order of society" (98). There is a Foucauldian argument that emerges out of this, that it was the prohibition of (the representation of) sex, the construction of it as something *to be regulated*, that produced the pink industry just years following the establishment of *Eirin* as a body.

¹⁰⁵ It is worth quoting from Cather at some length about how *Eirin*'s revision of their charter code was revised in 1959 to establish what would become the censorship guidelines for the adult film industry (subsequently reconfigured through a obscenity cases in the courts). While many of these were disregarded by sex cinema, the second, separate memo contributed significantly to how pink would imagine it ought to regulate itself (with some points upheld more than others):

The regulations listed under each category became increasingly detailed, seemingly in response to the innovative censorship-dodging strategies developed by filmmakers, with those for 'Sex and Mores' swelling from six points total to six regulations and seven sub-regulations. The four items under the previous 'Sex' category remained unchanged (items no. 1-4 in the new regulations), but the formerly vague injunction not 'to stimulate the base impulses of spectators' was expanded considerably:

Section 6 "Sex and Mores" (*Sei oyobi fuzoku*):

- 1) Take care not to defile the sanctity of marriage or the family with the treatment of sexual relations.
- 2) Don't endorse prostitution.
- 3) Don't depict acts based on sexual perversion or perverted sexual desires. No endorsement of prostitution.
- 4) Sexual hygiene and sexual diseases shall not be used as material other than as necessary from a moral or scientific perspective.
- 5) Sexual acts and sex crimes (i.e. incest) must be treated with care, especially the following categories: a. In depictions of bedroom scenes and rape, take enough care to ensure that spectator's base passions are not stimulated. b. Do not deal with obscene words, actions, clothes, lyrics, jokes, etc. And be very careful with suggesting those things.
- 6) Avoid depictions of customs that are commonly accepted to be reviled or vulgar depictions that will incite the hatred of spectators. In particular, take care with the following categories: a) naked bodies, removing clothing, exposing the body, and dances based on these; b) full nudity; c) mixed

bathing; d) genitalia; e) acts of excretion.

In addition, there existed a separate memo (also dated August 10, 1959) that detailed the committee's consensus about how to apply these new regulations:

- 1) No depiction of genitalia or pubic hair.
- 2) Avoid full shots of completely naked bodies that show the sex act.
- 3) Avoid any pumping motion that includes lower bodies.
- 4) No depiction of things clearly associated with clear ejaculation.
- 5) Avoid persistent genital petting (including, for example, fellatio and hand entanglements either inside or on top of underwear).
- 6) As much as possible, avoid repetitive dialogue, groans, etc. during orgasm (115-6)

While these regulations would be revised again, most notably in 1965, the growth and proliferation of pink cinema, which most date to 1963, resulted in a challenge that of how to oversee films being made in the sort of numbers that pink were being produced. The unevenness of this regulation was commented upon famously by Takeuchi Tetsuji, the director first charged with obscenity for his pink films (which, like many of Adachi and Wakamatsu's collaborations, used sex allegorically to address the US military presence/ongoing occupation of Japan after the official period of Occupation concluded). Cather concludes her essay, writing:

When indicted back in 1965, director Takeuchi Tetsuji suggested that artistic fame as a Pink director goes hand-in-hand with state censorship when he likened the *Black Snow* indictment to the awarding of the prestigious Imperial Cultural Decoration (*Bunka Kunsho*) by the Emperor: 'To be indicted by the state authorities is the ultimate badge of honor for an artist. It beats getting a Cultural Decoration. With this, I've become a first-class artist.'" (135).

¹⁰⁶ There is also a noteworthy difference in discussions of censorship between the visual economy built around genitalia blurred through pixelated mosaics or through the use of *maebari* strips and Hamano's multiple strategies of concealing. This extends beyond putting the shape of the penis in plain view underneath crisp white underwear, including the use of lace underwear on women which simultaneously hides and reveals the long-tabooed pubic hair, strategic use of hands, grabbing at genitalia to cover both penises and vaginas and to ensure that pubic hair remains hidden. Hamano will, at other times, flag this obsession with pubic hair as in *Hitodzuma Furin Ganbō* (*Housewives Adulterous Desire*, 1988)—a narrative of faux-couple swapping that constitutes family structures that as easily dissolve as sport—by disembodieding it, shooting the hair in thin air, to play with the conventions of visibility and invisibility within the image.

¹⁰⁷ Jonathan Abel's impressive postwar history of underpants in Japan "Packaging desires: The Unmentionables of Japanese Film," which I am grateful once again to Alex Zahlten for reminding me of, makes the argument that the obsession of Japanese pornography with underpants operates both as "a substitute for the object of sexual and commodity desire and as the object of desire itself (273). While I find his arguments generally compelling, in Hamano's case, I think we have to look comparatively at the distinctions between the underwear she dresses her actors in and her actresses' (frequently commented upon by spectators and, in turn, by Hamano in the autobiography). Likewise, it is also telling, in Hamano's cinema to compare, as I will here, the insistence of covering with the underwear and moments when she uses dildos as penis substitutes.

¹⁰⁸ While *Greedy Housewives*, released under Hamano's pseudonym Matoba Chise, is the English title provided by Jasper Sharp in *Behind the Pink Curtain*, Sas prefers to translate it as *Desiring Wives* to get closer to the Japanese, *Yaritai hitodzuma-tachi*, which removes the misogynistic undertones of their "greediness." *Yaritai* is derived from the root verb *yaru*, meaning "to do," which in this form (*-tai*) translates to "want to do." The word for wife, *hitodzuma*, it is worth noting, refers not only to wives but to someone else's wife, signaling the relationship of ownership presumed by the marriage contract and the wives' desire to disrupt that. Rather than the lofty "desire," I would instead retain the everydayness of the verb "to do" and translate it as something like *Wives Who Wanna Get Down* or *Wives Who Wanna Do It*.

¹⁰⁹ I refer here to Mulvey's explication of the male gaze, which positions women's bodies as objects *to be looked at*.

¹¹⁰ It is important to note that Hamano has also made a body of gay porn, but, in pursuit of her claims about the female gaze and representing female desire, I will not deal with those films at this time. Studying her autobiography is also suggestive of her relationships to those films as it extends my earlier arguments about intimate publics—making the latent argument that identifying lesbian and gay audiences as a *market* through her participation in lesbian and gay film festivals (and this is the language she uses rather than, for instance, LGBT) produces a public that her gay pink films likely responds to in much the same way that her *ippan* films respond to the public "women."

¹¹¹ This he offers up to the “softer and gentler touch” of actress-turned director Toshiki Sato.

¹¹² This is so much the case that Sas wonders if we should not understand *Housewives*’ homosocial universe as a buddy film (310).

¹¹³ The “sensei” attempts to provide the cure to women who have not known a uniquely female pleasure. However, as both Kei and Aya are keen to instruct the teacher, they need no mansplainer to understand their pleasure.

¹¹⁴ *Chikan Densha* is a long running series, helmed by a number of directors, that has been translated as *Groper Train*. For the subtitle, I offer the translation “A Whole Lotta Sexy.”

¹¹⁵ In this way, Hamano’s cinema is evocative both of Audre Lorde’s formulation of the erotic in her essay “Uses of the Erotic,” originally a 1978 address to the Fourth Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, and of Foucault’s discussion in *The History of Sexuality* (discussed throughout the literature on pornography) about sexuality as an object of knowledge.

¹¹⁶ Vibe-*chan* is an informal, intimate and diminutive way of referring synecdochically to the character through her associations with vibrators.

¹¹⁷ As well as the economic prosperity enjoyed in, i.e., the US and Britain thanks to Reagan and Thatcher’s neoliberal economic policies. It is interesting to now see the echoes of Reaganomics in Prime Minister Abe’s response to the recent financial crisis, nostalgic for Reagan’s neoliberalism, and invoking it in his auto-branded Abenomics, despite the lessons that we might have thought would register from the crash of the bubble economy Japan enjoyed in the 80s in the decade that followed.

¹¹⁸ Anne Allison’s “Cartooning Erotics: Japanese *Ero Manga*” in *Permitted and Prohibited Desires* connects the incidence of groping on trains directly to the consumption of erotic manga in those spaces. On groping on trains, see also Steger “Negotiating Gendered Space on Japanese Commuter Trains” and its brief mention in Mark D. West’s *Secrets, Sex, and Spectacle* that suggests that it was the “groping epidemic” of the early 2000s that drew the Gender Equity Bureau’s attention to yield women-only train cars. What this timeline suggests is not so much the measure of incidence as the measure of when groping drew state attention. Though it only briefly makes mention of groping, see also James A. Fujii’s “Intimate Alienation,” which understands groping to be one in a constellation of tactics of responding to the space of the train.

¹¹⁹ As has become familiar to audiences of American cinema through such films as *Karate Kid*, the suffix sensei generally refers to teachers. However, it is a word also assigned to *erai hito*, the elite and those deemed important, so that, for instance, we would refer not only to professors as sensei, but also doctors and lawyers. *Sensei* establishes clear hierarchies justified through legible claims to expertise.

¹²⁰ A “mistake” enabled by the bureaucratized access to sex that such technologies as Japan’s thoroughly networked delivery system provide, supplying an anonymity that we also see thematized in the film through the pornography vending machines that Hamano represents the secretary as quietly visiting, an anonymity impossible in the pink theater itself and which has significant gendered implications.

¹²¹ Quite literally capitalizing, thus, on the mysteries of woman to generate capital.

¹²² This notion of the male body as dummy is reinforced by Kyoko’s rare, emphatically willing rather than economically coerced, offer of fellatio to Daiitsu-san (played by Yoshida Yūken, an actor as well-known for his *ippan* work in such popular films as *Popoya*, *All About Lily Chou Chou*, and *The Land of Hope*), who she has romantic feelings for rather than economic ties. Despite her feelings, while receiving fellatio his body remains limp, his body lying still, unmoving, very much like a dummy. Contrasted with the moving, feeling female bodies, the mechanical, robotic male body is put on display not just in a shaming critique or in the sort of reductive role reversal that Hamano’s joking about using actors as mere dummies might suggest, but instead it reveals how crippled and crippling an economic system upholding and invested in the phallus can be.

¹²³ Insisted upon in the next frame when the two sisters, lying asleep naked on the bed, are displayed with sources of light glowing from their genitals (which they lay utterly unaware of since they remain asleep). It is Kyoko’s critique of their materialist attachments (to *zeitaku* things) that suggests that they might not be able to recircuit the economies they participate in, as unimaginable as a subsistence, let alone a gift, economy might be to them.

¹²⁴ That is, non-domestic, labor. This is also meant to serve as a salvation narrative, considering that their participation not only in the sex industries broadly defined but also in non-home-bound labor undermines their status as properly gendered national subjects.

¹²⁵ *Danchi* refer to the soviet style apartment blocs built en masse in the postwar. They function as both an emblem of rapid growth and, in their current evacuated state, the bubble’s burst. See Anne McKnight’s “The Wages of

Affluence: The High-Rise Housewife in Japanese Sex Films” for an analysis of the political theater the danchi’s offered sex films in the 1960s and 70s.

¹²⁶ Here, I refer to Blanchot’s arguments in “Speaking is Not Seeing.”

¹²⁷ This is a reference to the conclusion of de Lauretis’ “The Technology of Gender” (26).

Chapter III

*Otoko ga otoko o otoko to shite mitomeru*¹:

Serial Reproductions of Masculinity in Tōei Studios' Ninkyō Films

While the previous chapter examined the problem of images of women that circulated in a temporality that fanned out from high growth, this one will immerse itself in one of high growth's most beloved images—that of *ninkyō*, or chivalry, films and their great star Takakura Ken. While the films' romantic vision of the yakuza would come to be denounced as the period accelerated toward the violent “end of politics,”² Takakura Ken had served as mascot to political movements on both the left and the right. Though the image of the yakuza would not prove recoverable for some time, Takakura Ken's image, on the other hand, emerged unscathed, retaining the allure his yakuza anti-heroes had attracted, but stripped of the yakuza's baggage. This chapter attributes Takakura Ken's salvaging to the work he performed across multiple series, across the genre, and even I would argue, across the film industry to put forward an image of man, laboring for the people and therefore easily slipping into a labor for the nation.

His initial performance of this in *ninkyō* rode the same wave as high growth's peak. At the very moment when high growth capital was reaching its fever pitch as cultures of family, workplace, industry, and geography transformed what it meant to go to work and the authority that work bestowed, Takakura Ken modeled a male form of leadership that suggested a natural predilection for social success. Whether in the largely male driven *ninkyō* series or even in the Fuji Junko helmed *Red Peony Gambler* series, the films performed a pedagogy around male labor that alternately absented or disciplined women's agency. Though Hamano would speak about Fuji Junko as providing a strong hero—and claims were certainly made to show that she, like *When A Woman Ascends the Stairs*' Keiko was persevering—*ninkyō* overwhelmingly

instructed that it was the exceptional man, the Takakura Ken's, who would best be positioned to lead the nation into its future.

When this chapter thus examines the various iterations of seriality that structure *ninkyō*'s reproductions, it tracks a mechanism that, very much contrary to Harootunian's postwar trope of the present, does imagine a future. It imagines a future before the fact, so that once already forgotten, a structure is in place to remind not those parts best left forgotten, but instead the pieces—in the case of *ninkyō*, the moral claims made by a male subject position—necessary to keep the nation working. In addition to close readings of *Red Peony Gambler* and one of the episodes of *Shōwa Zankyōden*, I look too at the slippery movement that happens when *otoko*, man, is circulated around discourses of *ninkyō* to create a closed system, a tautology, that does not necessitate definition to merit its worth. I juxtapose this to forgotten histories of the yakuza's claim to chivalry to demonstrate how the selective forgetting and memory of the serial can support a vision of strong men. I emphasize thus that the claim to strength and its extraordinary repetition speaks to its vulnerability, indexing an instability rather than confirming what is already there.

On November 10th, 2014, Takakura Ken did what seemed impossible: he died. It was perhaps for this reason—owing to its incommensurability with the image of Ken-san, as he continues to be affectionately and intimately known—that the news of his passing was not released until November 17th.³ It would be inaccurate to speak of a beginning of the circulation of the news; what occurred instead was a deluge of reporting, a flood of memories and memorializations. While this has lost its fever pitch, it has not dissipated. Rather, the few months that have passed since Ken-san's death have given space to the rhythms of the publishing world

and provided time for the reflection that builds special issues of magazines and journals, television specials and rereleased DVD box sets.⁴

While Ken-san would join Tōei Studios in the 1950s as young talent, he emerged in the 60s as Japan's biggest star since Toshiro Mifune⁵ with Tōei's *ninkyō* (chivalry) films, yakuza films invested in promoting a heroic notion of the yakuza who live by the code.⁶ The comparison to Mifune in this is more than incidental: Mifune was a star not only domestically but, by virtue of the international distribution and therefore theatre of Akira Kurosawa's films, a Japanese star in the world, as Takakura himself would become.⁷ Where Mifune rose within Japanese cinema's Golden Age, its period of greatest prosperity and largest audiences, Takakura rose to prominence in its wake, as Japanese cinema rapidly lost theatrical audiences and the studio system that had sustained the Golden Age faltered. He did so, winning audience's hearts and minds, saving the film industry and Tōei in particular, by injecting new life into the industry. Both men, too, would gain popularity reprising roles associated with figures of "traditional" masculinity in the nation⁸: Mifune eternally returning to the samurai and Takakura to the yakuza with a heart of gold in *ninkyō*.⁹

As the news broke of Ken-san's death, familiar choruses arose that linked him, in that moment, to the rise of his star in *ninkyō* cinema: Ken-san was a man among men, the kind of man Japanese cinema, and perhaps the world, would never see again.¹⁰ He was an ambassador of Japan for the world—both a national star *and* a star who exceeded national boundaries.¹¹ A fine example of a Kyūshū man. A *true* Fukuoka man.¹² But whatever he was, he was, through and through, a man and, in this, a man associated with the nation. Though popular media would associate him with his later roles as a leading man in such films as *The Yellow Handkerchief* (1977), *Poppoya* (1999) or even his final film *Dearest* (2012), the "stoic, rugged heroes"¹³

obituaries relentlessly referenced arose out of the star image cultivated in his *ninkyō* roles. It was in those films, especially in his three most popular series—*Abashiri Prison* (1965-1972), *Shōwa Zankyōden* (1965-1972), and *Nihon Kyōkakuden* (1964-1971)—that his star persona, the taciturn, unflinching hero was made.¹⁴

This chapter insists that we continue the work, started by Saitō Ayako and Isolde Standish in writing about Takakura Ken and masculinity in *ninkyō*,¹⁵ of unraveling that which audiences in the 60s and we still today are invited *not* to question: what made Ken-san a man and what work was conducted through this? So much of what has been written about *ninkyō* replicates the sedimented master narratives about these most generically reliable of films, returning us always to the films' production, exhibition and consumption contexts in the 60s with films that themselves already stick to a tight script. Rather than arrest this association or divorce the films from those contexts, this essay seeks to develop a fuller context of the films—looking at the genealogy of the films and their afterlives—to read as an additional register the narratives that have explained *ninkyō*.¹⁶ In this, it takes advantage of the historical distance from the sixties to understand the ongoing attachment to the period that emerges in criticism of the films through rehearsals that justify attention to these objects of mass appeal vis-à-vis their association with 60s political movements and claims to watching the films in real time.¹⁷ It argues that, by centralizing seriality as the films' key organizing principle, we do more than literally reference the films' production mode or the increasing dominance and influence of the televisual mode in the period and instead name a mode of reproduction that implicates a relation to time—a serial time that implicates both the early modern period and our current moment of mourning—and a structuring principle of the sexual division of labor within it.¹⁸ This allows us to build a genealogy that explains why the investment in Takakura Ken matters still so much today, and

how that investment has operated through the simultaneous movement that fills his body with all the burden of upholding masculinity for the nation just as it, in the hydraulics of stardom,¹⁹ evacuates him.

This is, thus, not a story confined to cinema; rather, the activity and investment circulating around the figure of Takakura Ken implicates a much broader economic system built on the mass propulsion and consumption of images through techniques of serial reproduction that, while coalescing around a single, replicable individual image to suggest an individualized experience (i.e., the divergent and often ideologically competing claims that Ken-san is/was *my* hero²⁰), disavows the mass even while it is experienced through it.²¹ Emerging in a moment of Japan's soaring economic prosperity that constructed an unprecedented consumer subjectivity,²² Takakura Ken's star teaches us a great deal about high growth, its legacy, and foundations, as well as the mechanisms upon which it depended. While a great deal has been written that understands Japanese high growth through consumption and labor patterns and practices,²³ there has not yet been enough discussion of the how aesthetics fits into the political economy of this paradigm shift. This study aims to contribute to that project, gathering together visual, political, cinema industrial, and linguistic economies to elaborate how social life was restructured within high growth capital.²⁴

It's a Man's Man's Man's World²⁵: *Otoko* as Series

Even more than the overdetermined conflict between *giri* and *ninjō* so often offered to explain *ninkyō* films,²⁶ journalist Sawaki Kotaro contended in a 1984 essay that *the* structuring motif of the films was “*otoko ga otoko o otoko to shite mitomeru*”—men recognizing men as men (35). Since Sawaki penned these words they have become integral to the master narrative of the *yakuza* films that the rehearsal of the set phrase, the *kimari monku*, that *ninkyō* films

embodied this men's world, for men, has become a gesture to expect.²⁷ Clichéd tautology though it is, it is a narrative that has had staying power. That remains.²⁸ It remains, too, within an architecture that presumes we always already know what it means. The tautology itself, that is, forecloses the question of what it means to be a man and, therefore, what it means to be a man in *ninkyō*. Not only does it now demand that we pursue the question of that which is beyond question, I argue that identifying *otoko ga otoko o otoko to shite mitomeru* as *ninkyō*'s motif points to the reproductions that not only fueled *ninkyō* but which called out to the broader economic paradigm, particularly in the defense of a male labor force,²⁹ that coalesces in *ninkyō*—to the films' reproductive labor. Paying attention to the *otoko* involves distinguishing what adheres when we rehearse truisms about *ninkyō*'s masculinity from what that rehearsal (a man is a man is a man) evacuates.³⁰ It necessitates looking at the intersecting histories of the film industry, the yakuza, and the sexual division of labor in Japan to build a material historiographical understanding of *otoko*'s circulation.³¹

The explanation for the emergence of the films itself has been rehearsed as a set: following the general loss of theatrical audiences to the domestic television set, an emblem of Japan's prosperity and its accompanying consumer boom,³² the studio system, which had just enjoyed the "Golden Age" of Kurosawa, Ozu, and Mizoguchi, sought to regain spectators. Viewers, as film critic Sato Tadao has it, became divided in this period between television and film viewers radically gendered such that "in movie theaters, where real women could not be found, erotic and violent stimuli escalated and aggressive and self-destructive impulses ran amok" (236).³³ This overlapped with a period that has become known as Japan's "season of politics," when the Anti-US-Japan Security Treaty protests bookended a decade full of political movements: from the active student movement to rightwing nationalists trying to reclaim the

nation.³⁴ Anti-Vietnam war protests, the Women’s Liberation movement and agrarian movements resisting the development of Narita airport filled out the network of activists and activity of the period. Within this dual paradigm—of activism, on the one hand, and the manufacturing of cinematic subjects imagined as male, on the other—Tōei’s contribution to the defense of Japanese cinema came in the form of their yakuza films, star vehicles that catapulted Tsuruta Kōji, Takakura Ken, and Fuji Junko into the limelight.³⁵ However, even within this triad, Takakura Ken occupied a privileged place. Audiences identified with him, such that he became a symbol not just of the nation, but of an ideal Japanese masculinity.³⁶ It is for this reason that my discussion of the serial reproduction of masculinity in *ninkyō* films focuses most prominently on Ken-san, as he continues to be affectionately known, through whom so much of the work of *ninkyō* was done.

Narratives around *ninkyō eiga* have become particularly sedimented because of the strength of Takakura’s mythic image and its coupling with the mythos of 60s politics³⁷: Tokyo University students advertised their demonstrations with posters emblazoned with stylized



Figure 3.1 Hashimoto Osamu Tokyo University Demonstration Poster (1968)

versions of his yakuza persona³⁸; rightwing nationalist and literary figure Mishima Yukio reportedly sang “Karajishi Botan,” the theme song from the *ninkyō* series *Shōwa Zankyōden* sung by Takakura himself, as he headed to stage his failed coup on the Self-Defense forces before committing *seppuku* at their headquarters.³⁹ That said, the films were not only popular with political movements, they also delivered on what Tōei most needed: box office.⁴⁰ Serially produced between 1963 or 1964 (depending on which series you count

as *ninkyō*'s start) and 1972, *ninkyō* were period films, or *jidai-geki*, that returned to an early modern moment when the yakuza could still make claim to the *ninkyō*, or chivalrous, way. They trafficked, as the literature will remind you, in binaries, coding righteous conflicts between good and bad yakuza in a chain of related signifiers: traditional and modern, Japanese and western(ized), those who fought by the sword and the others who relied on the gun. The *ninkyō* film was highly patterned, organized around three or so acts, where the first introduced the hero and set up his relation to the boss, whose death would generally inspire the need for revenge in the second act, to be fully realized with a leveling battle that would take up much of the final act, a fight to the death where often the only man left standing to wander on would be our hero: Takakura Ken.⁴¹

Ninkyō, so thoroughly saturated with messages of manliness that they threaten to utterly overwhelm you, attaches the signifier of man nowhere more so than to Takakura.⁴² This has everything to do with the promise of his return and the structural reproduction—the reminder at every moment that what you, in fact, are dealing with is men (and that Takakura is the ur-man)—that gives the rhetoric its power, precisely through the manufacturing of forgetting and deferral that its volume yields, in the manifestations on the audio-visual, linguistic, and narrative registers that tell us so insistently that we are dealing with men so that we need not ever ask what makes a man. This we see across the cinematic apparatus: in advertising materials that naturalize the integration of text that literally glosses, in the few minutes allowed for a trailer, a chain of related identifications, all screaming men; in the dialogue and the theme songs that carry across each series, linking each episode to the others through the same language invoked in the trailers and an extended idiom speaking to manliness and its euphemisms; in the male-bodied casts that leave

very little room for women; and in the values indexed by the very language of chivalry,⁴³ values performed within the worlds of the films.

The trailers for *Shōwa Zankyōden* (1965-1972) decode this for the viewer, providing keys not just to the linguistic chain of signification—articulating a set (indeed, a series) of related terms to form the lexicon “man”—but, by glossing the image with textual translation, communicates doubly via the visual field that a yakuza is a man. The fifth installment of the series, *Karajishi Jingi* (1969), draws a mathematical equation in its gloss, concluding with a sequence that equates wielding a sword (“*kiru kirimakuru*”) with being a man, and being a man



Figure 3.2 Otoko



Figure 3.3 Starring Takakura Ken

with Takakura Ken.⁴⁴ Elsewhere, in the trailer for *Shinde Moraimasu* (the 7th installment of the series; 1970), the aural and visual registers come together so that the by then very well-known lyrics of the series' theme song, “Karajishi Botan,” sung by Takakura himself, work together with the iconic image of Takakura passing through an otherwise emptied landscape together with his brother, *aniki*,⁴⁵ and rival, Ikebe Ryō, as the textual gloss reinforces that the Chinese character *otoko* should be read as *yakuza*.⁴⁶ Yakuza transliterates man. Man overdetermines this space. The



Figure 3.4 Otoko = Yakuza

palimpsest closes the loop of the tautology of a masculinity already understood, signaling above all other things man, such that the proliferation of an idiom of man, hearing the word and cataloguing images over and over as man, accumulates to a quality of being man that no one could mistake. We are indeed provided with an entire arsenal of textual reminders that return us to man: we know, already, that yakuza are men. Men are yakuza. Takakura Ken, a man. The textual register identifies for us, too, that those who heed *giri* and *ninjō*, display manliness (*otokodate*). In *otokodate* chivalry and man merge. For, *otokodate* translates to someone who employs the ethic of *kyōkaku* or *ninkyō*: to protect the weak and crush the strong. One term recurs in the constellation that has no ostensible claim to manliness though it codes the yakuza and, by virtue of being embedded in the chain of signification, I argue, aims at securing its association to man: *tosei*, a term to be discussed in greater detail below, which refers to “the

trade”—indexing the gambling trade and the yakuza’s historical business, and which also points to the film’s investment in attaching labor to both the yakuza and, most importantly, to man. *Tosei* features centrally as the opening to the ritual introduction of the wandering yakuza known as *jingi*, justifying the appearance of the non-affiliated yakuza in the name of *tosei*, which like *otoko*, in its utterance is expected *a priori* to have legibility. He who comes in observation (for it is in *tosei no giri*—the phrase embedded in *jingi* reproduced across the films) of the trade deserves the ear of the other yakuza, according to the code. Each of these iterations of the constellation that makes a yakuza a man, in their superfluity and in their insistent reproduction, solicit viewers to always already recognize their assembly, naturalizing the genre’s claim to man.



Figure 3.5 *Ninkyō ni ikiru otokodate* / The manliness that lives in ninkyō

This proliferation of pronouncements of manliness prompts Saitō Ayako to identify the films as performing a kind of brainwashing, indoctrinating spectators in the fiction and fantasy of being a “man” (72), noting that the films quite clearly index a shift in what it meant to be a man during the high growth years. Reading with Eve Sedgwick, Saitō argues that *ninkyō* makes way for a *modern* Japanese patriarchy by coupling traditions of male homosocial bonds, i.e. in samurai culture, with the regulatory Oedipal narrative of the West, to fortify a Japanese masculinity.⁴⁷ Without diminishing Saito’s tremendous analysis of the films’ blurring of the

homosocial, homoerotic and homophobic,⁴⁸ reading the texts as brainwashing imagines the same spectatorial paradigm I located in Sato Tadao earlier—of a strict binarized division between male and female that maps cleanly onto the sex-gender system via the sexual division of labor, rehearsing its normative fictions. It relies on a one-to-one model of identification, of male spectators identifying with the films' heroes and directly consuming their values.⁴⁹ We cannot assume, however, that the interpellated, the cinematic spectator or even the ardent fan, has heeded the call. We cannot assume, that is, that because patriarchy is problematized in these films, that it only speaks to the strengthening of its terms, when we can also see patently the processes of emptying its tautology simultaneously involves.

It is for good reason that critics like Saitō and Isolde Standish turn to psychoanalysis to think about the films' fixation on masculinity: it holds serious advantages for reading the clear symptoms of a patriarchy in crisis through structures of myth. Psychoanalysis also provides a means to think about structure itself, that which *ninkyō* emphatically reproduces. However, that work does not yet take into account the content of the structure, itself resorting to the universal structures of myth even when it grounds those narratives in nation—e.g. narratives of the samurai, imagined to stand in for the nation.⁵⁰ Ultimately that keeps the question of what makes a man a man suspended, and suspended in the structure. Like Saitō I see the proliferations of messages of manliness as a sign of a patriarchy in crisis; however, we must now ask why it is so difficult to avoid homogenizing both man and patriarchy as uniform, why the existing work concerned with gender in *ninkyō* passes over the much more proximate (that is, than samurai) patriarchal structure directly implicated by the films: that of the yakuza. Here, too, it is not just any yakuza being indexed, but a yakuza coded through the discourse of *ninkyō*. It is this form of patriarchy and its historical structure, its strategic returns and transvaluations, that carry a

masculinity tied not just to the romance of the yakuza but to a romance built on the yakuza's ties to labor, with significant implications for the political-economy of high growth.

I propose, as one solution for thinking about the problem of the structure of *otoko*, to adopt Iris Marion Young's notion of gender as a series. In her "Gender as Seriality: Thinking about Women as a Social Collective" Young calls on seriality to respond to the critique of essentialism staged by women of color feminists so that the collective "women" can continue to have currency (and, indeed, relevance for feminist politics) without defaulting to totalizing claims. Young builds her theory of seriality around Sartre's formulation of the concept in his two volume *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, contextualizing that, for Sartre, "a series is a social collective whose members are unified passively by the objects around which their actions are oriented or by the objectified results of the material effects of the actions of the others" (724). Thinking thus about the series *otoko* is both to think of "man" as the object around which *ninkyō* organizes itself *and* to think about *ninkyō* as organizing the series man. In its object orientation it the series is also a construct fitting for thinking about the consumer-subject of high growth.

Just as Young emphasizes that the object that organizes the gender of the social collective is the sexual division of labor (730) and Sartre's example of the series of those waiting for the bus, by virtue of the material realities of living in the city, are "united though not integrated through work" (Vol. I 256), what is absolutely central to the organization of the city is the "practico-inert" *labor* of the series' organization. To speak of a passive work is not the same as to speak of the dupe nor the mindwashed. Instead it is to acknowledge the movement that happens within the contradiction that Sartre writes about as the alienation of the mass.⁵¹ Which is to say, that just as *otoko* organizes *ninkyō* in a defense and construction of patriarchy, its allure does not work to secure the patriarchy, only to organize it as a desire. It may build a structure,

but that structure remains lost in the loops of its tautologies, searching for an identity that it does not yet have, meeting its isolation and alienation in perpetuity. It looks for its hero, in Takakura Ken and in the manliness he promises, but it keeps on looking—it is not fulfilled.⁵² The labor too is twofold: there is the labor of building a man that happens through *ninkyō* as well as the labor's connection to *ninkyō*'s *otoko* that attempts to craft a series to make public labor man's. The challenge within this, of then defining man, is that that definition operates internal to the category: *a man is a man is a man*. You know one when you see one. And you know him from his labor.

Serial Time in the Return of the Chivalrous

To understand the films' commitments to labor demands an examination of the history of the appearance of the language of *kyōkaku*, *ninkyō*'s synonym, within the history of the modern yakuza. While labor is built into the very fabric of the linguistic landscape of the films, with frequent and recurring mentions made to euphemistically being in “the trade” (the aforementioned *tosei*)—a direct reference to the yakuza's roots in gambling—the trade, labor, is directly thematized within each film's diegesis. It is over labor that the films' main conflicts are always waged. The films' Manichean worlds traffic in binaries that divide the good from the bad yakuza, assigning to the good yakuza an explicit connection to so-called “tradition”: to Japan through dress, weapons, and values.⁵³ He wears kimono, *haramaki*,⁵⁴ and *shirushi banten*,⁵⁵ fights by the sword, and lives by the code. The bad yakuza stands in for a ruthless westernized capitalism—he is exploitative, does not play fair, and will destroy you, disregarding your very humanity with his glasses, pomaded hair, and often rotund form. Within this paradigm, the laborers, coded most strongly through their donning of *shirushi banten* (which, as all of the collective's members wear the jacket, also visually draws a series in its repetition), find in

Takakura Ken's *aniki*—the older brother, the one will look after and protect you—a leader prepared to stand up to those forces. Ken-san protects labor from losing his fishing business, his quarry in a bidding contest, his small farm stand. He rebuilds what the bad yakuza knock down.

This too is where the films' period settings become particularly important. While produced in the postwar 60s, the films took spectators back to an early modern, generally prewar context with settings from the Meiji period leading up to the contemporaneous moment (though they were clustered around the Meiji period and the early Shōwa period).⁵⁶ This temporality is important for two interrelated reasons: the Meiji period is generally used to demarcate the modern from the premodern. In addition to this, the years from the Meiji period through the sixties mark the yakuza's development as an organization that standardized and nationalized in keeping with modernity. *Shōwa Zankyōden*, for instance, takes as its starting point the earliest days of the Shōwa period, which begins in 1926 during the interwar years, significant for their coding of a period of prosperity quite similar to that of the 60s high growth.⁵⁷ Even more historically pertinent to the films' Shōwa setting was that by the Shōwa period, the use of the language of *kyōkaku*, chivalry (language embedded in the second half of the series' title, the *kyō* of *Zankyōden*), was already being reappropriated, so that the films fold into *kyōkaku*, or what I would encourage us to think about as serializing, three time periods: the early modern moment when *kyōkaku* gained its currency, the early Shōwa period when the films were set and when *kyōkaku* had prominently and strategically resurfaced, and mid-Shōwa when the films were distributed (and *kyōkaku* was being made claim to once again, both in the films and in politics).

To understand the appropriation of *kyōkaku* it is necessary to be aware that the yakuza has its origins in two kinds of organizations: the *tekiya*, or merchants, who continue to run food stands at festivals today, and *bakuto*, or gamblers. As *bakuto* organized in early modern Japan,

they formed affiliative family units, *ikka*, often composed of outlaws of various sorts, defined as such because of their lack of registration within the strict categories of status prescribed by the Tokugawa shogunate. While the *bakuto*'s self-identification as *kyōkaku* who conducted themselves in a robin-hood-like fashion according to that ethic of protecting the weak and crushing the strong may always have been parts myth, their involvement in politics as what Eiko Maruko Siniawer has written about as “violence specialists,” in the middle of the Meiji period aligned with labor. Across a number of incidents known collectively as the Freedom and People’s Rights Movement, *bakuto* worked as strong arm organizers fighting the state on the side of the people: with impoverished farmers and laborers, as *bakuto* were often farmers as well at that time, as the state took on those organizations with policies that encouraged deflation, inordinately taxed them, and sacrificed their work.⁵⁸ At this early modern moment, the *bakuto* opposed the state, the police, and the wealthy. Thus, when they made claim to the language of *kyōkaku* at this time, they were making claim to an anti-authoritarian position: they identified with the weak and placed the state in the position of the strong. However by the 1920s, the *yakuza* had become involved in nationalist organizations; no longer outlaws, they were the very leaders of these groups and had become recruited by the state to deploy their physical force, per Siniawer, in the interest of forming a modern democracy. In their work with these organizations (including the Kokusuikai⁵⁹) they justified their use of violence through claims to a defense of a Japanese, or Yamato spirit, and, in appropriating the language of *kyōkaku* at this moment, carried its chivalrous associations into a paradigm that demanded a redefinition of the weak and the strong. The “*kyōkaku*” would be brought in during this period in labor disputes in a number of factory strikes, defended the “vulnerable” and small in number bosses from the angry masses of underpaid workers (casting them as “strong” according to their numbers).⁶⁰ The incidents that

they were brought in to manage stretched from 1920-1930, squarely within those first years of the Shōwa period that *Shōwa Zankyōden* is set. *Ninkyō*'s Manichean universe and above all things, its version of the yakuza, thus, builds on this appropriation, depending on the appropriation of *kyōkaku*'s Meiji legacy to serve Shōwa political means. It resuscitates the fiction that early Shōwa yakuza called upon, that the yakuza remained the arbiters of moral right, of the justice that defended the people (notably represented in the films via the mass, most often of aged workers) and labor, despite their turn to strikebreaking at the time of the films' release.

The serial articulation of *kyōkaku* does not conclude in the 1920s. In the postwar, as the season of politics previously mentioned ramped up, the language of *kyōkaku* once again resurfaced. In the yakuza's by then long established political activities with nationalist organizations like the *Nihon Kokusuikai* (or, National Essence Society), the claim to *kyōkaku* transformed into a claim to protecting the national essence. The yakuza came, by this point, to make up one part of what Siniawer calls "the conservative nexus." The yakuza fought side by side the police as their strong arm in the yakuza's final days of distributing state-sanctioned physical violence before that violence reached such an apex in 1960 (with the Miike Coal Mines strike, Anti-ANPO demonstrations, and the assassination of the Japanese socialist party chairman) that Siniawer argues it made it impossible for society to accept their methods any longer.⁶¹ *Bōryokudan*, the violence groups, had to change, so that thereafter "for the yakuza, wielding money was preferable to using violence because financial transactions were much less visible to the public eye" (173). The sixties then represented the moment in which the yakuza were engaged in a transformation, alternately beating students involved in mass campus demonstrations and in supporting and setting up the publically traded companies that would fuel

them in their futures. They were both in need of a PR salve and a distraction that would allow their incorporation into the standard state economy.

The romance of the films was, of course, intimately connected to this negotiation, a broad negotiation of the socius. That the *bōryokudan* were engaged in this messy transformation and in need of a PR campaign at this time is already well known. However, despite recurrent critiques of the student left's purchase into the romantic image of the yakuza in *ninkyō* films, often by the very same students being beaten by the yakuza in other contexts, there is little offered to explain what gave the films their currency in the face of this contradiction.⁶² What enables the coexistence of yakuza beating their ranks just as they put up Takakura Ken's yakuza image as their heroic ideal is the long history of evacuating the violent *work* of the yakuza via the invocation of a *kyōkaku* that retained the early modern *bakuto*'s defense of the people (that is, the claim to righteousness that returns to and incorporates their earlier defense in the Freedom and People's Rights Movement), a concept in its desire for righteousness that was flexible enough that the left and right equally could identify with it. It is thus *ninkyō* itself, which if we are to parse it, translates to the protector (*ninkyō*'s 任), the one we entrust with *kyōkaku*, with the protection and chivalry, that enables history to be forgotten even as it unfolds.

If we thus retain this phantasmatic righteous association of the yakuza with labor, the one that justifies their long and serial claim to chivalry, then we must ask again: what is *this* patriarchy after protecting in terms of labor in the 1960s? Previously, I have made mention of consumer boom in this period working to more radically demarcate a gendered division of labor. In addition to fashioning women anew as housewife super consumers, it also recruited men to occupy the flood of new jobs created by the prosperity of further industrialization. Scholars have written about this as the rise of the Japanese middle class, which normatively concentrated

management of the household around the homemaking wife and mother at the same time that men would travel further and work harder and longer to secure the good life.⁶³ While women in this model would increasingly be shut out of production, they became heads of the domestic domain, charged with converting the salaryman's efforts into rewards for all.⁶⁴ Tomiko Yoda has studied this formation to probe the history of identifying Japan as a "maternal society," associated more strongly with discourses that circulated in the 1980s around anxieties expressed through the mother complex (Oedipal complex) and the *kyōiku mama* (the education mom, hovering over homework). Yoda's intervention is to locate that anxiety as emerging already from the 60s via the "depaternalization of familialism" that both results in a call in the 90s for a restoration of fatherhood and also within *nihonjinron* or nationalist discourse in the 1970s made "the workplace [...] just about the *only* genuine site of social identity and agency available" (881). The paradigm that emerged in Japan's extraordinarily rapid high growth was one that encouraged a strict division of labor that aimed to divide the public/private sphere along strictly gendered lines.

When we think about the struggles over labor, the struggles to maintain labor, in *ninkyō*, what is also being displayed before us is a very public spectacle of the claiming of public workspace for men. In their fantasies of worlds without women, when the films operate in a serial logic, with a new film coming out every few months from the peak of Japan's high growth years, from 1964 until 1972, what they rehearse is a very public struggle to retain the space of post-industrial production not for men, but for a man with a moral center, who will manage this public sphere in the interests of the people. And if we are to retain the association with the yakuza patriarchy, this also functions to legitimate a rationalized model of labor—where, if the yakuza play by the rules, extricate and separate themselves from a pre-modern physicality with

no place in global economic competition, then they have a place in a future order. All of this said, if we are to engage *ninkyō* in a conversation about reproduction, and the serial forms of reproduction I propose are structuring not just these films but which reflect a larger paradigm of cinema in Japan from the 60s, we must heed the futurism that reproduction embeds. That is, reproduction is always about the return, about its inheritance and its yield. In social reproduction—again, that complex of activities that make our labor and our life possible, that make it possible for us to return to work—the inheritance is much more about that yield, the profit—the inheritance not in another body, but one that loops within the self.

A Dominating Figure in a Landscape: Ken-san's Labor in *Karajishi Botan*

If *ninkyō* offers a world saturated with death as much as with *otoko*, how then can we think about its reproductions? Director Ōshima Nagisa would frame *ninkyō*'s final blood baths, which resulted in death for all but the constant exception, Takakura Ken, as a purification that attested to *ninkyō*'s representation of an aesthetic rather than a philosophy (*Waga Nihon* 151). Given what he proceeds to write about Mishima Yukio's fascination with *ninkyō* in the context of Mishima's suicide,⁶⁵ Ōshima's critique of the aesthetization of violence makes clear that he aligns these purges, the logic of the purge, with a political conservatism, equally concerned with the threat of nationalism as well as the yakuza as an organization—he takes aim at the establishment itself, within which he rightfully includes the yakuza (147). However, focusing on these deaths and their participation in the aesthetics of violence, the focus too of Phil Kaffen's dissertation *Image Romanticism and the Responsibility of Cinema*,⁶⁶ forget the returns. Spectacular though the final choreographed fight scenes may be (and I would be remiss if I suggested this was all either Ōshima or Kaffen were invoking in their discussion of *ninkyō*'s aesthetics)—few could argue that it is not incredible to watch Takakura Ken take a bullet without

flinching, to single-handedly take on a group of men we know to be the “bad guys,” or to valiantly partner with his once rival turned comrade, Ikebe Ryō—it is critical that *ninkyō* does not end with utter destruction. Because Takakura Ken’s wandering on, by exception—the promise that he will come back again, returning in the next film and returning in some possible future even within the imagined futures of the world of each individual film—that is where *ninkyō*’s seriality begins and ends. That, I would argue, is what audiences invested in, even while calling out, as they did at Ōshima’s midnight screening, for Ken-san to get rid of the bastard.

For what *ninkyō* imagines as its future is a reproduction that neither require sex, nor does it require women. This is a man’s world with so few women in it that it is easy to imagine a *ninkyō* film with none at all. There is an utter disinterest in the films in heterosexual coupling and neither intergenerational transmission nor making anew perpetuates *ninkyō*’s values. Even if Takakura Ken goes into these final battle scenes to avenge a fallen *oyabun*, to fight for the labor contract against a rival and dirty *oyabun*, the loss of all of his brothers, even when attended to lovingly by him, as Ikebe Ryō serially is, also means that the male bonds that Saitō and Yomota invest in too dissolve, that they are tremendously vulnerable. Even while those bonds may be tenuous, Takakura Ken fulfills Yvonne Tasker’s assertion that the action hero, after Laura Mulvey, must be a “dominating figure in a landscape.” Indeed, in film after film, Takakura



Figure 3.6 A Dominating Figure in a Landscape

closes out the films by crossing over an evacuated landscape—a nowhere that is at the same time everywhere.⁶⁷ In the rare cases when he has not emptied the frame of all other bodies, i.e. in *Shōwa Zankyōden: Ippiki Ōkami* [Lone Wolf] (1966) where Ken-san is carted off to prison after his righteous kills, he clears instead the center of the frame, parting seas of people to make way for his exceptional procession. Thus, whether he survives alone within the diegesis or merely stands in isolation, his exceptionality is always transmitted to create a visual chain with us, the spectator, telling us that *we* can rely on him and his return, even when he departs with his back turned away from us. That image is reproducible into an infinity.

Karajishi Botan (the second installment of *Shōwa Zankyōden*; 1966) is unusual within the *ninkyō* corpus for its meditation on futurity through the figure of the child, a presence even more rare in *ninkyō* than women. After intervening to preserve his brother's love, ostensibly threatened by the toothless son of the town's bully *oyabun*, Ken-san reluctantly settles the score by entering into an "agreement among men" to kill the rival *oyabun* Akiyama in an exchange of lives identified by the nasty *oyabun*. This exchange, which pivots around a woman cut out of the equation as soon as she enters into it, makes men of the entire chain of actors associated with her (from her paramour to the *oyabun*'s son to Ken-san's Hanada, and even to Akiyama).⁶⁸ There is a distinction that emerges in this chain, however, that marks Hanada and Akiyama, through the latter's death, with a nobility of spirit. While the duel between the two men begins with Akiyama announcing he will not go without a fight because so many people depend on him (invoking the logic of the mass and what we will come to learn is a mass organized around labor), it is always already won by Ken-san by virtue of his being Ken-san. Akiyama's death also occasions Hanada's first return, presumably having been sent to prison after remaining by Akiyama's body to be found out for the crime. When he returns three years later, the impasse he enters into is



Figure 3.7 Visualizing Impasse

announced formally
with a rock wall that
takes up the majority of
the frame.⁶⁹ Hanada's
first stop is to visit
death, where Akiyama
once again structures

one of *ninkyō*'s ritual returns: to the scene of the cemetery. Even while death is observed, respected, in these scenes, death remains firmly encrypted to give the opportunity of announcing Ken-san's life. These scenes, too, isolate Ken-san within the frame, attaching his living body to the land (reinforced tonally with the wheat-colored palette that so often accompanies these images).

This first visit to Akiyama's grave also precipitates Hanada's encounter with Akiyama's son, Kazuo, and Kazuo's mother, who has taken over the family business in Akiyama's wake. Given the person Akiyama showed himself to be in death, Hanada feels in this moment hailed into a kind of surrogacy with both Kazuo and the mother, what is known within the milieu of *ninkyō* as *giri*. Rather than invest in this model as a kind of replication of the biological, plugging into an existing familial structure, what is being modeled in this case is the *yakuza*'s structure of affiliation. Instead of producing a great romance, even in the face of a clear *frisson* between Hanada (who lies about his name to hide his identity) and Akiyama's wife, what this triangle and surrogacy establishes most of all is the rightful place of labor, both domestically and publically. For, having no father, Kazuo laments never having experienced a festival. Hanada steps in to play the role of father in this context, to intervene in the narrative that maternalism could be

sufficient for Kazuo's rearing (betraying the anxiety that Yoda locates in the sixties around the depaternalization of the family because of the increasingly absent father), demonstrating the importance of the reproductive labor of the father *figure*. There are things, Hanada shows, that only a man could provide.

This is nowhere made more true, however, than in his interventions around Akiyama's business. When the same bully *oyabun* attempts to unfairly fix a mining contract in his favor by shutting out Mita Yoshiko's Akiyama, she falls ill, and right into Hanada's arms. Hanada becomes her dual caretaker, tending both to her illness and to the business, reassuring her, and making certain, at least for the same temporary interval that is their personal relation (and recall this is true of any relation that Ken-san will form), that her men are managed. He rallies her troops, he gets dirty beside them in the quarry. He stands above and over it, able to anticipate the dirty tactics of the competition. With her business and health assured, and his true identity already revealed, Hanada once again is obligated to wander on. He pauses wistfully to look into the home that he cannot have with the two Akiyamas and Kazuo notices him. For a moment they stand together on the path, before Hanada proceeds on, giving his hat to Kazuo but refusing to heed his call, walking on with his back to Kazuo as to us. He will not be Kazuo's father. He will not domesticate and will always wander on, but will always be prepared with what it takes to support each and every labor structure, domestic or public—he can care for it all.

Acting for in Fuji Junko's *Red Peony Gambler*

Apart from Ueno Chizuko's scathing critique that the masculinist culture tying *ninkyō* to the anti-establishment political movements of the New Left in the 60s left women only the option of becoming a Fuji Junko or a Gewalt Rosa,⁷⁰ the vast majority of writing about Fuji Junko and the *Red Peony Gambler* (1968-1972) *ninkyō* series she starred in otherwise champions

the films as a signifier of women's liberation.⁷¹ Fuji entered the film business and *ninkyō* after much trepidation from her film producer father Shundō Kōji, the man so responsible for *ninkyō* that he was known as their “Don.” When, in his *Ninkyō eiga-den* [Tales of *ninkyō* film],⁷² Shundō attributes the concern to his idea that normal (*futsū*) girls should find a husband and get married (150-1), he speaks beyond feelings exclusive to his daughter and to the broader paradigm that birthed *ninkyō*: that they were not for girls.⁷³ Nevertheless, with the encouragement of *ninkyō*'s most celebrated director, Makino Masahiro, Fuji not only joined Tōei's impressive roster of supporting female talent in *ninkyō* and rose to star status with the *Red Peony Gambler* series.⁷⁴ Despite Fuji's own much-storied retirement from the film industry in 1972 to marry,⁷⁵ the persistence of the films' association with liberation arises from Oryū's—Fuji's *Red Peony Gambler* of the films' title—apparent defiance of this normative gendered script from the story's onset. Within the world of the film, with a marriage all but decided, the slaying of Oryū's *oyabun* father prompts her to set out to fearlessly avenge his death, against all gendered expectations of an early modern woman (given the film's Meiji setting), let alone a woman in *ninkyō* otherwise relegated to a decidedly supporting role (including Fuji herself). True to form for liberation logics,⁷⁶ that absence of fear and her ability to wield a weapon *as a woman*, to stand at the center of a male dominated industry and genre, has prompted critics and audiences alike to locate promise in the *Red Peony Gambler*'s “strong” heroine.⁷⁷ So much so that, contrary to the master narrative that *ninkyō* died when *Battles without Honor and Humanity's jitsuroku eiga* (vérité film) eclipsed the no longer bearable romance of *ninkyō*,⁷⁸ Shundō's co-author and film critic Yamane Sadao instead contends that *ninkyō*, experiencing, indeed, a *flowering* of female-centered series at its close in the late 60s and early 70s, died with Fuji's retirement (161).⁷⁹

Gregory Barrett's comparison of *Red Peony Gambler* to *Ugetsu* (Mizoguchi Kenji, 1953) highlights the role the disruption of what he calls the "normal phase of her life cycle, marriage" (109) plays in motivating revenge for both women. In this he makes overtures to *Red Peony Gambler*'s concern with the sexual division of labor, which he is right to suggest connects both to the film's incorporation of the visual motif of red peonies and the progression, over the series, that moves Oryū from avenging by male proxy to killing with her own hands (109-110). Pursuing Barrett's suggestion of the concern of the films, which feature Ken-san in a "supporting" role, with the sexual division of labor through the vector of the defense of male labor we have already seen in Takakura Ken's *ninkyō* films reveals that what is at greatest stake in *Red Peony Gambler* is how labor itself is defined. For, *Red Peony Gambler*'s fixation on gender norms and the corresponding sexual division of labor it maps, betray the same anxiety about female labor and the threat of a maternal society that we have seen in the Takakura Ken-starring *ninkyō* films.

While the ethos of *ninkyō* devotes itself always to working on behalf of others—the aforementioned working *for*⁸⁰—*Red Peony Gambler* overwhelmingly demonstrates that the only labor available to Fuji Junko, within the contained world of each individual film and across the series, is the work of crossing over: to work to no longer carry the weight of qualified existence—to no longer be a woman (to not be an *onna toseinin*, but to be a *toseinin*). In this series, we do not see the negotiation of market labor politics we find in Takakura Ken's *ninkyō*—absent are the representations of manual labor: her work is not to defend the quarry, the fisherman, the merchant. Fuji Junko's work is to combat the qualification "onna" that we always already know she cannot throw off. Overwhelmingly thematized in the dialogue, this is reinforced dramatically in the films' structure and *mise-en-scène*.⁸¹

The problem of labor coalesces around an emblematic moment at the climax of the first film in the series, in an exchange Oryū has with Ken-san's Katagiri after he has avenged her father's death on her behalf. She asks: "did you do it for me" (*watashi no tame ni?*)? "No, I did it for myself" (*Iya, ore no tame ni da*), he responds. Not only does Katagiri claim the revenge for himself, but in doing so, he claims it *as his work* when he explains it was something he did not want her to do. In declaring he did it for himself, he suddenly and singularly invokes the masculine, and really masculinist, pronoun *ore*,⁸² to announce that he did it for her to insure his own masculinity.⁸³ Doing it for himself means that in avenging in her stead, he did it *for* her to preserve himself, to preserve the chain of signification that marries yakuza to men. He demonstrates in this that it is his reproductive labor to reproduce himself by supporting—that is, protecting—women because that remaps, in the ethos of *kyōkaku*, a gendered hierarchy that understands women as the "weak" and affirms that he remains the "strong."⁸⁴ I did it for myself so that you could not, so that you could not cross over—so that you could not make the claim that you continuously try to: that you are a man and thus a yakuza. A yakuza is a man, which is me.

This dynamic of doing for is communicated most strongly through the red peonies that audiences cannot help but seek out given the series' title. We know before watching to anticipate a symbolic motif around the peonies. For Barrett, the red peonies foreshadow Oryū's "fate" (109); however, fated though she might be to seek revenge for the blood-letting of her father, we know that the bloody ending cannot be hers given the grammar of *ninkyō* and its reliance on the survival of its protagonists. The peonies do indeed heavy-handedly communicate, i.e. Oryū's "fall from grace" in the imagination of her acolyte Fugushin (Yamamoto Rinichi, who plays against the villainous, and often cruel type he is featured as in other *ninkyō* series) who, on the

verge of death having attempted to act on her behalf against her father's murderer, has a fever dream organized around the peonies. The montage he recalls takes her from a dew-eyed adolescent surrounded with the "purity" of white peonies that, over the montage's sequence, turn red as she transforms into the woman who becomes the Red Peony Gambler, before ultimately turning black, with her evacuated from the frame (though, of course, still very much present within it thanks to the peony).



Figure 3.8 Peony Sequence Shot 1



Figure 3.9 Peony Sequence Shot 2



Figure 3.10 Peony Sequence Shot 3



Figure 3.11 Peony Sequence Shot 4



Figure 3.12 Peony Sequence Shot 5

It is not, contra Barrett's assertion, her fate that the black peony prepares us for, but Fugushin's: a death mediated through the peony, through Oryū's peony, who Fugushin makes clear he has devoted himself to at the expense of romantic partnership (albeit with incessant illusions to his sexual desire for her and especially her adolescent form). That devotion, that complicity with the peony, and his interpellation to work *for* kills Fugushin. Fugushin dies for her. The peonies too disrupt the frame as Fugushin confronts his rival (his rival, that is, by virtue of it being hers). The same peonies sit prominently in the frame when Ken-san's Katagiri confronts the same foe, announcing for Katagiri as for Fugushin, and even for Oryū herself, that all of these activities operate *for* her. Even when she does not appear on screen, in frame, she is ever present, woven into its *mise-en-scène*. The peonies serve as the medium, as Fuji Junko herself does⁸⁵: through the peonies action and, thus labor, is served. They remind us that all of what happens in the film are for her, but they equally remind us that all she does is likewise *for*, as the peonies provide the material form that ties her to her lineage—the soiled index to her father's death, that which called her into the yakuza fold, and disrupts that too.

That the peonies often stand in between highlights the geometry of crossing over that organizes the film, announcing the barrier that is the red peony it/herself. This is pronounced by the film's dialogue, in the linguistic register that articulates crossing over in terms of Oryū's desire to be and become a man. These come in Oryū's rebuttals that she is a man to the relentless reminders that she receives, in the gambling den, in greeting rival and friendly oyabun, that she is not. More than the verbal volley that questions her status as a yakuza from each claim to the position—for the claim to man arises from her claim to being yakuza, it is the pivot term for yakuza, *tosei*, around which crossing becomes the term that organizes the film and which implicates labor at its very core. *Tosei*, recall, is a term that signals the euphemistic “trade.” It

thus affirms the yakuza's work as such, as a living made in labor. It is tied in this way to the *bakuto*'s labor history as well as the history of the *bakuto*'s life, his livelihood. Even while it is a term understood as "living" (a Japanese-Japanese dictionary defines *tosei* as *kurashi*: to live, to make a living), its component parts tell another story: *tosei*'s Chinese characters, 渡世, literally refer to crossing over (渡) into another world (世), a meaning disavowed or forgotten when the term is defined as "gambling" or "the trade," or an indistinction of the two. However, when *tosei* is invoked sparingly in a film about a female yakuza,⁸⁶ absented of the trades that make a living, evacuated of the trades performed by the moral yakuza, the *ninkyō*, it reinvigorates those buried meanings: reminding us of the labor of crossing over and that labor as a form of life. That the language of *tosei* in fact bookends the film, invoked in the Red Peony's performance of the *jingi* at both film's opening and end, articulates that desire as fundamental to her story.

However, it is not the discursive presence of *tosei* alone that suggests that labor organizes the film. Instead, the first volume of the series makes clear through a visual association that pairs Oryū with water and, progressively, with water under bridges, that Oryū's work is that of crossing over.⁸⁷ The presence of water alone would not be nearly as meaningful if it would not come to punctuate Oryū's moments of solo interaction with Ken-san/Katagiri. While each vignette of Oryū's pursuits begins with her departure by sea, with water featured prominently in the background, when she and Katagiri first encounter one another, it is near a river, accentuated by a litany of docked boats. This pairing has the injured Oryū (no less, with a sword wound that slices a bloody opening, all too evocative of a vaginal opening, directly through the white peony tattooed on her shoulder) receiving a *literal* and generous application of salve from Katagiri, who reminds her verbally, though still a stranger, that she is still a woman even if she can take on any man. Of course this occurs under his watchful gaze, as he stands over her, intimately applying

the salve, in a moment full of romantic possibility that speaks also to his desire to make her a woman. The reproductive labor of his care is thus interwoven with an insistently gendered script that articulates a clear and overdetermined hierarchy—psychically, spatially, romantically—that is overwhelming in its coarticulations. This association of Oryū with water would not matter nearly as much if it were not the case that Takakura Ken is so emphatically associated across his *ninkyō* series and in his heroic star figure with land.⁸⁸ If, following Mulvey’s adage that the male protagonist is a “figure in a landscape” (63)—he who “demands a three-dimensional space”—placing Fuji Junko in direct relief to this in her pairing with water underscores her fluidity, her malleability, her likelihood to shift. In contrast to Takakura Ken’s command of the land elsewhere, this emphasis on the flow of *nagaremono*’s root (the *nagare* of *nagaremono*’s wanderer), highlights her vulnerability in those fluctuations, her instability. Where Takakura will wander over land to promise a return, tied to that very land, her wandering by sea, suggests a wandering without guarantees.⁸⁹ A wandering, too, which is always already fluid, never guaranteed, but stuck in limbo as it is all medium rather than actor. It guarantees the eternal return, but to the glass ceiling. It will not land, even when Oryū comes to exact her own revenge. It will be a reminder that she is supplemental, qualified, that she still is not a man.

Give me Your Death!: The Remaking of the Sexual Division of Labor in High Growth

Ninkyō’s most emblematic reproduction comes via the *Shōwa Zankyōden* series: its infamous tagline, uttered by Ken-san before he proceeds with his final strike: “Shinde Moraimasu!” While looser translations have rendered this as “give me your life,” “Shinde moraimasu” is served better by a translation of “(kindly) give me your death,” combining as it does the verb “to die” with the humble-honorific “to receive.” It thus replicates a solicitation of sovereign power, where its humility is a kind of joke already embedded within it. The death will

be taken because Takakura Ken has already seized the audience's heart, he is already sovereign before he ever wanders in or on. This rehearsal, and *ninkyō*'s stakes in rehearsing the sovereign power of an exceptional man, becomes all the more pronounced when in *Red Peony Gambler* what Oryū instead utters as she enters these same battle scenes is "*inochi o morau*." There are three notable shifts here: she literally asks for the *life (inochi)* to be given to her, instrumentalizing that life with the particle *o*, and calls on the casual form of the verb (*morau*) in issuing her command. Her liberties to speak casually speak to her efforts to assert herself in the same way I have written above as that desire to cross over into a field already inhospitable to her, requiring her acquisition of a life. To be a *toseinin* would be to be alive, to have a life. Ken-san, already speaking of the position of life, needs to eliminate that which does not serve him to go on.

What, then, is the position of the spectator? Are we, like Oryū, asking for his life? In death, Takakura would be revered as a treasure, a national treasure. In this he remained locked within the logic of consumer capital which he emerged from within, that logic which in high growth sold to consumers three sets of mass produced and mass consumed "treasures," language borrowed from the pre-modern imperial regalia (referring to the mirror, sword, and jewel), which in high growth translated first to the set of the electric fan, washing machine, and rice cooker, then in the 60s to the car, air conditioners, and, critically, the color tv, before transforming at high growth's peak to those objects most legible as signs of conspicuous consumption of the middle class: jewelry, vacations, and the stand-alone home (Kelly 195).⁹⁰ His death observed in its initial wake as something like a state secret, kept quiet as if a head of who the people could not bear to lose state had passed, Takakura Ken finally came to be the treasure through which consumer desires had passed since the 1960s.

In the last piece he wrote before he passed away, submitted to the magazine *Bungei Shunjū* just four days before he died, Takakura would reflect on the period when he was making *ninkyō*. While this came in the service of the magazine's request that he reflect on the seventy years that had passed since the end of the war, Ken-san relays a moving anecdote about his encounter with an Ajari-san.⁹¹ Having reached his limit with the apparatus around the work, Ken-san goes out seeking nature and encounters the Ajari-san on the grounds of a Kyoto shrine (97). The Ajari-san self-identifies as a fan of *ninkyō* and describes the energy he received watching Ken-san on the screen, thinking to himself that Ken-san was trying so hard (98), this, coming from a man who had walked the equivalent of twice around the globe. That narrative of Ken-san's effort echoed across the remembrances produced in his death. Sawaki Kotaro's own response to Ken-san's piece commented on his first meeting with the actor and his discovery that Ken-san never even sat on set (112), another figure of his labor which often repeats in discussions of Ken-san's commitment to his trade. In addition, all of the associations with labor embedded in the representational universes of *ninkyō* congealed in the body of Takakura so that, as is common with the star, he became indistinguishable from his characters, super human. The embodiment of labor itself. Takakura's closing section, titled "Ikiru no ni hisshi" [Even though I'm living, I'm fighting for dear life], offers an explanation for that effort in his feeling that he was always one foot out the door.

On his death, held up as a national treasure, lauded for the effort he as an actor and character, collapsed into one, always maintained, inspiring spectators to themselves try harder (in keeping with the demands of industrial global capital), Takakura Ken still had not died. The promise built in the *ninkyō* films to go on, to reproduce the serial chronotope, no longer demanded the memory of the films themselves, just as *kyōkaku*'s revaluation no longer

demanded that the weak be associated with laboring bodies. Indeed, Ken-san living on no longer requires the body of Ken-san at all, because the work has already been done, a memory available to catapult him into a future. He remains enshrined in the same grammar, the same logic of the *ninkyō*—protected within a paradigm of state secrecy, revered as the same national treasure. He fulfills the promise of remaining embedded in *Shōwa Zankyōden*'s *zan* (残). *Shinde Moraimasu*. Give me your death, but give me your death so that I may live. *Ninkyō ni ikiru otokodate*. The masculinity that lives in *ninkyō*. The serial model imagined a world where reproduction did not require sexuality to perpetuate itself. Neither though, Ken-san, demonstrates, does it require a biological body any longer.



Figure 3.13 Yokō Tadanori, *Sengo Nihon Eiga no Hitotsu no Nagare* / *One Current of Postwar Japanese Cinema*

¹ While I will discuss this within the chapter, this phrase is one that has become emblematic of *ninkyō*. Penned by journalist Sawaki Kotarō in his 1984 memoir *Bourbon Street*, it has become integral to staging analysis of the films (see, e.g., Saitō, “Takakura Ken no aimai na nikutai”).

² This tends to be marked by the Asama Lodge incident of 1972, which will be referenced again below. On the violence of this moment and shifts in the violent tactics of the yakuza over the course of the 1960s, see the conclusion to Eiko Maruko Siniawer’s *Ruffians, Yakuza, Nationalists*.

³ The consensus of livedoor bloggers indicates that the delay in distributing the news owes to his family’s concern that if the public knew about his death, they would be unable to mourn in peace. Indeed, Sharon Hayashi conveyed to the author in conversation that Takakura’s Akasaka office received so many flowers in memorium of Takakura’s death, that the office could not contain them all, such that they overflowed into all parts of the building.

⁴ Among the noteworthy publications to include materials or to devote special issues to Ken-san’s passing are: the monthly *Bungei Shunjū* which published the last piece that Takakura wrote before he passed, a reflection on the 70th anniversary of the War; Japan’s most prominent film magazine, *Kinema Junpō*, which published a special issue devoted to Ken-san in January (with their following issue devote to Bunta Sugawara, another star of yakuza film, who died just after Ken-san); and the literary magazine, *Yurika* [Eureka].

⁵ Mifune enjoyed a prolific acting career, but was especially well known for his starring roles in Akira Kurosawa films.

⁶ Much has been made of the mythology of the code in Japanese culture (especially, i.e., in the code of the samurai). Still, it seems important to emphasize that the code both speaks to the mythos of the ethical commitments of the yakuza, but it also has historically been represented within yakuza organizations as material objects—written codes of ethical commitments. On the former (the mythic), see Kaplan and Dubro’s *Yakuza* (Jake Adelstein’s pop journalism take on the Yakuza, *Tokyo Vice*, demonstrates the allure and identification that can happen with yakuza through his own adoption of the language of the code to think about his ethical position). Adelstein provides examples of the latter (the code as document) in his Ted Talk, “Hard Lessons Learned from Tough People.”

⁷ While this may be exemplified in a US context with Takakura’s appearances in *The Yakuza* (1974), *Black Rain* (1989), and *Mr. Baseball* (1992), Takakura was wildly popular throughout Asia, particularly in China where, after his *Kimi Yo Funnu no Kawa o Watare* (1976) became one of the first foreign film to be shown following the Cultural Revolution, he became an icon whose films (including the yakuza films discussed here) were highly sought after. Though, he would eventually also star in Zhang Yimou’s *Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles* (2005), both Xueping Zhong and Kwai-Cheung Lo have described Takakura’s status as symbol of masculinity since the 80s in China. Upon Takakura’s Death, the Japanese mass media devoted considerable coverage to his mourning in China, where news of his death had circulated widely.

⁸ While both the samurai and, via a more complicated narrative, the yakuza are taken as figures of traditional Japanese masculinity, Stephen Vlastos’ take up of Eric Hobsbawm’s notion of the invention of tradition in *Mirror of Modernity* to historicize the rhetoric of tradition within Japan’s modernization cannot be emphasized enough. Figures like the samurai and, indeed, the yakuza, rely on a continual reinvention of their pasts to construct a continuity that may never have been. Often, but not exclusively, this also depends on the kinds of linear and binary logics that feed, for instance, orientalism. Tak Fujitani’s *Splendid Monarchy* provides an excellent example how invented traditions around the emperor system contributed to the construction of modern Japan.

⁹ In the promotional efforts for Ken-san’s final film *Dearest (Anata e)*, *Bungei Shunjū* released a photographic study of Ken-san, that materialized this link, bringing him to Tōhō Studios, where Mifune had acted, to pose as the “eighth samurai” before a more than life sized poster of Kurosawa’s *Seven Samurai*.

¹⁰ While the number of news articles that reproduce this language is too numerous to name here, this is language that recurred across the coverage, especially in Japanese outlets (in both Japanese and English), from broadcasting organizations like NHK to the major newspapers—Asahi, Mainichi, Yomiuri—and even the Japan Times.

¹¹ While this is an idea that recurs, it can be located in *Kinema Junpō*’s introduction to their special feature on him, “*Shokugyō, eiga haiyū. Takakura Ken*” [Occupation, Film Actor. Takakura Ken] (25). His ability to be all things to anyone is in keeping with theories of the film star, especially as described in Gledhill’s *Stardom: Industry of Desire* (1991).

¹² The reactions to Takakura Ken’s death collected in NHK special reporting, broadcast and available online on November 18, 2014 as “Takakura Ken-san shikyo zenkoku kakuchi kara oshimu koe” [The Death of Takakura

Ken—Voices Missing [Him] From all Across the Country], exemplify this range of response, most notably in terms of its geographical mapping. While the title may suggest a limit to response within the nation, the coverage also included remembrances from abroad and thus his star in its transnational circulation.

¹³ We see this language in *The Hollywood Reporter's* obituary for Takakura. They would also make comparisons, long held, of Takakura to Clint Eastwood. Both this comparison and its characterization would then be picked up and lauded by the Japanese media as representative of his exemplary reputation abroad.

¹⁴ Motivated by an interest in what I would call the law (or the force of law)—one that arises out of the framework of myth to reproduces the thematic touchstones associated with yakuza narratives (*giri*, *ninjō*, and especially the ethic of *jingi*) to evidence the eruption of violence from a “socio-psycho-analytic perspective”—Isolde Standish’s study of “tragic masculinity” focuses on *Abashiri Prison* in particular. While that series represents a rich text that converses with many of the arguments I will make here, I focus especially on the *Shōwa Zankyōden* series for its direct implication of the period with its approach to the genre.

¹⁵ Isolde Standish takes on this project with her *Myth and Masculinity* in the Japanese cinema, Saitō with “Takakura Ken’s Ambiguous Body.”

¹⁶ Methodologically my approach here is informed by Edward Said’s contrapuntal analysis, which he writes about in *Culture and Imperialism* as being invested in looking at “intertwined and overlapping histories” both as an alternative (in the case of writing a comparative literary history of imperialism) to “a politics of blame and to the even more destructive politics of confrontation and hostility” (19). What Said says “we need to do” is “look at these matters [of imperialism, its history, and its new forms] as a network of interdependent histories that it would be inaccurate and senseless to repress, useful and interesting to understand” (19). While a postcolonial framework might initially appear quite apart from the matter of this chapter, Ken-san stands, I will argue, at the nexus of a new form of imperialism, representing as he does the formation and reformation—the ideological reproduction—of a national and nationalist form of masculinity. He represents a man *for Japan* most of all, where questions of empire and the machinations of imperial force do not remain as distant as desire might lead us to believe. In thinking about this form of masculinity, I follow Said’s investment in looking at the range of cultural activity, sometimes contradictory, that helps us to get at the circulation of power and pleasure that invests itself in the figure of Takakura Ken. I am grateful to Jennifer Terry for encouraging me, at a presentation I delivered to the Department of Gender and Sexuality Studies of an earlier version of this essay, to draw out more elements of this contrapuntal approach, which returned me to the Said.

¹⁷ Compare, for instance, Saitō’s introduction to her piece on Takakura Ken, which begins with an acknowledgement that she had not watched the films in real time feeling as if they were a world only for men (67) and the description of the retrospective interest she developed in the films after reading Oshima discussion of the students’ response to the films, with Yomota’s introduction to the same volume on male bonds in Asian cinema (Saitō and Yomota’s response to the work of Eve Sedgwick) which initiates from his own love of action cinema and is organized around his first-hand experience of the films.

¹⁸ In my use of “serial time” here I am influenced by Bliss Cua Lim’s earlier essay, “Serial Time: Bluebeard in *Stepford*,” which invokes “serial time” as a frame for understanding how the intertext of “Blue Beard” in *Stepford Wives* works to code “historically tenacious forms of domination,” or “the nonsynchronous texture of gender norms” (185). The story of Blue Beard—“folklore’s first serial killer” and a “serial bachelor,” Lim reminds us—“is a potent emblem for women’s longstanding fears of literal or metaphoric death in wedlock” (166). My use of serial time departs from Lim’s however on several grounds. While it shares the concern about the recurrence and remaking of gender norms over time, rather the supplying its structure, it relates more immediately to the medium of television’s serial organization. In addition, the examples this chapter relies on suggest that rather than using the language of nonsynchronicity—of being out of time, or what really seems to be suggestive of a non-linear time—it is more accurate in these cases to think about the structures of time as, yes, reproductions and, as such, a kind of cyclic return of time or what Jeanne Schepers read in my presentation of this material for the Gender and Sexuality Studies department as a kind of “cascading time.” There is a logic and a shape to the returns I track that is at odds with the language of nonsynchronicity.

¹⁹ While the case of Takakura Ken has a great deal to contribute to star studies, it is work that would not have been possible without Richard Dyer’s *Stars* (first published in 1979), which inaugurated the star as text. The Christine Gledhill edited collection, *Stardom: Industry of Desire* (1991) further developed the field, adding to Dyer’s sociological and semiotic approach, an approach informed by the psychoanalytic approach to cinema that was gaining traction in film studies at the time, particularly among feminist film theorists like Gledhill. Given the

interventions of cultural studies as well, this collection wrestles with the politics of the star and how, through the star, political negotiation happens in the representational sphere. That said, there is a lot focused on issues of identification and legitimation of the political potential of the star in a way that has now registered as a viable analytic. I too share the interest that Gledhill's volume invests in the political economy of stardom, but much less from an industry-historical perspective and much more to the star's position within a broader political-economic paradigm in the cultural sphere. In this way I see the star as an image that is material (rather than in a regime of signs and signifiers disconnected from material conditions). My efforts here are thus to mobilize this image materialized to understand the problem of being a man.

²⁰ In this I am referring to the enthusiasm for Ken-san from both the left and the right, from counter-cultural formations and the position of the position of the hegemonic consumer alike. Indeed, it is because of the much commented upon identification of audiences with Takakura that explains why this chapter focuses on him to talk about *ninkyō* rather than the genre writ large.

²¹ In his gloss of *ninkyō* in his *Japanese Film History's 100 Years*, Yomota argues that the thing that made it possible for both the new left student radicals and the ultra-right nationalists like Mishima to both attach themselves to *ninkyō* was that the films upheld the sort of compulsory system they could self identify with, that allowed a claim to the community while leaving individualism in tact (174). This offers the beginnings of an incredible insight, but, interestingly, it still forgets the mass: those viewers who may not have been a member of either of these groups who have come to represent the villains and heroes of the consumers of *ninkyō* but who attended the films in droves—that is, in some of the highest numbers that box office saw within this period. In his book with journalist Yamane Sadao, the producer responsible for bringing *ninkyō* to the screen, Shundo Kōji, will talk about the film's appeals in terms of offering “dreams and romance.” This language of romance recurs to in Shiba and Aoyama's *Yakuza Film and its Time*. The two texts thus code is the structure of fantasy the films constructed with mass appeal, an appeal that Shiba and Aoyama are right to point to cooperating with the consumerism of the time (even if in their assessment it was the touchstones of *giri* and *ninjō*, to be discussed below, that specifically fit into this process) (14). The film's formulaic structures as both genre and contract films (the very thing that could reliably draw back the mass audience) proved tiring for directors like Ishii Teruo (who directed many of the films in the *Abashiri Prison* series and an early experiment with the genre, *Shōwa Kyōkakuden*) who would comment in an interview with Chris D for his *Outlaw Masters of Japanese Film* that he felt like he grew weary of the series, “making almost the same picture time after time. So, I wanted to have Takakura killed in the last one I did. But, of course, that wasn't going to happen. After that I gave up my claim on the series to whichever director wanted to take it over” (160). The films he would proceed to make after *Abashiri* challenged the mass mode of address of the yakuza films he made at Tōei, as well as the conditions of production that had the studio forcing him to make certain films (159), proceeding as he did to make a much more extreme cinema built on sex and violence. Director Makino Masahiro, on the other hand, who likely helmed more *ninkyō* films than anyone else, embraced the mass audience, delighted in giving fans what they wanted (and referring to them as “true fans”) (see Yamada *Nihon kyōkakuden*). However, the mass what not unknown to anyone, so instead what I mean when I write here about the disavowal of the mass, what I refer to is a movement that happens in claiming these objects for or through political aims.

²² Many of the essays collected in the *Postwar Japan as History* collection are instructive here, but of particular note is Marilyn Ivy's “Formations of Mass Culture” and Charles Yuji Horioka's “Consuming and Saving.”

²³ I refer once more to the work collected in *Postwar Japan as History* but also such work as Brinton's *Women in the Economic Miracle*, and Andrew Gordon's postwar labor history *The Wages of Affluence*.

²⁴ Certainly this extends the work of Fredric Jameson, who, writing on mass culture, contextualizes genre as fulfilling what he calls the “serial ‘public’ of mass culture”'s desire to “see the same thing over and over again” (137). So, too, should be said of the Frankfurt school, which contributed fundamentally to the opening of discussions of the aesthetic in the political field.

²⁵ The James Brown song of the same name was released contemporaneously to *ninkyō*, in the United States in April of 1966. Though the lyrics achingly dramatize sexism, given Brown's own biography the song invites a feminist critique of what ultimately appears to be a celebration of that very sexism. The song itself, interestingly, was written by an ex-girlfriend of Brown's and would be the subject of a long legal battle over not only questions of authorship but also about royalties she had not been paid (interesting, that is, because of the material implications of the inequalities ultimately enacted through and by the song).

²⁶ The conflict between *giri* and *ninjō*, or what is often translated as honor and humanity, have carried overdetermined associations not just with the genre, but with the inheritance yakuza narratives owe to samurai

stories, central as the two concepts were to both the “code” of the samurai and to the yakuza’s code. Those involved with production of *ninkyō* called on this language, for instance, in the trailers as well as in the theme songs that would carry over the length of each series, organizing them together (see also Shiba and Aoyama for more here). That said, the saturation of this discourse (that insists always and everywhere that that is what the films are *about*), evacuates them of meaning, apart from what they indicate in terms of the attachment to the preferred reading of the films. Mitsuyo Wada-Marciano in her *Nippon Modern* has also taken critics to task who have uncritically reproduced these values within conversations about genre, resorting to ahistorical culturalism that sutures over differences, i.e. within the yakuza genre, let alone between samurai and yakuza films, to manufacture reductive continuities (see “Problematizing Genre as a Linear Form” (47-9)). Also worthy of note within the context of *giri* and *ninjō* is that much of the knowledge of these concepts in the English language owes itself to Ruth Benedict’s postwar ethnography, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, commissioned by the State Department near the end of the war and first published in 1946 based on a few textual resources and what appears to be a single interred Japanese-American informant. The book was so influential, however, that in his introduction to the films, Ōshima would reference it to describe the two concepts (*Waga nihon* 150).

²⁷ The phrase is particularly ubiquitous in the Japanese criticism from Saitō to Shiba and Aoyama.

²⁸ In my previous chapter I discussed Hamano’s investment in a notion of existence predicated on remaining in history. So much of the mythos of these films—that is, *ninkyō*—is organized around remaining. It is built into the titles of the films, along with language that codes narrative and storytelling (the *-den* suffix, for instance, often translated as “Tales of...”). The constellation of linguistic signifiers of storytelling point to oral narrative, to the sharing and conveying transmitted intergenerationally, which in the context of the *ninkyō* films relates intimately to the period drama element of the films and their resuscitation of the not to distant past, especially in moments of the making of modern Japan. This chapter will engage what precisely the films, and the spectators who consumed them, desired to have remain. That said, remaining has a great deal to do with how the films envision life and the power of the grammar of the films to catapult into the future that is now.

²⁹ Sandra Buckley’s “Altered States” addresses the reorganization of the socius in the postwar that occurred at the intersections of the family, labor, and the state. Article 14 of the postwar constitution, which she points to as a pivot in discussions of women’s rights, made claim to “extending” rights to women by disrupting the system of “primogeniture and patrilineal households” (346)—that is, by rewriting the rules of *inheritance*. While Buckley’s article provides the history of how this legal shift did *not* in fact produce equal rights for women and instead, following a period in the immediate postwar when women’s labor was crucial to postwar reconstruction, provisions like the “Labor Standards Act” would protect the “reproductive function of the female worker, not the worker herself” under the law (349). The result she found was “distinct gender-differentiated entry tracks into the work force and separate male/female employment profiles even in the case of equally qualified male and female members of a recruit cohort” (349). Though these juridical motions would ensure male labor in the workforce, both Buckley and Tomiko Yoda’s “The Rise and Fall of Maternal Society,” to be discussed at greater length below, both suggest that the reorganization of the family that arose not just because of the constitutional shifts but also because of the rapid influx of labor (including commuting labor) from rural areas into the Kanto region, the production of the housewife, and the development of a mass consumer society, would all contribute to anxieties over patriarchy and its hold—implicating the power and control of male labor in the indistinction between public and domestic labor.

³⁰ My use of the language of rehearsal here and throughout the dissertation cannot but evoke the politics of the performative associated so thoroughly, especially in gender and sexuality studies, with Judith Butler. Since her theory of gender as performance emerged in *Gender Trouble* it has received a thorough critique, so much so that on its republication in 1999, Butler included a new preface devoted to responding to these critiques (which remind us that the performative arose itself as an apparatus to respond to the normative thrust and heterosexism of the feminism she encountered). Across her revisions and development of performativity—from *Excitable Speech* to and *Antigone’s Claim to Giving An Account of Oneself*—even more than a theatrical frame, Butler remains attached to the illocutionary force of the performative utterance that she inherited from J. L. Austin. Performativity, Butler reminds us in that 1999 preface to *Gender Trouble*, “is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual, which achieves its effects through its naturalization in the context of a body, understood, in part, as a culturally sustained temporal duration” (xvi).

³¹ I think of *otoko* here not as an abstract, disconnected signifier, but as a medium, as a material force that congeals and transforms practice, ideas and meaning. In this I find instructive Stuart Hall’s intervention in post-structural debates around ideology and the false division between discourse and practice in his “Signification, Representation,

Ideology.” So much of this essay informs my approach, but Hall’s emphasis on examining “articulations” (and the related “condensation”) as those places where chains of signification meet social practice in discursive entities helps structure my work here. His description of articulation highlights the importance of its study: articulation is “a connection or link which is not necessarily given in all cases, as a law or a fact of life, but which requires particular conditions of existence to appear at all, which has to be positively sustained by specific processes, which is not “eternal” but has constantly to be renewed, which can under some circumstances disappear or be overthrown, leading to the old linkages being dissolved and new connections-re-articulations-being forged” (113 n. 2). This chapter attempts to understand those processes and arrest the attachment to those narratives that appear to be law.

³² Here I refer to the discourse of the three treasures, to be discussed below, which Gluck and Kelly have described in *Postwar Japan as History*.

³³ The gendering of audiences is repeated with great enthusiasm by the largely male critical force that writes about the films. Saitō Ayako, too, has noted that she felt strongly that the films were a male space that she could not enter and accounts for only becoming interested in them later, after reading Ōshima’s discussion of the films in his *Waga nihon seishin kaizō keikaku* (71). While I do not have data that indicates the gender breakdown of theatrical audiences attending these films, considering at the very least the films’ popularity within the student movement and Ken-san’s popularity among women, every suggestion indicates women were far from absent from the theater (In *taidan* with Ogawa and Ishidō—who, it happens, also wrote a number of the screenplays for Yoshida Yoshishige’s films, the subject of the next chapter—Mishima notes how strange he found Ken-san’s popularity with women and Ogawa pejoratively offers that women in the student movement liked them because their male counterparts liked them (35-6)). Just as women were written out of the student movement, relegated, as has now been well documented, to the role of rice ball maker, or demonized as United Red Army leader Nagata Hiroko would be (Chelsea Szendi Schieder’s 2014 dissertation, *Coed Revolution: The Female Student in the Japanese New Left, 1957-1972*, devotes itself to correcting precisely this evacuation) I have a hard time imagining that the so-called absence of “real women” from the *ninkyō* theater was not also a motivated fiction, even if the mode of address was indeed directed toward men.

³⁴ C.f. Yuriko Furuhata’s *Cinema of Actuality: Japanese Avant-Grade Filmmaking in the Season of Image Politics* and Setsu Shigematsu’s *Scream from the Shadows: the Women’s Liberation Movement in Japan*.

³⁵ Tsuruta had already enjoyed a considerable career by this point. Takakura, too, had already been on Tōei’s roster for some time, but his fame was not on the level that he would rise to with *ninkyō* or that would persist thereafter. Fuji, who had long wished to be an actress and had been sought after by producers from Shōchiku, was made a star by *ninkyō*, so that she was called its flower (see Chapter 7 of Shundo and Yamane for more on Fuji’s career).

³⁶ You can scarcely open a piece, whether academic or popular, about him without encountering the reminder that he is *the* actor synonymous with Japan. See especially Saitō, Standish, and Shiba and Aoyama.

³⁷ Myth too would become an organizing principle for understanding the films, i.e. in Isolde Standish’s *Myth and Masculinity in The Japanese Cinema* (2000). That said, it is a script that writes itself, operating in the same tautology previously mentioned in the discussion of “*otoko ga otoko o otoko to shite mitomeru*”—that is, even in asserting that the films relied on a structure of myth that necessitates a historical view of the nation, it fails to define its most central term, masculinity, leaving that too, suspended within the *otoko ga otoko o otoko to shite mitomeru* paradigm. If, as Barthes warns us in *Mythologies*, “myth is read as a factual system, whereas it is but a semiological system,” (131), we need still to do the work of deconstructing its ideological investments and not allowing for the persistence of its apparent facticity. When I refer thus to the mythos of 60s politics, I am also implicating the idea that circulates—marked especially by the announcement of the so-called death of politics in the 70s, especially with the Asama Lodge incident—that the sixties was somehow the last frontier of leftist political engagement.

³⁸ Ōshima’s anecdote of a late 60s all night screening of his films and the jeers yelled at the screen by leftist students when they encountered the by then stale Stalinist rhetoric of his *Night and Fog in Japan* (1960), begging Ken-san to destroy the guy (*Ken-san, koitsu o tataki kittle kure*), offers the occasion for both him, and later for Saitō (70), to open their discussions of the mass appeals of the film. While for Ōshima, writing in 1972, the anecdote would help stage his critique of the left’s enthusiasm for the films, by the time Saitō took up the anecdote in the early 21st century, it seemed to operate in a much more evidentiary function. That said, Saitō too uses this to discuss Ōshima’s critique of the dangers of the left’s aestheticization of the yakuza (153). Where for Ōshima the right’s fascination with *ninkyō* was to be expected, likening their attachment to the films to the ritual (and national-imperialist) performance of praying before a shrine (*Waga Nihon* 152), he seems to suggest that the left should have seen through the aesthetics.

³⁹ While this idea has circulated broadly, it manifests in Paul Schrader's dramatization of Mishima's life, *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters* (1985).

⁴⁰ Citing a figure that indicates that by 1966 yakuza film accounted for almost fifty percent of all film production in Japan, Phil Kaffen argues in his 2011 dissertation, that "statistically speaking, it is clear that from the early 1960s, the number of yakuza films in Japan increased greatly while the number of Japanese films being produced overall diminished rapidly, that *cinema was gradually becoming yakuza*" (338).

⁴¹ American screenwriter Paul Schrader, who would parlay his enthusiasm for yakuza film and Takakura Ken into the American film *The Yakuza* (1974), was so convinced of the formulaicness of the films that he outlined a schema of some 18 features a viewer of *ninkyō* could rely on encountering in his 1974 piece for *Film Comment*, "Yakuza eiga: a primer." *The Yakuza* is a testament to all that gets lost in assuming that the films can be schematized in this way.

⁴² In fact the narratives of *Shōwa Zankyōden* thematize this by recurrently working into dialogue commentary that reinforces that he is a good man. Throughout the series, the line repeats itself so that we cannot forget: Takakura's Hanada is always identified by the phrase "ii otoko da," or "he's a good guy." Women in love with him say this (as in the case of *Karajishi Jingi*), oyabun announce this, and Takakura is so immune to criticism that even his dying rivals admire him, repeating the chorus, as does his rival also in stardom Tsuruta Kōji playing the rival gang's oyabun, when he declares it on his death bed at the beginning of *Karajishi Botan* (dying at Takakura's own hand).

⁴³ By this I am referring to the ethos of *kyōkaku*, as described by Eiko Maruko Siniawer: to protect the weak and crush the strong (24).

⁴⁴ Tōei has made this, and each of the other trailers for the series, available via their youtube channel which, at the time of this text's publication, could be located at:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoKxGDuKtZWadLY_geFIh8A. *Karajishi Jingi*'s trailer is at

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dUytpv_8tE8.

⁴⁵ Critically, this is a brotherhood based on an affiliative rather than bloodline structure. Siniawer contends that this is the major difference between the Italian mafia and the Japanese yakuza, which arose historically in part because so many of the early modern yakuza were *mushuku*, or unregistered—that is, unrecognized by the state as having an official status (20-21).

⁴⁶ Etymologically "yakuza" refers to a losing card hand of 8 (ya) – 9 (ku) – 3 (za) in *hanafuda*, indexing the yakuza's past in the business of gambling (c.f. Siniawer 192 n.58).

⁴⁷ In this, Saitō builds on what Ōshima had written earlier about the modernization of the yakuza in *Waga nihon seishin kaizō keikaku*, contributing the psychoanalytic narrative.

⁴⁸ For both Saitō and Yomota, the films' homophobia and the homophobia of their critical reception is triangulated through Ueno Kōshi's writing on *ninkyō* in "Eiga to homosekushuaru" [Film and homosexuality], wherein he makes reference to the "stench" (*nioi*) of homosexuality in *ninkyō*'s representation of a male universe (115). That said I take point with Yomota's insistence, in a piece he wrote reflecting on the deaths of Takakura and Bunta Sugawara ("Otoko dōshi") that the films were entirely homosocial rather than homosexual, which in its emphatic protest that the films are not homosexual appears to remake the homophobic relation. I am much more sympathetic to Saitō's reading that accounts for the blurring of the lines between homosexual and homosocial precisely because of the films' absolute absorption, which she calls narcissistic, with the male body. It is worth noting, also, that a homoerotic reading of the film precedes Ueno's by a significant margin: just before his death in 1971 in the *taidan* with Ishidō and Ogawa, Mishima was reading the glances Ikebe Ryō and Takakura Ken exchange in their final scenes not only as homoerotic but as participating in a tradition of Japanese culture (by which I understand him to be making reference to a history of male-male sexuality within the homosocial cultures of such "traditional" formations as samurai or theater culture) (35). For more on this, see Gregory Pflugfelder's *Cartographies of Desire*.

Here, too, it is impossible not to note the extraordinary level of rumor that circulates around Takakura's own sexuality. While Takakura studiously avoided speaking about his private life (the interview with Tadanori Yokō included in *Yūkon, Takakura Ken* is one example of many that demonstrates an elusiveness in interview; Takakura was likewise known for avoiding interviews themselves)—which Richard deCordova's actually takes as the mark of the star in his "Emergence of the Star System in America," that he has a private life—since I started this research in 2011, I have been taken aside countless times to discuss Takakura's private life. Often these interactions have started with, "well, you know, he's gay." Other times, people—sometimes friends, but more often people I am meeting for the very first time—have been concerned to make sure that I know. On one occasion, evidence for his sexuality was referenced in mention of Takakura posing for gay muscle magazines at the start of his career (I have yet to confirm

these, though I do not equate posing in the magazine with a truth-telling moment about Takakura's sexuality). On another, eye-witness evidence was provided: "my mother's friend *saw* Takakura at the bath canoodling." There is a counter-movement to this rumor as well, deeply implicated in my arguments in this chapter: that is, when I would discuss the rumors with those unfamiliar with them, I would also encounter at times a disbelief, the insistence that it was *impossible* that Takakura could be gay (not "our" Ken-san! No!). Whatever the truth, which is not mine to know, nor an object I aim to "discover"—I have no interest in posthumously outing Takakura—what is noteworthy in these rumors is the enormous field of contestation that happens through Takakura's body with stakes in how masculinity is understood for the nation, a masculinity that has the potential to protect male culture—the "tradition" Mishima referred to—regardless of sexuality and a simultaneous investment in protecting a heteronorm for patriarchy.

⁴⁹ In another serial context in Japan, in the context of the serial killer, brainwashing's kin, "mind control" has been designated in more than one legal case (i.e. in the Kita-kyūshū Serial Murder case involving Futoshi Matsunaga and Junko Ogata) as the justification to assign a sentence of lesser value to a female accomplice to a brutal crime, presuming that she has carried out her actions in the crime solely as a result of the control and influence of the crime's leader and mastermind, the male bodied perpetrator.

⁵⁰ What I wish to parse here is that the category "samurai" makes claims to specificity (rather than universalism) because it indexes something *Japanese*, a specifically Japanese myth. However, there is a homogenization of what "samurai" means that is disconnected from locality and that transforms into an a-historical signifier. What is most significant in this, is the rehearsal of this, however, as a signifier of a specifically Japanese genealogy—in this context, from within Japan (from Ōshima to Saitō and from far less critical corners as well), but we know as well how the legend of samurai grows outside of Japan to stand in for something similar. In this mode, it appears to me that samurai is evacuated of specificity and instead works to code myth as a universal structure, articulated in different locations, but essentially operating in the same way. My forthcoming arguments regarding *kyōkaku* will make the case, I hope, for what can be missed in this universalizing tendency.

⁵¹ He writes: "the intensity of the isolation, as a relation of exteriority between the members of a temporary and contingent gathering, expresses *the degree of massification* of the social ensemble, in so far as it is produced on the basis of given conditions" (257).

⁵² This speaks to a structure of desire and the infinite deferrals it contains, deferrals which promise its reproduction.

⁵³ Interestingly the binaries articulated through the films' period costume reinvigorate the conflict written about by Jason Karlin in his piece, "The Gender of Nationalism: Competing Masculinities in Meiji Japan." The competing nationalisms he analyzes within the article that were waged through a gender expression heavily policed through the period's fashions mapped an association of the gentleman with Westernization, and feminization with that by way of "superficiality, imitation and decadence" (55). The gentlemen (*shinshi*) was contrasted with the *sōshi*, a group Siniawer identifies as composing the yakuza, who Karlin describes as having a "vigorous masculinity": "whereas the silhouette of the gentleman with his stiff collars and formal ties expressed visible authority, the *sōshi*'s long hair and tattered clothing rejected authority and fashion" (59). Karlin's description of the *hai-kara* gentleman (c. f. 61-68) evokes every *ninkyō* villain and he distills the world those villains represent when he concludes (of Meiji masculinity rather than *ninkyō*): "representations of a 'feminized' masculinity were linked to the degenerate and imitative aspects of Western material culture, while representations of a 'masculinized' masculinity emphasized the spiritual domain of an essential national culture" (77).

⁵⁴ Anthropologist Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney describes the *haramaki*, "a piece of material wrapped around the abdomen" as having "a long history [that] illustrates the importance of this part of the body." She explains "during the feudal period, samurai were protected by their armor, but foot soldiers protected their abdomens from attack with *haramaki*. During World War II, as part of the governmental program to heighten morale, women sewed white cotton *haramaki*, each with a thousand red knots made of red string; these cloths were said to be bullet-proof, and were supposedly sent to soldiers on the front line" (58).

⁵⁵ Because *shirushi banten* carry association with Edo (pre-modern) period firefighters, their association with labor carries over into modern Japan, when they became more associated with labor broadly and with festivals (likely through their labor association, in fact, worn as they would have been by *tekiya*, or the merchants who continue to sell goods at festivals today, and were the peddlers who composed the yakuza alongside gamblers (*bakuto*).

⁵⁶ In addition to the use of the Western calendar, Japan also periodizes through reference to the emperor. Thus, the Meiji period refers to the reign of the Meiji emperor (1868-1912), the Taishō period that followed it (1912-1926) to Taishō emperor, and the Shōwa period (1926-1989) to that emperor (Hirohito).

⁵⁷ Not only did the interwar years put similar emphasis on consumption, and fashioning subjectivity through that consumption, but these years also marked Japan's acceleration of its imperialist expansion efforts (and were thus central to imagining a national identity). In a broader political context, it was during this period too when democracy most violently worked to gain traction.

⁵⁸ See especially Siniawer 26-41.

⁵⁹ Siniawer provides an account of the yakuza's alignment with the *Nihon Kokusuikai*, or National Essence Society, in her fourth chapter, "Fascist Violence: Ideology and Power in Prewar Japan."

⁶⁰ Siniawer discusses these events in greater detail in that same chapter (115-125), concluding with a comparison between the Japanese nationalist organizations and the Italian *squadrismo* and the German SA, arguing: "all of these groups had a solid grounding in nationalist ideology and considered labor unions and socialists a grave threat to national character and development. . . in practice, all of these bodies fought violently against socialists and labor in an effort to silence, and indeed cleanse, their nations of leftist contamination" (125).

⁶¹ Siniawer's argument and periodization rely on the premise that the violence that the yakuza wielded from 1860-1960 was a *physical* violence—the "physical coercion of the physical body" (5)—which she quickly contends in her conclusion, as I have suggested here, that physical violence both became unbearable in Japan but also on the world stage for Japan's consideration as a modern nation. Beyond the yakuza, there are also arguments more broadly that violence became unbearable in the era, that tend to mark the moment when physical violence could no longer be tolerated with the United Red Army's *Asama Sansō* incident, a hostage incident in 1972 that has come to stand in as the symbolic moment of the group's utter self-destruction.

⁶² Nowhere is this critique better articulated than by film director Ōshima Nagisa in his *Waga nihon seishin kaizō keikaku: ikyō kara no hassateki repōto* [The Reconstruction Plan for our Japanese Spirit: Bouts of report from a foreign land]. While Ōshima emphasizes that there is nothing mysterious (*fushigi*) about right-wing nationalists' attraction to the films, he identifies a "danger" in the new left student movement's interest. Though he connects this to what he calls the *otoshiana* (trap or pitfall) of the films' aesthetics (153), he does not offer an explanation for how those operate. For Tsukasa and Sakae, on the other hand, there's no great concern over the aesthetics or the contradiction for the student movement, as they align the films with an anti-establishment politics, suturing over their yakuza context and seeing Ken-san simply as an anti-establishment hero (16).

⁶³ See the Andrew Gordon edited collection *Postwar Japan as History*, especially Gordon's own "Contests for the Workplace," Frank Upham's "Unplaced Persons and Movement for Place" and Marilyn Ivy's "Formation of Mass Culture."

⁶⁴ Upham is especially instructive in this and, as such, worth citing at length: "It is important to stress at this point that the clarity and completeness of role differentiation in Japanese society is not attributable solely to a voluntary choice by women to stay home and eschew participation in the mainstream labor market. On the contrary, it is attributable to a substantial extent to the effective denial of choice. Japanese government and business consciously created a role for women that—at least according to poll data—was satisfying for most women and highly valued, indeed celebrated, by the rest of society. But keeping women in their 'place' depended not only on making their place as attractive as possible but also on making every effort possible in a free society to limit women's choice to decline the role established for them.

If one assumes a causal relationship between the postwar consensus that women belonged in the home and the social fact that virtually all of them were there, it is not at all clear that the former caused the latter. Well into the 1950s Japanese women occupied high-wage, blue collar jobs on the shop floors of most factories. That they had virtually disappeared by the 1960s was not because they had voluntarily resigned or because young women did not wish to enter those jobs; they disappeared because Japanese companies initiated policies forcing them to resign and then refused to assign newly hired women for anything but subordinate jobs. Not only did the government not oppose these measures in the private sector, where their legality was questionable, but it actively discriminated against women itself, a practice that, because it involved direct state action, was clearly unconstitutional. Private labor unions went along with the exclusion of women from regular employment, so that Japanese women had little choice but to submit to a vision of society designed by men" (334).

⁶⁵ Ōshima, recalling that Mishima had described in their *taidan* that the thing he loved most about *ninkyō* was Tsuruta Kōji's face just before he would kill someone, poignantly wonders Mishima's face would have looked like before he left his house the day of his suicide (152).

⁶⁶ Kaffen makes the incredible argument that rather than *ninkyō* representing a genre, that it instead should be thought about as an orientation toward images (320).

⁶⁷ This language of evacuated landscape reflects a collaboration between myself, Patrick Noonan, and Paul Roquet, language we developed together as we prepared a panel for the 2012 Asian Cinema Studies Conference ultimately titled “The Evacuated Landscapes of Post-1964 Japanese Cinema.” Together we identified 1964 as a turning point generative for rethinking the periodization of the postwar, and noticed that from this 1964 a proliferation of emptying organized in the spatial registers of cinema. The paper I delivered for this panel dealt with the very evacuated landscapes I discuss in this section.

⁶⁸ For Saitō, these triangulations make the man, writing: “in order to ‘become a man’ ‘woman’ is necessary, but that necessitates a disavowal” (85).

⁶⁹ This is both the impasse of labor and it is an impasse coding labor, reminding us that it is the rock quarry that is the site for the contestation of labor contracts within the diegesis.

⁷⁰ In *Ueno Chizuko ga bungaku o shakaigaku suru* [Ueno Chizuko Sociologizes Literature], Japan’s most renowned feminist articulates that the anti-establishment remade patriarchy in the 60s and implicates the movement’s beloved *ninkyō* as cooperating with this paradigm precisely through its contribution to the gender binary available to women. In the text, Ueno elaborates on the binary’s associations, describing the Fuji Junko position as the cute woman, thoroughly loved by men, which is put into opposition with the “tomboy” who is treated like a man and incorporates male values (to ultimately effectively kill off the Fuji Junko), the Gewalt Rosa (the latter took her name from the Marxist heroine, Rosa Luxemburg, and her emblem, the *geba-bo*—the baton that students and other leftist activists used to violently stage their revolt). Ueno finds that for the latter, the Gewalt Rosa, love has been foreclosed as she has been made into a man (175-6). While Ueno is making a critical intervention in how we think about women in the movement (and her indictment of the movement’s patriarchal structure is both welcome and refreshing, even if dogmatic), I agree with Amano Yasukazu’s assessment that neither *ninkyō* nor Fuji Junko is quite as simple as Ueno’s explanation, as she scarcely hides her disdain, of the films’ “popular” (*tsūzokuteki*) structure (140). While Amano points this out in the service of an interesting reading that ties the films to the self-destruction of the United Red Army and a broader dynamic in the period of internal violence, what I find still more complicated are the ways that Fuji Junko, the star and the characters she plays, oscillates between both of the poles Ueno identifies and neither, all at once.

⁷¹ Like Takakura too, Fuji became the darling of the nation, articulating fans identification of her with an ideal Japanese femininity spoken about as *yamato nadeshiko* (qtd. in Schilling 124). Yamato Nadeshiko has a long history of serving as nationalist figure of ideal femininity, gained through her support of the family and nation. In writing about the Japanese women’s soccer team who, since 2004, has played as *yamato nadeshiko*, Elise Edwards also provides a history of the transformation of the figure, describing how, through the team, she has taken on the association of being “graceful, cute, delicate, persistent, and strong” (adding to her earlier association with obedience). Edwards also notes the “irony” that, during the war, comfort women were sometimes also referred to as *yamato nadeshiko* (264 n.2). There is, however, nothing ironic about this as what *yamato nadeshiko* codes is the gendered reproductive labor that happens in support of Japan.

⁷² The title is a play on the titles of *ninkyō*’s most popular series, *Nihon kyōkakuden* and *Shōwa Zankyōden*, for example.

⁷³ Recall, an idea reproduced by Saitō, Mishima, and Ogawa.

⁷⁴ Despite the investment in the idea that Fuji was singular in her ability, as woman, to carry her own series, there is considerable narrative labor put into emphasizing that even her stardom could be attributed to a deal between men.

⁷⁵ She would return to entertainment industry in the 1980s as a television personality and, following that, for a few films.

⁷⁶ Here, however, Japanese women’s liberation really must be distinguished from second wave Euro-American forms of feminism. Offering particular insight into these differences is Setsu Shigematsu’s *Scream from the Shadows*.

⁷⁷ C.f. Mark Schilling’s *The Yakuza Movie Book*, which describes Fuji as “the biggest female star of the yakuza movie genre, who dominated men on the screening and in the audience with her cool sensuality and forceful presence” (123) and “projected a natural dignity and authority [...] without sacrificing her femininity” (124). In a similar vein see also Chris D.’s *Outlaw Masters of Japanese Cinema*, which features an interview with director Fukusaku Kinji (of the *Battles without Honor or Humanity* series), who describes her as a “strong character” (20). Hamano, too, recall, cites Fuji as an example of a strong Japanese woman (leaving me to ask: what then of Meiko Kaji?).

⁷⁸ A narrative Kaffen dismantles, arguing that yakuza film did not progress as linearly from *ninkyō* to *jitsuroku* as most like to rehearse. Kaffen also offers an interesting read of Fuji Junko within his arguments about image romanticism, referring to her as an “attraction” in Tom Gunning’s sense of the concept and underscoring her deployment as aesthetic object (331-2).

⁷⁹ While these are not commented on nearly as much as the most popular series starring Takakura Ken or Tsuruta Kōji, for what I hope will be obviously gendered reasons, *ninkyō*’s later days saw not only the *Red Peony Gambler* series but a group of films referred to as the “*onna ninkyō rosen*” [Female Yakuza Line], including *Onna toseinin* (1971, starring Fuji Junko as well), *Nihon onna ninkyō*, her farewell film *Kanto Hizakura Ikka*, as well as the earlier (though, according to Shundō less deliberately executed (158)) *Onna tobakushi*, among others.

⁸⁰ Recall once more *kyōkaku*’s slogan: “Protect the weak, crush the strong.”

⁸¹ This is further reinforced by the mirroring that triangulates that treat through the horrors of other female *oyabun* and the modeling of proper femininity in her *kobun*’s paramours. In the case of the other female *oyabun*, a kind of *sempai*, that she encounters who is ostensibly successful as a yakuza, her authority is both undermined by petty *chinpira* and her great failing her sonis demonstrated to be, an imbecile who, it is suggested, has failed because of her neglect, because she placed her energies in the occupation of men—that is, her work as yakuza—rather than rightfully offering him the mothering that would have otherwise assured his success. Her *kobun*’s lover, on the other hand, performs the role of the woman who does not object, who stays beautiful and quiet in support of her man.

⁸² While *machismo* has a long history of expression via the pronoun *ore*, attention to this has accelerated in recent years with the identification of the *ore ore otoko*, the guy who only speaks about himself, beginning each utterance with “*ore*.” C.f. Kaori Shoji’s *Japan Times* piece “Men can be sexy when talking about themselves.”

⁸³ I would make the argument that *ore* is a personal pronoun always staged in defense, a declaration that always protests too much in its over-proud insistence on its masculinity, in its corresponding invocation of a feminized pronoun that reinforces a strict gender hierarchy.

⁸⁴ The series’ theme song, too, incessantly reminds her that she is a woman and where songs like *Shōwa Zankyōden*’s “*Karajishi Botan*” would wax poetic about *giri* and wandering on, her series would repeat (in the threes that we have already seen reproduced, i.e. in the *otoko ga otoko o otoko to shite mitomeru* motif) that she is a woman and associate being a woman with falling in love, lingering emotions, and fate.

⁸⁵ Though he is writing more about supporting actresses than Fuji Junko, Yomota’s introduction to his co-authored collection with Saitō, writes also about women in *ninkyō* as mediums, in the vein that Saitō discusses the love triangle (and this is influenced by their volume’s motivation in taking up Eve Sedgwick’s work in the context of Asian cinema).

⁸⁶ *Tosei* is explicitly identified with men on her father’s deathbed, attempting to exclude her from the trade before the fact. It appears too in flashback with Katagiri.

⁸⁷ The motif of water attaches itself to Fuji in worlds beyond *The Red Peony Gambler*, making recurrent appearances, for instance, in *Shōwa Zankyōden*: *Shinde Moraimasu*, first featured decorating her obi when she is introduced in the film.

⁸⁸ Of great interest to the author is affirmation of this association of Takakura Ken with the land in the final advertising campaign he starred in, released months before his passing, for *Kenkō Kazoku*’s (Healthy Family’s) “*Traditional Garlic Egg yolks*.” In this, Takakura reprises the role of the tireless laborer, playing the garlic farmer who wakes early to tend the land. There is a not at all subtle nationalism in the invocation of “*tradition*” in the project that also features Ken-san in a regionally identified role as farmer, cultivating the nation’s greatest garlic in his birth home of Kyushu.

⁸⁹ I am also struck by the resonances of water imagery with, for instance, water’s symbolic representation of women’s potential for manipulation and transformation in the literature of Izumi Kyōka. For a discussion of this see Charles Shiro Inouye’s “*Water Imagery in the Work of Izumi Kyōka*.” Inouye too connects border crossing to the space of the water and provides the Japanese literary historical context for this.

⁹⁰ See also Carol Gluck’s “*The Past in the Present*,” which situates these within the context of the Shōwa Genroku and what she refers to as a “*chronology of seikatsu*”—an investment in “*lifestyle*” that “*followed a different postwar course than that of official history, which claimed a continuous climb in national progress and international stature*” (75).

⁹¹ In the piece, Takakura Ken is writing about speaking to Yusai Sakai, who had been a kamikaze pilot during the war, but who, subsequent to that experience, became an ascetic who completed the pilgrimage known as the Sennichi Kaiho Gyo, an arduous trip equivalent to the earth’s circumference, where upon completing the trip,

devotees are considered living Buddhas known as Ajari-san. Sakai was one of only three people known to have completed the trip twice (“Buddhist priest”).

Chapter IV
Reproducing *Impasse*:
Yoshida Kijū's Techniques of "Transformation"

*Cinema is drama, not accident.*¹
Ozu Yasujirō

While the second chapter takes on a part of cinema that while popular remains at its periphery, in the private-public sphere, and the third chapter address material of mass appeal that crossed class lines and political affiliation (perhaps participating in the erasure of their differences), this chapter deals with material that is decidedly more esoteric. In it I look at the independent art melodramas directed by Yoshida Kijū that his wife Okada Mariko. Yoshida's directorial ethos was premised on a critique of Japanese cinema's establishment and its reduction of women. His training in French thought at the prestigious Tokyo university armed him with a critical apparatus to stage his critique, which was most of all invested in a self-critique. It was at the same time waged against hegemonic ideologies: of gender, of family, of the emerging bourgeoisie, of the state, and of the emperor system. Alongside this, Yoshida perpetually engaged in the production of a self-critique, resembling the sorts that the radical new left practiced before it transformed into self-destruction and their violent ends. Central to this self-critique was Yoshida's engagement with dialectics, especially the dialectics of self and other.

His reproduction of critical discourses that had particular currency amongst the intellectual elite and the left during the 60s were rewarded contemporaneously and retroactively with the association of "transformation" as Yoshida's filmmaking and critical practice. By examining the rhetoric of politics in the criticism of Yoshida alongside his own engagement with the social reproduction of gender via one of his less celebrated films, *Impasse*, illustrates the great consequence of Yoshida's disavowal of the privileges that made his critique possible: his elite background, his directorial position and claims, and, so too, his status as man. Unlike

Hamano, Yoshida resisted the idea that the film was his thing, resisting the idea of “thing-ness” more broadly, concerned about the transference of humans into things. However, he did this as he made his wife bear all the weight of this filmmaking, estranged from her, working through her, and ignoring the debt his entire cinema owes to her. Not only has this had the effect, through competing and contradictory reproductions, of rendering her thing, but by doing so, under the name of making himself other and encountering the other, he has under the very rubric of transformation and change remade more of the same.

Where I described in the previous chapter a continuity of series that embeds forgetting into its structure over time, the geometry of Yoshida’s cinema and his claims works a little differently. This is the closed tautology of *ninkyō* overlapping structures of overdetermination. This is an intellectual game that reproduces a spiral that does change shapes but renews old structures and power dynamics reserving quite of the claim to morality of Takakura’s man, but critically, in the name of woman. It provides the most sophisticated vision of a radical remade sexual division of labor, one that incorporates woman by altruistic gesture, self-incriminating one to affirm a new structure of patriarchy.

In 2010, on the 50th anniversary of his directorial debut, the National Film Center (NFC) hosted a retrospective of the darling of 1960s Japanese new wave cinema, Yoshida Kijū.² Alongside screenings of his feature film corpus and his major works for television, the NFC also programmed speaking engagements with the director; his lead actress and wife, Okada Mariko; Tokyo University Professor Hasumi Shigehiko, one of their most prominent interlocutors and editor of Yoshida’s collected writings; and film director Aoyama Shinji.³ When Okada Mariko was brought onstage following the screening of their first and one of their most beloved collaborations, *Akitsu Onsen* (1962), she invited Yoshida, also in attendance, to join her. As the

emcee began asking her questions about the film, she quickly deferred to “*kantoku-sama*,” the great director—maestro. This moment, a brief but symptomatic gesture, gave leave not just for Yoshida to speak, but to speak for her, supported by her assurance that it was he who would know best how to speak about the film. In this moment, Okada, who audiences were waiting to see (she is, after all, a much bigger celebrity than Yoshida ever was⁴), announced her hyper-performance of an imagined ideal actress and deferential wife that I am not sure anyone but Yoshida, and perhaps not even he, expected her to be.⁵ In this, however, she rehearsed decades of deferral, a pattern long since established by their collaborative mode.⁶ She corroborated, too, the rumors perpetually circulating around her that it is Yoshida who authors her. While this discourse manifests abstractly in manifold ways, it is exemplified by the hushed whispers, on the occasion of the publication of her autobiography *Actress Okada Mariko* (2009), which intimated it was Yoshida who *really* wrote the book. However unreliable hearsay may be to discern a truth, the circulation of this gossip participates in a much broader chain of association that upholds Yoshida as Japan’s auteur par excellence.⁷ It disavows Okada’s contributions to their so-called “collaborations” and buries Yoshida’s recurrent dismissals of her in the domestic sphere.⁸ Together these moments inaugurate this chapter’s discussion of the sexual division of labor in Yoshida’s post-postwar cinema,⁹ articulated in his relationship with Okada, in his critical writings, and most of all, as I will argue, in the technique of cinema that realizes his dialectic to tell us more about gender politics in the period than any other part of his cinematic apparatus.¹⁰

This chapter shares the preoccupation of the previous two chapters with the tightness of narrative reproduction—with the reproductions that construct cinematic history and all the more so, as I have been developing, cinema in Japan’s high growth. Yoshida’s story and his privileged place in Japanese film history have been shaped by a consistency similar to my earlier examples

that reflects a cooperation between filmmaker, critics, and academics.¹¹ This is not to say that Yoshida has been free of critique or that there have not been exceptions to these narrative rules; rather, it represents an argument that by attending to those mechanisms of reproduction we can better understand how they maintain and remake dominant ideologies even while enacting critique of them. I seek in this to loosen the hold of those stories by pushing back against the force of Yoshida's claims and his framework to put his films and those very claims into their historical context. This is not to impose, as a number of scholars from Desser to Standish have, history on the films.¹² Instead it is to ask what Yoshida and his films contribute to history, how they participate in it, how they tell it. It is to read those texts as the history itself, in conversation with worlds beyond Yoshida and even beyond cinema.

Surrounding Yoshida there are two predominant associative reproductions: first, that his films' concern and intervene in "*sei to seiji*," sex and politics, and, second, the assertions of Yoshida's auteurship.¹³ While Yoshida would actively resist the latter through his film politics of "self-negation" or "self-denial" (*jiko-hitei*) that would emerge in his extensive writings and his filmmaking practice, this has not prevented critics and scholars from treating (celebrating, even) him as auteur.¹⁴ Indeed, his auteurship depends on the former, on his engagement with sex and politics. While I will discuss this at greater length below, this dyad itself indexes the overdetermination at work in Yoshida, where the circulation of this association rarely demands a question of what is meant by either sex or politics, given their currency as touchstones in and for the 60s and 70s—within that "season of politics"—and in discussions of the period. However, it is here that I insist we must begin. Because, by probing how these terms were understood by the constellation of actors reading Yoshida—by which I reference once again, Yoshida himself, critics, and academics—we see too a reproduction that speaks not only to the history of the

sixties, but already to its historiography. Through this, also, we can understand how, despite Yoshida's great anxieties around totalization,¹⁵ his praxis, which deployed dialectics to detour, nonetheless created something resembling a critical totality that has kept critics and scholars enmeshed in the same impasse he manufactured in his work. Ultimately, Yoshida's dialectics provide an account, in process (indeed, in motion) and *in technique*, of the paradigm shift that invested in social reproduction and moved away from biological reproduction as the basis of life. It is for this reason that, following a first section that will discuss the location of politics in Yoshida's oeuvre (critical to understanding the displacement of his reproductions), I will proceed on to a reading of his 1967 independent feature, *Honō to Onna* (literally, *Flame and Women*, but assigned by Yoshida the English title *Impasse*).¹⁶ The film, which thematizes the problem of reproduction through two couples whose lives intersect through artificial insemination, manifests Yoshida's dialectics to create a cinematic approach to the politics of the sexual division of labor in high growth. I will then close with a discussion of Yoshida's engagement with the thing (*mono*) to situate the stakes of Yoshida's praxis, his tendency toward theory and abstraction, and to explain how it is he, and perhaps also we, get stuck in the circles of impasse characteristic of his filmmaking praxis.¹⁷

The telling of Yoshida's career has, from the inception of its story, reproduced a mythos of sixties anti-establishmentarianism: Yoshida's career was built on throwing off the old-guard, those figures I have written about previously as the cornerstones of the Golden Age.¹⁸ After a much-storied fascination with Sartre,¹⁹ Yoshida enrolled at Tokyo University to study French literature. Upon graduating, torn about what to do next, he entered Shōchiku Studios in 1955 as part of their efforts to invigorate the Studio with new talent, bringing with him all of the influence of contemporary French thought. Though much has already been said to discourage

conceiving of the group of young talent assembled at Shōchiku in that period as a new wave—both because they did not represent a collective movement²⁰ and because the studio would use the language as a marketing strategy to sell their films²¹—Yoshida was of the generation that included Ōshima Nagisa and Shinoda Masahiro and together they have been recognized for offering a new cinema. Yoshida’s activities, including with the journal *Shichinin* (produced by a collective of seven members at the Studio who would publish original screenwriting, in opposition to the long-held practice of adapting *gensaku*), too, were built around a critique of the outmoded ideologies and filmmaking practices of his predecessors.²²

Though Yoshida’s career may consistently bear the signature of his authorship, Saitō Ayako in her “Women and Fantasy: Yoshida Kijū and Okada Mariko” suggests this work can be roughly divided into “his Shōchiku period (1960-1964), his early independent period (1965-1968), his ATG period (1969-1973), and his late period (1986-2003)” (33).²³ Though Yoshida has explained that he wrote his premier film *Good for Nothing* (*Roku de nashi*, 1960) with Okada in mind (*Henbō* 448), they did not work together until she requested he direct her 100th film.²⁴ Their romance took off from *Akitsu Onsen*, and they were married a short while later. Yoshida’s growing discontent with Shōchiku was cemented when the studio edited the conclusion of his *Escape from Japan* (*Nihon Dasshutsu*, 1964) while the two honeymooned. This sealed Yoshida’s decision to depart the Studio and the two started their independent production company *Gendai eigasha*. Though referred to by some as “anti-melodramas” and by Saitō as meta-melodramas, the films made in this second period tend to be dismissed.²⁵ Case in point is Yomota’s assertion, at an Austrian symposium on the Art Theater Guild (ATG) in 2003, that “if ATG had not existed, perhaps we would have remembered Yoshida Kijū only as a director of delicate melodramas, not as an *auteur* who experimented with ways of representing historical overdetermination in *Erosu*

+ *Gyakusatsu* ("Eros plus Massacre", 1970) and *Kaigenrei* ("Coup d'Etat", 1973)" (29).

Anderson and Richie echo this, too, when they write of the second period films that “whatever their intentions [...] these are essentially women's films, the like of which have long been a Shōchiku staple” (468).²⁶ It is difficult not to assume that the films were not dismissed for gender and genre reasons in both cases, especially as the latter followed on Anderson and Richie’s explanation, betraying its complaint, that:

One of the reasons that Yoshida could make such elaborate independent films was that he was by then married to Mariko Okada, at that time a major star, wealthy, and daughter of a man well-entrenched in the Japanese film world. She appeared in all of his films, thus ensuring an audience, and her popularity also helped induce Shochiku and other companies to distribute the pictures. (468).

This comment does more than reveal the political economy, the material conditions, that made Yoshida’s independence possible. It reeks of the castration of a kept man, contrary to the celebration of Yoshida’s auteur days with ATG. ATG becomes the moment when Yoshida is rewarded for his “politics,” nowhere more so than that great “masterpiece” (as critics and scholars repeat ad nauseam) *Eros Plus Massacre* (1969²⁷). But where the critical apparatus would talk about these as his political films, Yoshida himself would contextualize for Hasumi that he did not set out to make political films—he “couldn’t represent the politics he’d lived” (451)—but refers to the trilogy of *Eros Plus Massacre*, *Heroic Purgatory* (1970), and *Coup D’Etat* (1973) as “represent[ing] the postwar fantasy of revolution” (452). Of the earlier films, Yoshida contextualizes that ever since he had met Okada he hoped to represent women’s “nature” (性, read *saga*) and that this nature was not sex (性, *sei* clarified as not being *sekkusu*) but could be nothing but her otherness (455).²⁸ This, then, he feels is what he is trying to represent in what Hasumi called his “ethics of transformation.”

Yoshida's "Ethics of Transformation"²⁹

While Hasumi's collection of Yoshida's critical writings would be published long after Yoshida's heyday in the sixties and early seventies and would thus be organized around a retrospective gaze, its title reflects the now dominant discourse of Yoshida: that his was a filmmaking that made claim a) to an ethical position and b) to an ethics structured around transformation. The transformation offered something new—it was the new of the New Wave. It was the new critical apparatus. It was a new way of making films. A new mode of expression for a new period.

In response to what he calls "the most facile analyses of the Japanese New Wave cinema of the 1960s"—those that identify the films simply as arising as a direct response to the previous generation of filmmakers (1-2)—David Desser's "annotation" of the Japanese New Wave, *Eros Plus Massacre* (titled, of course, after Yoshida's film of the same name) insists that we must contextualize the New Wave within the "cultural concerns" of the sixties. Seeking origins, Desser claims within a discussion of Ōshima's *Night and Fog in Japan* that "the entire New Wave arose out of the [Anti-US-Japan Security Treaty demonstration] movement (at least as an immediate response)" (31). In this moment, what Desser locates is a focal point for his definition of politics which, with Yoshida (and Okada, notably, as it is her image from *Eros* that graces its cover) as its posterboy and emblem, coalesce around the symbolic events of the "movement," the protests which bookend the 1960s and which code a series of related associations present in his book: that of the left, of the "radical," of "breaks" and of "movement," all of which amount to the "political" sixties. Just as Desser builds his intervention on a critique of Noel Burch's culturalist analysis of Japanese cinema in *To the Distant Observer*, since the publication of Desser's book he too has become a theoretical strawman who has come to stand for another figure who sutures

over discontinuities in his attachment to period and origins. However, the critiques from Yoshimoto and Cazdyn, for example (and these are worthwhile critiques), particularly implicate Desser's periodization and though Yoshimoto will take Desser to task for assuming a broad politics for the period, both preserve the notion of politics as I have described it through Desser above.³⁰ Cazdyn's approach to the historical prioritizes film as that medium best positioned to examine transformation (28), to underscore transformation's value in the historical record.³¹ Though the force of Hasumi's academic position no doubt places weight behind the influence of the discursive association of transformation with Yoshida's filmmaking in particular,³² I reference Cazdyn here because while his account of transformation is considerably more nuanced than Hasumi's (and we must recognize the difference of purpose and audience for their two books), he is also operating within a Marxist analytical paradigm that has associated the very terms listed above with the political. Within this paradigm, too, transformation's value is located within a telos that precisely celebrates the new that so often adorns Yoshida. It is the reproduction of this attachment to both a notion of politics tied to the event, not unfortunately limited to Desser, and to transformation as the value of 60s political cinema that has led so many academics and critics to focus on *Eros Plus Massacre* to the exclusion of Yoshida's other work. The film's direct engagement with the student movement that ties the movement to prewar leftist politics makes it legible as political. That remains too within the logic of the event. *Eros*' disruption of linear narratives of time, for these critics, challenges too how we think about history's reproductions.

A closer examination of the narrative of politics and transformation in Hasumi's interview with Yoshida justifies broadening the scope of attention with regards to the "political." The interview, which closes *Henbō no rinri* [The Ethics of Transformation], also concentrates

around this chain of association, confirming that Hasumi's "transformation" reiterates the over-determined chain we encountered in Desser's book on the New Wave. Throughout the interview, so much so that the reader cannot but ask what precisely this change and transformation is they speak of, the two exchange a litany of terms for Yoshida's transformation. We see thus constant references not just to *henbō*, but to *henka* (change), *henkō* (change, alteration), Yoshida's valuing of freshness (*shinsen* in, i.e. Alain Resnais (442)) and identifying with newness (*arata na*), all of it interested in the relation to *undō* (the same "movement" which is used to talk about collective movements but which also refers to the verb of motion). Though Yoshida will sparingly reference the political events that structured Desser's notion of politics—i.e. the ANPO protests: for instance, his "*Watashi no eigaron—jiko-hitei no ronri*" [My Film Theory: The Logic of Self-Negation" (*Henbō* 71-77)³³ initiates with an explanation that he had his first opportunity to make a film in the middle of the first stage of those protests around 1960—he goes to great pains to explain that, for him, *undō* is not a formation that ties him to other filmmakers. Instead, *undō* represents that motion between the film and the spectator—between the image he creates and the receivers of those images (446). In response to the discourse that postwar cinema became increasingly invested in the carnal body (cinema's "*nikutaika*")³⁴—a movement that accelerated in the 1960s with pink and ninkyō—Yoshida once again identifies that carnalization, those bodies, not as being in the realm of representation, but instead in the circulation, in the *movement* between images and audience, in "sexual difference" (*danjo no seisa*) (447). While I am wary of operating too much inside Yoshida's own terms—as this, too, is how the critical attachment to transformation has had such a long shelf life—when discussing his trilogy with Hasumi, that privileged site for critics of his engagement with "sex and politics," Yoshida explains that he

sought distance from “political film” (*seijiteki eiga*) (451) and here, too, was more interested in the relation between gender and the political figures and events represented within the films.

This, for Yoshida, is where his ethics come in: the aforementioned ethics of self-negation which structure Yoshida’s political position. It is in his critical writing like his “*Watashi no eigaron*” (first published in 1969 in the journal *Eiga Geijutsu* [Film Art]) where Yoshida makes claims to this political position. It is for this reason that Patrick Noonan forefronts Yoshida’s critical writings in his discussion of the filmmaker’s “new form of politically engaged fictional filmmaking” that “sought to re-conceptualize the production and consumption of film in Japan” (110). The promise of these ethics—elaborated on by Noonan in his article “The Alterity of Cinema,” concentrate around the relationship between self and other, subject and object and disrupting the bounds between those binaries—is precisely that they will result in transformation: that they will “alter the ideologies and conventions structuring Japanese film and society in the period” (Noonan 113). Without giving up the framework of transformation, Noonan takes Yoshida to task for these politics, asserting that Yoshida’s “denial of his self, in fact, situates the other (in [*Akitsu Onsen...*] Okada Mariko) in a position to which it must articulate through its own language, gaze, and gesture the filmmaker’s subjectivity” (112). It is for this reason—for Yoshida’s dependence on Okada Mariko in particular, without whom “the film auteur Yoshida Kijū as we know him would not have existed” (Saitō “Women” 33)—that Saitō refers to him as the “the most masculine auteur” (41).³⁵ While Okada was critical too to the so-called political trilogy that attracts so much attention, the group of films that Yomota called Yoshida’s delicate melodramas, those Yoshida made with Okada in the mid-60s, haunt me like Saitō with the “strange, obsessive feeling that ‘there are no women’ despite the featured presence of the female character in these films” (37), for it is there that women’s “presence lies in their very expression

of absence” (36).³⁶ In those expressions of vacancy and within the “delicate melodramas,” we encounter yet another version of Yoshida’s politics, a politics continuous with what he will engage in that later trilogy.³⁷ It is the politics he himself identifies, though in arguing thus I do not seek to recuperate these as the politics to be celebrated. Rather Noonan and Saitō, even in their indictment of Yoshida, point to something which by virtue of its position in the social life fits into the realm of the political despite its evacuation from that zone, which his mobilization of the dialectic, precisely in its perpetual reproduction, has made possible. To continue the work of demystification started by Noonan and Saitō demands that we look at Yoshida’s strategy of *reproducing* the dialectic, not to rescue Yoshida or valorize him as auteur but to see what account of the sixties his technique provides. What this yields is an account of infinite motion without a destination, transformation that provides new aesthetic forms without new ideologies, returning us to the still too familiar, to say much more about the desire for a break than its presence (just as missing in action as women are in Saitō’s reading). There is here a call to look more carefully at *form* to understand how it articulates Yoshida’s film philosophy and politics.

The Dialectics of *Impasse*

In reviewing Yoshida’s career, Hasumi observes a pattern of cycles (*saikuru*) in Yoshida’s production schedule that prompt Hasumi to ask why he took such a long interval after making *Coup D’Etat* to return to cinema.³⁸ Yoshida himself is surprised to have these patterns, and especially their interval (13 years), brought to his attention and comments:

Since my virgin (*shojo*) piece, I worked at such a speed, “transforming” on a tear, right? In the Shōchiku period when I was still in my 20s, I made films full of the instability (*fuan*) of youth. A little later, I encountered Okada Mariko and there was the period when I decided to represent women’s essence (*onna no saga*). And then, the season of pursuing the embodiment of politics (*seiji no nikutaika*). That instability of youth is the other within me. The essence of woman is not sex—it can’t be anything but the woman as other. Then, through the embodiment of politics, I grasped at that as other, deciding to overcome it. Over those first thirteen years, until I finished shooting *Coup D’Etat*,

probably all of the various others divided in me dispersed piece by piece. Then, when I turned 40, I broke it off with film, that work I'd come into by chance, having the sense I wanted to start life as a completely new other. (454-5).

What is notable about Yoshida's response to Hasumi is how it too cycles through a reproduction of his various others. Each stage, or period, of his career, corresponds to the excavation of a different other. Perhaps more accurate than excavation though is exchange—over each interval Yoshida identifies as moving in conversation with those others, cycling with them. This, I will develop further in this section through a reading of *Honō to Onna* (or, *Flame and Woman*, 1967), given the English title of *Impasse* by Yoshida, is how we should understand his dialectics: as an infinite reproduction, the rotation, the loop. In this, what *Honō* demonstrates to us more than any other film is the geometry of his dialectics, its circular nature. *Impasse* provides us with the cinematic technique to understand his dialectic, illustrating more than ever its dependence on the other and how fundamentally informed that dynamic is by a shifting sexual division of labor increasingly invested in the social. *Impasse*, too, translates for us Yoshida's *undō* to demonstrate that his reproductions of movement, his transformations, do not solve the crisis but rather perpetuate its returns.

With *Honō* Yoshida takes on the bourgeoisie, indicting the fiction and banality of middle class domesticity's attachment to a reproduction that serves heteronormativity's fulfillment in the nuclear family.³⁹ The film implicates in this biological models of reproduction premised on a notion of "natural" filiation (either by bloodline or embodiment—forms of reproduction that the film indicates amount to relations of possession that subjectify) by concentrating on the intersecting lives and crises of two couples linked together by artificial insemination. In a series of scenes often indistinguishable as memory, fantasy, or dream, where past and present are easily confused and point of view comes from uncertain sources, we learn of Ibuki's insistence on

having a child with his wife Ritsuko (Okada) despite, and likely *because* of, his infertility.⁴⁰ The narrative represents Ritsuko as neither interested in a child nor responsive to Ibuki's repeated recourse to the logic of the couple (the *fūfu*)—she thus bears the weight of Yoshida's polemic, Okada's vacant stares put into the service of communicating the disaffection that comes with the performance of hegemonic scripts. Ibuki and Ritsuko are mirrored, a favorite device (discursively as well as cinematically—both in his audio-visual techniques of crafting cinema and in the object world that makes up his films' *mise-en-scène*) of Yoshida's, by the equally unsympathetic couple of Sakaguchi and Shīna. Sakaguchi's complex about being treated as a thing (*mono*) comes to organize the film's elliptical movements, feeling as he does as if bought to run Shīna's father's hospital. Where Sakaguchi's feeling of psychic castration even while being the supposed sperm donor fuels much of the drama of the film,⁴¹ his wife is, like Ibuki, though much more publicly and avowedly (in contrast to him), infertile. If anyone is portrayed with an ounce of sympathy in this, it is Shīna as she is the only character who seems to have absorbed the lessons of the moment: that is, that relations of affiliation, social life, offer much more than the biology that is being remade as artificial.⁴²

The film stages this drama of relations when it opens to an image of trees overhead, saturated in light but out of focus. Already from the start, filmic desire is deferred: the film begins by refusing clarity. As the camera tracks over these still out of focus trees, a woman's voice initiates a conversation about looking. It is met with a man's response and the two volley back and forth with utterances confirming vision's power. Soon, the image (as if it has a life of its own) heeds the call of desire and comes into focus to reveal two oversized human heads, the presumed owners of the voices. It reveals itself too as the point of view of the Sakaguchi's infant son, Takashi (it indeed does have a life of its own). Though the conversation could sound as if it

were the quotidian chatter of new parents, in it, the two compete for ownership of the child—for his gaze—to demonstrate that the conversation is much less about the child than it is about the objects we invest with desire.⁴³ This moment displays all the parents are invested in—in being seen—and all the baby is meant to mediate. It is hard not to recall Yoshida’s admiration for Ozu’s pillow shots in this moment.⁴⁴ In the book he began writing some ten years ago as he made a documentary series about Ozu’s work, Yoshida would generally compliment the complex set of gazes in *Tokyo Story* (1953),⁴⁵ devoting some length, however, to all the possibility he locates in Ozu’s decision to shoot from the point of view of an air pillow, which shows that “Ozu-san’s films are really all about how to look at human beings from alternate points of view” (7). In this scene from *Honō to onna*, Takashi, absent and evacuated save all of the discussion circulating around him, is not so different from that air pillow. He is present only in his look—the look that unites the couple, his parents, together within the frame. That is the drama of this opening scene—the performance of the triangulation a child is meant to fulfill, or, perhaps more accurately stated, announces the coupledness the child is meant to secure.

Layers of surrogacy mark Shīna and Sakaguchi’s home, on the other hand, built around a massive crow’s cage. Yoshida, who in this film reproduces images within images, nested like Russian dolls with origins that can never be found, codes this as surrogacy when we are ushered into their home by looking over the shoulder of someone, whose identity we cannot initially discern, flip through photographs we know to have been taken at the Ibuki’s home. As they are flipped through, the photographs manufacture an artificial longing built on a grammar of blood, connected as Sakaguchi and Ritsuko supposedly are through the conception of Takashi, given that it turns out to be Sakaguchi who looks at the photographs of himself walking with Ritsuko that begin, as is also Yoshida’s technique across this film, at a significant distance.⁴⁶ The

mediation in this scene is really quite incredible as Shīna, present both in the room and “in” the photographs, as her point of view and her gaze as the photographer captured the images (announced aurally in the spare soundtrack by the loud click of her camera as she took the pictures, disrupting any fictions of unification between Ritsuko and Sakaguchi suggested by their occupation of the visual frame as they walked together). Before Sakaguchi has even been revealed as the viewer of the images, they grow progressively more zoomed in on Ritsuko until she is framed alone in close-up, that privileged visual grammar that solicits the viewer’s sympathy to Yoshida’s great concern.⁴⁷ Just as Ritsuko’s transparent umbrella⁴⁸ blocked within



Figure 4.1 Hiding in plain sight

plain sight the relation between her and Sakaguchi from Shīna and us as they walked together under Shīna’s watchful gaze, the pictures now too stand at a remove to naturalize a coupling that is not and has no reason to be, manufacturing too a comparative structure that suggests that something is missing in Sakaguchi and Shīna’s relationship. As Sakaguchi pages through these photographs, recordings of crows squawk loudly from a deck on their table. Shīna meanwhile looks to the birds for the attention she is not receiving from her husband, dancing seductively around their cage. In a reference to her own sterility—which Shīna seems to have no problem

with save its disruption of her possession of Sakaguchi—Shīna, talking half to herself, announces how much one of the crows looks like Sakaguchi. She will come back to this at other times in the films, rehearsing that call to resemblance, ordinarily reserved for the biological child, that she knows the birds cannot meet and which thus highlights her great violation of the sexual division of labor. This too is screamed by Ritsuko’s photographic presence within the scene, then confirmed by Sakaguchi’s disgusted response to her flip question “don’t they look just like you?” Shīna must rechannel her motherly love, she must rehearse the utterances that make it true to confirm herself as woman. Even though Sakaguchi may call her dirty for directing this through and towards the birds, in mediating her desire for a connectedness in reproduction through them, she also initiates their sexual encounter after she accuses him of thinking of another man’s wife while she addresses the crows. He takes her and the confusion of the soundtrack does not make clear whether this is desired or not (indiscernible within the cacophony as protests of rape and or the sounds of rapture). Nevertheless, the birds mediate each of her sexual encounters (at that time with Sakaguchi and later when she attempts to seduce Ibuki under the premise that if their spouses “naturally” belong together—and are together elsewhere—perhaps they too should unite in their sterility), providing the surrogate calls of nature and the authenticating function established, as Takashi’s, through point of view. The thematic carry over to the next scene, of Ibuki in the work place, where he meditates on an aphorism laden in tautologies of life⁴⁹ encourages us to see this mediation as the impasse, the indictment of these structures, working for no character in the film, which comes to loudly layer the many interacting registers of the film.

The narrative’s insistent return to the family unit (with the force of blood relations propelling Sakaguchi constantly toward Ritsuko) invariably works to unravel itself. This is

particularly mobilized around the film's anxiety about and a critique of being treated as object, as thing (*mono*)—first raised within the dialogue in that encounter between Sakaguchi and Ritsuko, wherein he issues the cautionary tale of the “Kotobuki incident,” where, in the immediate postwar, a midwife who was receiving milk and sugar to rear babies, instead sold it for a profit on the black market, treating, Dr. Sakaguchi argues, life itself as a thing.⁵⁰ Ibuki's failure to come to terms with his inability to reproduce are taken out in frustrations with his wife, as well as anger and confusion over his college girlfriend's abortion that both inhabit his memory and prompt him to seek her out in an encounter with her in the “present,” both of which are represented with constant visual disruptions of the frame—visual obstructions—that stand between him and the women in his lives, to communicate the absolute alterity which structure his relations to them and his psychic infertility.



Figure 4.2 Disrupting Obstructions

It remains, however, that the film takes women to task for objectifying life, for not taking their status as caregivers and caretakers seriously enough, for not participating enthusiastically enough in shepherding the life of the child. Ibuki desperately wants a child to demonstrate he is a man, but that does not seem to involve the child much. Ritsuko herself oscillates between

absolute disconnection from the child and what appears to be an obsession with possessing him, something she appears more propelled towards when she grows disinterested in her husband. Ultimately, though, her inability to connect with the child seems to precipitate his wandering into the street and disappearing, prompting her confession that things were nicer when they were "quiet," before his birth (and really, goes the suggestion, by way of earlier associations, in the week before she was married and while she was away from her parents—when she was on her own). Yoshida presents an entire panoply of scenarios for how Takashi goes missing—from what appears to be Ibuki's paranoiac point of view, which imagines Ritsuko taking Takashi to the roof and dropping him off, to Ritsuko's fantasy of immobilization, presented as in the logic of a dream when, with horror, one finds they suddenly cannot move. The loops and indistinctions in this sequence tell us that we cannot decide the truth of what happened. They nevertheless betray, and utterly naturalize, that whatever happened returns us to Ritsuko and the expectation of her reproductive labor. Even, thus, if the disconnection of their bourgeois lives, the circuits they pass through, demonstrate the emptiness of these worlds—the emptiness of the force of reproduction and living nicely⁵¹—the impasse of the film arises with the very dialectic that stages the critique of the system,⁵² keeping in place the heteronorm. It does not move outside of it, but circulates within it.

Indeed, the most marked technique of the film is its literal circulating movement, doubled through the movements of actors circulating like vultures, which is then echoed by a camera that often follows in rotation.⁵³ This rotating camera is both subjective and psychic, mapping onto the path traversed by the film's actors, but also exceeding their movement by tracking their imagined movements.⁵⁴ Most often, this motion communicates (the failures of) possession in domestic relations—Ibuki hovers over his wife, incensed a woman could exist who might not want a child;

Ibuki's subconscious propels the paranoiac circulation around the image of Ritsuko embracing a stranger before he awakes from a dream and comforts himself by verifying their attachment through a look at the guarantor of their futurity—Takashi. Ritsuko moves around Takashi, claiming him, following the conclusion of the segment of the crisis of the child's supposed loss. Though this camera movement otherwise generally marks a masculine claiming, and Ritsuko is more often represented in a mode of disidentification with maternity, in this moment—a moment structured as fantasy though the diegesis does not clarify whether or not it is—she comes to stake a claim to Takashi as hers. The question of fantasy is raised not as much visually as it is in this moment's radical claim to a position that Ritsuko does not seem interested in occupying and the efforts throughout the film to cast maternity as monstrous—a monstrosity repeatedly tied in obscure sequences that associate it with war and a nowhere/everywhere space, where, for instance, a mother who is not Ritsuko runs after but cannot save her son, lying like Takashi in the middle of a deserted street and that boy is taken away while she is shamed by the military police who take him from her. It is even more present, however, in the soundtrack, which so often accompanies the feminine with the horrors of war through an entirely non-diegetic incorporation in too many scenes to mention of the low sounds of distant sirens. This both casts the woman as horrific—in the vein of *Rosemary's Baby*, in her everydayness, in her maternal associations and especially in her hesitations over maternity—but it also expresses the ongoing crisis of the everyday.⁵⁵

The possibility that Shīna has taken Takashi, which we know is what happened (not that she stole him, but that she picks him up out of the middle of the street) is communicated, too, as a horror when it subtly returns us to the discourse of the thing. This too, however, pits the two women against each other, as it is Ritsuko's flashback on Ibuki's suggestion that it Takashi could

be with Shīna, who Ritsuko derisively refers to as *ano hito* [that person], that motivates a flashback to the two women talking about motherhood. In this scene, where Shīna will eventually reveal her sterility, she asks Ritsuko what it is like to have a child. Ritsuko is non-plussed, strangely disaffected, but it is Shīna who becomes all the more monstrous when she responds to Ritsuko's reply that all mothers feel the same thing with the question: "but aren't babies the strangest living things (*hen na ikimono*)?" Indeed a strange turn—both to refer to the sacred child as a thing,⁵⁶ and also to render the thing living. Ritsuko is most of all disinterested in this question, which prompts a reproduction of that all too familiar cooing call: oh they're cute (*kawaii*)? Ritsuko repeats this language, but neither woman performs the cuteness enough, failing to be called into discursive regime dictated for them.⁵⁷

The fantasy of the biological, rightful coupling of Ritsuko and Sakaguchi to finally render them a "real" family provides the film with its Japanese title, *Flame and Woman*. Here, too, it is the soundtrack that most clearly articulates the presence of the dialectic—the confusion—involved in this negotiation. In this scene, the consummation of their already connectedness, the desire for the union is communicated via the *sound* of crackling of a wood stove in the country house where they have gone (for Ritsuko, a return to the place where, before her marriage, she was happy and thus representative of recuperative desire⁵⁸), a stove that Sakaguchi may stare at but which we do not (or cannot) see. Within the paradigm of desire, we hear that flame burn as long as the two are separated in longing. However, as they grow closer, approaching one another, the flame gives way to the hollowness of wind, that same wind filled with a dull siren of vague crisis, which eventually transform into an amplified silence when they grow even more proximate. The scene moves in and out of these aural registers, incorporating at one point the foreboding operatic score that so often represents Ritsuko's alienation at her mid century modern

single family home in Tokyo⁵⁹ (we know this location from the identification on the license plate of Shīna's car that places it in Shinagawa), and structures the stillness in motion of the impasse. I have been very careful until now not to talk about Yoshida's techniques of this film as being visual, electing the cinematic not only in recognition of all of the extracinematic ways that Yoshida's dialectic extends to the spectator, recruiting the spectator into the motion in place of the dialectic, but also to incorporate this critical aural register. That said, if we were only to understand this scene through the aural register we would miss an overwhelming intertext: namely, that which opens this dissertation: Naruse's *When a Woman Ascends the Stairs*. Though Yoshida may not identify with Naruse,⁶⁰ the elliptical movement of this scene (which echoes the geometry of the rest of the film, disrespecting constantly the 180 degree rule and which, by design, violates the rules of cinematic space) and the focus within it of Ritsuko's movement, *ascending the stairs*, appearing imprisoned within wooden bars all too evocative of those that line Keiko as she ascends toward the hostess bars, add a layer of immobile movement tied directly and intimately to sexuality and to the woman's reproductive labor. The bars move us between Keiko's world and this world, creating a connection of women's supporting labor and its incredible alienation. Within this too the bars, which first appeared when the laborer enters the *beso* to bed Ritsuko, announce dramatically this is someone else's system of desire. They project the shadows that point to the structure, propelling forward, subjectifying but not allowing for any one('s) subjectivity.⁶¹

Impasse speaks to Yoshida's critique of the remaking of the family system within the consumer paradigm of the high growth years, launched through Ritsuko's disconnectedness and an object world that no longer allows for the distinction between human life and consumer goods like the Renault Caravelle Shīna drives. However, this critique relies on a cinematic grammar

that fixates on movement, detournement, deferral. It refuses to land, refusing to explain itself, showing us that we as spectators are implicated in its system, and stuck too in the circuits of exchange, that geometry of movement that keeps us within the circle. Lauren Berlant's elaboration on "impasse" in her recent *Cruel Optimism* takes as its starting point a time and place at remove from this context, in the United States at the end of the 20th century and the early part of the 21st, when the "crisis ordinary" makes impossible the disavowals that allow citizen subjects to invest in the fantasy of the good life. Here, in the extending present, impasse is "induced" by crisis (10). Her conceptualization of impasse in this model instructs us that it is:

a space of time lived without a narrative genre. Adaptation to it usually involves a gesture or dramatic action that points to and revises an unresolved situation. One takes a *pass* to avoid something or to get somewhere: it's a formal figure of transit. But the impasse is a *cul-de-sac*—indeed, the word *impasse* was invented to replace the *cul-de-sac*, with its untoward implications in French. In a *cul-de-sac*, one keeps moving, but one moves paradoxically, in the *same space*. An impasse is a holding station that doesn't hold securely but opens out into anxiety, that dogpaddling around a space whose contours remain obscure. An impasse is a decompositional—in the unbound temporality of the stretch of time, it marks a delay that demands activity. The activity can produce impacts and events, but one does not know where they are leading. That delay enables us to develop gestures of composure, of mannerly transaction, of being-with in the world as well as of rejection, refusal, detachment, psychosis, and all kinds of radical negation" (199)

This *is* what we see in *Honō*, it is a procession that is always moving (Ritsuko never stops walking, even if/especially when it is only to walk in the circles of her home). However, what the film shows us is that the crisis ordinary is not the thing that arrives when the good life is no longer possible.⁶² The crisis ordinary is present at the very inception of the promise of the good life. It is not the precarity that arrives after the fantasy is over, it is the vulnerability of the fantasy itself. While we are well served to absorb the lesson of the film, we would be missing something important indeed about it if we left it in the recuperative space of performing critique. Because what the film shows us most of all is that this movement, this deferral, this desire to

avoid congealing, that it is consistent with the politics that Yoshida makes claim to throughout his cinema, those politics that promise transformation and that promise to deliver it on behalf of women. If we are to take the lesson of *impasse* seriously it is to understand how much we still remain within the cul-de-sac, with Yoshida there with us too. Thus even if the film's intervention is to say that as long as you are caught up in the biological you will find yourself caught in these circles, there is no outside to the circles. There is nothing but the perpetual elliptical movement. This offers us no break, even if it accounts for a redistribution of life away from that biological and toward the promise of social life.

The Postwar Thing: Anxiety around *Mono*

Honō's anxieties about the thing participate in a larger concern of Yoshida's with the thing. One of Yoshida's early engagements with the problem came in the frequently commented upon essay, first published in 1960, "A Challenge to the 'Thing.'"⁶³ In "The Alterity of Cinema," Noonan places this within a schema of Yoshida's negotiation of subjectivity. Noonan notes that, very much within the paradigm I have described above, this essay "solicits participation from its audience to interpret and complete its significance" to make up for what it "lacks [in] rigorous explication of the terms and ideas—like the 'object' (*taishō*), the self as a 'relational concept' (*kankei gainen*), and the negation of the self through thought ("ware omou, yue ni ware nashi")" (115). While Yoshida certainly encourages these readings, in his consistent reproduction of the problem of subjectivity within his dialectical apparatus, revisiting the essay after reviewing *Honō* suggests other coordinates: that is, historical coordinates easy to ignore because of their own overdetermination in this moment in Japanese history,⁶⁴ but which matter critically to understanding Yoshida's (and, indeed, Sakaguchi's) anxieties about the thing.

Though the definitions of Yoshida's key terms may be deferred, he begins from a materially grounded point. His essay initiates with the identification that "contemporary film" (the *Gendai* of his not yet existent production company), is *penetrated* by a philosophy (*shisō*) of the thing (43). While, as Noonan suggests about his philosophical key terms, Yoshida provides no reference to what he is thinking about when he refers to contemporary film, this "inclination" of cinema, its "tendency," when he deconstructs it, can be traced to the "turmoil of the postwar" (*sengo no konmei*) (41). In this he points not to that *gendai*, but instead, to the period of the immediate postwar, of the war's incorporation into that moment. We know this when he proceeds with a discussion that reminds his readers of that motto of denying empathy and burying sentimentality that came in the effort to destroy the "Japanese" familialism that the emperor system relied on at its height (43). What ends up emerging from this is that he sets up his self-negation and his interest in existentialism *in opposition* to this, in opposition to the treatment of the thing. The effect is that it places the thing, both as object that objectifies and as material, within the immediate-postwar moment, the burnout years.⁶⁵ In contrast to this is placed the *gendai*—the present (and thus, a different postwar—which, as I have suggested, via the naming of his production company years later, comes also to *be* him.

This, I argue, is where all of the contradictions of Yoshida's filmmaking praxis congeal. His desire to represent "real women," in opposition to the women of the previous generation of Shōchiku melodrama,⁶⁶ and to get to women's "nature" through the elliptical circuit that oscillates constantly in the theoretical realm that avoids meaning does so to avoid the violences of the tactics that made the physical body the overdetermined tactical theater of the war and the signifier of its continuities when the war was finished.⁶⁷ That vacant stare of Okada's, serving as some kind of present absence per Saitō, attempts to move away from what Douglas Slaymaker

identified in his study of the body in postwar literature as the sheer physicality of everyday life—the demands of bodily needs" in those years (1). It attempts to draw a line, defying the *kokutai* (the national body) that propelled the war, while also retaining a real conflict around the *nikutai* (the fleshly body). Slaymaker's critique of the *nikutai-ha* writers implicates Honō's Yoshida and his body of work, where, too,:

a woman's body serves as an object, a means, via sex, for male characters to achieve a variety of goals: utopia of communality, connection with fellow human beings, a guide for the path to another level of existence, or liberation from current oppressions. Tamura's idea of a 'liberation from the body by the body,' shared to some extent by all the flesh writers I discuss, proves to be a liberation of *male* bodies (rather than all bodies, as they seem to assume) towards, via, or from, a woman's body. (Slaymaker 14)

Just as the carnal woman's body became the emblem of the freedoms of the postwar, Okada's face becomes the emblem of Yoshida's liberation in this supposedly no longer chaotic *gendai*.

Perhaps the perpetual motion of Yoshida's dialectic would save him, as it so often has in criticism of his work in the claims that its structure works to undermine familism, patriarchy, and the structures that imprison woman as others, had it not so emphatically secured a hierarchy with him as auteur at top even as he negates himself and critiques the power dynamics of the auteur. While he may displace the meaning making of a film, moving it out of his hands and into the audience's in acknowledgement of the ability of both audience and actor to alter his intentions,⁶⁸ and may likewise have avoided playing director on set by forcing his actors to intuit how to perform their roles⁶⁹ he nevertheless manages to communicate that the film is the director's thing with that same language we encountered in Hamano: of *mono*. Okada's own interview with Hasumi from 2003, "As an Actress, As a Producer, as a Partner," reproduces that language we have already encountered in Hamano: namely the idea that the film is the director's thing—Yoshida's reviled *mono*.⁷⁰ Just as Okada would relay in her later autobiography anecdotes of Yoshida shutting her out from his study when he would work, in Okada's interview

she references moments over the course of their workings, where she perhaps assuming a collaboration that they had already long since been engaged in, when he would dismiss by telling her, as in the case of a part in *Coup D'Etat* that interested her, “It’s not your thing” (*Anata no mono de ha nai*) (68), making her the producer of the film in consolation. This perpetual regulation of her, Yoshida justifies in his *Midnight Eye* interview with Alexander Jacoby and Rea Amit just a few years ago via a logic of professionalism, of maintaining the distance that would allow Okada to work as an actor or as a producer on set, without interference. This distance, however, affirms Okada’s use as material, as not just *thing* but as *his thing*. Saitō is very right to say he would have never been the director we know had he not had her. However, Yoshida’s “politics” disregards her status as his avatar and the power of her image within his cinema. It also disregards the material means she provided to make Yoshida’s independent cinema possible at all: not just her body as the raw material of his images, but her capital, which carried with it also her currency, the social capital, within the film industry to smooth over his reputation and facilitate the distribution of his independent films.⁷¹

Ultimately, Okada communicates the sexual division of labor that diffused Yoshida’s cinema: the gendered reproductive labor that was rehearsed and propelled into an infinity, that has no greater expression than in *Impasse*, that critique of Japanese high growth. More than anything, what the film demonstrates to us is the layers upon which a critique of both outmoded ideologies of domesticity and their marriage to a contemporary domestic subjectivity could still produce a model of work that relies on the very same structures of support that undermine the distinction feminists have long since recognized as false between the public and private.⁷² Okada’s public work does not save her from the domestic rituals of playing Yoshida’s avatar and they cannot save him from the pitfalls of his own political claims (even if he would disavow that

he was ever looking for saving). What *Impasse* provides us with then is a cinematic account of the shift that wants to move away from an overetermined association of the postwar with the material toward a something else which is not the materialism of consumer life, but which invests in some other kind of life: in a social life, in bonds, in connections that the film cannot have, but so desperately desires.⁷³ This desire and its elliptical reproductions defy any kind of historical break that the dialectic attempts to move toward. Just as biological reproduction in its claim to making “new” life aims at a maintenance (of, e.g., the family) that stabilizes, this shows us how social reproduction’s claim to the same newness, to transformation, secures itself in all too familiar structures *through that the very claim to newness*.

¹ Ozu’s departing words to Yoshida in 1963 (*Anti-Cinema 2*).

² Though Yoshida went by Yoshida Yoshishige for the better part of his career and is sometimes still referred to as such in Japanese, several years ago he began self-identifying his given name with a different reading of its Chinese characters, reportedly easier to pronounce by non-Japanese speakers: Kijū (Yoshida’s explanation for this can be found in Jacoby and Amit). Though there was a period when he went by both in different contexts, because he goes by Kijū now, in my references to him in this chapter, I will use Kijū. Where the reader notices references to Yoshishige, that is to preserve the reading at the time the text was published or to preserve another author’s reference to Yoshida.

³ Aoyama, perhaps most well known for *Eureka* (2000), is a director who, like, Yoshida, has considered it part of his filmmaking practice to write theory and criticism. He is often, thus, held up as an example of such a director for his generation (at the “unofficial” Society for Cinema and Media Studies conference in Tokyo in 2009, also known as the Alt. SCMS, Aoyama participated in a panel with Kiyoshi Kurosawa representing just this function).

⁴ That the two would get acquainted on the set of Okada’s 100th film speaks to the extensive career Okada had already, by the early sixties, experienced. She has now made more than 150 films that have run the gamut of film genres, but has made films with wider commercial appeal (from her early melodramas to *Tampopo* (1985)) than Yoshida’s art cinema, better known to cinephiles and academics.

⁵ In their 1984 *taidan* (see chapter 3 for a description of this genre), generously shared with me by my *sempai* Yuka Kanno, film critics Yamada Hiroshi and Yamane Sadao discuss “When a an actress becomes a star.” While of course this is a form staged as a conversation and is necessarily more casual than an essay and the two critics are not academics or making claims to academic argument, the section of their conversation titled “The Sense of Existence (*sonzaikan*) of the Actress” is symptomatic of how she, and indeed in this scenario Okada Mariko, is imagined by them. That is, this section, with the ostensible object of “existence,” fixates on two things: actresses’ beauty and their ability to affect emotion in spectator-fans, especially through the face and the voice. Yamada and Yamane’s reflections on Japanese actresses proceed through a litany of commendations for being sweet (associated especially with the voice) and for whatever it is that they consider good (*ii*). This has the effect, of course, of entirely undermining any sense of existence, or of illustrating the instrumentality of existence for the actress, whose only existence can be within the image itself.

⁶ While I will elaborate on this below, both Okada’s autobiography and her interview with Hasumi Shigehiko, “Joyū to shite, purodyusā to shite, pātonā to shite,” [As an actress, as a producer, as a partner], describe Yoshida’s dismissal of Okada in the process of developing the film. As I describe below, Yoshida will frame this in terms of “professionalism” and the need to separate his private life from his work, treating Okada like any other actor or

actress in his films, but it affirms a structure that maintains the director at the head of the production pyramid and subjugates the actress, even one who such a commanding force as Okada has been.

⁷ While this is broadly affirmed—in Desser and Burch, and by the authors collected in the “Against the Grain” ATG minikomi and the essayists collected in the Dick Stegewerns edited volume on Yoshida—it is Saitō’s “Women and Fantasy” which deconstructs this situation as auteur, explaining that he is made auteur via the very representation of women’s perspective, of *écriture féminine*, to make him not just the auteur par excellence but the most masculine of auteurs (41).

⁸ The laughter and elipses written into Hasumi’s interview with Okada are a difficult to read subtext that nevertheless invite the suspicion that there is still more to be said, in the gaps it manufactures, about the difficulties of living and working with a director who both claims not to have ownership over the film and who simultaneously does not give up control over it.

⁹ I refer to the temporality of his cinema in this way in reflection of his insistent protest that the films he makes come *after* the previous generations’ and in response to them.

¹⁰ I am responding thus to Yoshida’s persistent claim of crafting a cinema that provides real women. Though this will be rewarded by Desser and Sato, who discuss his status as *feminisuto*—that slightly misogynistic cousin of the feminist who adores women (but nonetheless set them apart as radically other), and Jean-Michel Frodon will make reference in *Cahiers* to his “fiery indictments of the condition of women in Japanese society of the time,” I am less convinced than they are, as this chapter will demonstrate, of his hospitality toward women.

¹¹ This privilege comes in his symbolic position in relation to the “new wave,” however contested that formation has become. We see this, for instance, in the way that he plays poster boy for the new wave in Desser’s *Eros Plus Massacre*. The privilege too arises from the academic background which enabled him to write as prolifically as he did and the pedigree which allowed him to be hired at Shōchiku in the first place, to then gain a cinematic pedigree working with some of the biggest directors of the Golden Age. Even if Yoshida would make his career throwing those figure off, it never hurts to have had Kinoshita Keisuke on your side. It was also Yoshida’s tremendous privilege to be able to go independent at all and to have the resources to make the sumptuous film he did, a very different version of independent filmmaking from the contemporaneous example we see emerging with pink film. All of these forms of privilege coalesce in the affirmation of his image as political art filmmaker.

¹² Desser’s *Eros Plus Massacre* works to “bring historical specificity to the Japanese New Wave cinema and to place it within the wider discourse of historical, political, social, and cultural studies,” (2) or what he describes as placing “the films of the 1960s as expressions of cultural concerns of the 1960s” (3). However, that Desser comes to claim that “the entire New Wave arose out of the [Japanese leftist movements and the Anti-Security treaty demonstrations] impels this summary” (31) reflects the real limitations of his understanding of even what constitutes history. While I am by no means the first to the party in critiquing what was, for a very long time, one of the only studies devoted to 60s cinema, this chapter aims to make more dynamic still how we understand the cultural concerns that shaped Yoshida’s cinema to see what the history of the period can teach us.

Standish’s approach is similar—insisting that we read the films through their “socio-political and economic contexts” (4). Again, my approach might not appear so different, but there is a difference of rhetoric worth paying attention to and a historical context of the two books I refer to here. Desser’s initially came out in 1988 and, though Standish’s *Politics, Porn and Protest*, would be published much more recently in 2011, both books register the influence of cultural studies on film studies and respond to the sort of approach to Japanese cinema that has been emblemized by Noel Burch’s *To the Distant Observer* which has read cinema within a Metzian paradigm that reads films’ signs. This effort to address the socio-historical thus aims to get closer to the contexts in which the films emerged, to ground the analysis. However, where Desser imposes a fixed historical event as a device to explain the films of the period and otherwise he fixes the histories they can tell, Standish works to ground the history of the films by looking at the narratives provided by the filmmakers. What I work to do here is to figure out the relationship to that internal logic—rather than operate from within it, I am working to also move outside of it, to examine its implications and to do so dialogically, rather than to take that context as the fixed point or *the* material reality.

¹³ The ubiquity and overdetermination of Yoshida’s association with sex and politics is spoken to in the naming of a DVD collection of some of his most well known films from the end of the 60s and early 70s as *The Collected Works of Yoshida Yoshishige (68-73): The Season of Sex and Politics*. The association with auteurship is, like the discourse itself, decidedly more academic in context, but represents an important starting point across the literature for discussions of Yoshida’s place in Japanese film history.

¹⁴ This celebration comes much more from Hasumi, Yomota, and Desser than Saitō. I am forever struck by Yomota's comment, which I will discuss at greater length below, that "If ATG had no existed, perhaps we would have remembered Yoshida Kijū only as a director of delicate melodramas, not as an *auteur* who experimented with ways of represented historical overdetermination in *Erosu + Gyakusatus* ('Eros plus Massacre', 1970) and *Kaigenrei* ('Coup D'Etat', 1973)" ("Two or Three Things" 29). Though, of course, it is ATG that Yomota celebrates here most of all, the opposition he creates between melodrama (that privileged gendered genre) and auteurship is striking. So too is the naturalization of historical overdetermination with material deemed to be "political"—that is, related to leftist political movement. It disregards, as I will develop here, the everyday politics that circulate and are developed in Yoshida's "delicate melodramas."

¹⁵ Anxieties we can locate across his writing (especially in his essays "The Anarchism of Looking" (*Henbō* 21-42), "A Challenge to the 'Thing'" (*Henbō* 43-47), and "My Film Theory: The Logic of Self-Negation" (*Henbō* 71-77)), in the context of the film (i.e. the idea that a film could be a totality), the subject, and the self.

¹⁶ The first of Yoshida's films to be screened abroad was the 1969 *Eros Plus Massacre*, which premiered not in Japan, but in France. *Impasse* was thus not screened contemporaneously abroad and, while a KineJapan email has indicated that it was a title approved by Yoshida himself, it is not clear when *Impasse* was selected as its English title.

¹⁷ Though Yoshida appears to imagine the geometry of his dialectics as shooting off into a thousand directions, I worry instead that the geometry he manufactures is one of circles, evocative of the "cul-de-sac" that Berlant names as the shape of the impasse in *Cruel Optimism* (199).

¹⁸ The differences of pointing to the Golden Age as a genealogical reference point for Yoshida in comparison to *ninkyō* should be noted. For starters, Yoshida entered the film world at the moment when it was still cresting in its Golden Age and worked as an assistant director within that very paradigm. His mode of filmmaking, too, despite his protests, is much more continuous with the melodramas made by those who trained him (Kinoshita, for example). Making films, as he would in the mid-60s about the bourgeoisie, also implicated an audience very different from the mass audience of the *ninkyō* or even pink film: while he was persistently a critical favorite (represented by the *Kinema Jumpō* best ten lists) his films were not stand-outs in box office revenue). Where pink and *ninkyō* represented mass produced films distributed for a mass spectatorship, Yoshida's films were art films for cinephiles and critics.

¹⁹ In the interview with Hasumi Shigehiko that closes the edited volume of his writings, *Yoshida Yoshishige Henbō no rinri* [Yoshida Yoshishige: Ethics of Transformation], Yoshida explains that this began in high school when he read *Nausea* (437).

²⁰ See Furuhata, Noonan, Yoshida in Jacoby, etc.

²¹ This is suggested by Yoshida in his interview with Jacoby and Amit, in describing Shōchiku's decision to place one of Yoshida's films on a double bill with Ōshima's *Night and Fog in Japan*, organized around the idea that both were examples from the Japanese New Wave.

²² As an assistant director, it is worth noting, he would work with such masters of melodrama, the genre Shōchiku was known for, as Kinoshita Keisuke (to whose "*kumi*," or group, he would belong) and Oba Hideo.

²³ The English version of this article, published by the Norwegian Film Institute on the occasion of a Northwest European retrospective of his work in 2010, is an abridged version of Saitō's earlier "*Josei to gensō*." In that, she provides additional coordinates that names the films that mark the ends of each period (69). Yoshida himself distinguishes a period between his independent melodramas and what's known as his political trilogy (*Eros Plus Massacre* (1969/70), *Heroic Purgatory* (1970), and *Coup D'etat* (1973)), which he talks about as "road movies" of sorts (*Henbō* 448).

²⁴ In Okada's interview with Hasumi, "Joyū to shite, purodyusā to shite, pātonā to shite," [As an actress, as a producer, as a partner], she details the process of coming to collaborate with Yoshida. Though he had approached her for *Good for Nothing*, she could not do the project because of a scheduling conflict. So struck by the script that she sought out a part in his second film, a refusal from its producer stymied their connection at the time. When she was given charge for the *kikaku* (its conceptualization) of her 100th anniversary film, she requested Yoshida direct the film (55). Yoshida agreed, on the condition that he could make "his" (*boku no kangaeru*) *Akitsu Onsen* (56).

²⁵ The anti-melodrama discourse has arisen in reference to Yoshida's presence within his book on Ozu, *Ozu's Anti-Cinema*. Chris Fujiwara's interview with Yoshida for the Norwegian Film Institute publication introduces Yoshida through the frame of anti-cinema, writing "'anti-cinema' for Yoshida, means roughly 'counter to the rules and conventions of commercial cinema'. In this sense, Yoshida's own work must be considered 'anti-cinema'" (9).

When Fujiwara asks within the interview about the assignation of anti-melodrama to describe his work, Yoshida responds, consistent with his film philosophy, with the explanation that “Naturally there is always a rejection on my part whenever someone else categorizes my works. But when people explain to me why they make such categorizations, then I often accept that such a point of view is possible. I often say that at the same time I am both myself, and ‘the other’ to myself, a stranger to myself. So when somebody tells me, ‘You are such a person,’ then I have to accept it. So I find the categorization of those films as anti-melodrama acceptable, to some extent. But you can also call some of them anti-youth films. Whatever you put after ‘anti-‘ as long ‘anti-‘ is there, it fits my films” (10).

Saitō’s “Women and Fantasy” offers the alternate meta-melodrama because, with *Akitsu Onsen*, he “structured the melodrama to the extreme” and proceeded with the mid-sixties melodramas to deconstruct the genre (33).

²⁶ They reference Shōchiku in this context not only by way of comparison but because the Studio would often distribute Yoshida’s independently produced films.

²⁷ Across the literature you will alternately see the date associated with *Eros Plus Massacre* as either 1969 or 1970. When the former is listed it reflects the film’s initial distribution in France. The 1970 date, more often listed in association with the film, reflects its domestic distribution within Japan.

²⁸ There is a complicated play happening in the Japanese where the same character for “sex” (性, read *sei* as in that pair of sex and politics) can also be read *saga*, nature (or very likely, given Yoshida’s philosophical pedigree, “essence.”). This is pursued by Saitō in the untranslated second half of her Japanese piece.

²⁹ *Henbō no rinri*, the title Hasumi Shigehiko provided for Yoshida’s collected works, has also been translated as Ethics of Transfiguration. While *henbō* can indeed be translated either way and there are advantages to both translations, I have elected for transformation both for its epochal associations (implicated in the politics of the period and my arguments to be found below) as well as for its medium specific associations—that is, to place emphasis on the cinematic “form” rather than the more linguistically associated “figure.”

³⁰ See Cazdyn 76-79. Yoshimoto’s objection in his dissertation *The Logic of Sentiment* is that Desser collapses the new wave and the political avant-garde, finding that to be “quite disrespectful to historical specificities of both the New Wave and political movements of the 60s. In the 1960s, there was no unified political avant-garde to be spoken of; instead there were many different political avant-gardes, protest movements, and armed struggles” (181). Ultimately he takes umbrage with “the use of 1960 and 1970 as the year of ANPO [...as] a common case of using the decade as an unproblematically meaningful unit of historical segment” (182).

³¹ This is owing, I believe, to what he later writes about money and images working together to produce value (50).

³² Hasumi, a Tokyo university professor of French literature who also served at one time as the university’s president (at, one might note, the most prestigious university in Japan and one of the most prestigious in all of Asia), is considered one of the fathers of film studies in Japan. He has trained directors like Aoyama Shinji and Kurosawa Kiyoshi in film studies and theory.

³³ I should also note my effort to be vigilant here in translating *eiga* as film because of Yoshida’s identification with film in a conversation with Hasumi that contrasts film with cinema, where cinema carries association with narrative and its problems of futurity (c.f. 460-1).

³⁴ Douglas Slaymaker’s *The Body in Postwar Japanese Fiction* gives an account of women’s bodies being employed as symbolic material in the immediate postwar in a literary context, where, he explains: “In the image system of the fiction examined here, a woman’s body serves as an object, a means, via sex, for male characters to achieve a variety of goals: utopia of communality, connection with fellow human beings, a guide for the path to another level of existence, or liberation from current oppressions. Tamura’s idea of a ‘liberation from the body by the body,’ shared to some extent by all the flesh writers I discuss, proves to be a liberation of *male* bodies (rather than all bodies, as they seem to assume) towards, via, or from, a woman’s body” (14).

See also Saitō’s “Occupation and Memory: The Representation of Woman’s Body in Postwar Japanese Cinema.”

³⁵ While the translator’s of the English edition render this as “the most masculine author” I have adjusted it to account for the film studies discourse of the auteur that Saitō clearly indexes here. It might also be more accurate still, whether in letter or in spirit, to talk about this as the most “masculinist auteur,” as Saitō’s critique really hinges on Yoshida’s instrumentalization of *écriture féminine*. The Japanese version makes this clearer: “*Gyakusetsuteki ni kikoeru kamoshirenai ga, josei no ekurichūru o kakan ni mo jissen shiyō to suru dansei sakka ha, aru imi de motto mo danseiteki na sakka na no de aru*” (121-2).

³⁶ For Saitō Okada’s presence can be located in in her stares into the void (“Women” 36).

³⁷ My use of politics here both challenges Yoshida's claim to disruption *and* asks that we reformulate our definition of politics. I thus move away from the notion of politics put forward by some like Ranciere, which has gathered a powerfully overdetermined association with the sixties since Kristen Ross's *May '68 and Its Afterlives* (2002), one examples that understands politics to be about contestation and resistance (in opposition to his "policing," driven by regulation and discipline). I am interested instead in an understanding of the political as the matrix and interaction of Ranciere's politics and police together, or something closer to the field of the political that Foucault talks about in terms of the micro-physics of power, something generative but which is not necessarily inflected with the progressive narrative or the achievements of resistance. I am referring thus to the relations—those structures, that form, describe, and value—of knowledge-power (see "Truth and Power" and *Discipline and Punish*).

³⁸ Though Yoshida would make some documentaries for television, he did not return with a feature film until 1986, when he released *The Human Promise*.

³⁹ See Lee Edelman's *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*, especially his development of the concept of "reproductive futurism," which argues that the child "remains the perpetual horizon of every acknowledged politics, the fantasmatic beneficiary of every political intervention," "to affirma structure, to authenticate social order" (3). Heterosexuality is powerfully implicated within Edelman's study in futurism's work to promote "generational succession, temporality, and narrative sequence, not toward the end of enabling change, but, instead of perpetuating sameness, of turning back time to assure repetition—or to assure a logic of resemblance (more precisely: a logic of metaphoricity) in the service of representation and, by extension, of desire" (60) (see also 177 n. 42).

⁴⁰ In a heavy handed gesture about the power dynamics of the sexual division of labor in the middle class family, the two professional male protagonists are referred to by their surnames. Their wives, on the other hand, are only ever called by their given names. The working class specter who Ritsuko can either not remember or refuses to believe is the same person she had an affair with prior to her marriage is given no name at all (referred to as *otoko*—man—in materials about the film).

⁴¹ In his persistent strategy of *détournement*, however, Yoshida avoids settling on this truth. Really, he avoids truths. While various actors in the film assume that Sakaguchi is the biological father, there is great uncertainty about whether Ritsuko was impregnated artificially or through intercourse, and if the latter, whether she conceived with Sakaguchi or with the unnamed man.

⁴² That said, Shīna will be punished for this when, finding Takashi in the middle of the street, she picks him up and spend a few hours with him while his parents (including her husband, positioned by virtue of his presence in the home and an assumed bloodline relation, as parent) passively worry about him.

⁴³ Think once more of Edelman's reproductive futurism, where the investment in the child is less about the child's future than the parents.

⁴⁴ Those he discusses, of course, in his *Ozu's Anti-Cinema* book, a book he developed after making a documentary series on Ozu for NHK in 1994 (as Daisuke Miyao explains in his translator's introduction to the English edition) (ix).

⁴⁵ He writes: "*Tokyo Story* may be considered a drama featuring many intricate gazes, and it can be interpreted as a film of revelation that exceeds language. Such looks as the gazes of things, absent gazes, invisible gazes, the disorderly gazes of human beings, the gazes of the sacred other side, the gazes of orderly strangers, and the gazes of the deceased appearing in the reflection of water—all emerge one after another, reflect upon each other, and coexist. None of these gazes becomes dominant in Ozu-san's films or in this chaotic world" (113-4).

⁴⁶ While I would argue that Yoshida's films offer us the best theorization of this relation to space, distance, and desire, his essays collected in the section of Hasumi's *Henbō no Rinri* called "Space-Time" include extensive reflection on this distance (Yoshida consistently offers the language of *hedatari*—distance, yes, but gap, chasm, rift, cleavage, which given his reference in across this set of essays to Maurice Merleau-Ponty—including his *The Visible and the Invisible* (276)—gestures, in chorus, to Merleau-Ponty's chiasm, that intersubjective space of mingling, the intertwining) (249-373, especially "Film Space and Time" (257-280) and "The Structure of Visual Expression and Nothingness: When you can untie the knot of space" (281-297)).

⁴⁷ While Yoshida comments on this in his interview with Hasumi, in Fujiwara's interview he comments "the common rule is that when you make a close-up, the focus of the shot should be at the center of the frame, so that for most people, it's easy to look at, it's comfortable. Which also means that as part of the set of rules of cinema, the person at the center is often unconsciously defined as the protagonist. So I very often frame only half of the face of the actor. It's a kind of resistance, telling the audience, 'Don't trust so blindly what you see on the screen. Please try to find by yourselves what is really important to you as the audience, in what you see within this frame'" (11). The

contradictions around the power that Yoshida makes claim to give over to the audience while still working to shape speaks to his own struggles around direction, suggesting a desire to control that which he nevertheless realizes he cannot control. Only a little while later in the interview he explains why he uses flashbacks and daydreams: “Because the images I created become independent from myself and take on a life of their own, the audience is free to interpret a scene as a fantasy or a flashback even if I never intended it that way. I feel that if I say in words that this scene is ten years ago, a sophisticated audience might say to me, ‘You shouldn’t have said that, it’s better if you don’t tell us this directly.’ A film is ultimately not about what I tell the audience to see but about what the audience sees and discovers for themselves” (12).

⁴⁸ Like the mirror, the umbrella is known as a favorite device of Yoshida’s.

⁴⁹ In Japanese he refers this aphorism where birds say, “*Ikite iru koto ha suteki da mon. Naze nareba, jinsei ha subarashiku ikite iru to iu koto ha subarashī kara da. Ikite iru!*” [Living is great! The reason is that a life lived well is great! Living!]. That this comes through the figure of the bird that has just mediated the couple both codes the stakes of life and the position of the dialectic, its movement, in negotiating this (and, too, to a circle unto itself).

⁵⁰ As I will discuss below, Yoshida’s concern about the thing stretches across his career, manifesting as a discourse in both his films and his critical writings. What is at stake here, in Yoshida’s connection of the discourse of “mono” (linked historically to forms of production and manufacturing in Japan—to those objects produced) to the postwar, is also the course of a shifting political-economic paradigm that turns almost anything into a consummable. That Yoshida so often contrasts “mono” with life (and not for instance, “*koto*,” another word for thing around which these issues are sometimes contested) or with subjectivity is to suggest both that subjectivity and life are connected within a humanist paradigm, but also that to be a thing is not to exist in the world of life or to participate in a relation of living, a social relation not premised on consumption and reproduction (almost evoking Jameson’s arguments about the waning of affect in *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, which he exemplifies with the distancing of the human in “stars—like Marilyn Monroe—who are themselves commodified and transformed into their own images” (11).

⁵¹ This is an emptiness that is nowhere more felt than in the architecture and landscapes of the films. Aside from the protagonists this is an unpopulated Tokyo, and impossibly so given their albeit-semi-suburban location in Shinagawa (designated by the license plate on Shīna’s car). The homes, epitomizing mid-century modern architectural design, are saturated in white, indoor-outdoor, offer split-level spaces that split without logic. They took are all surface and give the sense that no one could possibly live in these spaces. The homes have massive, sculpted gardens, flat-plane-like structures that are displayed but not ruffled. Yoshida will pursue this engagement with architectural space across his filmography but nowhere is it more developed than in *Heroic Purgatory*.

⁵² I am thus resistant to critic Mathieu Capel’s assessment in the French film magazine *Positif* that “Yoshida advocates through his films what might be called a subjective practice of the world,” which offers another solution to the problem of identification—so that in identifying one loses her identity as much as she’s freed of it (81).

⁵³ Capel describes this motion as “vertiginous,” writing that *Honō to Onna* is full of dislocating structures: “the foundation of the film is in flashback, structured somewhat vertiginously, such that you lose your bearings. Thus the breaks in chronology mean that you can never (or perhaps must) identify with certainty the nature of the sequences. When you start to think you’ve determined a point of reference, you are often confronted with images where you can’t quite be sure if they’re memory, fantasy, conjecture, or a supposedly objective representation” (80). This structure and its circular manifestation reminds us too of Deleuze’s elucidation of the action image in small form (the 10th chapter of *The Movement Image*), relevant to Yoshida’s technique of manufacturing gaps. As Deleuze explains, the ellipsis, in French, is both a pause as well as a geometry, both reflected in this elliptical motion. This is a style that Deleuze associates especially with the Italians and Russians (Japanese cinema only has a small place in his study), especially Antonioni, who Yoshida was known to admire.

⁵⁴ The camera often operates here in a mode that evokes the free indirect discourse that Deleuze develops from Pasolini over his two *Cinema* books. Deleuze, writing of Godard, but sounding as if he is describing Yoshida, writes of a third time image:

the image has to include the before the after; it thus has to bring together in this way the conditions of a new, direct time-image, instead of being in the present ‘as in bad films’. It is under these conditions of the time-image that the same transformation involves the cinema of fiction and the cinema of reality and blurs their differences; in the same movement, descriptions become pure, purely optical and sound, narrations falsifying and stories, simulations. The whole cinema becomes a free indirect discourse, operating in reality. The forger and his power, the film-maker and his character, or the reverse, since they only exist

through this community which allows them to say ‘we, creators of truth’. This is a third time-image, distinct from those we saw in the previous chapter. The two earlier ones essentially concerned the *order of time*, that is, the coexistence of the elements internal to time. The Third concerns the *series of time*, which brings together the before and the after in a becoming, instead of separating them; its paradox is to introduce an enduring interval in the moment itself. (*The Time Image* 155).

⁵⁵ Or what Berlant writes about in *Cruel Optimism* as the “crisis ordinary,” crises systemically produced by the normative scripts that dictate how things are “supposed” to be (10).

⁵⁶ Once more, I reference Edelman’s reproductive futurism.

⁵⁷ Sharon Kinsella’s “Cuties in Japan” charts the rise of *kawaii* as a style that “dominated popular culture in the 1980s” (though it certainly continues to hold appeal today) (220). While she presents arguments suggesting that *kawaii* as child-like *style* had only come into being in the seventies, the labor that happens around the circulation of *kawaii* in this scene suggests otherwise. While it is ostensibly the child’s cuteness (Kinsella also suggests that before *kawaii* style the word, in slightly different form, emphasized more strongly the pitiful connotations of the use in, e.g., *kawaiso*) that is at stake, Shīna also persistently affects *kawaii*, acting cute (acting such that it’s not often/always actually cute at all), which appears itself as somehow related to her infertility and pressure to perform her femininity. All of this suggests that, while Kinsella’s analysis of the operation of *kawaii* might be very on, its periodization might arrive at a slight delay.

⁵⁸ The recuperative desire here is a real palimpsest. It is a nostalgia for the time that she was still a “maiden.” Nostalgia too for a time before marriage and children—before she had responsibilities. It is also, however, a nostalgia, for the one time in her life she appears to have been on her own and not under either a father or a husband, which enabled her to have an affair (though once again, it is not clear to us whether this was fact or fantasy). It is too a nostalgia for a pastoral time and place, outside of the city and within “nature.”

⁵⁹ Recall that this is just becoming one of three treasures (known as the “3 Js”) of the late 60s/early 70s (Kelly).

⁶⁰ Fujiwara asked Yoshida whether he saw a resistance to cinema rules in Naruse’s cinema that dialogued with his own. Despite saying he did not identify a similarity in this way, he has many good things to say about Naruse. That said, there is something evasive in his comments that are hard to read. Where Yoshida seems to think that Naruse put an undue burden on women (“for me, with the burdens of my generation and my society, the historical responsibility of that period is on the men’s side, not the women’s, so the male side must be responsible for everything bad that happens” (13)).

⁶¹ The stairs and the split level are in fact features of both homes. In addition to providing a structure from which to project the shadows of imprisonment, they also have the effect of cutting the image in two, of splitting the image and often the subject, recalling the analytic of subtraction critic Abe Kashō (in English his name is rendered Abe Casio) incorporates into his analysis in the altogether different context of the films of Takashi Kitano. I raise this for two reasons: one, what conversation lends us about an aesthetic politics of death and, two, what it helps us think about in terms of Yoshida’s dual investments of the subject and the thing. This splitting renders the subject always as thing. It thingifies (or, objectifies) the subject.

⁶² This good life seems, in this case, to be “the social democratic promise of the post-Second World War period in the United States and Europe” (3) (limited somewhat artificially, I imagine to those geographies as a way of flagging Berlant’s geographical expertise as an Americanist). She identifies “that there has been a mass dissolution of a disavowal. The promise of the good life no longer masks the living precarity of the historical present” (196). I am questioning here whether it ever really did.

⁶³ I follow Patrick Noonan in translation of the title in “The Alterity of Cinema,” though the title (in Japanese: “*Mono’ e no chōsen*”) could also be rendered “In Defiance of the ‘Thing’”).

⁶⁴ That is, at the essay’s publication in 1960.

⁶⁵ Yakeato was language used contemporaneously to talk about the material state of ruin Japan was in at war’s end. Standish begins her book *Politics, Porn and Protest* by providing this as an explanatory frame for that avant-garde filmmakers she is concerned with. For more on this generation and *yakeato* as an analytic: Roman Rosenbaum and Yasuko Claremont’s *Legacies of the Asia-Pacific War: The Yakeato Generation*.

⁶⁶ In Jacoby and Amit’s article, however, it seems that his claims to representing “real women” extend to his contemporaries and colleagues as well (perhaps even his successors) as he expresses how rare it was for someone to represent women’s situation as he does (referring elsewhere within the interview to the context of women’s discrimination within Japan).

⁶⁷ In addition to Slaymaker, see also Yoshikuni Igarashi's fabulous *Bodies of Memory: Narratives of War in Postwar Japanese Culture, 1945-1970* and Ayako Saito's "Occupation and Memory." Sabine Frühstück's *Colonizing Sex*, though it extends beyond the war, provides an excellent history of the regimes that called on the body as an object of power and knowledge in the state in modern Japan.

⁶⁸ In this interview with Hasumi, Yoshida's example of this comes from *Good for Nothing*, where when he could not secure Okada for the female lead, the actress who ended up playing the role written for Okada completely changed his vision in the contribution of coldness she lent the production (448).

⁶⁹ Okada describes this lack of direction in "*Joyū to shite*"; this fits within Saitō's criticism of Yoshida's auteurship ("Josei").

⁷⁰ For Yoshida's generation of director, however, it seems almost universally agreed upon that a film is a director's "thing," it repeats so often.

⁷¹ Recall here, Anderson and Richie, for one.

⁷² These are interventions that two groups of people have been particularly instrumental in articulating: Marxists feminists (in addition to Federici, Heidi Hartmann is topical here) and feminist and queer theorists of publics (Berlant in "Sex in Public," Nancy Fraser, Dean).

⁷³ Within the conversation about *mono* and the broader one about commodities, Arjun Appadurai's introduction to *The Social Life of Things* seems particularly relevant.

Epilogue

Japanese Cinema is Alive

Here, at the close of this study, I return us to where we began: to the rhetoric of life claimed on behalf of Japanese cinema around the turn of the century. I do so, not just for continuity or to replicate that strategy of narrative cinema that appeals to a bookend structure, but rather to address the claim made by the dissertation's title that reproduction does not end.

The chapters that have just concluded begin the task of demonstrating that that reproduction does not end *because* the reproductive labor they called upon and performed in scaffolding the sexual division of labor manufactures fictions within the socius that need renewal, even transformation, in order to continue to solicit the participation of those involved. This, of course, is not new. This is what we learn reading Marx, Gramsci, Althusser, Hall, Said Spivak, Federici, Karatani and many others. What is, however, particular within this structure and the structure that emerges from high growth is that when we shift the model from a life based on biological survival to a life structured within the social sphere that imagines the good life, or even, the better life, what it builds into the structure and machinations of reproduction is an aspirational logic, an asymptomatic structure. You cannot arrive at this place. You cannot stabilize. The anxious response to this is one of defense, an attempt to stabilize, an attempt to affirm. It is for this reason I focus so resolutely across the dissertation on the structure of claim. Claims *try* to possess. They stake territory. The endeavor for ownership. They shape the terms of those fictions, fictions that affirm gender binaries, fiction that rely on a damaging separation of self and other.

Across my examples, the productive labor of man is affirmed. This man is not an essentialist man. He is also not a real man (to borrow from de Lauretis' model of the distinction of women and the subject of feminism). He is a series. He is a class. He may not biologically be

born a man. He may not be heterosexual. But a man is a man is a man and we know him when we see him. Knowing that enables a naturalization of a gender based hierarchies that cascade out into other social structures and social axes. I do not articulate this in an effort to recuperate heterosexuality, compulsory or otherwise. Likewise, despite the incredible concern over Japan's aging population, low birthrate, and the fictions of a sexless youth,¹ I am not interested in the project of recuperating procreation or a biological notion of life—this is not a salvation project.

When Abe published his *Japanese Cinema Exists*, he borrowed on language used before him by director Ōshima Nagisa in his essay “Perspective on the Japanese Film.” Writing approximately a decade before Abe, Ōshima responded to a different crisis, the Japanese studio system's demise, which he explains by the 1980s had been “swept into a state of nonexistence” (9). Ōshima's essay begins with the language of existence, starting with the question and the de facto assumption that Japanese cinema must of course exist. He proceeds, however, to stage a powerful critique around claims to existence that articulate their stakes as an attachment to nation and homogeneity that he sees as damaging.

Already by Abe and much before the *Japanese Cinema is Alive* series, the emphatic production of the protest that Japanese cinema is thriving has somehow managed to forget or disregard Ōshima's intervention. The first line of Abe's book returns us to that 1958 break I referred to in the introduction—that peak of Japanese cinema audience. It does so in the service of establishing the moment when Japanese cinema was last thought to flourish. He proceeds, that is, to give an account of Japanese cinema's positioning as boring from the 70s and the subsequent turn away from Japanese cinema and toward “western” cinema (what generally codes Hollywood and some European arthouse film). Though he extends arguments about the postwar's embodiment to narrative, there is no question of what Japanese cinema is or how it

might be defined. The nation stands in tact and it is the nation's life which is at stake in insisting that his readers take note of the presence of Japanese cinema.

Yomota, as the convener of the first volume of the *Japanese Cinema is Alive* series and an editor across the remaining volumes, introduces it with his prefatory remarks, "For the New Gospel of Japanese Cinema."² Reflecting the decade that had passed since Abe's publication and Yomota's academic background (Abe, on the other hand, is a critic), Yomota takes a different strategy to his claim to life. Yomota's approach to the question of Japanese cinema's life works by welcoming into its fold and championing its others, incorporating them.³ So in the response to the threat of cinema's death broadly and Japanese cinema's death in particular, within this paradigm of even greater concern over Japan's aging population in the decade since Abe's book,⁴ Yomota opens the door to the new--that new, we should not have forgotten from the Yoshida chapter, that operates in a relation of slippage with the language of transformation (like Yoshida this newness is framed in terms of the changes of *henka*). He celebrates the influx of foreign scholars like myself who study Japanese cinema as a sign of its vibrancy (18-23).

Though he will begin by comparing the current state of Japanese cinema to a "zombie" (1), to the living dead, he sees in this an opportunity, a classroom (*kōza*) for the 21st century.⁵ Yomota points out that we must move into the 21st century with the fresh eyes of Japanese cinema, taking its failures as an opportunity for, once again, correction: to be a transnational cinema, a cinema gives way to a boom of female directors (16), to compete in East Asia. His approach suggests an identity politics that appears rather perfunctory, tipping a nod to newness without shifting the relations of authority that determine who is allowed in, at what times, and for what labor (and indeed replicating much of the same language I argue in my chapter on Yoshida grants him his power). When he asserts that the film is *not* the director's thing (5), the negation

of the language that Hamano reproduces (*eiga ha kantoku no mono da*), he is in a position *to be able to* negate it.

What most radically marks Yomota's oscillation between these points of defense and critique of Japanese cinema, between cinema's survival and its place in Japan's social life, however, is his conclusion and its emphatic protest once more. He writes:

No matter how many [volumes we write], we cannot resolve those aporias that we're likely to carry into the near future. Regardless, Japanese cinema exists. It has existed in the past, it will likely exist in the future. I just ask that you keep in mind what I have penned as the person overseeing this issue. (28)

That last line operates in many ways as a compulsory nod to an ending: "think about what I wrote." It is not intended for reading—that is, for interpretation—as the essay's other parts are. It is not meant to be part of the "Good News." And yet, it cannot be divorced from it, for, in that last line Yomota takes the time to remind us that he sits at the head (the language of head is built into the Japanese). He sits at the head to remind us Japanese cinema exists. To invite us to observe it but having already decided it. Thus, even while Yomota opens the very first pages with an acknowledgment that the volume is likely to be taken as one more defense of Japanese cinema, he has only affirmed this, only affirmed the boundaries around Japanese cinema, for the nation, for men.

Lest this seem like a corner of labor reserved for the peculiarities of academics, the long tail of the sexual division of labor decided in high growth reared its ugly head on the Tokyo assembly floor almost exactly one year ago today, on June 18, 2014, when assemblywoman Shiomura Ayaka was subjected to jeers on the assembly floor. Within a debate about how to better support working mothers that came in response to Prime Minister Shinzō Abe's positioning of women as one of three pillars to the success of his economic growth plan dubbed *Abenomics*, Shiomura was heckled with taunts that told her she should go get married and asking

why she didn't have a baby.⁶ The *arasa* (slang for “around thirty”⁷) or even worse still *araho* (around forty⁸) Shiomura, aged 35 at the time and as the jeers make clear was as yet unmarried, is punished for her public participation in labor. While the event was widely criticized and those who jeered Shiomura taken to task for their harassment, posed ultimately as anomalous, it nonetheless manifested, at the very least, the residue of value that we encountered at this dissertation's opening: one that continues to assume that women's occupation of the workforce is a temporary inclusion to be resolved with her departure from the workplace in her mid to late 20s with marriage. As the labor paradigm continues to shift away from lifetime employment, to value those with international experience and foreign language skills, and resources continue to be needed to take care not only of young people but to the rapidly aging population, the sexual division of labor and the postwar legacies of reproduction will continue to be the subject of great negotiation and that aporia which cannot be answered to by keeping the other contained within or, like the leper colony, held at its slight distance, separate but still in sight.

¹ Though the *sōshokudan* (literally, “grass-eater”), that “herbivore” man who is more interested in the maintenance of his aesthetics than in coupledness, has attracted attention not just within Japan but with great enthusiasm outside of it, this discourse and related ones speak much more to a disinterest in the *couple form* than they do to a disinterest in sexuality. That this aesthetic or narcissistic attachment would not be recognized as a form of sexuality also baffles me. While I worry about some of his hasty conclusions, I find compelling Mark D. West's argument in his *Love Sick Japan* that love (and the complex that includes romance and sex) is to be found anywhere *but marriage* suggestive too that while the couple form may be endangered (not surprising given the sexual division of labor I describe herein), I have yet to see evidence that sex is dying.

² The title here could either be translated with the language of “good news” or with “the gospel” but the theological connotations, especially given Yomota's interests at the time, are not accidental even if articulated in part tongue in cheek.

³ I write this, I cannot help noting, on the day that Godzilla has been reported by English language media to have received his “citizenship.” This is erroneous, however, as Godzilla was in fact awarded the status as special resident (reserved for foreigners, generally) of Shinjuku ward, not Japanese citizenry. That difference, subtle enough to go undetected by those unfamiliar with Japan, means the difference between national belonging and an incorporated other within (Also, this is nearly month old news being reported at some delay). In exchange for Godzilla's resident award, the monster, we should note, has been recruited into the reproductive labor of the ward and will serve as its tourism ambassador (Hongo).

⁴ Now that the dual threat of an aging population and a low birthrate have conspired to pose a real threat to the Japanese population, we see conceptions of life as survival returning (relevant also because of the catastrophe, still not resolved, of the triple disasters of March 11, 2011). This version of life however stands in tension with the modes, the apparatus, of Japan's long social life and a resolution has not yet arrived. Instead, what we see are

concerns over Japan's "extinction" (language invoked in a recent Japan Times article)—threatened especially in the countryside, which has seen a steady drain of its population as workers migrated to Japan's metropolitan centers, especially Tokyo and the greater Kanto region since Japan's recovery in the postwar.

⁵ Famed documentarian Hara Kazuo has been organizing what he calls "new cinema juku" (or, new cinema cram school) in a *kōza* format, resonating with the *kōza* of Yomota's prefatory remarks. Noteworthy too are the reports of how, even when included, women are scarcely given room to speak for themselves or not relegated to "women's issues" (University of Michigan professor Markus Nornes in a 3/28 memo to the KineJapan listserv remarks

Today's juku also suffered from a problem that ran through the entire year. The place of women in the project was really quite problematic. This was true from the start, when the largely female staff bailed and left the juku after the first month or two. And while Hara did feature a number of important women, like Kawase Naomi, Hamano Sachi, and Yang Yonghi, too often they were relegated to themes connected to women; thus, it was not surprising that no women were invited to today's meta-level wrap-up of the year's efforts. Hara also treated men and women very differently. Men were cut a lot of slack, given mostly softball questions, and questionable behavior was excused with little to no comment. For example, pink director Hirano Katsuyuki talked about the children that he fathered (ultimately in absentia, except for the sex act) he admitted he doesn't really care to even see them, but sometimes gives them presents. Hara did little more than laugh. But when women took the stage, Hara relentlessly questioned them about their most intimate personal lives. It was sometimes quite uncomfortable, as when he pressed Kawase Naomi about the state of her marriage.

Just today this blind spot about gender was particularly obvious. One of today's films was Kazoku Ketchup, one of the earliest self-documentaries, which begins with the main character urinating on his mother in front of the family shrine. Hara said little about this scene except that it "took courage." In contrast, later in the day Hara showed Sato Makoto's diary film about the birth of his second daughter, and ridiculed Sato and the film. He didn't get far into his reasons, but it was clear he couldn't see how a well-functioning couple going through childbirth—together—had any social dimension. He seemed blind to what was going on in the film, perhaps because there was nothing extreme or provocative in it. Or it could just be that the two never got along. But it could just be Hara's blind spot; earlier in the juku he was perplexed why his daughter from Extreme Private Eros—who he admitted he hardly spent time with over the decades—refused to go on stage when he showed the film...in turn perplexing many audience members who wondered why he didn't get it.)

⁶ This is language that really ought to remind us of Reaganomics, after which it takes far too many cues. That said, it also builds on a 15 year old economic plan dubbed "womenomics" that was developed by Goldman Sachs lead investigator Kathy Matsui, who advised Abe that the direct participation (to borrow Brinton's language) of women in the labor market would be necessary for Japan's future economic health).

⁷ These are terms that have replaced the code of "Christmas Cake," or someone older than twenty-five, for a term for a woman that is on the verge of expiring, past her prime for being plucked for marriage, the telos of her sure desire. Being marked in the past with "Christmas Cake" and now with "*arasa*" (*arafa* is perilous), does though divide populations and create success and failure narratives to uphold marriage as that destination as desirable of a fiction now as it was within *When a Woman Ascends the Stairs*.

⁸ *Arafo*, given the connotations described in the last note, starts much earlier than 40 as it is anxiously anticipated for what it could mean that a woman is laid out to pasture. This is, of course, language used primarily, though not exclusively in a pejorative "joke" for women.

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