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MODERN GIRLS AND NEW WOMEN IN JAPANESE CINEMA

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The ideal traditional woman and the new modern woman vie for viewer sympathy in Japanese film history, even through the sixties. The song of the “pure Japanese woman” sung by Richiko at the family gathering in *Gishiki* [Ceremonies] by Oshima Nagisa (1968) raises questions about the “pure” Japanese woman, the ideal traditional role. Hanako, the free yet violent spirit of late fifties womanhood who dominates Oshima’s *Taiyō no Hakaba* [Burial of the Sun] (1960) raises the question of how the *moga*, the modern girl, filters across the decades to remain an issue of contestation in the late fifties and sixties. These portrayals demand contextualizing in Japanese film history, and indeed, the history of Japanese women from the Meiji period to the present. The purpose of this essay is to examine the earliest portrayals in Japanese film of the new modern woman and her ideal traditional counterpart to provide that context.

In her essay “The Modern Girl as Militant,” Miriam Silverberg looks at the history of the “Moga” or *Modan gaaru*, as Japanese popular culture termed the Japanese cultural heroine who emerged around 1924 and captured the public’s imagination in the late twenties. She is seen as a “glittering decadent middle-class consumer” who “flaunts tradition in the urban playgrounds,” although Silverberg aligns her with a more politically engaged militant of the same period. She ends her suggestive essay by remarking that much more research into popular culture needs to explore this image of the modern woman.¹

Silverberg’s essay is joined in the volume by two different approaches to the women of the Taisho period (1912-1926) and the early part of the Showa period which follows: one approach speaks of the “new woman” envisioned by feminist writers of the turn of the century through the twenties, while another addresses the woman as worker. Two articles explore this focus on the woman worker; one looks at the middle-class female intellectual worker (primarily the secretary, teacher, and nurse) and the other at the female factory worker. All four of these essays then center

¹ Miriam Silverberg, “The Modern Girl as Militant,” in Gail Lee Bernstein, ed., *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 239-266.

on women of Japanese modernity, but given that the perspectives are different – intellectual history in the first case, labor history in the second and third cases, and the history of popular culture in the Silverberg “Modern Girl” essay – the objects and the perspectives of these four studies are tellingly different.

Barbara Sato revisits this material in her *The New Japanese Woman: Modernity, Media, and Women in Interwar Japan*, comparing three types, the modern girl, the working girl, and the self-motivated housewife, reflected in women’s magazines of the twenties and thirties.² Each of the studies points towards the perspectives of the other; for example, Silverberg tries to show how the modern girl may merge symbolically with the Marxist militant, thus becoming a figure with significance for intellectual and labor history. Yet some of the differentiation here is of generations, some of class.

First, as to generational differences, as we move through the decades of the Meiji (1868-1912) and the Taisho (1912-1926) feminist writing and women’s outlook develop in stages that are distinct: a first generation might be seen as the male theorists of the 1870s, then a second, a generation of women feminist writers, such as Hiratsuka Raicho and Saito Akiko. This trajectory parallels the history of feminist ideas emerging in the West with Frederic Engels and John Stuart Mill preceding the women theorists of first wave feminism and suffrage. In fact the “new women feminists,” as the Japanese feminists of this generation are called, named their journal *Seito* [Bluestockings] after their sisters in the West. This new woman activist generation can be characterized by debate among women arguing for political and legal issues, while others argued for a transformation of roles. Then came the next generational shift, parallel to one in the West: The “new women” feminists in Japan were to the modern girls who came after them as the suffragist feminists were to the flapper, although I do not mean to imply a simple equivalence here between U.S. early feminists and their Japanese counterparts, nor between the modern girls and the flapper. Rather I wish to emphasize certain parallels in the way one generation in both countries expressed its feminism through writers and activists, and the following one expressed a will towards freedom through cultural expression somewhat divorced from legal and political concerns.

² Barbara Hamill Sato, *The New Japanese Woman: Modernity, Media, and Women in Interwar Japan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

Second, as to class differences, both the new women feminists and the modern girls are associated with the middle class, while working class women's struggles are studied largely in terms of their working lives and family ties. While we do not really know how much of the intellectual arguments of the new women feminists filtered to the working class, there is a sense in which the working women interviewed at the time were striving to be modern girls; the draw of the factory and the city may be to a lifestyle that popular culture itself announces and champions.

Behind all three positions for women loom the "dutiful daughter" and the "good wife, wise mother" the more traditional roles for Japanese women, roles still absolutely dominant at the time, but roles that are themselves threatened by modernization. Being a "dutiful daughter" might now mean being a factory worker or secretary to supplement family income, although the studies indicate that perhaps factory workers were more bent on establishing their independence. On the other hand, one branch of the "new women" feminists campaigned for government supplements to ensure women would continue to be able to perform their special duties in the domestic sphere; they were seeking less radical change and more economic support for the more traditional roles for woman. We are clearly in a period when traditional roles are increasingly under siege, not simply by women's desires for change, but by economic conditions driving women into the public economic sphere rather than the private domestic sphere, and away from their traditional productive roles within artisanal production, the family shop, and farming.

Behind all these women also looms the sexual woman. Female sexuality in Japan at this time finds traditional geisha and concubine roles competing with a new form of bar hostess. As was the case in the West, we are learning that sexual freedoms were being adopted by the Japanese female working class, but somewhat more clandestinely than the open claiming of sexual freedom staked by some "New Women" feminists. It is perhaps this area of sexual freedoms both in practice and in representation that is the hardest to determine and evaluate. Chastisement, as well as defense of "fallen women", abounds in these films, but do representations of fallen women serve as a stern warning or do they promote sexual discourse and even liberation as Janet Staiger suggests they might in the U.S. context in *Bad Women*?³ While there may be a cumulative effect on

³ Janet Staiger, *Bad Women: Regulating Sexuality in Early American Cinema* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1995).

sexuality's presence in representation which inverts overt moralistic messages that would condemn the sexual woman, such retrospective evaluation may have been less than apparent to women struggling for a more liberated view of female sexuality, while others might have unconsciously or consciously ingested the films' moral condemnation.

Despite the broad based changes in images of women, clearly many women in interwar Japan remained in traditional roles. It is instructive to hear Yosano Akiko, one of the "New Women" feminists speaking in 1916: "the distinction between subjugation and equality lay not in behavior but choice."⁴ Although this statement is made defending her choice to marry and have ten children, we can see that for some Japanese women the problem was being assigned roles; even a traditional role could be defended if chosen by the woman who has considered other options.

Behind all these women also loom Western models, particularly in art, fashion, theater and the novel. The question of Western influence, at once so obvious in its evidence on styles both in life and art as well as in its constant citation and debate by writers of the period, becomes quite controversial as it implies a simplistic contrast between old and new, Japan and the West. Not all changes occurring to and produced by Japanese women are a result of Western influences.

Our specific question regarding the modern girl's emergence in film is difficult due to the paucity of surviving Taisho period films. Aaron Gerow states, "We are fortunate that at least two feature-length films do exist from the 1910's." We have *Goro masamune koshiden* from 1915 and *Chushingura* [Tale of the Loyal 47 Retainers] that as Gerow points out, exists in two versions, both of which compile footage from various versions of this tale made between 1910-1917. Both of these films are from the Kabuki repertoire, and both use *oyama* (female impersonators) in the female roles. Gerow also shows that the *shingeki* or "new drama" films began appearing in 1917.⁵ These would be key to any study of the modern girl, but

⁴ Laurel Rasplica Rodd, "Yosano Akiko and the Taisho Debate over the 'New Woman,'" in Bernstein, ed., *Recreating Japanese Women*, pp. 175-198 (187).

⁵ Aaron Gerow, "Celluloid Masks: The Cinematic Image and the Image of Japan," *Iris* 16 (1993): 23-26. See also Aaron Gerow, "Writing a Pure Cinema: Articulations of Early Japanese Film" (Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 1996); and Joanne Bernardi, *Writing in Light: The Silent Scenario*

we are limited to the study of film reviews and synopses that do not often give us a clear sense of how women are represented in these films. With the better-preserved films of the twenties we are able to study extant prints, but let me emphasize how rare it is for a film from the twenties to have survived. David Bordwell's phrase in his Ozu Yasujiro filmography – "no script, negative, or prints known to survive" – forms a poetic elegy for a period.⁶

Our first assumption might be that new woman/modern girl would not appear as long as *oyama* played all female roles, and that the new woman/modern girl would be implicated immediately once actresses appear. Representation must rid itself of males substituting for females, as well as the male voice substituting for female, for the codified traditional female of the *oyama* repertoire to give way to a new portrayal. The *chambara*, Kabuki and Shinpa traditions must then give way to original screenplays, *shingeki* influences, and eventually, tendency films. I want to argue that this may be a somewhat false assumption, for several reasons. If we entertain the possibility that *oyama* might vary from those who rehearsed a codified interpretation of traditional Japanese womanhood to those who through their own gender perspective, or their following of foreign models, began to grant their heroines a greater measure of departure from the gestures. Let us look closely at two film stills: *Resurrection* (1914) and *The Living Corpse* (1917). Both of these films were adaptations of Tolstoy, and both feature *oyama*. From stills that survive from these films, it is clear that *oyama*, in acting out the Russian women's roles, set the stage for the Japanese new woman. Let me point particularly to the handholding gaze into the lover's eye in *The Living Corpse*, as well as the heroine's costume, her fashionable men's-style tie, the cloche hat and bobbed hair. Ironically here, the *oyama* did not shy away from men's-style clothing for his heroine in fear that his attempt to portray femininity would be compromised; instead the masculine aspects of the *oyama* here seem to lend themselves to the signifiers of female modernity. Men playing women could, if they so chose, subvert traditional feminine coding instead of the perhaps more common practice of borrowing the No and Kabuki means of coding femininity by exaggerated dipping, exposure of the back of the neck,

and the Japanese Pure Film Movement (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2001).

⁶ David Bordwell, *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema* (London: BFI Publishing, 1988).

kimono sleeves covering the mouth, glances down, the repertoire of graceful and submissive female gestures.

Let us also examine the assumption that *benshi* (Japanese performers who provided narration for short films) controlled the discourse. First comes the revelation of female *benshi* who specialized in foreign films and in the female voices in Japanese film,⁷ and then the tale of lewd *benshi* narration of *Sally the Dancer* (probably *Sally* [1925] starring Coleen Moore) and the response it provoked in the largely female audience.⁸ These two pieces of crucial historical information remind us that we know so little about Taisho era films, their substance, and the ephemeral issues of presentation and reception. New hints are emerging and extant material must be closely read for all clues they provide.

In fact, if we jump back for a moment to the research of Komatsu Hiroshi on the late Meiji beginnings of Japanese cinema, we can find a fascinating instance in his discussion of Takamatsu Toyojiro who traveled around the country interpreting film from a socialist perspective beginning in 1901 (*Reframing Japanese Cinema*). Such Takamatsu titles from 1903 as *The End of the Role of the Schoolgirl* and *The Drinking Habit and the Family* suggest that these films may well have been inflected with New Woman feminism, although they may have focused on these women's issues as a by-product of a socialist critique. It is intriguing to correlate *The End of the Role of the Schoolgirl* with Hosoi Wakizo's *Jokō aishi* [The Pitiful History of Women Workers], an early study of female employment in the textile industry cited by Barbara Molony.⁹ Hosoi portrayed girls right out of elementary school being lured to work in the mills contractually as indentured servants by unscrupulous recruiters who offered their parents a prepayment of at least several months wages. Although Molony now criticizes this study for creating the impression of a young and docile

⁷ Joseph Anderson, "Spoken Silents in the Japanese Cinema; or Talking to Pictures: Essaying the *Katsuben*, Contextualizing the Texts," in Arthur Nolletti, Jr. and David Desser, eds., *Reframing Japanese Cinema: Authorship, Genre, History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), pp. 259-310.

⁸ Komatsu Hiroshi and Frances Loden, "Mastering the Mute Image: The Role of the *Benshi* in Japanese Cinema," *Iris: A Journal of Theory and Sound* 22 (1996), p. 46.

⁹ Barbara Molony, "Activism Among Women in the Taisho Cotton Textile Industry," in Bernstein, ed., *Recreating Japanese Women*, pp. 217-238.

female work force in light of the labor activism of Japanese female textile workers in the twenties, we might compare *The End of the Role of the Schoolgirl* to the slightly later American film by Lois Weber, *Cry of the Children* (1911), which makes similar use of a young girl as an icon in a campaign against child labor practices with reformist and feminist implications.

Let me emphasize at this juncture that much of my argument is based on surmising a possible untold history of Taisho film from sources that do not ask questions of female representation and female audiences. Komatsu's purpose in introducing Takamatsu's films into his article is to argue that they represent a uniquely Japanese style of filmmaking not influenced by Western narrative style in that they are allegorical and use "icons for expressing thoughts." The theoretical questions that dominate histories of early Japanese film practice have been questions of Western influence, posited, refuted, or mediated. These questions surely overlap with a history that would trace New Women feminism and the modern girl, but the feminist inquiry that looks to female representation and reception needs to tell the story of Western influence quite differently. As we will see, the modern girl becomes an icon for the embrace of the West, infused with eroticization of the modern and the foreign.

Murata Minoru's films from the early twenties show how the female roles are clearly changing and highlight the function of female actresses in performing the modern girl. As women begin to play themselves, the women that they are playing are new women, different from the tradition, highly inflected by European ideals, but as Silverberg points out, not simply the echo or equivalent of the vamp and the flapper of U.S. and European cultures. Our theoretical dilemma here is how to get at the nature of this mixture of European and American ideals and Japanese factors.

Rojo no reikon [Souls on the Road] by Murata (1921) survives as an excellent print allowing us to address some of these questions. Adapted by Ushihara Kiyohiko from both *The Lower Depths* of Maxime Gorki and *Mutter Landstrasse* of Wilhelm Schmidtbonn, the film focuses in its first part on a musician's struggle to forge a career in the city, but finds he cannot support his lover and child, and he resents and mistreats them in his drunken, wasted state. Repenting, he marries his lover, and he convinces his new wife, who then dresses to resemble Mary Pickford, to head for his home to start life anew. The transformation of the lover into the image of a respectable Western-style woman represents a fascinating insistence on

urban respectability and the possibility of reform. The promise of a modernism that her appearance so embodies entails reform; in quite a specific sense, she is a new woman, one whose apparent fallen state can be cleansed of the less desirable attributes of modernity. Yet this new woman will meet with stiff resistance at the paternal country home.

The rest of the film focuses on the husband's determination to cross the country on foot to earn back the love and respect of his father. A young woman who cares for the father serves to contrast with his city bride. The father never forgives his son, and mistreats the wife and grandchild; the film critiques a harsh and unforgiving patriarchy. A second, unrelated narrative follows two former criminals who are seeking to survive in the country; they are given aid, and they reform, and it is these redeemed men who find the frozen body of the musician. A third woman, a wealthy landowner who hosts a flamboyant party for her neighbors complicates the portrayal of women, posing an alternative of autonomy. So while the women are not the central figures of this film, there is still the suggestion that a new Western-styled woman emerges on the landscape to challenge traditions, and especially the conservative, unforgiving mentality of patriarchal households.

What we do know from surviving prints and from synopses of plots in reviews is that many of the films from the twenties focus on women as performers often associated with the Asakusa district, Tokyo's site of vaudeville and film. I read this preoccupation with Asakusa as complex enunciation of the shift from the tradition of *oyama* to the appearance of women actresses. How do historical and fictional worlds interact during a period in which filmic and theatrical representation is transforming itself as the tradition of *oyama* has given way to the appearance of women actresses?

In the case of Mizoguchi Kenji, his connection to the Asakusa district is rendered in much of the criticism in biographical terms. This auteurist biographical approach ignores how such elements coincide with cultural currents and particularly the sources of several key Mizoguchi films in the *shinpa* plays and the novels of writer Izumi Kyoka (*Nihonbashi* [1929], *Taki no shiraito* [Water Magician, 1933], and *Orizuru osen* [1934]). Joseph Murphy's "Izumi Kyoka Today" explores this connection in depth focusing on its significance for Japanese literary history.¹⁰ Here I wish to

¹⁰ Joseph Murphy, "Izumi Kyoka Today: Cinema, Antimodernity, and the Logic of Contestation in the Literary Field" (Ph.D. diss., 391 pp., Cornell University, 1995).

highlight his suggestion that the women who perform in these narratives do so on a terrain of ambiguity, in which the *shinpa* stage and the film industry already imply a modern frame to whatever condemnation of modernity the narratives generate.

The paucity of surviving films explains why those who have tried to address Taisho period cinema turn to Tanazaki Junichiro as a chronicler of the films in print media that has proved more durable than the celluloid that captured this writer's attention. Miriam Silverberg discusses Tanazaki's *A Fool's Love* translated into English as *Naomi* (1924).¹¹ Aaron Gerow notes that Tanazaki's *In Praise of Shadows* (1933) evinces a general appreciation of cinema, but more significant for our purposes here he discusses Tanazaki's *Jinmenso* [The Boil with a Human Face] a 1918 ghost story. Tanazaki places an imaginary film within the story in which a Japanese actress stars in an American film, but perhaps this film does not exist – a film expert denies this special effect is even possible at the stage of development of film technology.¹² I am fascinated by this repeated calling on Tanazaki for material evidence, although as I read the novels and stories in question, they raise questions of voice and framing of these references to film, for example, in *Naomi* how an authorial fantasy is presented through a protagonist and how the protagonist's love object, the woman, is known only through this doubly male voice and perspective. Silverberg tells us, "Naomi's chief desire is to act and look Western, an aspiration at first encouraged by her mentor," leaving out how we know what we know of Naomi's desire; her portrait, her desire is filtered through the confessional voice of the narrator, who begins by forming her Pygmalion style to conform to his desires, and who by the end of the narrative (the time of the narration) has vilified and abandoned Naomi and the very Western styles and behaviors she has come to represent. Tanazaki's novel begs comparison with Andre Breton's *Nadja* as an exploration of male fascination; Silverberg's conclusion that Tanazaki "projected his fear onto the Modern Girl" accounts for authorial fantasy at the end of the novel. If we recognize that the novel's evidentiary status needs to be constituted through a careful reading of its structure and its function as symptomatic discourse, then we can argue that Tanazaki's fiction and his essay hold U.S. and European

¹¹ Silverberg, "The Modern Girl as Militant," pp. 239-266.

¹² Gerow, "Celluloid Masks," pp. 23-26.

films up as an ideal, yet pose as problematic Japanese films keeping pace with them.¹³

The modern girl becomes a locus within artistic form for this problem; she is necessary to modern artmaking, at once fascinating and frightening, for her very presence seems to ask precisely what the Japanese artist as Japanese might have to offer in his art. We have the modern girl as a figure of a symptomatic anxiety of influence.

It is in this light that I wish to now introduce yet another parallel form of expression to film, that of oil painting, a Western form introduced in the Meiji period that captivated young Japanese artists during the late Meiji and throughout the Taisho periods. These paintings display the modern girl as model and closely parallel work of Western artists, notably Auguste Renoir, Edgar Degas and Henri Matisse. In Yamashita Shintarō's *Woman Reading* (1906) and *Offering* (1915), Mitsutani Kunishiro's *Nude Leaning on a Chair* (1912) and *Scarlet Rug* (1932), Nakamura Tsune's *Nude Girl* (1914), and Umehara Ryusaburo's *Nude* (1921), each of these paintings couple oil painting and the female nude as forms of Japanese modernity. One thing that these paintings demand from us is awareness that the women in them are fantasy projections of the artists, aspects of which are borrowed from the West, even as Europe was busily borrowing aspects of its new aesthetic practices from *ukiyoe*, the Japanese woodblock print. These wonderful nudes are not unlike the image of the Japanese Mary Pickford lounging perkily across the armchair in Murata's film discussed earlier; they are modern women tailored to the mise-en-scene which the modern aesthetic form (oil painting, silent film narratives) demands of them.

Turning to two films from the early thirties in way of conclusion, we find that the modern woman is still a sharp point of contention. Ozu Yasujiro's modern girl does not necessarily appear in Western dress; her differentiation is more subtle and has to do with the way she figures in the frame and narrative. For example in Ozu's *Tokyo no onna* [A Woman of Tokyo, 1933], the sister, Chikako (Okada Yoshiko) is shown in her room transforming herself from a domestic appearance, including an apron, into her street-wear kimono; this scene includes cutting to a series of three shots from various distances and angles of her applying make-up, kneeling in front of the large mirror over her make-up box. In the last of the series, she is shown in close-up reflected in the mirror, but towards the end of the shot

¹³ Silverberg, "The Modern Girl as Militant," pp. 239-266.

she exits, leaving the “empty” mirror. In Ozu’s famous abrupt-cut transitions, this shot is followed by a shot of a table on which rests the white gloves of a police official, who, as we find out in the following scene, has come to inform her employer of her moonlighting activities in illicit prostitution. In the understated associations constructed through Ozu’s formal filmic montage, the mirror is a sign of the prostitute, but an ambiguous one; the empty mirror leaves us with the suggestion of Chikako’s absent and uncertain self-image, rather than the replete image of her as a fallen woman. It also suggests that Chikako’s behaviors and roles perhaps escape the categorization and condemnation that will befall them.

In *Nasanu naka* [Not Blood Relations] by Naruse Mikio (1932), an actress returns from the U.S. after five years in Hollywood to reclaim a daughter she left behind. Extravagant deco surroundings and elegant dress establish her wealth and modernity. Her former husband has raised the daughter with his new wife, a more traditional woman (who nonetheless later in the film is shown working at a department store, where she sees her daughter in tow with the actress mother who has abducted her). That the girl had become deeply attached to her stepmother was established in scenes of their play together, as well as those of the stepmother’s recovery from an auto accident caused when she runs into the street to save the girl who was attempting to recover a lost doll. The film focuses on the mise-en-scene of contrasts and confrontations of the two mother figures, portraying harshly the materiality of the actress and her reliance on money to secure what she wants, even to buy her daughter’s love. Similar to the maternal melodramas in the U.S. in the thirties, this film suggests that modernity for women potentially causes inadequate nurturing.

In her dissertation, Mitsuyo Wada Marciano devotes a last chapter to how the studio’s modernist style of filmmaking treats the modern woman.¹⁴ She argues that the middle class becomes the center of Japanese modernity, while the films evidence a tension between Hollywood style filmmaking and nationalist prerogatives in defining the Japanese subject. For her, women become the locus of Japanese anxiety over modernization. Catherine Russell looks at the discourse of “beauty” as an affirmation of Japaneseness in light of the slogan “overcoming the modern,” which H.D. Harootunian has discussed as the impetus of a 1942 symposium that aimed

¹⁴ Mitsuyo Wada Marciano, “The Production of Modernity in Japanese Cinema: Shochiku Kamata Style in the 1920s and 1930s” (Ph.D. diss., 236 pp., University of Iowa, 2000).

at “redeeming ‘the social’ from the fragmenting machine of modern history.”¹⁵ *Osaka Elegy* by Mizoguchi Kenji (1936) serves as Russell’s example of a melodrama from the thirties, which she then compares to Ozu and Shinoda Masahiro films from the sixties. Melancholia is Russell’s term for the sadness and social malaise evoked in the film, and she concentrates her analysis on the circumscribed emancipation of the heroine in the last shot as she refuses suicide and walks towards the camera. She makes the point that by 1936 the *moga* was already disappearing in the face of reactionary anti-Westernism.

So if 1936 has been seen as a temporary dead-end for the *moga* in the face of militarist nationalism, I wish to suggest that ambiguity underlies her intervention in Japanese culture throughout the pre-war period. Indeed, as I began this paper with reference to the echoes of these images in the films of Oshima, the post-war period will long reverberate with renewed discourses on women and modernity.

I will close with a question of methodology for the evaluation of images of modernity and womanhood in mass culture, art and writing.¹⁶ We need to look further into practices of reading and interpreting historical

¹⁵ Catherine Russell, “Overcoming Modernity: Gender and the Pathos of History in Japanese Film Melodrama,” *Camera Obscura: A Journal of Feminism and Film Theory* 35 (1995): 131-139; and Harry D. Harootunian, *History’s Disquiet: Modernity, Cultural Practice, and the Question of Everyday Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

¹⁶ In addition to the sources cited, the author consulted the following: J.R. Clammer, *Difference and Modernity: Social Theory and Contemporary Japanese Society* (New York: Kegan Paul International, 1995); Vera C. Mackie, *Feminism in Modern Japan: Citizenship, Embodiment, and Sexuality* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Margit Nagy, “Middle-Class Working Women During the Interwar Years,” in Bernstein, ed., *Recreating Japanese Women*, pp. 199-216; Yoshiko Miyake, “Doubling Expectations: Motherhood and Women’s Factory Work Under State Management in Japan in the 1930s and 1940s,” in Bernstein, ed., *Recreating Japanese Women*, 267-296; Elise K. Tipton and John Clark, eds., *Being Modern in Japan: Culture and Society from the 1910s to the 1930s* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000); and Maureen Turim, *The Films of Oshima Nagisa: Images of a Japanese Iconoclast* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

images of gender. In reading the film histories of the period, I have found discussion of gender representations to be intermixed with formal and industrial film history so that, for example, transformations in women's depictions provide keys to spurring the growth of the Shochiku and Nikkatsu studios, or are seen as part of a formal process of mixing Japanese and Western modes of representation or as an aspect of a director's approach as is common in discussions of Mizoguchi. By focusing specifically on the issue of the films' relationship to both historical Japanese women and to other cultural representations, I wish to bring a different focus to the important findings of historians of this period of Japanese cinema.

