

**UNSEEN FEMININITY:
WOMEN IN JAPANESE NEW WAVE CINEMA**

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During the mid-1950s to the early 1970s a subversive cinema, known as the Japanese New Wave, arose in Japan. This dissertation challenges critical trends that use French New Wave cinema and the oeuvre of Oshima Nagisa as templates to construct Japanese New Wave cinema as largely male-centered and avant-garde in its formal aesthetics. I argue instead for the centrality of the erotic woman to a questioning of national and postwar identity in Japan, and for the importance of popular cinema to an understanding of this New Wave movement. In short, this study aims to break new ground in Japanese New Wave scholarship by focusing on issues of gender and popular aesthetics.

Each chapter investigates female archetypes in light of their postwar transformation in an analysis that demonstrates how the New Wave *woman* challenges conventional notions of history, memory, and the human in Japan. Chapter One questions the mythology of male centeredness to the New Wave by examining the domestic figures of the Japanese wife and daughter as “anti-heroines” in the films of Oshima Nagisa as well as in earlier popular Sun Tribe films. Chapter Two explores the political significance of the transgendered body to institutional protest and war memory through a consideration of pornography and underground cinema. Through the films of Wakamatsu Koji and Matsumoto Toshio, this chapter engages in a queer study of the New Wave that rethinks postwar Japanese masculinity, aggression, and landscape. Chapter Three looks at the “comfort woman” and how Suzuki Seijun and Masumura Yasuzo utilize time narratively and aesthetically in their war cinema to negotiate the sexual

mechanization of bodies before and after World War II. Chapter Four analyzes the transformation of the “good” mother into a demon in Shindo Kaneto’s horror films *Onibaba* (1964) and *Kuroneko* (1968). Drawing from a range of older cult horror films and venerated *haha-mono* (mother films) to articulate its argument, this chapter highlights the importance of horror to the New Wave in its production of new social discourses surrounding gender and the popular.

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PREFACE

When I first began studying Japanese cinema I never imagined that I would not only live and engage in research in Japan and the United States, but that I would meet so many individuals who would inspire and challenge my academic and emotional growth. Now, dissertation in hand, I can honestly say I never would have completed this document without the guidance and support of key people throughout the years. Adam Lowenstein, my chair, has been an unending well of advice, providing a clear lens through which my work increasingly came into focus. His horror and posthuman seminars provided a steady platform for many of the ideas that needed to be thought through in this dissertation. Adam's hands off approach and simultaneous encouragement to enter into unknown disciplinary arenas within my work, allowed me to truly take risks in my scholarship, while his firm standards forced me out of comfort zones that were obfuscating my writing. I have become not only a better thinker, but a better writer under Adam's tutelage.

Since my entrance as a graduate student at the University of Pittsburgh, Neepa Majumdar has been one of my greatest supporters. The thoughtfulness, detail and clarity of Neepa's feedback is only equaled by her deep belief in me as an international film scholar. Our many talks arising out of discussions on Indian and Sound cinema or how to balance academia and motherhood, among a host of other conversations, have been instrumental in pushing me to continually strive for originality and voice within the field. Throughout my time in Pittsburgh,

Marcia Landy has also been inspirational and has challenged the ways in which my work considers themes of memory, history, horror and space. Her insistence that I question the terms and stylistic choices at play within my work has made for a much richer document and a work invested in parsing out the ‘unthought’. Nancy Condee was a surprising addition to my committee, but one who brought such insight and new direction to my work that I cannot imagine her not being a part of the process from the very beginning. With her clear direction I was able to transform my dissertation into a more critical and candid piece of work.

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I continue to owe many thanks to the Director of Graduate Studies in English, Nancy Glazener, and the administrative staff of the English Department, especially Jesse Daugherty, for their tireless help in the face of the unexpected that sought to derail both dissertation defense and

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I have to thank my extended family: my mother Earlyn for leaving the tropics to take care of grandchildren day and night at the height of winter with little reward all so I could complete

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A brief note on the conventions utilized in this document: Asian names are written in accordance to a traditional Japanese order preserving the surname first, followed by first name, except in instances where references occur and individuals have accepted a Western formulation due to their works in English or residence abroad.

1.0 INTRODUCTION: UNSEEN FEMININITY IN JAPANESE NEW WAVE CINEMA

A critical analysis of a film or cinematic movement involves a way of seeing the basic techniques and principles that structure its film form and style. Over time in film scholarship critical elements of a movement can become unseen or obscured by earlier critical readings that take the shape of theoretical bedrock rather than a pioneering avenue of investigation. Critical studies of Japanese new wave cinema have been stymied by an overarching understanding of masculinity, symbolized through the violence and sexuality of a young male anti-hero, as central to its formal system to the exclusion of the feminine. Grounded in a French *nouvelle vague* understanding of new wave cinema, which until recently has focused almost exclusively on the male auteur and consequently the male gaze and his subjectivity, Japanese new wave cinema reproduces a blind spot in critical new wave writings. Barring films from Japanese directors considered to be 'feminist' in their production of filmic texts concerned with the social repression of the female, critical analyses of the Japanese female in the new wave tend to be limited in scope.

Critical histories situate the *nouvelle vague* and the Japanese new wave as beginning in 1959 with Francois Truffaut's *400 Blows (Les Quatre cents coups)*, Alain Resnais' *Hiroshima Mon Amour* and Oshima Nagisa's *A Town of Love and Hope*. As compared though to literature on the *nouvelle vague*, little has been written holistically about the Japanese new wave

movement in the West; particularly in terms of critical writings that seek to examine this distinctly national cinema outside the purview of the grand narrative of the *nouvelle vague*. Many theorists have written chapters dedicated to Japan in larger works about new wave cinemas, for example Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (2013), or articles and essays in collections within which the Japanese New Wave enters into discussion within a broader category of postwar Japanese cinema, as seen in the texts of Eric Cazdyn and Isolde Standish. In Sean Martin's current *New Waves in Cinema* (2013), he devotes approximately four pages to the Japanese new wave in a text which begins a discourse on new wave cinemas with a chapter on the *nouvelle vague*. Others, through an authorial focus on one or two directors considered key to an understanding of the new wave, produce full texts that provide an insight into this new Japanese cinema, for example Maureen Turim's look at the films of Oshima Nagisa or James Quandt's perusal of Imamura Shohei's cinema. Although published in 1988, David Desser's text, *Eros plus Massacre: An Introduction to the Japanese New Wave Cinema*, is important in its pioneering holistic effort to interrogate Japanese new wave cinema. Scholars from David Desser to Richard Neupert (2007) have continually highlighted the masculine focus of the new wave from director to character. Desser devotes one chapter to an insightful examination of woman in the Japanese new wave, an examination that relegates woman to "powerful metaphor" (109) and focuses on '*feminisuto*' directors. Although Desser's work is impressive and remains important to new wave studies, it falls short of situating woman as a central thread or motif that works to unite the seemingly disparate films of the Japanese new wave.

In more recent scholarship, female critics like Anne Gillian (*Francois Truffaut: Le Secret Perdu*, 1991) and Genevieve Sellier (*Masculine Singular: French New Wave Cinema*, 2008) express an interest in the female body in French new wave cinema. Even though their

scholarship centers on the French *nouvelle vague*, it reveals the flaw in the masculinist discourse of new wave scholarship. While thematically approaching my interests, Sellier, maintaining a smaller timeline (1957-1962), focuses upon the *nouvelle vague* as chiefly concerned with gender relationships and sexual identities. In her explication of the *nouvelle vague* the male appears and writes “in the masculine first-person singular” (9) whereas, in the more traditional Mulveyan way of thinking about gazing in cinema, women exist as powerless, objects of desire— male authorial constructions that help the auteur come to terms with the liberated postwar female. Japanese New Wave cinema reveals a staging of the female that troubles the feminized body in ways that complicates Sellier’s argument concerning new wave cinema. In Japanese cinema, it is the female body, tormented and sexualized, that addresses most fully the politics of the present-past and notions of memory, mythology and forgetting. Understood as a movement which swept the globe, Sellier’s positioning of the new wave, although fresh and important, remains reductive in its strict representation of the *nouvelle vague* woman as highlighting a male social fear of the cultural producing woman. While Sellier argues for the lack of agency in the figure of the female in new wave cinema, I contend that the female figure actually holds power within this postwar new cinema in Japan and ultimately escapes (albeit to a certain extent) the grasp of the male and hegemonic systems that seek to control her.

The masculinist ideology that is inscribed in Japanese new wave studies in the West echoes not only a French new wave philosophy, but an older model of film scholarship that adheres to binaries of masculine eye/female object (of the gaze) and active male/passive female. Despite belonging to a cinema tradition privileging the female as signifier of modernity, social transformation and state control, an unyielding western discourse continues to place the Japanese male at the focal point of critical studies over the vast majority of new wave cinema. To date, no

full text on the Japanese new wave that examines the pertinent figure of the female has been published in the West. There is no denying, as countless essays and texts on the Japanese new wave have outlined, the importance of the male directorial gaze and anti-hero to the socio-historical and political protest-text that is this counter-hegemonic cinema. This is not a feminist text as the female body is often articulated through modes of rape and male scopophilia. Scholarship on the Japanese new wave, though, fails to recognize the equal importance of the feminine to a politics of desire embedded in the text. Obscured is a close-up view of female bodies and their situated-ness as doorways to social and political change most fundamentally at the level of the genitals, of the sexual. A renewed focus on the female body brings into sharp relief the intersection between sexuality and politics that run through these ‘new’ films and can especially be seen in the cinema of Oshima Nagisa, the publicized face of the Japanese new wave.

1.1 DEFINING THE JAPANESE NEW WAVE

In his recent book, *The Age of New Waves: Art Cinema and the Staging of Globalization*,” (2013) James Tweedie, with the *nouvelle vague* as his chief point of reference, characterizes cinemas called “new wave” as global, revolutionary and focused on newness and markets. Tweedie argues that “the single most important legacy of French new wave cinema was the concept of *mise-en-scene*, developed by the critics and filmmakers associated with *Cahiers du Cinema*, and that this idiosyncratic vision of film has become the very definition of new wave cinema in subsequent decades” (25). In this way, Tweedie points to a rebellion of aesthetics as the defining feature of new wave cinemas produced by a cadre of young and innovative

directors. Japanese new wave cinema, though, finds its alignment not chiefly through *mise-en-scene*, but through a shared political agenda related to a transformed postwar landscape, both in terms of the female body and the defeated nation, in a shift from the spiritual *kokutai* (emperor-nation body) to *nikutai* (flesh).

The new wave currently stands as a classification under contention, with contemporary critics using words like *so-called* in front of the term. Critics today have taken to breaking up the body of Japanese new wave films under different terms in an attempt to speak more specifically to what has become a vague category. For example, Japanese film scholars Maureen Turim and Isolde Standish call these films ‘avant-garde’ rather than new wave, while Geoffrey Nowell-Smith in his current book, *Making Waves: New Cinemas of the 1960s*, is deliberately flexible as to what he terms ‘new cinema’ placing under its umbrella not just new wave movements but cinema that has the term ‘new’ whether formally or informally attached to them. Isolde Standish largely stays away from the term “new wave”, preferring to call the directors who emerged towards the 1960s with a political ideology in hand, “a dissentient group of avant-garde filmmakers who created a counter-cinema that addressed a newly constituted, political conscious audience” (1). She points to a shared ethical position as a means to identify these filmmakers in the face of their differing “conceptions of visual style” (1). This study shares the view that more can be gained through a definition of the Japanese new wave based on ethical or thematic concerns as a result of cohabitation in a postwar world, concerns at once domestic and universal. The figure of the Japanese female, as a more thematic concern, challenges an investment in the male anti-hero as embedded in the high-art formalities of the avant-garde and its radical aesthetics in critical film studies. Thinking about the Japanese new wave as a political consciousness or communication forces wide open an understanding of the time period

demarcated as new wave and thus allows for heretofore unthought of films and directors to enter into the purview of Japanese new cinema. In this way, the provocations of many of the directors discussed in this dissertation are thematic rather than formal, lending to an investment in popular cultural products ranging from the *taiyozoku* (sun tribe) and *pinku eiga* (pornographic films) to cult horror and underground films, as well as recognizable song, dance and headline national events, thus highlighting the importance of the popular to the Japanese new wave.

Many film historians, following the lead of David Desser, take Oshima Nagisa as the starting point of a new domestic protest-cinema operating within 1960 – 1970 that would be called new wave cinema in critical studies. For Desser, furthermore, youth, sex, politics and violence (50) formed the essential thematics of the Japanese new wave, reflecting the concerns of the 1960s. Oshima, on the other hand, disavowed the new wave designation observing how the situatedness of the Japanese new wave within the studio system effectively hamstrung the avant-garde possibilities of the directors, who were too few initially to truly constitute a ‘wave’ (Bock 317). The Japanese studio system utilized a director-assistant method that encouraged the creation of studio-privileged plotlines and film techniques. The very nature of the new wave undermined the director-assistant system by allowing young directors to circumvent a mentorship practice endemic to Japanese cinema and culture. These young directors sought to reiterate this destabilization within their own cinema through a rebellion of aesthetics and formal systems that promoted a thematics of victimization and psychologizing of characters common to the cinema of postwar humanists like Kurosawa Akira. Kurosawa Akira, for example, often questioned the darkness within man and his belief systems that create his identity in his cinema. Japanese new wave cinema, conversely, is predominantly possessed of characters who embrace their darkneses and are unapologetic in the face of their actions. The Japanese new wave also

attacks the mythology of heterosexual romance and woman's freedom of choice. The newly democratic society portrayed in Occupation postwar cinema reinforced patriarchal systems by engendering a belief that through women's suffering and passivity contentment could be attained¹. The Japanese new wave, embedded as it was in the politics of the 1950s and 60s, did not simply challenge older cinematic models, but rather, would take genres and images popular with the masses only to render them strange in an act intent on rewriting meaning and thus promoting a reconsideration of postwar society and notions of Japaneseness (*nihonjinron*).

Furuhata Yuriko, on the other hand, places the phenomenon of the new wave under the narrow category of a "cinema of actuality", the eponymous heading of her new book (2013). Furuhata belongs to a group of newly arisen skeptics and makes it clear that not all "so-called New Wave filmmakers contributed to the cinema of actuality. ...I hence eschew the clichéd label of New Wave in favor of the term political avant-garde in describing the filmmakers whose works form the cinema of actuality" (4), films that "point to a collectively shared concern with journalistic actuality" (2). Furuhata points to the variability of the aesthetic choices of the Japanese new wave, which allows it to be continually re-divided into new arrangements by film theorists resulting in the occlusion of directors and films in film criticism. She furthermore argues that "the term *political avant-garde* acknowledges the permeability between commercial and underground forms of filmmaking—a permeability erased by the term New Wave" (3). Although acknowledging the problematic of the term 'new wave', Japanese cinema has always been one enmeshed with the arts, a feature which the Japanese new wave showcases through its troubling of these older forms.

¹Isolde Standish, *A New History of Japanese Cinema: A Century of Narrative Film*. (New York: Continuum, 2006), 194.

Unlike the new cinema of France, what many considered to be Japanese new wave cinema had no shared manifesto but consisted of a richly collaborative space despite the appearance of looseness amongst directors and their respective works. For example, many Japanese new wave directors wrote for other directors. Shindo Kaneto wrote the screenplay for Suzuki Seijun's *Fighting Elegy* (1966), while Wakamatsu Koji produced Oshima's *In the Realm of the Senses* (1976). Theatre, film, dance, music and literature percolated throughout the arena of the Japanese new wave, all engaged in their own postwar transformation. Avant-garde poet, dramatist and filmmaker Shuji Terayama, for instance, would screen-write for Shinoda Masahiro, while infamous author, dramatist and director Mishima Yukio would act in Masumura Yasuzo's *Afraid to Die* (1960). The independent production company, the Art Theater Guild, which was started in 1961, also aided in the release of new wave films alongside underground works. In addition, leftist activist Adachi Masao and Oshima Nagisa mutually influenced each other in their respective efforts to speak back to power discourses and effect change at the level of the body/landscape.

This dissertation study does not seek to join a debate over the overarching terminology of the films belonging to a new cinema that arose in Japan after liberation from the censorship imposed by its occupiers after the war. Rather, this study argues for an inadequacy of masculinist accounts associated with the term new wave within a Japanese context through examining a phenomenon of the erotic female body that pierces through these films of the 1950s and 1960s postwar period, a phenomenon of *nikutai* or flesh invested in the 'fall' of the Japanese individual. I choose to apply the term new wave here, despite the current ambivalence, due to an absorption with newness implicit in these films as well as new engagements with the old which these films are attempting to grapple with within the postwar landscape. Important too to these

considerations of the Japanese new wave are the newly arisen mobilized masses hungry for films that pushed back against the hegemony of the power systems at work in an ironically successful Japan experiencing an economic high growth period (1955 – 1970).

Japanese new wave cinema, I argue, was not so much a startlingly new idea as much as a transgressive one, one operating in tangent with a radical art and literary scene alongside domestic and global discourses at play within its own national body. I think of newness, not in terms of an erasure of the old, but rather in the sense of a new mode of articulating reality, new memories and histories, that no longer fit with the dominant narrative impressed upon one's world, a mode centered on the figure of the female in Japanese postwar cinema. The structure of new wave cinema, I contend, referenced earlier Japanese cinema and systems of control in their very breaking away from and layering of new female archetypes onto the screen. A Japanese cinema spectator would easily recognize these iconic images in their subversive recalling.

Indeed, one might argue that the Japanese new wave was not just about the women within its new cinema, but the women who influenced and assisted the men creating these films—from Imamura Shohei's attraction to the image of his 'fleshy woman' who haunted all his films, to Shindo Kaneto's pairing with wife Otowa Nobuko, Shinoda Masahiro and his wife Iwashita Shima, Ichikawa Kon and screenwriting partner Natto Wada, and Yoshida Kiju and the legendary actress Okada Mariko, to name a few. Certain actresses, like Wakao Ayako, appear repeatedly, across directors, within Japanese new wave cinema, and examples of this staging of the star in Japan will be seen throughout this dissertation in an entrance into star studies. As a type of postwar imaginary pivoting around the body of the transgressive female, this new Japanese cinema takes hold of and troubles cultural cinematic archetypes of desire and memory

in its cinema, in a representation that incites the spectator to new sight and consumption of the subversive audio-visual image.

Positioned in terms of the masculine, and thus in terms of her lack, there exists a gap in critical study invested in an overarching exploration of the Japanese new wave movement in light of the female and feminine subjectivities. Furthermore, an attempt to understand the masculine—from male director to protagonist—through the feminine, rather than its typical reverse, produces fresh pathways into a calcified understanding of the Japanese new wave. This study seeks to liberate the notion of femininity as it applies to both male and female in an attempt to produce a deeper critical analysis that will bring the marginalized female figure to the very center of Japanese new wave discourses.

1.2 POSTWAR EROTICISM: *KASUTORI* CULTURE AND THE FALL

The concept of erotic or transgressive female staging references the growth of a *kasutori*-inspired counter-aesthetic of *nikutai* (flesh) in the new cinema of the mid-50s to early 70s that questions, among other things, not only the idealized passive and suffering representations of womanhood in earlier Japanese melodrama but so too the very social systems built upon the sacred body of the emperor. The banning of the *jidaigeki* (period film), censorship of discourse and images concerned with the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as well as Japanese defeat in the war marked the cinema and art scene during the 1945 – 1952 American occupation period in Japan. In the midst of such censorship, chaotic economic and urban transformation, and attempted rewritings of Japanese self and nation by State, the Japanese individual was engaging in his own

political counter-pressure and examinations of national self through the spectacle of the female body.

Kasutori culture, according to John Dower, “left a legacy of escapism, titillation, and outright sleaze—a commercial world dominated by sexually oriented entertainments [like peep shows, dance halls, strip shows] and a veritable cascade of pulp literature” (148). A lifestyle at the margins that promoted decadence as the only truth and encouraged the reverence of the carnal body, *kasutori* centered on a spectatorship of the erotic female body. Male spectatorship of, and access to, female flesh provided new gendered negotiations with national space and the politics of freedom. “While the *kasutori* magazines celebrated a fugitive world of hedonistic and even grotesque indulgence,” Dower argues, “they also evoked more sobering images of impermanence, a world of no tomorrow, the banishment of authority, the absence of orthodox or transcendent values” (149). Although drawing from the West, it was a gaudy world sealed to the westerner who had in metaphorical terms conquered the Japanese body/nation through defeat in World War II. The term *nihonjinron*, describing the phenomenon of a plethora of debates and literature concerned with Japaneseness, came into true prominence in Japan with the conclusion of a second world war marked by the nuclear bomb. Suddenly, the question of what it meant to be Japanese became central to postwar discourses. The Japanese nation would be feminized in popular discourse and allegorized as a once-virtuous female body through her military loss—both in terms of the Japanese male, once certain of his undefeatable military might, and in terms of the Japanese women offered up en masse to the GIs by the Japanese government as ‘comfort women’ (and line of defense for the ‘purer’ Japanese women²) to the victors.

² For more information see John Dower, “Cultures of Defeat,” in *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*, (New York: Norton, 2000), 121-167.

The obsession with carnality in *kasutori* culture interacted with debates on the nation-body circulating in the rich literary and art scene of Japan. The figure of the fallen woman would eventually replace an immediate postwar configuration, and victim narrative, of Japan as violated virgin. Grief over Japan's 'rape' by western forces, tempered by shared disillusionment and shame, metamorphosed nation as virgin into nation as whore courtesy a *kasutori*-like promotion of sex, and pleasure in carnality, as a means of revitalization and procuring of a stronger Japanese self. "After losing her virginity, with what sweetness, eagerness, and shivers of carnal delight," Takeda asks, "will Japan accept such unfamiliar violence by 'men'?" (Yoshinaga 45). Sex and sexuality would increasingly become mediums of transgression from the spiritual and conservative ideals of *kokutai* as well as a means of female empowerment in the new cinema of the 1960s. The erotic 'staging' of the female body considers a cinematic focus on female flesh and transformation performed for audience witnessing and consumption that occurs in Japanese new wave cinema. Neal Oxenhandler perceives the new wave as advancing new ways of considering the historical body, one in which "a new methodological approach considering age as a category of historical analysis comparable to, and in tandem with, race, class and gender" came into being (10). Through a centering upon the erotic female body the new wave crafts a counterhegemonic text that draws together the politics of past and present, remembering and un-remembering, at the juncture of the genitals.

Thus, rather than an obsession with cleanliness or newness represented in the rapidly transforming cityscape that Tweedie suggests is indicative of all new wave cinema, Japanese new cinema expresses a preoccupation with the fall, with darkness and squalor, with brutality in the face of clean modernity, with dirt and sweat, and with woman in the wastelands of desire. Female desire counterposed against male impotence becomes a motif that runs through these

new postwar films. Miryam Sas speaks of the notion of *daraku* which re-emerges in Japanese theater in the late 1960s, stemming from the 1946 essay “*Darakuron*” by critic and novelist Sakaguchi Ango,

degradation, delinquency, even apostasy—a place reached through the degradation of war—*daraku* marks an unmooring from religious, political, or social systematicity and structure. *Daraku*, related to the Buddhist term for falling away, has often been translated as decadence, depravity, or degeneration. Rotting or dissipation under the guise of an amoral, banal chaos, *daraku* is the anti-hierarchical, the ‘topsy-turvy’. (5)

Daraku, according to Sas, is the place of the freefall, of the body and of the black market, “a ‘realism’ to be opposed to wartime’s idealisms...it is also something that allows people to survive, to be saved/rescued (if not redeemed)” (6). Although the novel became a bestseller again in 1967, reverberations of the idea of *daraku*, the fall as potential salvation and fleeting empowerment, arguably exists prior to this date in Japanese new wave cinema. The ‘fall from grace’ aligned with the sexual, with prostitution and the taboo, is most frequently articulated through the body of the Japanese female in Japanese new wave cinema. Sexual performance becomes a critical tool for potential political activity and new sight or transformation in audiences. The excess of *kasutori* culture and philosophy of *daraku* are necessary components to deepening an understanding of the nuances of a new wave cinema in which the postwar transformation of nation and self is paramount.

The Japanese new wave emerged within a landscape of contradictions, one within which Japan found itself, even after regaining sovereignty in 1952, tied to its conquerors turned occupiers, and consequently their cold war philosophies, which set up a strong economic and political presence that continues to this day. On April 28, 1952, not only did the political end of the United States led occupation of Japan come to an end, (a treaty actually signed in 1951 but which took a year to come into effect), but the first U.S.-Japan Security Treaty signed by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru came into being. The Yoshida Doctrine³, which outlined a ‘short-term’ policy intent on regaining economic prosperity and reclaiming status as a world power, allowed an image of Japan as pacifist while laying the weight of national security on the United States. Although the Occupation initially promoted democracy, for example through removing ultra-nationalists from office, and reforms encouraging unions and dismantling the *zaibatsu* (corporate and industry monopolies), this progressive trend quickly turned with the rise of communism worldwide and the impending Korean War. The Reverse Course Policy (1947-1952) of the Allied Occupation would severely damage the idea of individual liberty espoused by the United States, and was a major catalyst for the protests surrounding the ratification of the US-Japan Mutual Security Act (Ampo)⁴ in 1960. Despite a postwar constitution prohibiting Japan’s rearmament for life (Article 9), the Reverse Course Policy would not only undermine the unions and reinstate conservative politicians and

³ Yoneyuki Sugita, “Yoshida Doctrine is a myth,” *Japan Today*, April 29, 2014, <http://www.japantoday.com/category/opinions/view/yoshida-doctrine-is-a-myth>.

⁴ For an in-depth explanation of this struggle see Dessler, *Eros Plus Massacre*, 31-38.

war criminals, under pressure from the United States, it would lead to the formation of the Japanese Self-Defense Force (Jieitai) in 1954.

The US-Japan Mutual Security Act drew forth nationwide protests over its subsequent renewal in 1960 that many felt gave the United States continued leverage over Japan and signaled poor leadership. There existed a pervasive concern about the direction of Japan— its foreign policy (especially as related to the United States) and international relations, the rapid rate of its industrial growth, the restless discontent of its youth, and a seeming return to a conservative prewar military ideology— that gave rise to the formation of labor unions and organized student riots. These protests not only consisted of students but so too workers, teachers, farmers, civilians, housewives, who all mobilized together with different agendas focused upon state control and power, all wanting their respective voices to be heard. Out of this mass came a new audience hungry for a different type of cinema that engaged with the politics and impulses of the time. The respective movements of the public to speak back to power, though, would find itself brutally crushed by State police or overwhelmed by economic policies that promoted materialism as a means of forgetting the failures of democracy. It is in this landscape of rapid economic growth and changing infrastructure, of heavy commoditization and shifting gender relations that the cinema of the Japanese new wave would fully come into its own as a medium invested in desire for change.

The 1960s also importantly witnessed the Japanese public eye consumed with two contrasting visions of the woman as nation, in an explosion of mass produced images, celebrity culture and literature immersed in the political tensions of the time period. One ‘Michiko of the people’ married into Japanese royalty in 1959 in a reinvigoration of the imperial family, tying Japan both to the modern, the tradition and the ideology of the middleclass. The other Michiko,

a student activist, similarly became a symbol for Japanese political desire and narratives of rebirth in her death during a violent confrontation between Ampo protesters and the police in 1960. These two high profile images of the Japanese woman proliferated across mass media in an articulation of the tensions at work in a society recovered economically with its Emperor system intact, while still faced with the reminders of its military-imperialist history and a rigid *ie* system that stifled true political and social change.

The tension between democratic ideals and autocratic rigidity in Japan persists today. On December 10, 2014 Japan's State Secrets Law was instituted despite being opposed by 80% of the population. This law, supported by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and his Cabinet, the United States Government smarting from Edward Snowden allegations, the Japan Business Federation (*Nippon Keidanren*) and the police, allows for government freedom in handling domestic "terrorism" or "designated harmful activities"⁵. Considered as "one of the most serious threats to Japanese democracy in decades", the Secrets Protection Bill gives power to the State to arbitrarily punish individual and journalistic freedoms as well as limit government transparency. The institution of the Secrets law highlights anew the importance of a project that examines a new wave time period in which the legacy of a 1930s militaristic government seemed to be repeating in the 1960s. In fact, of note here, is the return of Shinzo Abe to office, the grandson of former Prime Minister Kishi Nobusuke, who orchestrated the passing of the 1960 Ampo despite mass protest and was forced to resign by the populace. Studies on the Japanese new wave lie at the axis of discourses concerned not just with the atomic bomb and gender relations, but with a return to militarism and the hypocrisy of a pacifist nation that helps promote United

⁵ Eric Johnston, "Public protest in Japan: Power to the people?" *The Japan Times*, December 20, 2014, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/life/2014/12/20/general/public-protest-japan-power-people/#.VJfaACZ0OA>.

States' militarism, the issue of the comfort woman and notions of victimization and war aggression, as well as State attempts to rewrite self and history—discourses reverberating within Japan today.

1.4 CHANNELING DAVID DESSER: THE PROBLEM OF OSHIMA

Published in 1988, David Desser's text, *Eros plus Massacre: An Introduction to the Japanese New Wave Cinema*, remains the only *full* text in English devoted to the examination of the Japanese New Wave across numerous themes and directors. Desser defines the Japanese new wave as “films produced and/or released in the wake of Oshima's [first film] *A Town of Love and Hope* [1959], films which take an overtly political stance in a general way or toward a specific issue, utilizing a deliberately disjunctive form compared to previous filmic norms in Japan” (4). Although Desser maintains the ‘Japaneseness’ of Japan's new wave cinema, illuminating the movement's concern with “creating a film content and form capable of revealing the contradictions within Japanese society and with isolating the culture's increasingly materialist values and its imperialist alliances” (4), his discussion of this highly *specific* new wave phenomenon fails to escape the powerful theoretical foundation of the *nouvelle vague*. For Desser, the alienated male youth of the French new wave remains one of the key factors of new wave cinema.

Desser begins his introduction by referencing Jean-Luc Godard's release of *A bout de souffle* (*Breathless*) in order to forge an initial understanding of Japanese new wave cinema through the lens of the *nouvelle vague*. Desiring to make a thematic connection, Desser unconsciously produces a historical one as well, mistakenly citing Godard's release of *A bout de*

soufflé (*Breathless*) a year earlier than its original release in 1960. “In 1959,” he writes, “Godard released *A bout de soufflé* launching “a new kind of film hero...alienated, disaffected, violent, a product of the media” (1). In his second paragraph Desser reproduces the abovementioned sentence structure in light of Oshima Nagisa and his 1959 release *A Town of Love and Hope*, paralleling the two directors and films linguistically, historically, as well as stylistically in a flawed comparison which equates the hardened adult “remorselessness” of *A bout de soufflé* with the poor youth pushed into corners by society in Oshima’s *A Town of Love and Hope*. Describing Oshima’s first film as “the story of a slum youth who commits crimes with the same remorselessness as Godard’s protagonist” (1), what Desser marks as a similarity stands instead as a marked difference between the two films. Although Desser does point to the dissimilarity of Oshima and Godard’s respective films by differentiating the youth politics of France from the “radical rethinking of Japanese society” (1), which a film that pushes against “group identity, stability and respect for elders and their traditions, and a certain reluctance to express one’s feelings publicly” (1) occasions, he fails in his comparison to distinguish a masculine always already shadowed by, and mitigated through, the feminine that pervades Japanese new wave cinema.

Remorse is not unfelt in Oshima’s cinema, there just is little place for it in a postwar world, where survival is paramount. Framed by four women—his mother, teacher, a wealthy fellow student with whom he forms a budding relationship, and a young sister, it is through the contextualization of the male protagonist by the women that surround him in *A Town of Love and Hope* that the new wave themes of loss of innocence, disillusionment and social entrapment come into full expression. Of interest here is the gap in a discourse that focuses on the male ‘hero’ exclusively, a gap stemming from a theoretical bedrock that continues to fashion the male

as chief focal point of new wave cinema while overlooking the equal, if not greater, importance of the Japanese female. Part of the oversight lies in the heavy emphasis placed on Oshima and Godard, and thus the male auteur, in critical writing forcing an umbrella understanding of the Japanese new wave that obscures as much as it illuminates.

Critics from Patrick Alan Terry to Maureen Turim and James Tweedie have noted the problem of Desser's placement of the Japanese new wave squarely upon Oshima's shoulders. As Terry states, Oshima's debut is taken by many as the marker for the start of the Japanese new wave thereby situating the new wave largely within the 1960s and ignoring films that came earlier as also falling within the category of the new wave. For critics like Michael Raine and Alexander Jacoby, for example, Ichikawa Kon's film *Punishment Room* (1956) is a film not typically thought to belong to the *taiyozoku* genre of films but with its focus on youth rebellion and sexual brutality not only could it be considered a key film in the category but its echoes can be felt in Oshima's own *Cruel Story of Youth* (1960). *Odd Obsession* (1959), another Ichikawa film released in Japan in June, months before Oshima's *A Town of Love and Hope*, showcases many experimental elements of the new wave such as freeze frames and theatrical breakings of the fourth wall. Despite possessing an earlier release date than Oshima's oeuvre and a subversive aesthetics associated with the new wave, *Odd Obsession* is not held up as a film launching the Japanese new wave. Both *Punishment Room* and *Odd Obsession* situate the feminine as important to their politics, and, recognizable as new wave vehicles, reveal the constructed nature of the terminology 'new wave', an issue that I will speak to later in this chapter.

David Desser maintains that even if presaged by the work of earlier directors like Masumura Yasuzo and the *taiyozoku* cycle of films,

the combination of the culture's interest in youth, the backgrounds of the young directors, the particular characteristics of the Japanese film industry, and the massive protests surrounding the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty renewal conspired, in a sense, to bring about a new look, form, and feel to the Japanese cinema. ...This new look, form, and feel...came clearly into view with the first directorial effort of Oshima Nagisa. (47)

In one sense, Desser is not wrong in his position, which places the origins of the Japanese new wave at Oshima's feet. The new wave as a formal concept or marketing campaign did not emerge on paper until 1959, as such, within such understandings earlier films lie outside a formal historical framework of the new wave. Oshima's *A Town of Love and Hope* was the first in a series of films directed by up and coming young directors, part and parcel of a marketing scheme soon to be called the *Shochiku* New Wave. It would be the editor of the *Weekly Yomiuri* who would be the first to officially tie these new films to the French New Wave⁶. Conscious of the ways in which certain *Shochiku* films arising around *Cruel Story of Youth* all adhered to a focus on youth and an aesthetic style different from a more classical narrative style found in older Japanese films that modelled a Hollywood mode of storytelling, the superficial similarities to the *nouvelle vague* were clear. The Japanese new wave's actual beginnings, though, were less than auspicious with the first names associated with the *wave* (Oshima Nagisa, Takahashi Osamu, Shinoda Masahiro, Tamura Takeshi, Yoshida Yoshishige) being given the opportunity to direct their first features in a desperate attempt by *Shochiku's* production department to turn the tide of failures repeatedly encountered at the box-office. Overturning a long tradition of director mentorship, these young assistant directors would be fast-tracked to focus on youth issues. In

⁶ Nagisa Oshima, "In Protest against the Massacre of *Night and Fog in Japan*," *Film Criticism, December 1960* in *Cinema, Censorship, and the State: The Writings of Nagisa Oshima* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1993), 56.

time these directors would escape the confines of *Shochiku* productions to be streamlined to the likes of Oshima, Shinoda, Yoshida, Imamura Shohei, Hani Susumu, Teshigahara Hiroshi, Kurahara Koreyoshi and Masumura Yasuzo, with Terayama Shūji, Suzuki Seijun, Nakahira Kō and Shindo Kaneto later being connected to the movement, despite belonging to other film companies.

Even as other Japanese filmmakers were simultaneously making controversial films, Oshima was consistently considered ‘the father of the Japanese new wave’. As a prolific film critic, prior to his directorial debut, already involved in the politics of his day, Oshima most closely resembled the French new wave critics and directors, possessed as he was of an ideology and radicalism already in place. Maureen Turim deepens such an idea in her contention that the true reason for the 1960’s films of Oshima (*Cruel Story of Youth* and *Night and Fog in Japan*) being so universally thought of as “paradigmatic” (5) of Japanese new wave cinema is due to a foreign reception that was denied many of the Japanese films of the period. Taking from Oshima Nagisa’s theory that World War II created a rupture in modern Japanese history, Scott Nygren argues in his text, *Time Frames: Japanese Cinema and the Unfolding of History*, that Japanese film history ‘begins’ after 1945 when Japanese film attained to international status with the success of Kurosawa Akira’s *Rashomon* (1950). Similarly, akin to Nygren’s discourse on history and Japanese cinema, a narrative of the Japanese new wave is presented in cinema studies that finds itself focused not only on the auteur but based chiefly upon international recognition and reception of these films. Turim elaborates on the problem of placing Oshima, regardless of his importance, at the center of the Japanese New Wave, stating that “however valid it may be to speak of a distinct cinematic movement in the early sixties in Japan paralleling that of France, the convention of simply centering this "New Wave" on Oshima inevitably distorts aspects of

film history and our understanding of its place in a larger social history” (10). The heavy focus on Oshima forces Japanese new wave cinema automatically into parameters of the French new wave and thus into an examination of youth and masculinity, which often excludes the Japanese female, or at the very least positions her as an after-thought in new wave films in which she is not ostensibly the subject. Japanese new wave cinema might be more aptly interrogated by broadening the time period to examine films that share a certain political and visual ideology fostered through the motif of woman.

Desser himself appears aware of the availability of alternate currents to define the Japanese new wave—namely through that of the re-politicized modern Japanese woman. Since the 1920’s, woman has been politicized in Japanese cinema, only, according to Desser, to be “politicized again” (115) in the postwar era. Despite a heavy focus on the disenfranchised male, Desser acknowledges that “in the films of Oshima Nagisa, the paradigmatic canon of the New Wave cinema, women are conspicuous by their presence [and] linked in some form to all of the political, social, cultural, and aesthetic issues of the [Japanese new wave] movement” (144). In films from *Cruel Story of Youth* (1960), *The Sun’s Burial* (1960), and *Gishiki (The Ceremony)* (1971), he mentions how Oshima, not typically thought of as a director concerned with the feminine, provides “an important symbolic place [for women, often linking] the alienation and disillusionment of youth with the alienation and disillusionment of women” (143-144)⁷.” Further, Desser states that the new wave presents “women [as] a powerful metaphor for the situation of Japan’s alienated groups in the postwar era” (109). But, even as Desser presses for an awareness of the deep importance of woman to Japanese new wave cinema, he both fails to

⁷See Desser’s *Eros plus Massacre: An Introduction to the Japanese New Wave Cinema* (144) for a brief summary of how Oshima links woman to male sociopathy, oppressed classes and national identity in Japan.

fully explore the category of woman outside *feminisuto* directors like Imamura Shohei, and contradictorily continues to place most energy on the masculine in the new wave from director⁸ to character.

While in the more recent scholarship of female critics like Anne Gillain (1991) and Genevieve Sellier (2008), an interest in the female body in new wave cinema has begun to make itself felt, the focus is again placed on the French *nouvelle vague*. As mentioned earlier, this chapter seeks to examine the Japanese new wave in light of woman at the center, setting an argument that the new wave is explicitly about the female. While scholars from David Desser to Adam Lowenstein, have written insightful work fleshing out the figure of the female in the female dominant cinema of new wave directors like Shindo Kaneto and Imamura Shohei, an argument that situates the new wave as centered on the feminine rather than the masculine, has not been fully explored. Desser outlines an ambition of returning the reader “to an era, the 1960s primarily, and [showing] how certain Japanese filmmakers used cinema as a tool, a weapon in a cultural struggle” (3). This dissertation seeks to continue Desser’s project of examining Japanese new wave cinema in light of its specific film history, culture and politics, utilizing a methodology hinged upon the female archetype in order to fill a gap currently in existence in film scholarship.

Towards the end of his nominal work, Desser concludes his chapter with an important observation about Japanese new wave cinema and the transformation of the female body, which occurs throughout the cinematic movement. He writes:

...a concern with women manifested by the New Wave filmmakers is in many ways a continuation of the *feminisuto*⁹ tradition established by Mizoguchi. A basic sympathy for

⁸ All but one, Agnes Varda, of these French new wave directors was male.

women and an understanding of how ideology and social customs conspire to keep women in a certain place through the use of recurring archetypes has been characteristic of Japanese cinema since the 1920s. To an extent, the *feminisuto* directors of the New Wave, Imamura, Hani, Yoshida and Shinoda, merely extended this tradition into the volatile 1960s. ...In order to make film style and the image of woman genuinely political, genuinely progressive, a repositioning of traditional archetypes was required. (142-143)

Desser names the priestess (as seen most recognizably in the films of Mizoguchi Kenji) who becomes the mother in new wave cinema, as the key archetype that transitions in postwar cinema. He argues that the figure of the mother in new wave cinema is further eroticized through its conflation with the prostitute, which removes the traditional figure's association with the transcendental and humanism in prewar cinema. In addition, Desser states that

The collapsing together of the priestess and prostitute archetypes is therefore the conflation of the sacred and the profane realms. ...This strategy, combined with the dialectical stance toward genre conventions, has the effect of making these films tentative, of refusing easy emotional involvement and release. An overt Brechtianism emerges which effects the re-politicization of the image of women. (143)

Desser discusses the new wave in terms of the profane as it interacts with the female archetype, particularly in regards to the trifecta of priestess-mother-prostitute. Implied in this relationship is a structure of desire which mobilizes these figures to speech in a postwar political landscape. Despite the seeming disparate social positions of these female characters, desire allow these

⁹ The 'feminisuto' films are films produced by directors with a feminist point of view. Sato Tadao maintains that many Japanese films manifest this view, but it finds its best expression in the films of Mizoguchi, Shindo and Imamura. David Desser, (Desser 109).

women entrance into the same space politically. Desser only devotes two paragraphs to an important insight that hints at the ideological shakings of profaning the trifecta figure of the priestess-mother-prostitute in Japanese new wave cinema. While recognizing that the re-politicizing of women within the new wave forces a new engagement with the screen, Desser does not fully discuss how subverting and conflating traditional female archetypes re-energize these figures within the new wave. My study, focused on desire and the erotic female body in a conversation dependent on female archetypes, will thus make visible this omission.

1.5 CHAPTER DESCRIPTION

Through this project I hope to remove the new wave female from the shadows of masculinist readings to reveal how her sexual body, rather than simply a site of exploitation and fetishization, acts as lynchpin for social protest and negotiations related to a nation transformed by the historical legacy of war. Although I intend to examine the canonical directors/films that instantly come to mind through mere mention of the new wave, I remain more interested in looking at films that either escape the rubric of the canon or of which little has been written in terms of the feminized body and her/his subjectivity.

Marketed by *Shochiku* studios as “the Japanese Godard”, to this day many still regard Oshima in these *nouvelle vague* terms and consequently the new cinema through which he provides a gateway in cinema studies. In chapter 2, “The Erotic Woman: Feminizing the Japanese New Wave”, I will consider the question of why masculinist accounts of the Japanese New Wave have been dominant and why they are not adequate through a focus on Oshima Nagisa and the heroine in his cinema. Important to such an exploration is the *taiyozoku eiga* or

sun tribe films from which the Japanese new wave is said to emerge. In this chapter I will argue for the new wave's repurposing of traditional female archetypes only to turn these figures transgressive in a staging of desire. A focus on the 'fleshy' female body of Japanese New Wave cinema will, I believe, introduce new ways of working through current occlusions in film theory. Even as I examine a feminization of Oshima in chapter 2, I aim to draw open the time period often delineated for the new wave in an effort to consider the Japanese New Wave outside of its heretofore heavy focus on certain mediatized male figures such as Oshima. Widening the time frame of the Japanese new wave will allow for the tracing of the carnal female body appearing before, and traveling through, the mandated new wave period in film studies. I plan to redefine the notion of the new wave as a purely male vehicle by tracking the rise of a new cinema which highlights the female body in political and transgressive ways between 1955 and the early 1970s, thereby illuminating the debates and desire for a new landscape both in terms of nation and subject. I will briefly examine films from those of Nakahira Ko and Ichikawa Kon to Masumura Yasuzo and Hani Susumu in an effort to grasp hold of a pattern of erotic and transgressive female staging in the post-occupation era. In this way, a greater sense of the landscape of the Japanese new wave as feminine text can be achieved.

Chapter 3, "The Wound and the Blade: The Synthesis of the Pornographic (Fe)Male", makes the formerly obscured pornographic space accessible to new wave discourse. In this chapter I will examine the intersection between pornography and new wave cinema through a specific focus on the cinema of Wakamatsu Koji and Matsumoto Toshio's *Funeral Parade of the Roses* (1969). Rape and sexual deviance, seen in the films of Oshima Nagisa, Nakahira Ko and Kurahara Koreyoshi to name a few, have been the chief thematic in writings about taboos or transgressions in Japanese New Wave cinema, with Oshima's (1976) *In the Realm of the Senses*

taking center stage in its portrayal of a young woman and her voracious sexual appetite. Rather than pursue a path that has been well travelled by the likes of Maureen Turim and Catherine Russell, in this chapter, in an effort to expand the category of Japanese new cinema, I will consider the intersection of the pornographic pink film (*pinku eiga*) with New Wave cinema in light of the breakdown of bodies or transgressive crossing of boundaries between the male and female. As a systematic feature of the new wave film, this chapter engages in close readings of rape scenes in order to examine more closely the significance of these transgressive sequences to a politics of desire and resistance.

Despite the heavy emphasis many new wave directors place on visual representations of sexuality in their films, new wave cinema remains by definition largely outside the realm of the Pink. Jasper Sharp explains this distinction as a result of the genre's production and distribution practices (12) that situate the Japanese new wave within the major studio system thereby exempting these films from pejorative associations with the smaller independent Pink productions, regardless of the presence of sex scenes or displays of nudity. Cather¹⁰, conversely, contends that the censor's rating of films as "adult" is what truly differentiates the erotics of the new wave designated film from the pornographic film. In transposing the term 'new wave' from the *nouvelle vague*, limitations were imposed upon the ways in which the Japanese new wave could inherently be understood as 'art'. Pink cinema enters into a conversation with definitions previously put forth about new wave cinema, eliminating further the perceived difference between sex film and art film as an obstruction to examining these films in light of their engagement with the similar themes and aesthetics of a new political cinema. In short, if new

¹⁰ Cather, Kirsten. "Policing the Pinks". *The Pink Book: The Japanese Eroducton and its Contexts*.

wave cinema is a cinema concerned with the transgressive and the taboo, then the Pink film must be part of this conversation.

The attempt to canonize Japanese new wave cinema as authentic in relation to the West obscures the importance of the pornographic to a subversion of the canon, where sexuality and penetration becomes a means of shocking audiences into revolt and social awareness. The pornographic cinema of Wakamatsu, with its stress on aberrance and the taboo in a rejection of social mores, calls for a new way of seeing engineered through the ‘transgendered’ body. A rethinking of the new wave allows for a consideration of a broader body of films invested in an anti-authoritarian narrative and stylistic engagement with the present that cannot be separated from the traumas of the past. Reimagining the new wave along the lines of the pornographic (fe)male body brings fresh insights to a category colonized and calcified by previous definitions of the new wave. Despite disagreeing with the dismissive tendencies of film critics embedded in a western conservatism towards films of eroticism, this chapter does not seek to make a case for the validity of *pinku eiga* as an important genre in its own right, but rather to make an argument for the need to examine specific moments in this genre in order to more fully understand the protest cinema of the era.

Chapter 4, “The Comfort Woman: Sanitized Bodies and the Institutionalizing of Desire”, as the title suggests, investigates the specific logic of the comfort body as it appears in Japanese new wave cinema. To speak of the comfort body or comfort woman as it pertains to Japan is to immediately engage with Japan as sexual aggressor in her colonial pursuits before and during World War II, a history legacy that Japan continually seeks to disavow. Japan’s mechanical sexual subjugation of her colonies to relieve the needs or rather ‘comfort’ her war sick soldiers abroad, speaks to an inherent view of women that extends to Japan’s own shores. In this chapter

I will interrogate the construction of the Japanese woman as ‘comfort body’ in Japanese new wave cinema through a focus on the archetype of the nurse and the prostitute. I plan to consider how and why the body of the nurse and the prostitute, as sacred and profane representations, are blurred within these new wave texts in their positioning as comfort women. In his text, *Bodies of Memory: Narratives of War in Postwar Japanese Culture, 1945-1970*. Igarashi Yoshikuni interrogates the Japanese body as site of memory and national negotiation. Using his text as an important resource, I will examine Masumura Yasuzo’s *Red Angel* (1966) and Suzuki Seijun’s *Nikutai no Mon* (1964) to speak to notions of *nikutai* (flesh) and the Fall—the way in which the powerful staging of the erotic bodies of the prostitute and the nurse operate as hinge around which the politics of nation, war and self-transformation are negotiated. Little has been written in depth about *Nikutai no Mon*, particularly in light of the comfort body as healing body. Both *Red Angel* and *Nikutai no Mon* are important in their representation of male and female war bodies capable of transforming into something else, bringing the carnal body to the very forefront as these compromised bodies move past postwar notions of victimhood and external blame into a concentration on the very real, corporeal and domestic body. The treatment of the comfort women in Japanese new wave cinema highlights the very Japaneseness of the new wave that, even as it is considered a progressive text, participates in the silencing of the colonial *other* in the prioritizing of Japanese female voices at the expense of non-Japanese women.

Chapter 5, “The Rise of the Demon Mother”, will examine the horror cinema of Shindo Kaneto, especially his *Mother* (1963) and *Kuroneko* (1968). Little has been written on Shindo’s *Mother* and *Kuroneko* within which we see the manipulation of the trope of mother in Japanese New Wave cinema to present to audiences a now transgressive mother turned demon and vengeful within a postwar landscape, in a movement from casting blame solely outwards to an

inward consideration and horror of the aged, maternal body. In analyzing these films I hope to explore the legacy of the mother film in Japan and illuminate the importance of the institutional overturning of the mother-son dynamic in the new wave. At stake is the question of in what ways was this ‘new’ Japanese postwar cinema exploiting older strategies of maternal performance to readdress the needs of the society, reopening dialogues with the past to give voice and sight to the present condition and the previously unrepresented? I will seek to parse out this question through a scrutiny of the mother trope, returned and transformed, during the time period. The restaging or resituating of the mother, often presented as victim or martyr, as powerful, transgressive figure in the post-occupation period of study points to a de-familiarizing of the popular as new meanings are affixed through a fostering of desire or longing for the nostalgic image. The eroticized performance and transformation of this sacred figure into a transgressive one across various visual and literary media in Japan highlights a self-conscious restructuring of the female image in an effort to promote a politicized re-imagining of the Japanese self and national space to both domestic and international audiences.

This project emphasizes the importance of the Japanese woman to the political consciousness and the counter-pressure of a new wave movement that draws together different filmmakers across genres, all concerned with the modern space of Japan and the transformed and transforming body of Japanese society. As the title suggests, this dissertation is about a feminizing of the Japanese new wave which heretofore has largely been spoken about in masculinist terms—in terms of the male auteur and the male protagonist’s subjectivity and gaze—to the exclusion of the feminine, who is equally if not more important to a politics of desire embedded in the movement. Each chapter thus looks at a female archetype—from the Comfort Woman to the Prostitute and Nurse, to the Transgendered individual, and to the Sacred

Mother and Angry Housewife—examining how the Japanese new wave uses these archetypes in an attempt to subvert hegemonic systems and encourage a questioning of memory and the human in contemporary Japan. These studies break new ground in Japanese new wave scholarship both through an interrogation of the erotic female body as space of resistance and historical mediation, and through its particular forays into queerness, comfort bodies, urbanity and the genres of horror and pornography. It is my hope that this project will introduce novel ways of approaching the new wave outside of the restrictions of the French *nouvelle vague* and open doors to a new generation of scholarship invested in the radical form of the Japanese female.

2.0 THE EROTIC WOMAN: FEMINIZING THE JAPANESE NEW WAVE

“In the rip of a woman’s skirt and the buzz of a motorboat, sensitive people heard the heralding of a new generation of Japanese film,” (26) Oshima Nagisa would famously write in an oft quoted reference to Nakahira Ko’s 1956 *taiyozoku*¹¹ youth film *Crazed Fruit* (*Kurutta Kajitsu*). Largely unremarked is how in this apropos statement Oshima pinpoints the interaction between desire, intimated through the exposure of the female body, sexual violence and postwar prosperity as key to an understanding of a budding alternative cinema that would transition into a new wave of Japanese cinema. Instead of this ‘exposed’ female body, it would be the sexually aggressive and unapologetic male anti-hero of these *taiyozoku* (sun tribe) films who would hold critical attention as influencing the counter-aesthetic of the Japanese new wave. New Wave in cinema studies has been traditionally thought of as national, rebellious movements centered on the male body and subjectivity, preoccupied with youthful iconoclasm and a rejection of classical film forms. Youth, sex, politics, violence and a visual aesthetics of the subversive— considered the central tenements of the new wave, (canonized as beginning in France in the late 1950s from where it spread across the globe, through an initial mediatized focus upon its father-figures Francois Truffaut and Jean-Luc Godard)—tied a plethora of new cinema that arose in countries

¹¹ For an extended definition of the *taiyozoku* see Isolde Standish, *A New History of Japanese Cinema*, 222-227; Michael Raine, “Crazed Fruit: Imagining a New Japan—The Taiyozoku Films,” *Criterion Collection*, last modified June 27, 2005, <http://www.criterion.com/current/posts/373-crazed-fruit-imagining-a-new-japan-the-taiyozoku-films>.

such as Japan, Britain, Brazil, Germany, Taiwan and Czechoslovakia, to name a few, under the banner of a new wave, masculinist consciousness. Although the Japanese new wave has the distinction of emerging concurrently with the French *nouvelle vague* in film studies, and is recognized as operating within its own distinct historical and political context, at the level of theory the Japanese new wave remains grounded in auteur-driven understandings of the *nouvelle vague* as a male-centered, and youth-oriented cinema. To date there remains a scarcity of material that focus on the role of woman in Japanese new wave cinema, and none that place her at the very center of the movement in Western scholarship.

The Japanese new wave, I contend, is a cinema concerned with the postwar landscape as it emerges out of a military legacy of imperialism and colonialism, and thus is invested in the examination and production of a 'new' Japan or human mediated through the eroticized female body. Rather than a movement owing its allegiance to a shared *mise-en-scene*, the Japanese new wave communicates an ethics of political desire linking pre-and-post war bodies in a counter-hegemonic effort to undermine the sacrosanct and effect systems of change. Although the antihero or main protagonist is often represented as male in critical writings, postwar masculinity in the Japanese new wave exposes a compromised virility that finds expression through a staging of female flesh. Femaleness is at the center of an aesthetic protest against the sanctity of traditional social structures, and the Japanese establishment and United States' attempt to create a specific Japan in a mythologizing of history, which eliminates the tensions between war victim and aggressor. Desire, or rather frustrated desire, becomes the chief method of interrogating past and present through the site/sight of the female body. In this way, the new wave re-imagines classical tropes of Japaneseness from *bushido* to the *ie* (the home, and by extension, the nation state), through an undermining of cinematic traditions and female archetypes, as a form of

counter-modernity to the establishment. The union of the United States and Japan symbolized by the AMPO (Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security)¹² pact ratified in 1960 and 1970 respectively gave form to these tensions at work, tensions nested in the devastation of the atomic bomb, the long political relationship between the United States and Japan (defined in sexual terms with Japan's defeat in World War II), and Japan's own brutal colonial and sexual dominance throughout Asia. Struggling with notions of democracy and humanity within a rigid, repressive state and society, the AMPO riots provide a useful historical realization of the political consciousness expressed in Japanese new wave cinema.

In this chapter I will argue that the inadequate term "New Wave" operates as a placeholder for a larger political-aesthetic movement occurring during the postwar period in Japan, in which a focus on sex and the Japanese female reworks understandings of new wave cinema as male centered. Screenings of desire provide a conduit through which the resituating of the transgressive female, as an alternative entrance into a re-imagining of the world and Japanese self, occurs. Heralded as the father of the Japanese new wave, I will consequently spend time examining the films of filmmaker Oshima Nagisa, in an attempt to illuminate the importance of the desiring, and desired, Japanese woman, to his oeuvre. In an effort to further wrench open scholarship of the Japanese new wave, I will revisit films Oshima considered important to the birth of the new wave with an eye on the sexual woman at the center.

Renowned Japanese film scholar Sato Tadao stresses the importance of sex to the Japanese new wave by linking pornographic filmmakers Wakamatsu Koji and Takechi Tetsuji to

¹² Originally signed in 1951 the security treaty between Japan and the United States set the terms of the alliance between the two countries. To learn more on this treaty see Desser, *Eros plus Massacre*, 24-25, 33-36.

respected Japanese new wave directors Oshima Nagisa and Shinoda Masahiro¹³ as producers of a “sexual wave in films of the 1960s” (232). Although Sato does not explicitly organize this “sexual wave” around the carnal female body, he notices a clear through-line of sex that systematizes films during the late 1950s to 1960s, extending in some cases into the early 1970s, where sex and sexuality open new discourses that bring the past into the present in an attempt to negotiate both time periods. Sato Tadao states,

...Despite the thematic differences, the above directors were all trying to grasp the nature of feelings that lie deep in the human psyche. Moreover, fundamental human problems, such as the relationship between the rulers and the ruled, the power-wielder and slave, harmony and confrontation, freedom and loneliness, can all be seen within the sexual relationship between a man and a woman. These problems are usually defined in a social or political context and treated accordingly. (232)

The sexual pairing between the Japanese male and female remains a pertinent feature of a new cinema, in which the erotic woman has been obscured or under-examined in western film studies. Believing that within the late 1950s and 1960s the only effective films were those which employed sex and sexuality as critical tools, Sato Tadao recognizes the importance of sex to a new cinema intent on forging a politicizing connection with audiences. His placement of Oshima alongside the pornographic highlights how the Japanese new wave has more to do with the sexual in a bridging across different genres of cinema than has been readily explored by critics unable to escape their own moral groundings or embeddedness in French new wave or

¹³ To learn more about the cinema of Shinoda Masahiro see David Phelps, “The Closed World: The Films of Shinoda Masahiro – Surface play and subterfuge in the movies of a modern classicist,” *Senses of Cinema* 61 (2011), <http://sensesofcinema.com/2011/feature-articles/the-closed-world-the-films-of-shinoda-masahiro-surface-play-and-subterfuge-in-the-movies-of-a-modern-classicist/>

Italian neo-realist formulations. The notion of the Japanese new wave as female focal text has implications for a Japan today that still struggles with gender politics and a legacy of the war that strains against a desire to present the self purely as victim. The tensions that surround the text of the female in these new wave films continue in the political and international dissensions of contemporary Japan.

2.1 A BRIEF HISTORY OF WOMAN IN JAPANESE CINEMA

Woman has always been at the center of Japanese cinema. One of the first images captured on film in 1897 by Japanese cameramen was that of the *geisha*, not because of her Japanese-ness but, according to Japanese film historian and critic Donald Richie, due to her appeal as a desirable commodity¹⁴. From the very beginning of Japanese film history, the figure of woman has been employed by men to negotiate the shock of modernity¹⁵. Her staged body consumed en masse, the Japanese woman as archetype became a tool used to engage with the new sights provoked by monumental social change, especially at the level of landscape¹⁶ and gender. Although, as suggested earlier by David Desser, the use of recurring female archetypes in Japanese cinema is not a new phenomenon, the Japanese new wave explicitly repurposes this cinematic tradition in

¹⁴ *A Hundred Years of Japanese Film* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2005), 17.

¹⁵ For more on this issue see Mitsuyo Wada-Marciano, *Nippon Modern: Japanese Cinema of the 1920s and 1930s* (Honolulu: U of Hawai'i Press, 2008), 62-75.

¹⁶ Even before the many wars and atomic bomb that devastated the Japanese landscape, Japan experienced the Kanto Earthquake in 1923 that brought about monumental change at the level of landscape and culture. See J. Charles Schencking, "The Great Kanto Earthquake and the Culture of Catastrophe and Reconstruction in 1920s Japan," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 34, no. 2 (2008): 295-331. Also, see Joshua Hammer "The Great Japan Earthquake of 1923: The powerful quake and ensuing tsunami that struck Yokohama and Tokyo traumatized a nation and unleashed historic consequences," *Smithsonian Magazine*, last modified May 2011, <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-great-japan-earthquake-of-1923-1764539/#fs17XFbChCp7dSDe.99>

order to undermine sacrosanct social structures through a targeted assault on the knowledge systems embedded in these traditional female figures. It is thus necessary to perform a brief overview of the manipulation of woman in Japanese cinema by male directors, especially as influenced by censorship practices of the Japanese government and Occupation forces, in order to more effectively illustrate the critical movement that occurs with the arrival of the *taiyozoku* and Japanese new wave cinema.

Mitsuyo Wada-Marciano argues that in the 1920s the woman's film became the "dominant subgenre of the modern film and a signifier of 'the new' next to the antiquated genres of *shinpa* (drama) and period films, which remained tied to prefilmic theatrical representation and 'masculine' feudal narrative respectively" (76). The end of World War I and aftermath of the 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake saw the rise of the *moga* or modern girl¹⁷ in Japanese cinema indicative of the increased visibility and autonomy of the Japanese woman both in the workforce and in consumerist society. A signifier of westernization and bourgeois ideals, the sexually liberated 'working girl' body of the *moga*, intent on liberation from the family unit, highlighted the anxieties felt and tensions at work in a rapidly industrializing and economically expanding Japan. *Haha-mono* and *tsuma-mono* (mother and wife films) often dealing with *kimono*-clad women and their long suffering position in the face of a male-dominant and classist society, evident in the films of Mizoguchi Kenji for instance, would span the 1920s to the early 1950s, providing a steady counterpoint to the divisive figure of the *moga*. Mizoguchi's 1936 *Osaka Elogy*, for example, would beautifully meld the traditional image of the dutiful daughter with the shameful image of the *moga*, in the character, Ayako, who becomes a rich man's mistress in order to support her unscrupulous family, and is therefore punished by the selfsame system that

¹⁷ See Mitsuyo Wada-Marciano, *Nippon Modern*, 76-110.

insists on her filial obligation. In her discussion about images of masculinity in the cinema of the late 1930s and early 1940s, Standish engages in a conversation with Iwamoto Kenji where they observe the ambiguity of women on screen “reflecting masculinity insecurity” over the *okusan*’s (wives within the home) movement out of the home with the onslaught of modernity in the 1920s and 1930s (MM 53). With the threat that the mobile wife posed to the home and thus the traditional family, “in cinematic narratives, the social response to the new femininity was often to contain it within a ‘masculine point of view’ or masculine voice” (MM 53). During the interwar period in Japan this controversial modern female body would be re-inscribed within the home as militarism and nationalist ideologies grew promoting the consumption of a ‘good wife’ philosophy within movie theaters.

At the end of the Second World War, Japan found itself for the first time in its history occupied by foreign powers (1945-1952) whose presence would institute a wave of democratic reforms that encouraged individualism, feminism and weakened the status of the emperor as God. While *jidaigeki* (period dramas) and other films deemed to promote feudalism and militarist ideology found themselves largely banned¹⁸ under the aegis of the occupying forces, women’s liberation and kissing films were encouraged. Foreign films with strong, and often transgressive female characters were shown during the occupation period highlighting actors like Marlene Dietrich in the 1930 film *Morocco* and Josette Day in Jean Cocteau’s 1946 film *La Belle et La Bête*. Desser observes that

Filmmakers [in occupation cinema] were encouraged to show the ‘new woman’ in action, a woman who could assert herself in society in political, social, and cultural realms. Thus

¹⁸ For an introduction to the censorship of films during the Occupation, see Lars-Martin Sorensen, *Censorship of Japanese Films during the U.S. Occupation of Japan: The Cases of Yasujiro Ozu and Akira Kurosawa* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2009).

we might say that if women were already politicized in the Japanese cinema when they appeared on movie screens in the 1920s, they were already politicized again in the postwar era. (115)

While censorship marked the occupation cinema, a *kasutori*¹⁹ culture of decadence and reverence of the erotic female body flourished in the immediate postwar period. The transgression of celebrating *nikutai* (flesh) undermined the historical veneration of the more abstracted *kokutai* (the emperor-centered national body). Directly correlated with underground discourses concerned with Japanese male subjectivity and the mass need to grasp hold of the experience of the war, *kasutori* culture of *nikutai* allowed the Japanese individual to negotiate the trauma of the atomic bomb and the revelation of the emperor as human—a negotiation closed to the individual by more direct or outspoken means due to occupation censorship practices. The figure of the Japanese female as carnal spectacle existed not for her own sake, but as a platform for the opening up of a new landscape of discourse for the Japanese male, for the agitation of concepts of nation and thereby the very issue of the masculine itself.

In her essay, “Masculinist Identifications with ‘Woman’: Gender Politics in Postwar Japanese Literary Debates,” Yoshinaga Seiko contends that for the male intellectual of the postwar period—writers and critics such as Hirano Ken, Takeda Taijun and Takeuchi to name a few—“the image of woman’ functioned as the Other to which they could transfer the trauma of scarred masculinity of the national defeat. It thus operated as a means of symbolic identification for constructing a revitalized masculinist ‘subjectivity’” (32). Yoshinaga notes that despite the victim narratives presented by Japanese male intellectuals in postwar debates and literature after

¹⁹ See John Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: Norton, 2000), 148-158, for a more complex look at the *kasutori* phenomenon.

Japan's defeat in the war, a new image of 'tougher women' was widely circulated in Japanese movies, theater performances, and literature²⁰. The tough yet virtuous prostitutes, who do what they must in order to survive Japan's ignoble defeat in the war evident in Naruse Mikio's 1950s cinema, for instance, came into being, alongside narratives of heterosexual love and resistant, but re-contained, young female bodies showcased in the cinema of Akira Kurosawa and Yasujiro Ozu. For example the 'eternal virgin' Hara Setsuko was often presented as a vision of the 'new woman' in the films of Ozu, Naruse and even Kurosawa over a career spanning decades (1935-1963), and yet epitomized the dutiful and sacrosanct wife, mother and daughter in the face of failed attempts at resistance that served to reinforce her position in society.

Sato Tadao outlines a *feminisuto* or 'worship of womanhood' tradition that extends from the works of premodern director Mizoguchi Kenji to new wave directors Shindo Kaneto, and Imamura Shohei, drawing a line of continuity between cinema before and after World War II dependent on the idealized figure of the suffering woman.

The image of a woman suffering uncomplainingly can imbue us with admiration for a virtuous existence almost beyond our reach, rich in endurance and courage. One can idealize her rather than merely pity her, and this can lead to what I call the worship of womanhood, a special Japanese form of feminism. (Sato 78)

A cinema historically dependent on woman, Sato argues that the image of the suffering woman in Japanese cinema is one linked to the virtuous, and, as articulated by Desser, encoded in the transcendental and consequently in conservatism. The new wave reworks the link between the suffering woman and the virtuous by introducing thematics of sexuality, decadence and the 'fall'

²⁰ Seiko Yoshinaga, "Masculinist Identifications with 'Woman': Gender Politics in Postwar Japanese Literary Debates," *U.S. Japan's Women's Journal*, no.22 (2002): 32.

in an attempt to undermine notions of the sacred embedded in hierarchical patriarchal systems of power and a prewar militarism that found itself returning in the 1960s. The new wave presents women who do not suffer quietly, but rather, in a general sense, accede to power through their sexuality often seeking the mutual destruction of those around them. Through consumption of this new ‘suffering’ woman, audiences are forced to question notions of Japaneseness and identity. Although Japanese cinema has a history of politicizing the female body to speak to social problems, the Japanese new wave takes hold of these archetypes in an erotic staging and form of protest invested in national transformation.

2.2 THE *TAIYOZOKU EIGA*: THE ANTI-HEROINE

We cannot truly begin to redefine Japanese new wave cinema without examining the films of influence, in this case the youth film ‘precursors’ of the Japanese new wave. In his 1958 essay, “Is It a Breakthrough? (The Modernists of Japanese Film)”, Oshima points to Nakahira Ko’s *Crazed Fruit* (1956), Shirasaka Yoshio’s *The Betrothed* (1957), and Masumura Yasuzo’s *Kisses* (1957) as examples of a developing youth film in which one can perceive the beginnings of the New Wave with its stress on youthful transgression and use of shock to manipulate its audiences. The introduction of a faster editing pace and departure from the lyricism defining the earlier Japanese cinema of Mizoguchi and Ozu, for example, defined this new cinema aesthetically. In his essay “Tempo and Rhythm in Japanese Films: On Breaking with the Traditional Stereotypes”, Nakahira would defend the use of fast pacing in his films as simply echoing the social times:

Isn't the tempo of our lives already greatly eclipsing the one that we have historically seen in Japanese cinema? ... [I] firmly believe that if I don't shatter the traditional rhythm of Japanese films, already being quickly outstripped by the mood of modern Japanese life, a new narrative form will never be realized. My tempo is not too fast – others are simply too slow.²¹

For Oshima, auteurs such as Nakahira and Masumura stand as modernists²², creators of new forms that re-imagine and undermine Japanese social structures and relationships. The innovation of the youth film arising in the mid-1950s represented a movement into a new type of Japanese cinema, a newness that, according to Oshima, “must be analyzed, examined, strengthened, and publicized, because it probably represents the biggest breakthrough in the wall of Japanese film” (27). Oshima's cinema would draw from this new youth cinema and its socially condemning presentation of the disenfranchised in a re-politicization rooted in the AMPO riots and student revolution of the 1950s and 60s.

The first *seishun eiga* (youth films) that provided the seeds for a new cinema consciousness emerged out of a literary tradition. Three novels written by Ishihara Shintaro were adapted into films in 1956: *Season of the Sun/Taiyo no Kisetsu* (Furukawa Takumi), *Crazed Fruit/Kurutta Kajitsu* (Nakahira Ko), and *Punishment Room/Shokei no Heya* (Ichikawa Kon).

²¹ *Kinema Jumbo* 227 (1959): 40-42. Print. Translation Theodore Dixon.

²²Oshima defines modernists as those who create new forms arising “from their commitment to their own perceptions” and from ignoring the “old premodern side of their audience” (29), a side most comfortable with forms that appeal to a premodern Japanese social structure and the relationships engendered by it. To see more on this definition read Oshima's “Is It a Breakthrough? (The Modernists of Japanese Film),” *Cinema, Censorship, and the State: The Writings of Nagisa Oshima* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1993), 26-35. Originally published in *Film Review*, July 1958.

These films quickly became known as ‘sun tribe’ films or *taiyozoku eiga*²³ in their shocking expression of postwar youth’s wealth, delinquency and sexual perversity as mutinous rejection of their parent-generation’s moralizing work philosophy entrenched in exploitation and obligation. Although on paper the phenomenon of the *taiyozoku* ended in 1956 with the censorship pressures exerted by conservative bodies of the PTA (Parent Teacher Association) and Japanese government, for example, the obsession with postwar youth and changes wrought to Japanese cinema—from tempo to editing style—would continue to influence the cinema that followed. So too, the beginnings of a new representation of male and female began to make itself felt in a visualization of sexualized ‘problem’ bodies that refused containment within the *ie* system.

The *taiyozoku* body manifested suspiciously foreign traits that highlighted its western contamination through defeat in the war, and moreover a prewar military obsession with the ideal Japanese male body. Constantly moving, entrenched in jazz as well as Western clothing and automobiles, Japanese girls’ bodies writhe with hysteria in these films as they prostitute themselves to Western military personnel, while Japanese male bodies fairly burst with disinterest and animality in a reworking of masculine identity within the postwar world. Ishihara Yujiro²⁴ (Ishihara Shintaro’s brother), emerged as an iconic screen star of the *taiyozoku eiga* through his representation of a new potent masculinity that could compete with an invading white occupier, a masculinity steeped in postwar disillusionment, anxiety and vicious sexuality. Within this period Ishihara Yujiro showcased a desirable Japanese maleness exactly through his excessive sexuality and distance from the typical Japanese physique. Often filmed with a focus

²³ Sato Tadao defines “The sun tribe [as] teenagers who hung around beaches during the summer vacation” (212). See *Currents in Japanese Cinema* (New York: Kodansha International Ltd., 1982).

²⁴ Isolde Standish cites Ishihara Yujiro as the first star to embody these themes of hedonistic youth culture and argues that he “marks an important turning point in the creation of Japanese male film stars in the postwar period” (NH 223).

on his muscular legs and large body, as in *Crazed Fruit*, Ishihara tended to be compared in Japan to Western performers such as Elvis Presley and James Dean²⁵. While much has been written on Ishihara Yujiro²⁶ as a key symbol of male youth in the *taiyozoku eiga*, the same cannot be said of the *taiyozoku* maiden who often is referenced only as much as she pertains to the male in a revelation of gender relations and the failure of love in a postwar world.

An active counterpart to the Japanese male, the Japanese woman often lies at the heart of the diegesis despite a tendency in film criticism to focus primarily on the masculine in the *taiyozoku*. Containing the obligatory *taiyozoku* scene of a young girl ‘forced’ into sex by the sexually robust male protagonist for whom she then develops feelings, the narrative of *Crazed Fruit* oscillates between two brothers and their mutual obsession with the beautiful Eri (Kitahara Mie²⁷). Unbeknownst to the two brothers, who destroy themselves competing over her, Eri is married to a much older American man. It is at the point of Eri’s erotic female body that the tensions of Japan’s World War II defeat and subsequent American occupation, as well as Japan’s own colonial history of sexual subjugation, abound. In Ichikawa Kon’s *Punishment Room*²⁸, on the other hand, Wakao Ayako²⁹, a star of Mizoguchi’s *Street of Shame* (1956) who would become Masumura Yasuzo’s muse, plays the studious and outspoken Akiko, who, raped by the male protagonist, Katsumi, becomes obsessed with her rapist and ultimately mortally stabs him

²⁵ Another example of the male body similarly fetishized for its strangeness from the Japanese norm stems also from Ko Nakahira’s *Crazed Fruit* where the character of Frank, arguably the point of morality and equal desirability to cult star and protagonist Ishihara, is played by Masumi Okada, of mixed Eurasian heritage.

²⁶ See Michael Raine, “Ishihara Yujiro: Youth, Celebrity and the Male Body in Late 1950s Japan,” *Word and Image in Japanese Cinema* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2001) 202-225.

²⁷ Wife of Ishihara Yujiro.

²⁸ Natto Wada is one of the people credited with writing the screenplay for *Punishment Room*. She also co-wrote the screenplay for another Ichikawa film, *Odd Obsession* (1959). Masumura Yasuzo was the assistant director.

²⁹ The same year, Wakao Ayako gained fame for her role as a virtuous prostitute in Mizoguchi Kenji’s final film *Street of Shame* (1956).

for his unrequited feelings. In both *Crazed Fruit* and *Punishment Room*, the female protagonists refuse erasure within their respective situations. Not merely a passive conduit for male desire, Eri unrepentantly seeks after her own sexual pleasure outside marriage claiming, “I’m only doing what I should have before I got married.” Akiko, meanwhile, stalks her rapist rather than suffer quietly, determined to give meaning to Katsumi’s act of violence upon her. In one scene, in a series of shots that privilege the power of the female look, Akiko exchanges gazes with a bareback rugby player Katsumi. This exchange of looks temporarily reverses power dynamics in an objectification, which revels in the new masculinity represented by Katsumi, and enters into a negotiation with gender and social institutions. In these two iconic films of the *taiyozoku*, the young female protagonist resists her own silencing within patriarchal systems. Although often frustrated, the female protagonist’s efforts to escape her own entrapment within an uncaring postwar environment places her as an important parallel, and moral center, to the *taiyozoku* male, in the creation of a new cinema invested in social transformation.

2.3 MASUMURA YASUZO AND ICHIKAWA KON: A NEW FEMALE SUBJECTIVITY

Standish points to the “re-emergence of the independent woman in postwar society (the ‘modern girl’ of the 1930s representing the first wave)” (NH 223) as being key to the representation of masculinity in the *taiyozoku* films. While the independent woman’s return, coupled with the commodification of the *taiyozoku* male, is crucial to shedding light on postwar gender relations and, as such, male insecurities, the staging of the sexual female that begins in the *taiyozoku* and extends into the 1960s new wave cinema operates as a critical device for its own sake. The

taiyozoku female protagonist functions as an anti-heroine in her failure to conform to gender expectations that demand her duty to the *ie*, and thus the father/husband, thereby rendering her into a transgressive figure. Her desired body becomes a means of articulation through which criticism is levied at nation and state. While Standish is not wholly wrong in her assertion that in the *taiyozoku* “women are inscribed into new ‘democratic’ systems of patriarchal exchange as their newfound assertiveness, their right to choose a husband, is crushed at a most brutal level” (NH 229), her reading performs a generalization that saturates the *taiyozoku* in a western rhetoric dependent on female punishment and lack. The Japanese woman in her infractions begins to enter into a politics of liberation in the *taiyozoku*, a sexual politics that finds itself amplified through student revolution, war memory and the atomic bomb in the new avant-garde cinema of the 1960s.

Actress Wakao Ayako surfaces here as a shocking female figure whose filmography, directed most copiously by Masumura Yasuzo, crosses the *taiyozoku* into the boundaries of the Japanese new wave. Wakao’s desired, and desiring, star body thus provides a bridge that blurs the critical division between the *taiyozoku* and the new wave, further troubling a historical marking of the new wave as beginning with Oshima Nagisa. Sato Tadao cites the emergence of the documentary-style cinema of Hani Susumu with his 1955 *Children in the Classroom*, and Masumura with his 1957 trio of films (*Kisses*, *A Cheerful Girl/Blue Sky Maiden*, and *Warm Current*) as important to the transition of Japanese cinema in the late 1950s. While Hani’s documentary-style of presentation introduced ‘a fresh approach to film’ (208), Masumura’s 1957 films, brought an “important change” in Japanese cinema with “the birth of a new young hero and the development of a lighter, faster tempo in editing” (210). Marking this “new young hero” as male and “perpetually angry”, Sato points to Masumura’s young male protagonist as more

significant (particularly to the new wave aesthetic) than earlier incarnations due to his poor economic status and unrepentant explosive expressions of frustration. The importance of Masumura's female protagonists, meanwhile, is largely ignored by Sato even though many of Masumura's films hold anti-heroines who propel the diegesis forward.

In Masumura's 1957 color film *Sky Maiden* (*Aozora musume*), for example, the venerable Wakao plays the lead character, Yuko Ono, a country girl who discovers her illegitimacy days before she visits her loving but passive father and spoiled siblings for the first time in urban Tokyo. Her arrival in Tokyo to search for her abandoned mother forces an interrogation of Japan and the modern family in line with a pervasive theme of the individual versus the collective—a favorite thematic of Masumura. Yuko is an object of desire for all the men in the text—from her father to a high school teacher and a wealthy love interest. As someone who has grown up outside of the conventional structures of the *ie* system, sent as she was to live with her grandmother in the country, the rules of the daughter do not apply to her. Unlike Standish's earlier disavowals, Yuko possesses the power to choose; her cool sexuality highlighting a self-confidence that no one can squash or control without her permission. Yuko displaces the father as head of the household, forming her own family unit and forbidding him from seeing her newly found Mother, who has been suffering quietly in poverty caught up as the mother is in tradition expectations. “*Baka*” (fool), Yuko calls her in exasperation, directing censure towards the image of the virtuous mother. *Blue Sky Maiden* does not possess a male protagonist who ostensibly rebels, but rather uses the figure of the young woman or daughter, representative of a rebellious new generation, to subvert a system of hierarchy and power. Although *Blue Sky Maiden* takes Father to task, making him recognize his responsibility in the breakdown of the *ie* system, the film ultimately reincorporates the single strong woman from the countryside, who rejected the

corrupted version of the modern insincere family, into the *ie* through a pending marriage. Although Masumura's film contains none of the aesthetic athletics we expect of the Japanese new wave, *Blue Sky Maiden* possesses the spirit of a new subversive cinema organized around desire and the Japanese female. The film provides a counter-text to the earlier cinema of revered Japanese masters such as Ozu in whose cinema families exist in quiet dissatisfaction, removed from the realities of postwar Japan, in order to maintain the expected conduct and codes of society.

Masumura Yasuzo's cinema reveals the contradiction inherent in the Japanese new cinema of the 1950s and 60s. In its focus on women, this new cinema is not a feminist one in a western sense that directs attention towards a gender politics of equality but rather woman provides the means of entering into questions of the human after the war. What does it mean to be Japanese in such a rapidly transformed world that has experienced both the atomic bomb and an economic miracle? How does a focus on woman induce a reckoning with one's imperial past and materialist present? "I don't try to portray women. It's just that women are the more human" Masumura states.

Men only live for women, all their lives they carry their burden the way a horse pulls his carriage, and then they die of a heart attack. Only by focusing on women can we express humanity. I don't choose women so I can talk about women. I'm not a specialist of women's issues like Mizoguchi is. (1970 interview with *Cahiers du Cinéma*)³⁰

The *taiyozoku* maiden is often twined with the *taiyozoku* mother, a trope that continues into the 1960s new wave cinema gaining more political valences associated with Japan's pre-and-

³⁰ Tom Mes, "Yasuzo Masumura: Passion and Excess," *Midnight Eye*, June 1, 2010, <http://www.midnighteye.com/features/yasuzo-masumura-passion-and-excess/>

postwar past. In Ichikawa Kon's two most heralded *taiyozoku* films (*Punishment Room*, and *Odd Obsession*) light becomes a technique to center the archetype of the Japanese housewife as destabilizing presence in the Japanese household.

In *Punishment Room*, a film ostensibly engrossed with the wild rebellion of the son, Katsumi, Ichikawa takes the time to create 'punishment rooms' and none so much more so than for the unassuming housewife who bears on a daily basis her husband and son's disdain. In the midst of a fight between father and son, for instance, Ichikawa uses key lighting and close-ups to illuminate the mother within the household. Ichikawa takes the time to pause on the unhappy mother underscoring the problem of the *ie* through the site/sight of her body. Dismissed harshly by husband and son, the mother enters an unlit room, closing the door behind her. Punishment room transforms into an off-screen mental space with the turning on of a hanging light. Illuminated by the light of the hanging lamp, the mother's dissatisfaction is plainly portrayed through the introduction of music as an emotional cue. This strange off-screen space which the mother occupies operates akin to a subjective feminine space within which the *ie* is presented as a site of discord that is exposed, rather than hidden behind polite gestures. While father and son argue over respect and money, Ichikawa cuts to the mother's chuckling in off-screen space over a comic of two boys fighting over a ball in a subtle criticism of the veneers of civility that obscure the failure of the nation-state and home in the midst of a postwar 'economic miracle'. Standish observes that "the long-term good of the *ie* as an institution takes precedence over individual desire; hence the classic dichotomy between *giri* and *ninjo*—obligation and human desires—that derives the narrative of many mainstream genre films" (PP 81). Even though the *taiyozoku* mother in *Punishment Room* chooses duty within the home as compared to the angrier iterations of mother that will appear in the new wave cinema of the 1960s, a facet I will discuss

further in a future chapter, her unhappiness is not buried under the stoicism of the suffering mother common to earlier Japanese cinema. Despite the film's investment in its nihilistic young male protagonist, Katsumi, *Punishment Room* lends itself to moments where the disempowered female holds both power and knowledge, undermining the expectations of *okusan* (wife) and the 'fallen' woman to speak truth to patriarchal systems of power.

More than five months before Oshima would debut his *A Town of Love and Hope*, Ichikawa would release his *Odd Obsession* (1959), a film adapted from novelist Tanizaki Junichiro's *The Key* (1956) that would again suture lighting and desire in the presentation of the Japanese housewife. *Odd Obsession* is a dark tale about an old man, Mr. Kenmochi, who, unable to become aroused solves his problem by setting up sexual situations between his wife, Ikuko, and his daughter's lover, Dr. Kimura, (Nakadai Tatsuya)³¹ unaware of his wife's knowledge of and compliance with his voyeuristic schemes. Through theatricality and distanciation, extreme close-ups of unreadable faces, freeze-frames and strange camera angles, *Odd Obsession* is significant in its aesthetic subversions, which instantly sets everything askew, forcing audiences to realign their sense of reality in this presentation of the *ie* and the social customs of a family. Juxtaposed to *Punishment Room* with its similar focus on the entrapped housewife, *Odd Obsession* critically illustrates a shift that occurs in new cinema between the mid-1950s and the 1960s—the growing sexuality or staged eroticism of the Japanese woman as a means of resistance embedded in the feminine. In an effort to undermine the sacred space of the

³¹ Starred by Nakadai Tatsuya (Dr. Kimura), who would later perform with several new wave directors from Teshigahara Hiroshi to Kurahara Koreyoshi. He was an actor audiences would already recognize from his presence in Ichikawa's earlier *Enjo* (1958) and Kobayashi Masaki's *The Human Condition I* (1958) where his humanistic idealism collides with the brutal reality of the systems in place. His presentation as a calculating and ambitious young man increases the tension of his star persona, particularly through the theatricality of the piece which distances his humanity from audiences even further.

home and the archetype of the loyal and faithful wife/mother, *Odd Obsession*, employs the naked staging of the female body. The fact that Ichikawa's film with its experimental film style and rebellious politics was released earlier than Oshima's further exposes the arbitrariness of the historical assignment of the Japanese new wave's beginnings to Oshima.

Understood as a director who, through his shifting thematics, often defeats placement within auteur studies, Ichikawa Kon brilliantly situates the legendary Kyo Machiko as the deviant wife, Ikuko, at the center of *Odd Obsession*. Known for her work in two of the most celebrated films in Japanese film history— Akira Kurosawa's *Rashomon* (1950) and Mizoguchi Kenji's *Ugetsu* (1953) in which she problematizes the space of wife through the questioning of her virtue and sexual desires— Kyo, in her familiarity to audiences, would have immediately troubled the notion of dutiful wife that her role required her to play. The difference between these earlier classical films and Ichikawa's work lies in Ichikawa's repudiation of the *jidaigeki* (historical) morality and lyricism of Kurosawa and Mizoguchi's films, but additionally in the display of the carnal body of the Japanese female for the audience's voyeuristic pleasure. In *Odd Obsession* Ikuko's body comes under increasing scrutiny as the lighting and magnifying agents—from fluorescent lights, to her husband's polaroid camera and glasses—become motifs in the film that concentrate focus on the eroticism of the female sight/site. Throughout the film the camera repeatedly returns to an image of Ikuko feigning insentience in a steaming tub lit from above as her husband, lover and daughter, as a collective and individually, all stare with desire from the bathroom doorway in a flurry of affected activity. The erotic housewife body magnified through lighting forces a confrontation with the rituals and performativity at the heart of the modern Japanese family. Moreover, desire is expressed as multi-gendered rather than embedded in a traditional male gaze-female acquiescent objectification, for Ikuko's daughter

looks too further destabilizing power dynamics within the *ie*. As Ikuko surrenders to her own sexuality, she uses her new power in the household to murder her husband by raising his blood pressure.

In his remarkable book *The Aesthetics of Shadow: Lighting and Japanese Cinema* (2013) Miyao Daisuke maintains that “Ichikawa and Masumura were considered modernist in the sense that they had an acute understanding of the history of Japanese cinema and were obsessed with the questions of what Japanese modernity was and how Japanese cinema could present a new mode of subjectivity that was genuinely liberated and modern” (269). The humanness of female desire and sexuality would usher in new spaces of subjectivity in new wave Japanese cinema. According to Miyao cinematographer Miyagawa Kazuo utilizes lighting in *Odd Obsession* to transition cinematic space from spaces of confession to “[spaces] of objective third person narrative without any interruption” (272), creating a text that shifts seamlessly from a subjective to objective sight centered on the erotic housewife body. This use of stark lighting to illuminate the female body as site of alterity for the consumption of counter-hegemonic discourses would be a key feature in the sensuous new wave films of directors from Imamura Shohei to Wakamatsu Koji in the 1960s. There is a dark absurdity yet sensuality to Ichikawa’s oeuvre that works to undermine the stability of the *ie*, the threatening sexuality of the wife providing the pathway through which the pillar of the family and social systems are interrogated. For instance, it is while Ikuko and Kimura awkwardly embrace during a secret rendezvous, as her husband lies paralyzed from a stroke in the other room, that lovers’ talk takes the shape of household finances, care of Mr. Kenmochi, marriage to her daughter and anxiety to serve the wishes of Mr. Kenmochi. For Ichikawa, who due to illness was unable to serve in the war, his cynicism towards alliterations of the *ie*—from systems of government to the distance between

generations—expresses itself in the impotence and hypocrisy of characters who reveal the performance inherent in these dominant structures. The depiction of entrapped sexuality embodied in the bared body of Ikuko is set against the impotence of the older generation, symbolized by Kenmochi, whose passivity aided the growth of militarism that steered Japan into World War II. This parallelism of the fertile young female body with the sterile old male body challenges the discourse of a postwar recovery still dependent on the systems that led to Japan's presence in the war. *Odd Obsession* speaks to an erotics of the site/sight, where the carnal, naked body of woman is displayed for the spectatorship of audiences both on and off-screen in an inverting of expectations of the *ie* even as familiar genres such as melodrama and the *haha/tsuma mono* (mother/wife film) find themselves collapsed.

Even in films decidedly about male youth and delinquency the female becomes a conduit to male interiority and social criticism, in a type of 'feminizing' of memory and history. The erotic woman becomes a mode of dialogue between audience and filmmaker in a revelation of the problems at the heart of a postwar society, especially as relates to a present military past entrenched in its social systems. Imai Tadashi's 1957 *A Story of Pure Love* (*Jun'ai Monogatari*), for example, sets the strains both for Oshima's *Cruel Story of Youth* and Hani Susumu's 1959³² *Bad Boys*, which David Desser describes as "one of the fundamental films of the Japanese New Wave" (40). *A Story of Pure Love* has the distinction of being written by Mizuki Yoko, who also wrote for Naruse Mikio and was known for her skill in composing female perspectives. By the time Oshima wrote his screenplay for *Cruel Story of Youth*, his film could only have arisen out of a series of earlier films concerned with youth and the postwar landscape. *A Story of Pure Love*

³² Although the film was made in 1959, it was not released until 1960. For more information see the review by Rea Amit, "Bad Boys," *Midnight Eye*, April 22, 2010, <http://www.midnighteye.com/reviews/bad-boys/#sthash.ERSLMGXr.dpuf>.

presents a young lower class couple filled with the potential for a good future who, due to the cruelty of social systems (that, for example, will not hire without a guarantor), and the stigma of radiation sickness from atomic fallout of the bomb, can only become criminals or delinquents. In *Cruel Story of Youth*, Oshima removes any feeling of pity from his script, presenting a younger generation angry and disillusioned, making his political stance clear from newsreels to the paralleling of couples representing two generations of student revolts and failures in the face of rigid power structures. Imai, on the other hand, lends a documentary feel to his presentation of the postwar young to create a text heavy with sentiment through the ‘real’ observation of a young couple unable to escape historic events and social systems. The memory of the bombing of Hiroshima is displaced onto the young body of the street urchin anti-heroine, who has literally been poisoned by her environment. It is in her death that the ‘cruel story’ of these youth becomes explicit with the failure of their romance, and censure is levelled at a society and its systems of reformation. The meaning implicit in Oshima’s title *Cruel Story of Youth* gains complexity when taken as an inter-text with earlier films of the *taiyozoku* time period.

With its documentary-style and focus on the cruel militarization of Japan’s reformatory system, Hani’s *Bad Boys* would be heavily influenced by *A Story of Pure Love*. A largely neglected filmmaker in the West, Hani’s 1960s oeuvre (*He and She/Kanojo to Kare*, 1963, *A Full Life/Mitasareta Seikatsu*, 1962) would focus on the entrapment of the middleclass Japanese woman within the home. His 1950s ‘realist’ cinema would provide searing scripts concerned with Japanese communities and the ‘problem’ youth arising out of a defeated postwar landscape. Similar to Masumura, he would be quoted as saying, “I am interested only in the inside of

people.”³³ Masumura and Hani mark a shift from the *taiyozoku* through their focus on the lower classes. Utilizing non-professional actors and location shooting, *Bad Boys* follows eighteen year old Asai Hiroshi, as he is incarcerated in a reformatory employing brutal militaristic training geared towards reforming the youth into model citizens. Within such a punishing place in which the boys make no apologies for what the postwar landscape has made of them, memory takes the form of woman, humanizing these ‘bad boys’ and revealing the failure of social and institutional systems. For example, in one extended sequence where we observe a friend of Asai’s as he rolls and smokes a joint, a pure sound like a flute note sounds cuing the spectator to a shift from objective to subjective space. As the boy exhales smoke the camera pans along the wall to reveal a sketch of a naked woman, in a type of striptease that starts from her feet and pauses on her upper body, panning down the length of her hair to transition into a memory of a girl, via a dissolve onto long black hair being washed and groomed. Many of the beautiful memories that these boys return to in order to escape their existence are oneiric images of women. While Asai wistfully remembers a moment of care as a child at the hands of a young Japanese woman who serviced GIs at a club, his furniture group leader recollects a girl called Keiko whom he recalls whenever he looks at the promise of a pink cabinet intended for a bride’s trousseau. Another youth reminisces about a girl who lived with him and three other boys, noting, “We weren’t really living until she came to live with us.” Hani’s camera captures the boy’s memories in a fully lit close-up of the young girl’s laughing face, as though the memory itself is unspooling like a documentary with a soundtrack composed of non-diegetic music and laughter. Through

³³ Interview conducted May 2009 in Tokyo by Alexander Jacoby and Rea Amit, “Susumu Hani,” *Midnight Eye*, April 22, 2010, <http://www.midnighteye.com/interviews/susumu-hani/>

woman we enter into the deeper desires or longings of these ‘bad’ boys, undermining a social system that penalizes rather than recognizes its own complicity in these boys’ formation.

2.4 OSHIMA NAGISA: SENTIMENT AND CRUELTY

Although a box office failure³⁴, Oshima Nagisa would be deeply influenced by Masumura Yasuzo’s debut film *Kisses (Kuchizuke)* about a boy and a girl who meet while visiting their respective fathers in jail and in the course of their budding relationship navigate Japan on a motorcycle in an attempt to grasp a day of freedom from the obligations and exploitations of modern Japanese society. Oshima approved of Masumura’s separation from cinematic lyricism and his deep ambition “to paint, in all their excess, the desires and passions of human beings” (198)³⁵. Masumura’s oeuvre would possess the shared element central to a notion of a political consciousness of the Japanese new wave, one concerned with human desire. In his essay, “Beyond Endless Self-Negation: The Attitude of the New Filmmakers” (1960), Oshima contends that “to generate a new audience, new films must, first and foremost, express the filmmaker’s active involvement as an individual. Until this is realized, a dialogue between filmmaker and audience cannot be established and the film cannot function, in tension with reality as critical commentary” (47). New cinema, then, needs to be enunciative, seeking not only to escape the reigns of old film methods at the level of style but to engage in conversation with its audiences, a conversation that is always at “tension with reality” (48). In his current book *New Waves in*

³⁴ Tom Mes, “Yasuzo Masumura: Passion and Excess.”

³⁵ Richie, *A Hundred Years of Japanese Film*.

Cinema (2013) Sean Martin asserts that Oshima saw reality as constantly changing, and called for films that would be ““weapons used to change reality, [films that] must always follow through with their objective of revolutionizing consciousness”” (266). For Oshima this revolutionizing of audience consciousness could only be achieved through the formation of a new cinema that gives the “indolent” audience a shock³⁶, thus simultaneously creating a new audience.

As mentioned earlier, in film studies, the period demarcated as the Japanese new wave is thought to range from Oshima’s 1959 debut film, *A Town of Love and Hope*, to the early 1970s. The 1960s represented a time of defeat for many Japanese youth with the realization of the ‘lies’ of democracy espoused by government and the budding re-militarization of a constitutionally pacifist Japan. The bitter disillusionment caused by the failure of student movements and ‘red’ purging (*reddo paji*) of communist ‘troublemakers’, the ratification of the AMPO security pact and the return of previously purged ultranationalist and military individuals³⁷ to public activity by the end of the 1950s, infused the artwork of the young postwar generation. Deeply involved in the student associations and revolution of the 1950s, Oshima Nagisa was branded a ‘red student’ during the red purges of the late 1940s and early 1950s. The social stigma, which would bar him from employment opportunities, would lead directly to his entrance into cinema³⁸. Oshima was only twenty-seven when he released his first film *A Town of Love and Hope*. Originally entitled *The Boy who Sold his Pigeon*, Oshima would be suspended for six months for changing the ending from one in which the poor boy and rich girl reconcile (hence the title of the

³⁶ References Antonin Artaud and his Theater of Cruelty, see *The Theater and Its Double* (New York: Grove Press, 1958).

³⁷ John Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 271-273.

³⁸ Audie Bock, *Japanese Film Directors* (Tokyo: Kodansha International Ltd, 1978): 315.

film chosen by studio execs) to one where the rich girl kills the boy's pigeon in a shocking action revealing the impossibility of the social divide³⁹. In a 1959 critical essay, "A Review on 'Sleeping Lion: Shochiku Ofuna'"⁴⁰ Oshima expounds on the importance of a new cinema composed of a "new class of directors" reflecting the postwar condition and the desires of its generation:

Those new directors will probably be of essentially the same age as the postwar generation that forms the mainstream film audience. The common goal of the postwar generation is to give spectacular cinematic expression to the vivid desires and actions of people grappling with their circumstances. That is precisely where new themes are to be found. (40)

Isolde Standish defines the directors associated with the Japanese new wave through their youth, which "was dominated by the final stages of the war, the deprivation of defeat and the US-led occupation; they thus formed part of what became known colloquially as the 'generation of the burnt-out ruins'" (PPP 1). These directors due to their youth shared a personal connection with the student movements⁴¹ of the 1950s and 60s, and, distinct from their French new wave counterparts, worked within the hierarchical system of the studios. Unlike the *taiyozoku*, these new films often focused explicitly on the lower regions— of the body, of society— dealing in sex, criminals, delinquents, black markets and a burnt-out Japan within which promises and ideologies had been broken and compromised. This new work, Oshima further elaborates, "must

³⁹ Tadao Sato, *Currents in Japanese Cinema*, 214-215.

⁴⁰ *Cinema, Censorship, and the State: The Writings of Nagisa Oshima*. Previously published in *Film Criticism*, August 1959.

⁴¹ To read more on Oshima and his participation in student rebellions see Audie Bock, *Japanese Film Directors* (Tokyo: Kodansha International Ltd, 1978): 312-315.

center on the vivid desires and actions of people who grapple with the status quo. They must not depict feeble complexes, shabby emotions, or quiet virtue” (38). Oshima’s *A Town of Love and Hope* stars the suffering postwar mother of Kinoshita Keisuke’s *A Japanese Tragedy* (1953) as a lower class mother (Sato 316) who partakes in her son’s pigeon selling scam to ensure her family’s survival in a movement away from the lyricism and victim mentality often expressed through melodrama. For Oshima, Bock argues, “[the] relationship between the individual and society is best expressed, he has found, in the irrationality of crime and sex—forces that drive the individual without his own comprehension” (320-321). In this way too, rape, a typical tool emerging out of the *taiyozoku*, becomes a means of articulating oppressive patriarchal systems of power through an aesthetics of cruelty centered on the female body. Cruelty in Oshima’s oeuvre complicates the notion of the victim and the aggressor, presenting the social outcast as born out of a particular postwar environment but also cruel because of it.

The majority of texts examining the Japanese new wave focus chiefly on Oshima Nagisa not simply due to an understanding of the director as the originator of the movement, but due to the physical accessibility of his work and the closeness of his rebellious structure to the French new wave. Although Oshima, manages to escapes the limitations of the French new wave appellation, and in fact actively disavows it, many critics (with a few notable exceptions—Maureen Turim, for one, who dedicates an entire book to his works and writings) focus on the transgression of rape in his films without recognizing the importance of woman to his oeuvre as more than victim or object of exchange. Sex and violence intertwine with memory and history at the point of the female body in Japanese new wave cinema to create a platform of politicism and desire for socio-political change.

In 1960 Oshima released his landmark film *Cruel Story of Youth* to audiences about a wild young man, Kiyoshi, and a young woman, Makoto, who rebel through sex and extortion against the failed dreams of nation and democracy that stifle them at every turn. The film begins with the continuous shifting shutter of newspaper clippings, like a blinking eye which disorients the sight even as it provides the credits and intertitles. Opening on the image of a woman, Makoto, asking for a ride from a man who ultimately attempts to rape her, the film immediately centers our vision on this young woman, her transgressive activities and her relationship with the man who saves her, Kiyoshi, all juxtaposed with the politics of the times—from images of student protests in Japan to newsreels of demonstrations in South Korea. In one of their first interactions, Kiyoshi and Makoto talk about sex as they walk along a seaside lumberyard, against the background of the 1960 US/Japan Security Treaty demonstrations, a conversation that soon dissolves into violent sexual foreplay where Kiyoshi forces himself onto Makoto and there is an intimation of rape. In this strange phallic space of wooden pillars and logs, the fallen body of the woman becomes a spectacle for our consumption. In such a world of uneven power dynamics, fruitless endeavors and unheard voices, it is through this staging of the desired female body, her violation yet repeated return to Kiyoshi, that relationships are portrayed as symbolically doomed to failure. Rape resonates with the forced union between the United States and Japanese government after the war. The initial literary understanding of the bomb as rape, as forced entry of the west into the Japanese national body, leaving that body torn, reeling after defeat in the war, transforms itself to a visualization of the female body in new cinema as tough, transgressive and sexual.

Cruel Story of Youth sought to undermine a *Shochiku* representation of the ideal Japanese family tied to traditional images of tatami mats and wrested in a sentimentalism orchestrated

through close-ups that framed the entire face (Standish NH 252). Family units are nonconventional and often fractured, even as the failed relationships of the old and the young are paralleled through sexual relations as critical texts to be read. Sexual relationships in *Cruel Story of Youth* perform a politics of history and desire pronounced through the erotic female body across generations; these relationships range from the rebellious younger generation denoted by Makoto and Kiyoshi, to the revelation of the gap between a generation who brought about the war and a generation paying the consequences embodied by Kiyoshi and his older maternal lover and financial supporter, to Makoto's older sister and her ex-lover who epitomize a generation bitter and spent through their own unsuccessful protestations almost a decade ago against the Security Pact in a foreshadowing of the impending failure of Makoto and Kiyoshi's own relationship. Catherine Russell argues that Oshima's *Cruel Story of Youth* engages in a "somasochistic form of sexual relations [highlighting] the contradictions implicit in a political discourse that appropriates female desire without politicizing female subjectivity" (115). Maureen Turim conversely contends that the visual and technical style of Oshima's films delve into desire and the unconscious, opening into a world of the subjective, heretofore unseen in Japanese cinema. While youth is staged in open spaces often aligned with nature, wide open sequences along seascapes, on a motorcycle, against ambiguous spaces heralding the seeming freedom of a romance and love that has already become twisted in a postwar world, older bodies bring the threat of death and disappointment linked to nationhood and the frustrated desire for a new Japan and self. The concluding sequence of *Cruel Story of Youth*, in particular, brutally engages in a play of shot-reverse-shots suggestive of a feminine insight or mental space within which Oshima cruelly destroys the faces of his protagonists in a macabre caricature of the lovers'

suicide⁴² that distances the text from sentimentality. Rather than a pathway to freedom, the ‘double suicide’ of the young lovers reinforces the couple’s entrapment within a stagnated postwar society. In utilizing the ritual of the double suicide, and yet troubling the form through a camera that distances itself from sentiment and love, Oshima manipulates an older form embedded in traditional theater, and, in defamiliarizing it from the realm of the transcendent, forces new thought into older power and knowledge systems.

The destruction of the transgressive body remains a recurring motif in films like Nakahira Ko’s *Crazed Fruit* (1956), Ishii Teruo’s *Horror of Malformed Men* (1969) and Oshima Nagisa’s *Cruel Story of Youth* (1960). Catherine Russell argues that

...melodramatic death creates a void that, when filled, effects closure. Allegorical death is cruel because the void remains empty. The representation of the body itself, drained of life, is a privileged signifier for the allegorist. ...The bruised and bleeding body is, for Oshima, the site of writing, a writing that places demands on the reader or viewer. (121)

Death, especially death entwined with desire, operates as a visual and narrative space of political and social destabilization in *Cruel Story of Youth*. As a form of writing, the language of the bleeding body caught in unmitigated desire effects the power to awaken the masses to their political situation. *Cruel Story of Youth* concludes in a sequence where Kiyoshi breaks up with Makoto, an act which she repeatedly denies. The camera follows Makoto as she walks away, half of her body visible as though she stands both in and out of cinematic space, while the cityscape moves—a strange, ambiguous blur of bright lights around her marking the spectator as though within the subjective space of the feminine.

⁴² Catherine Russell provides an interesting reading on the double suicide in Oshima’s *Cruel Story of Youth*, see *Narrative Mortality: Death, Closure, and New Wave Cinemas* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota, 1995): 117.

When Makoto eventually accepts a ride from a stranger, her looks backward are juxtaposed with shots of Kiyoshi (in an entirely different location) being beaten up by goons. Due to earlier scenes in the film where Makoto's glances backward as she rode in multiple strange men's cars were indicative of her looking back at her Kiyoshi during their extortion scheme, a linkage is made between these intersecting scenes of past and present, and the looking of the female spectator. The scene in which Kiyoshi dies becomes a performative space where the frames between the respective spaces of Kiyoshi and Makoto collapse allowing the couple to share temporal space in the instant of death. Makoto's subsequent violent death as she attempts to leap from the moving car ultimately resulting in the dragging of her body along the street parallels Kiyoshi's death as if in a double suicide. It is in the sight/site of the destroyed or tortured face (the gangster has pummeled and mashed his foot into Kiyoshi's face, while Makoto's face has been dragged against gravel) placed side by side in the concluding shot of the film to be held in still shot that the spectator as witness of both deaths enters fully into the realm of new thought. For Russell, "what is often carelessly described as 'nihilism' in the Japanese New Wave is in fact an allegorization, a mode of writing in which the spectator is offered a place outside the closed circuits of ritual and repetition to understand 'freedom' as historical difference, as material change, and as otherness" (135). The shock and horror of these sudden deaths placed on display forces open meaning within the image in a rupturing of screened desires that illuminate a wounded nation in the fragmentation of families and relationships, echoing with the infiltration of foreignness, despair and disconnectedness in a postwar Japanese society.

Sex and violence perpetuated on the female body form a core aspect of Oshima's oeuvre. Turim highlights that the marketing of Oshima's films from the outset "depended upon an appeal to youth and pornography markets" (86). She mentions, for example, how *The Sun's Burial* (*Taiyo no Hakaba*, 1960) "was promoted in English-language press materials aimed at the Asian market as softcore porn" (86). Set in an Osaka slum, *The Sun's Burial* opens on the erotic image of Haneko (Kayoko Honoo), our main character, in a bra. Leading a racket where people literally sell their blood to survive in a sweltering postwar landscape, Haneko resists containment within archetypal categories of the virtuous Japanese heroine in cinema; on one hand she threatens to stab her partner who attempts to rape her, on the other Haneko supplements her income by selling her body. She refuses to feel shame when called a "devil" for doing what she must to survive. Her practical sexuality lends Haneko strength, and as a figure of desire it is she who operates as true point of critical sight or entrance into this slum world of the jobless, the yakuza, the feckless, and the marginalized, not her softer male counterpart, Takeshi. Despite Takeshi's virtue, Oshima makes the carnal Haneko the moving thread and moral center that ties all the different gangs and narratives together in his text. Turim describes a "feminization of rebellion" that occurs in Oshima's films alongside female characters who "possess a critical knowledge of Japanese culture that places them at silent or even suicidal odds with it" (252). Haneko, for example, wants nothing to do with the "return to former glory" crap espoused by the older generation within the slums, a generation obsessed with a past military strength proven mythical and reduced to random acts of cruelty (such as throwing a puppy on the floor), who provide no hope or help for the youth whose only recourse is crime and its cruel activities. Oshima's entrance into sex and pornographic markets would increase in the latter half of the 1960s,

corresponding to growing disillusionment with government and student movements related to the AMPO riots. The pornographic would become the next step in an oeuvre invested in a politics of desire and thus liberation, of which the desired, and desiring Japanese female as resistant body remained paramount.

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Oshima would be the first, according to Furuhashi Yuriko in her essay "The Actuality of Wakamatsu: Repetition, Citation, Media Event"⁴³, to take a politicized view of the pornographic pink film as "oppositional" and "defiant to the mainstream" (155), "comparing the marginalized position of the Pink Film to the victims of social and economic discrimination" (155). To Oshima, the pornographic film was a film which broke the taboo, and consequently censorship battles during the 1960s would illuminate not only the pornographic yet political nature of certain films and the reins of oppression held by government but the line of connection between the new wave, pink films and the erotic woman. Oshima would actively obscure the line of differentiation between the pink and the mainstream through his directorial work with Wakamatsu Koji, a producer on his groundbreaking *In the Realm of the Senses* (1976), and his adoption of Adachi Masao's landscape theory (*fukeiron*)⁴⁴ in his later cinema that depended on the medium of sex to politically activate his audiences. Oshima would also cast Adachi in his

⁴³ *The Pink Book: The Japanese Eroticism and its Contexts*. Ed. Abé Mark Nornes, 2014. 2nd Edition PDF. <http://hdl.handle.net/2027.42/107423>.

⁴⁴In 1968 Adachi Masao introduced his theory of landscape (*fukeiron*) which Oshima and Wakamatsu incorporated into their films. Isolde Standish would write that Adachi's landscape theory equated state power with landscape (PPP 108). Jasper Sharp also notes in his *Behind the Pink Curtain: The Complete History of Japanese Sex Cinema*, how Oshima's *The Man Who Left His Will on Film* (1970) emerged out of this discourse of landscape and how it shapes identity (105).

social indicting film *Death by Hanging* (1968) and co-write *Three Resurrected Drunkards* (1968) and *Diary of a Shinjuku Thief* (1969) with the pink scriptwriter, a creative collaboration leading to the production of Wakamatsu's searing *Running in Madness, Dying in Love* (1969)⁴⁵.

Oshima would cite Takechi Tetsuji's prosecution on obscenity charges in 1965 as the reason for his return to cinema after an absence of four years (while he worked in television and radio) with *Pleasures of the Flesh* (1965) and *Violence at Noon* (1966), films invested in thematics of violence and sadomasochism common to the genre of the pink. "There had never been a year in which film had received so many attacks from the outside," Oshima stated. "That is why Japanese film needed me. *Pleasures of the Flesh* was my response to that" (Sharp 75). *Violence at Noon*, in particular, in its creation of female confessional space aligns Oshima with the pornographic works of Wakamatsu and Adachi, a feature which I will discuss in the next chapter. A film marked not just by its fragmented quality owing to its 2000 cuts but by its privileging of female subjectivity and voice, especially through female writing and voiceover, *Violence at Noon* tracks a serial rapist and murderer through the recollections of two women—the rapist's wife and a former rape victim. Memory belongs chiefly to the women of this film and they are burdened with the task of piecing together history and the fragments of a man formed by a postwar society.

Oshima would be arraigned on obscenity charges⁴⁶ due to the boundaries transgressed by *In the Realm of the Senses*, which would fuel debates on pornography and censorship previously

⁴⁵ Jasper Sharp observes how Adachi "put together [*Running in Madness, Dying in Love*'s] scenario while on the road to Hokkaido with Oshima and his crew on their way to shoot *Boy* (1969)" (104), *Behind the Pink Curtain: The Complete History of Japanese Sex Cinema*.

⁴⁶ To read more about the different charges galvanizing debates during the 1960s, for example the Sade Trials, see Sharon Hayashi, "Marquis de Sade Goes to Tokyo: The Gynecological-Political Allegories of Wakamatsu Koji and Adachi Masao," *The Pink Book: The Japanese Erodution and its Contexts*, 269-294.

occasioned with Takechi Tetsuji for his 1965 *Black Snow*. Bemoaning his failure to use ‘so called’ pink actresses in *Pleasure of the Flesh*, Oshima would correct this mistake in *In the Realm of the Senses* with “Pink Empress Dowager”⁴⁷ Matsui Yasuko. An infamous pink actress who plays the nurse in Takechi’s *Daydream* (1964), Matsui Yasuko also appears as the priestess’ daughter in Imamura Shohei’s *Profound Desire of the Gods* (1968) and as the Tagawa Inn manager who is raped by the main character in *In the Realm of the Senses*, providing a further connection between the mainstream new wave and the pink pornographic film. Collaboration⁴⁸ between the *pinku eiga* and the Japanese new wave was a common feature of the revolutionary 1960s. Matsui also starred in *Aku no Modae (Ecstasy of Wickedness)* directed by Wakamatsu Koji in 1964.

The features used to marginalize pornographic film in cinema studies—misogyny, rape, nudity, torture—can all be seen in the cinema of Oshima Nagisa. Scholarship on the Japanese new wave continues to reproduce a rhetoric dependent on the rebellion of the male anti-hero despite the importance of sex and thus the eroticized woman to both Oshima’s, and other new wave directors’, cinematic works. I have been trying to do two main things in this chapter— (1) to highlight why masculinist discourses can no longer be deemed enough within a Japanese cinema context that has always been about woman; and (2) to argue for a consideration of the Japanese new wave as a subversive cinema of desire centered on the carnal figure of the female

⁴⁷ See Oshima’s essay “Theory of Experimental Pornographic Film,” in which he writes that “Matsui Yasuko appeared in *In the Realm of the Senses*. Long known as the ‘Pink Queen,’ she now has the dignity of being the ‘Pink Empress Dowager’”, *Cinema, Censorship, and the State*, 256.

⁴⁸ Jasper Sharp notes that Atsushi Yamatoya (often hiding under the pseudonym of Wataru Hino), for example, while being one of the anonymous writers behind the script for Suzuki Seijun’s *Branded to Kill* (1967), also directed several films in the pink genre from *Season of Betrayal* (1966) to *Dutch Wife of the Wasteland* (1967). He also anonymously wrote for Wakamatsu Koji, *Behind the Pink Curtain: The Complete History of Japanese Sex Cinema*, 60.

as a means of politicizing new audiences through a breakage or revelation of the power structures at work in Japanese society. The re-politicization of the Japanese female through an increasing eroticism provides a new direction to enter into Japanese new wave film studies. The erotic and destabilizing anti-heroine becomes a through-line linking disparate films together throughout the 1950s and 60s and opening an understanding of the Japanese new wave as inhabiting a shared ethical concern related to national change.

3.0 THE WOUND AND THE BLADE: THE SYNTHESIS OF THE PORNOGRAPHIC (FE)MALE

Emerging from traditions of art and literature, pornography has long operated as a central form of vision in Japanese cinema. From the woodblock art (*ukiyo-e*) of Edo period *shunga* (erotic art) to the western influences of the *ero-guro-nansensu* (erotic-grotesque-nonsense) literary and art movement in the 1920s and 1930s, the spectatorship of pornography served to negotiate the challenges of modernity and contemporary knowledge systems. The hardships of the wartime period would subsume the production of pornographic literature and art in favor of cinematic images promoting soldier camaraderie and the rhetoric of discipline and service to Emperor and country. The end of the Pacific War, however, would generate a return of pornography invested in articulating the incomprehensible war experience. While Japanese cinema stuttered under the censorship imposed by their occupiers after the war, by 1952, as the Allied Occupation of Japan drew to its conclusion, artists like Hamada Chimei were turning more fully to art to negotiate their war experience. His *Elegy of a New Conscript series*, which included *Landscape* (1952), for example, highlighted both the atrocities committed by the Japanese forces and the emotional fallout of their imperialist agenda through yonic imagery. Even as Japan's violence abroad was often expressed in allegorical terms, if at all, in its cinema, in the art world these images were privileged during the 1950s in a socio-cultural explosion that percolated throughout all levels of

the arts⁴⁹. Foregrounded and placed at the very center, the obscenely presented naked body exposing a woman's punctured vagina ironically holds the power position within Hamada's etching. Distant in the background, the retreating Japanese soldiers almost seem to be running away from the evidence of their aggression⁵⁰, even as the blade piercing the female body simulates an erect penis, in a merging of masculine and feminine bodies as (war) victim. Through the penetration of the vagina a critical commentary is levied against systems of power and the horror of war, which saw the Japanese male occupying the space of both victim and violator.

Almost eleven years after Hamada Chimei unveiled *Landscape*, the young filmmaker and scriptwriter, Adachi Masao, would produce an experimental film, *Sain*, (1963), through which he would meet both Wakamatsu Koji and Oshima Nagisa. Referring to a medical condition in which the vagina becomes constricted, the film would be at the heart of a *Zen-Nihon Gakusei Eiga-sai* (All Japan Students Film Festival) live event, aptly entitled *Sain no gi* or "The Ceremony of the Blocked Vagina" (Sharp 88). For Japanese underground cinema authority Hirasawa Go, *Sain* "symbolized the blocked up times after the 1960 Security Treaty Defeat through the image of a woman's congenitally constricted vagina" (Sharp 87), highlighting female sexuality as explicitly the discourse used to bridge the politics before and after the a-bomb. In foreclosing the possibility of penetration and thus male fertility, the 'blocked vagina' participates in Japanese male impotence, furthering a sense of powerlessness and humiliation exacerbated by military defeat in the war. The vagina becomes a space of contention to be interrogated, and pornography, a world of fantasy through-which penetration of the female body

⁴⁹ For more on this issue see Doryun Chong, *Tokyo 1955-1970: A New Avant-Garde* (New York: MOMA, 2012).

⁵⁰The Legacy Project's Visual Arts Library presents a close reading of the painting and highlights Hamada Chimei's other artworks during the period: http://www.legacy-project.org/index.php?page=art_detail&artID=646.

brings about protest and new sight. Concerned with the problem of penetration and voice in a postwar world, *Sain* would strangely disappear on the day of the festival screening. The interdisciplinary energy of this ‘ceremony’, which riot police later called a “political gathering” (Sharp 88), would continue to be reflected in the radical *pinku eiga* (Pink Cinema) of Wakamatsu Koji, a director whom Adachi would collaborate with for the next ten years.

Narratives of victim and aggressor find themselves blurred within the counter-hegemonic vision of pornography. In her essay, “The Erotic in Asian Cinema”, Maureen Turim describes pornography⁵¹ and the erotic as “the troubled shadows of gender and national power histories” (88). Oshima Nagisa, on the other hand, takes a more literal route and defines pornographic film in his 1976 essay “Theory of Experimental Pornographic Film” as “a film of sexual organs and sexual intercourse. A film that [breaks] taboos...” (260). Challenging codes of censorship, the transgressive politics of pornography would be the place that the new wave naturally siphoned during the tumultuous times of the 1960s. In the previous chapter, I have argued that the new wave can be identified through the politicized body of the female which taps into a concern with Japanese militarism, youth and the atomic past as it infuses the present. A focus on the erotic female body in the Japanese new wave complicates the global notion of the new wave as invested in the male and his subjectivity. Looking at the Japanese *eroduction* (erotic production) provides a further means of examining an inversion of the male gaze and control⁵² engendered in Japanese new wave cinematic texts. Accordingly, in this chapter I will focus on the intersection

⁵¹ Linda Williams also provides a pertinent definition of pornography in *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure, and the Frenzy of the Visible*, (Berkeley: U of California P, 1999), 9-16.

⁵² Laura Mulvey’s *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* remains one of the foremost essays on the subject of the male gaze. Originally published in *Screen* 16.3 (1975): 6-18. <http://www.jahsonic.com/VPNC.html>. http://archive.org/stream/visual-pleasure-and-narrative-cinema/Laura-mulvey-visual-pleasure-and-narrative-cinema_djvu.txt.

of the Japanese new wave and pornography in light of the time period's obsession with the vagina and the difficulty of penetration, which produces a transgressive sight/site, both in terms of the sexual act and the revelation of the transgendered body. Through the violated female body, the male body is caught up in turn within a shared space of trauma, marginalization and desire—a 'queer space'—illuminating the creation of a symbiotic system whereby woman acts as mirror for the memory of war and the 'horror' of man in contemporary society.

Queer, as a terminology, resonates with a Japanese understanding of abnormal sexualities. In *Queer Japan from the Pacific War to the Internet Age*, Mark McLellan translates the Japanese postwar term '*hentai*' or '*hentai seiyoku*, popularly used in Japanese media, as "queer sexual desires" (1). McLellan uses the word 'queer' to "describe a range of nonheterosexual and gender-variant identities, practices and communities that have come into being in Japan in the postwar period" (2). My employment of 'queer' in this chapter additionally speaks to the idea of bodily disruption, a disruption that overturns notions of gender, sexuality and thus desire. In the merging of bodies encountered in the pornographic film, the Queer figure arises—both male and female, allowing an entrance into a feminized male subjectivity that forces a confrontation both with the politics of gender but so too with notions of imperialism and sexual subjugation that stretch before and after the war, and positions Japan constantly at odds with its own engagement with aggression and victimhood. In this sense, through an exploration of the pornographic film I will be engaging in a queering of the Japanese new wave suggestive not only of a queer eye of the camera but the creation of queer bodily and mental spaces through the penetrative act of sexual intercourse and the queer site of the (fe)male.

The pornographic oeuvre of the notorious *pinku eiga* director, Wakamatsu Koji, and his scriptwriter, Adachi Masao, offers an important insight into a reworking of understandings of the

Japanese new wave through an inversion of the ‘male gaze’, allowing for a critical (fe)male subjectivity invested in the human and systems of power. While new wave mainstream cinema does engage in moments of ‘trans-sightedness’, a quality which I will speak more to later, it is explicitly within the violent *pinku eiga* that postwar Japan is investigated by rendering visible male-female pornographic spaces of dreaming and desire. In understanding queerness not solely in terms of disrupted gender categories but also destabilized hegemonic institutions of family and nation, an examination of how pornographic or transgressive sexual acts create multi-gendered spaces permits another avenue of thinking about Japanese new wave cinema in light of its queer politics rather than the hetero-normality assumed by most film criticism. Through an interrogation of the Pink cinema of Wakamatsu and Adachi, as well as a more specific look at the transgendered protagonist, Eddie, in Matsumoto Toshio’s 1969 *Funeral Parade of the Roses* (*Bara no Soretsu*), I will thus study pink pornography’s peculiar ability to align male and female bodies within confessional spaces in a sexual, historical and political merging which explodes social categories within the time period.

Although the *taiyozoku* youth films of the 1950s and Japanese new wave cinema of the 1950s and 1960s would attempt to interrogate postwar Japanese society through a staging, and oft intimated rape, of the eroticized female body, the explicit focus on the vagina as socio-political problem and ‘trans-eye’ would only truly enter into cinema through the lens of pornography. When I use the term ‘trans-eye’ I speak to the camera’s ability to become multi-gendered, that is, to simultaneously adopt both feminine and masculine subject positions, through an investment in male penetration of the pornographic (fe)male. So too, I understand the phrase ‘pornographic (fe)male’ to speak to this tendency of transgenderism, a tendency hinging on penetration where the Japanese male pushes himself into or sutures himself onto the female

body, in an aesthetic merging of the male and female body within performances of the erotic and taboo. The sexual presentation of the pornographic (fe)male, I argue, works to illuminate a female voice or ‘wound’ of the male protagonist/director. The notion of transgenderism and the ‘trans-eye’ aids in a re-visioning or ‘queering’ of the new wave due to the Japanese Pink film’s atypical employment of the eroticized female to provide access to other versions of masculinity.

Until the early 1920s, when female actresses became more popular, Japanese cinema was dominated by the *oyama*⁵³ or *onnagata*, specialized male actors who acted women’s roles, in a type of cross-dressing performance. The *oyama* highlights Japanese cinema’s long embeddedness in male-female intersections as a means of representing meaning to the masses. The (fe)male pornographic body reworks this early tendency in Japanese cinema in a queering that forces a confrontation with hegemonic systems and promotes a desire in its audience for social and political change. By this definition, it is ironically within the genre of pornography that the trans-eye inherently materializes. I say “ironically” here due to the fact that pornography is typically understood as a production of the male gaze and male desire, not much unlike understandings of the new wave. Pornography, though, has the potential to realize feminine spaces of desire, albeit ones articulated through the director’s masculine eye. The trans-eye emerges out of the synthesis of the male protagonist/director and the punctured body of the pornographic female staged for male consumption with the aim to articulate a new wave politics.

⁵³ Jasper Sharp names Haruko Sawamura, Yaeko Mizutani and Sumiko Kurishima as some of the original female actors who replaced the *oyama* in the early 1920’s in *Behind the Pink Curtain: The Complete History of Japanese Sex Cinema*, 21.

During the period demarcated as belonging to the new wave in Japan, a new wave of experimental erotic films, ushered in by novice director Takechi Tetsuji and *ex-yakuza* Wakamatsu Koji, would emerge in the 1960s. Although scholarship on pink adult cinema often reiterates an act of censorship, where all films within the genre are legislated the same even if different and attempting different aesthetic aims, the films of Wakamatsu Koji, Takechi and Adachi have managed to garner grudging respect in the West over the political aspirations of their pornographic films. Japanese film scholar Sato Tadao, remains one of the few who openly considers Wakamatsu Koji, alongside prominent new wave directors Oshima Nagisa, Shinoda Masahiro, Yoshida Yoshishige, Masumura Yasuzo, Imamura Shohei, Hani Susumu and Suzuki Seijun, as one of Japan's leading directors of the 1960s. The pink industry would attract intellectuals and budding talent excluded from the studio system due to their politics, who would draw from the art world seething around them in order to communicate a discourse of transgression, at the level of film aesthetic and the anti-establishment, to its audiences. In staging the sexualized female body that the male individual seeks to puncture, to screen or film, to torture, these films became sites of excess, experimentation, radicalism and pornographic expressions of politicism. These political *eroductions* intersected with the Japanese new wave at the point of the carnal female body and the trope of rape, where performances of perverse sexuality open a platform into spaces of history, memory and desire tied to the genitals.

The *pinku eiga*'s representation of male penetration into female flesh was a postwar phenomenon that spoke to the US-Japan political relationship in the 1960s in particular, but so too to the 'sickness' of a rigidly hierarchized society seeking new means of liberation and feeling in a landscape transformed by war and technology. As the radical extremism of students

escalated with the failure of the promises of democracy, the excesses of pornography allowed an alternative entrance into the political, dredging to the surface the lingering consequences of World War II on contemporary youth and illuminating the female body as a reflection of a violent landscape. In the hands of the filmmaker as activist⁵⁴, porn and politics became powerful agents for articulating change through an optics of desire. The utilization of porn, provided a conduit for a new wave consciousness, giving rise to the queer figure of the pornographic (fe)male, particularly in the latter half on the 1960s as heightened student rebellion merged with violence and terrorism.

If we understand the new wave as a shared political consciousness organized around the figure of the female and her erotic performance, we must understand the new wave as not only communal or collaborative but as having something to do with the pornographic or taboo. Pornography, or more specifically in this case, the vagina, becomes a point of climax, where a re-imagining of the new wave finds genesis. In other words, if the erotic female is the central vehicle for the new wave then the pornographic film, concerned as it is with the carnal female body, cannot be exempt from such considerations. A new scrutiny invested in the pornographic can only give a wider view of the politics of the new wave movement. In addition, it is also worth noting that if the eroticized female body is the chief way that critique can be levied within a new wave cinema, then every auteur is a male body already sutured onto a female body through the penetrative eye of his camera, and thus the very apparatus of the new wave cinema is one based in transgenderism.

Joan Mellen notes that for Oshima,

⁵⁴. New Film theory of the filmmaker as activist can be found in Go Hirasawa's "Underground Cinema and the Art Theater Guild," *Midnight Eye*, August 25, 2005, http://www.midnighteye.com/features/underground_atg.shtml.

A male being a female figure was the most significant aspect or spirit of that time, the era of the demonstrations from 1968-69. The liberation of the male from traditional Japanese ideas about masculinity thus becomes analogous to the political protest. ...Once Japanese society begins to be immersed in political upheaval with its end a more democratic society, the Japanese could also begin to free themselves psychologically from rigid, traditional, and repressive attitudes towards sexuality. (Waves 367-68)

David Desser, similarly, considers “transvestism” as “a form of ‘spectacular’ rebellion...[where] sex roles are deliberately theatricalized, highlighted in their social essence, and so provide a starting point for a radical critique of the dominant culture’s attitudes toward sexuality” (96). Desser and Oshima speak specifically to the historical figure of the transvestite, the cross-dressing male, and both situate the figure within discourses of rebellion and protest that ultimately aim criticism at “attitudes toward sexuality”. When I use the term ‘transgender’ or suffix ‘trans’ in this chapter, I do so not solely in terms of a ‘queering’ or liberation politics associated with gender, but also as a means of dialoguing chiefly with the sadomasochism of Wakamatsu Koji’s counter-hegemonic films and how they create *shared* spaces of bodily protest through a focus on the vagina. Through the tearing of female flesh, and piercing of the female body, a shared or doubly-gendered postwar body emerges that in its shocking and revolutionary force throws Japanese society into sharp relief.

The Japanese new wave has not been fully studied in light of pornography. Domenig understands the sudden proliferation of the word “pink”, as a sexual connotation in the 1960s, as illuminating “the increasing eroticization of mainstream society and the pervasion of sexuality in

the public sphere.” Although critics from Donald Richie to Noel Burch and Isolde Standish⁵⁵ have denigrated the Japanese *eroduction*, calling it “rot”, “rock-bottom mass cinema” and “exploitative”, respectively, in many ways, the *pinku eiga* approximates a closer resemblance to what the canon understands as definitive of new wave cinema, associated as it often is with the *nouvelle vague*. Beyond the deeply counter-hegemonic aspect of the Pink, the Pink director often hailed from his own independent production, had limited means and tiny budgets that led to the use of black and white cinematography, and often utilized on the spot locations, natural lighting, non-professional actors and aesthetic experimentation tied to affordability. For example, the use of color film inserts were as much for emotive effect, as due to the fact that color film was more expensive than black and white and, thus, had to be used sparingly. The overlap between films belonging to the Pink genre and the new wave gains greater credence when placed within the purview of pornography.

In her text *A New History of Japanese Cinema: A Century of Narrative Film*, Standish observes how in the films of Japan’s radical directors of the late 1950s to early 1970s sex and crime arose as “the transgressive mediums through which dominant social values were challenged [and] radical individuality asserted” (222). Teshigahara Hiroshi, Oshima Nagisa, Imamura Shohei, Shindo Kaneto, Suzuki Seijun, Masumura Yasuzo, to name an important few, were all new wave directors who manipulated the erotic in order to enter into social discourse. Masumura’s *Blind Beast* (1969), in which a blind artist keeps a young woman hostage to his senses within a surrealist yonic landscape composed of nude female sculptures, for instance,

⁵⁵ See Noel Burch, *To the Distant Observer: Form and Meaning in the Japanese Cinema* (Berkeley: U of California Press, 1979), 352; Donald Richie, “The Japanese Erodution—Inside Out,” *The Pink Book*, 331-362; Isolde Standish, *A New History of Japanese Cinema: A Century of Narrative Film* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group Inc, 2005), 266.

perches on the edge of being a pink film. While, but one film from a prolific oeuvre characterized by its ‘fleshy’ heroines who accede to power through their sexuality, Imamura Shohei’s *Pornographers* (1966) not only references the Pink industry but uses it as an allegory to explore the impotence of the modern Japanese individual caught within the strict mores of patriarchal society. Many Pink directors would, in fact, name Imamura’s *The Insect Woman* (1963), with its study of a young sensuous woman who fights against oppression at the center of the action—her easy earthiness a counterpoint to the sacredness of the emperor system and radicalism of student revolution—as highly influential to their work. For Sharp, it would be from this film that motifs proliferating in Pink films during the 1960s would be taken, and from which both Takechi Tetsuji’s *Black Snow* (1965) and Wakamatsu Koji’s *Chronicle of an Affair* (1965) would draw:

“Imamura’s distinctive treatment of his female characters as the backbone of Japanese society—vivacious, tenacious and assertive—was highly original at the time, and...the external scenes of the fences surrounding the American airbase outside of which [a] brothel is located, and its images of protests and of downtown Tokyo in a state of transformation, would become motifs employed within countless pink films during the ‘60s” (55).

Oshima Nagisa, on the other hand, infamously uses rape and the taboo as a trope throughout his films to rage for liberation in a postwar society frustrated by systems of power that leave the everyday man voiceless and trapped by ritual.

By tracing the trope of the erotic woman in Japanese new wave cinema and its underlying thematic of sex and politics, new wave cinema is revealed as an underground knowledge system concerned with the counter-hegemonic and given speech in cinematic terms—rather than a

meaningful representation of sexuality and sexual acts to be studied not censored. In her essay “She-Male Fantasies and the Aesthetics of Pornography”, for example, Laura Kipnis argues against a persistent understanding of pornography as a male vehicle of desire focused specifically on the female body and its violation, an understanding that immediately fails when positioned against pornography of male and transgendered bodies. This chapter contributes to the anticensorship side of the debates surrounding pornography, seeing in pornography the tools needed to examine a historical time period and the ‘new’ cinema that emerges in Japan in a destabilizing of the heterosexual norms in which the genre has heretofore been studied.

Second paragraph. In her nominal text *HardCore: Power, Pleasure, and the ‘Frenzy of the Visible’*, Linda Williams argues for pornography’s ability, along the same lines as melodrama, low comedy and thrillers, to move the body and elicit involuntary responses from audiences (5). Through a close-reading of Eadweard Muybridge’s eleven-volume opus, *Animal Locomotion* (1887), a pictorial study of people and animals performing movement, Williams contends that from its very inception cinema was invested in a scopophilic disturbance of vision centered on the female body, encoded as this body is culturally in its own sexuality. Observing how Muybridge’s capturing of movement employs nude male and female bodies, Williams notices that while men are typically nude or semi-nude as they perform athleticisms, “the physical business of the women is less clearly defined, and their self-consciousness in its performance is much greater; they blow kisses, narcissistically twirl about, endlessly flirt fans, and wear transparent drapery that emphasizes the nudity underneath” (40). Williams notes the role of fantasy in these early representations of motion and the female body, stressing that Muybridge’s fetishized presentation of the female body is not simply “Western art’s long tradition of representing the nude woman” (40).

Again and again the woman's body appears to be embedded in a mise-en-scene that places her in a more specific imaginary space and time [than the male body]. ...In one such scene, a woman pours a bucket of water over a woman seated in a basin. In another, a woman pours water from a large jug into the mouth of a second woman. In a third, most enigmatic scene, a woman leans against the chair of another woman who is smoking a cigarette. In this last instance Muybridge has abandoned movement altogether for the highly charged emotional tone of what could only be called longing (40).

In cinema's early forays into narrative and mise-en-scene, Muybridge's desire to perceive the 'truth' of the body gives way to fetishization and fantasy, a "disturbance of the text" (43) generating emotion and affixed to the naked female body. Thus, cinema possesses an inherently pornographic aspect in its creation of female subjective spaces fostered through the male cinematic eye and tied to the nude female body. Pornography asks for a different engagement with the female body rather than simply expressing a male fear of the castrating body. In the films of the Japanese new wave there is a troubling of the traditional view of the cinematic female, where she is both object and subject of the gaze. In other words, the pornographic woman occupies a space where she is object of desire but also the driving force of a text which seeks to articulate truths through penetrating her body.

Central to Williams' theory of pornography is a "principle of maximum visibility" (48-49), which expresses pornography's emphasis on sexual visualization of bodies and performances, but so too on male fantasy and the impossible visibility of authentic female pleasure during intercourse. Due to censorship constraints and the specific historical-cultural context of its audience, the Japanese pink film challenges Williams' definition of pornographic film, which, explicitly hardcore and inherently heterosexual, insists on the unsimulated

representation of sexual penetration. Japanese pink film remains a medium, to this day, distinct in its chosen visual mode of celluloid film⁵⁶ and its reliance on simulated sex. In one of the only scholarly texts devoted to softcore pornography, *Soft in the Middle: The Contemporary Softcore Feature in Its Contexts*, David Andrews defines softcore as

Any feature length narrative whose diegesis is punctuated by periodic moments (typically between eight and twelve, though more is not exceptional) of simulated, nonexplicit sexual spectacle. ...It stresses extensive female nudity and heterosexual encounters with “bumping and grinding.” The genre also leans on standardized forms of pornographic spectacle such as striptease numbers, tub or shower sequences, modeling scenes, voyeur numbers, girl-girl segments, threesomes, orgies, and the like. (2)

Further, Andrews explains that softcore cinema is “largely nonviolent and antimisogynistic” (11) containing feminized elements of masturbating women and romanticizing soft-focus effects (19). Unlike iterations of hardcore pornography, softcore pornography, according to Andrews, is about *female* fantasy and desire and, thus, places the female protagonist and her face caught in sexual ecstasy at its center. Invested in female subjectivity, softcore cinema can be considered a feminist text.

Japanese Pink film alienates delineations of pornography along the lines of hard and soft core adult film. In the case of the hardcore, visualizations of genitalia and sexual penetration are almost always rendered visibly invisible through the presence of *maebari* over genitals and cleverly positioned camera angles and shots. Michael Arnold in his essay, “On Location: Pink Photography and the Possibilities of Representation”, writes,

⁵⁶ To read more on the celluloid medium of Pink pornography, see Michael Arnold’s essay “On Location: Pink Photography and the Possibilities of Representation” in *The Pink Book: The Japanese Eroduction and its Contexts*, 363-392.

In Pink, cameras are angled to block clear views of actors' genitalia, and framings of nude bodies are visually handicapped. Full frontal nudity and pubic hair is usually avoided. Acts of intercourse are implied by showing moving bodies in close contact but without the "meat shot", or explicit, close-up of image of genitalia and genital contact.

Although the site/sight of male-female or male-male penetration is never seen, the invisible becomes visible through spectatorship of the female face and the expression of her questionable pain-pleasure. Denied a hardcore status in film scholarship due to censorship that mandates acts of simulated intercourse, Japanese Pink film nevertheless cannot be considered purely a softcore product when placed against Andrews's definition. With its oft violent and misogynistic appearance, Pink cinema has probably never been written about in western studies as a text concerned with 'female fantasy and desire', and yet it often does exhibit softcore characteristics of soft-focus and literary devices that trouble the placement of the Pink film within either category of hard or soft-core film. Neither inside nor outside western classifications of hardcore and softcore, Pink cinema, I argue, exemplifies a new liminal category of the pornographic film. These sexually explicit early Japanese films emerging in the 1960s would occupy an in-between space—between hard and soft pornography, independent and mainstream cinema, high and low art, male and female erotic spaces, and tensions of the visible and invisible—embroiled in fantasy, war memory and a political agenda that would challenge the social conventions and historical understandings of the Japanese collective.

Arising alongside the sexually invested films of the Japanese new wave and within the protest culture of 1960s Japan, Pink film is a distinctly postwar phenomenon that from its very beginnings has always been enmeshed in censorship battles due to its very political nature. In his "Pink Film and Porn Studies" essay, Peter Alilunas observes that "Pink Film, perhaps more

than any other adult film genre, frequently [includes] overt political content alongside its erotic imagery, making it as much a marker of a specific place and time as much as anything else.” Censorship plays an important part in the specific creation of these political pornographic texts. The new wave era porn of the 1960s differed from earlier erotic films in light of the interference of the police and the state, the law articles that forced a ‘softcore’ aspect to all pornography and the political allegory of these texts which infuriated government. I use the word ‘pornography’, at its most basic level, to speak to the creation of filmic texts containing a token number of sex scenes. Caught within debates of high and low culture, in general pornography is related to the taboo, to the socio-cultural leanings of a nation, and to desire and voyeurism. Pink pornography distinguishes itself as a trans-object as compared to the chiefly heteronormative expectations of western pornography and is hence important in its destabilization of preconceived notions of gender, pornography and the Japanese new wave itself. An examination of the (fe)male in Japanese 1960s pornographic cinema illuminates the creation of a type of trans-identity or transgendered subjective space through the act of sexual intercourse. Pink cinema thus becomes a political act engaged in a new wave optics of desire.

3.3

IN DEFENSE OF PORNOGRAPHY⁵⁷: BUT WHAT EXACTLY IS THE PINK? AND THE IMPORTANCE OF CENSORSHIP

For Miryam Sas, in her essay “Pink Feminism? The Program Pictures of Hamano Sachi”, *pinku eiga* was “an answer to the question of how to make films—how to get a film made—at a moment of crisis for the studio system.” The Pink provided the path of least resistance for many emergent directors during the explosively transformative socio-cultural period of the 1960s-1970s, not least at all for Hamano Sachi, one of the few female directors to materialize not just within the male dominated field of the Pink but of Japanese cinema itself. Although Sas criticizes the *pinku eiga* for their failure “to address the gender and sexual inequalities”⁵⁸ of Japan, new cinema, arguably, was never about gender equality but about re-imagining a new Japan through the erotic and often maternal female body. From the Sun Tribe films to the established new wave cinema of Oshima and others, female equality might have been heralded through the cinema’s revolutionary qualities both in terms of aesthetics and plot but, except perhaps for the films of Imamura Shohei, never truly through expressions of sexuality. In her text *A New History of Japanese Cinema: A Century of Narrative Film*, Standish notes the political use of the ‘body’ (*tai*) to counter the wartime emphasis on the ‘spirit’ within the new wave time period but argues that

⁵⁷ In his introduction, Nornes discusses at length the reasons why the pink is important. *The Pink Book: The Japanese Eroduction and its Contexts*, 1-16.

⁵⁸ “Pink Feminism? The Program Pictures of Hamano Sachi,” *The Pink Book: The Japanese Eroduction and its Contexts*, 295-330.

“the postwar re-evaluation of the decadent ‘body’ as the essence of individual subjectivity in avant-garde cinema was both constrained by the libidinal economy of the filmmakers and co-opted and in many ways perverted by both the emergence of independent, exploitative ‘pink’ films and the major studios that sought to temporarily sustain a declining industry through the production of ‘erotic’ films” (266).

In other words, for Standish, the Pink films and its male directors undermined the political employment of the body in their films. Her use of the word “perverted” here highlights her deep aversion to the Pink and her unwillingness to examine more deeply the ways in which the ‘perversion’ of the body performs a politics of transgression, and subsequently presents “a new history of Japanese cinema”. Rather, not unlike Sas, Standish considers the pornographic body of the Pink, marked feminine by its alignment with “the emotional, the nonrational and the hysterical” (NH 266) as reinforcing the gender politics of Japan’s family state and “thus contributing to the ever extending multifarious centres of power so central to Foucault’s explications of the role of sexuality and the perverse in industrial society” (266). Concerned with promoting a political conversation whereby cinema, and by extension the camera, becomes a counter-hegemonic action, the Pink film is important in light of its intersection with a new wave consciousness concerned with a transforming national landscape. Nornes observes that the “Pink Film has, for many foreign audiences and programmers, come to stand in as the image of contemporary Japanese film itself.” As the ‘local’ film of Japan, providing insights into popular cinematic consumption in ways closed to other new wave art-house films, the Pink film as entrance into a reconsideration of the new wave, pushes at a ‘high art’ understanding of the new wave while drawing attention to a connective thread drawn at the level of woman, sex and national transformation/landscape theory. Certain Pink directors were able to use the freedoms of

being outside the studio system to speak back to power in profoundly experimental ways. It would be Wakamatsu Koji, though, in a 1999 interview, who would most colorfully pin down what the Pink was at its heart—“movies can’t really be called ‘pink’ if they’re being accepted by the general public. They’ve always got to be guerrilla. Pink films are about putting it out there in the public’s face and smashing people’s mind!”⁵⁹ (187). For Wakamatsu, the Pink director, and by extension his oeuvre, had “to remain on the outside” (188), to present a different perspective, a different view from narratives of power. Pink cinema, like new wave cinema, was about resistance; a resistance from classical narrative forms in cinema, but almost more importantly, from social and cultural systems that constrict and contort the Japanese postwar individual.

Second paragraph. Framed by the renewals of the US-Japan Security Pact in 1960 and 1970 respectively, the *eroduction* arose in Japan during the decade of the 1960s with the release of Kobayashi Satoru’s 1962 film *Flesh Market*⁶⁰. While mainstream cinema suffered under the increase of alternate forms of leisure born out of its high economic growth, and the rising star of television⁶¹, which monopolized its housewife audiences in the 1960s, the *eroduction*, soon to be termed *pinku eiga*⁶², would thrive, generating revenue from its low cost production habits and

⁵⁹Chris Desjardins, “Koji Wakamatsu,” *Outlaw Masters of Japanese Film* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005), 166-188. Koji Wakamatsu Interview conducted by Christian Storms at a small bar in Tokyo 1999, using questions provided by Desjardins.

⁶⁰ Roland Domenig argues about the history of the beginnings of the *eroduction* in “The Market of Flesh and the Rise of the ‘Pink Film’”, *The Pink Book: The Japanese Erodution and its Contexts*, 17-48.

⁶¹ Sato Tadao speaks more on audience change in *Currents in Japanese Cinema*, 235-236.

⁶² Jasper Sharp writes that the term *pinku eiga* was first introduced into movie-going parlance in 1963, when the appearance of the actress at the heart of *Valley of Lust* prompted Minoru Murai, a journalist for the sports newspaper the Naigai Times, to advocate, somewhat tongue in cheek, a Pink Ribbon Award for these new *eroductions* in place of the Blue Ribbon Award, which was given to the year’s best mainstream movies. *Behind the Pink Curtain: The Complete History of Japanese Sex Cinema*, 53.

male-oriented audience largely composed of students and migratory low wage workers⁶³. Jasper Sharp, who to date has written the most comprehensive study of the Japanese Pink industry in English, notes the genre's leap from only four titles released in 1962 to 213 films by 1965, just three years later (9). While Donald Richie, the first English-speaking scholar to write on the genre, dismisses the *pinku eiga* as "formula-film"⁶⁴, Sharp argues that within the framework of the genre's prerequisite sex scenes, the Pink film allows for a freedom of experimentation denied higher budgeted mainstream productions, even as it places a surprising emphasis on performance, story and technique (10). Sharp parallels the early development of the Pink industry, in terms of its production, distribution and exhibition, to the birth of cinema itself, highlighting the similar way in which cinema and the Pink industry share a great loss of early works that "[shrouds] its exact genesis...in mystery and myth" (51). According to Sharp, "this small world [of the Pink industry] was a chaotic, profligate and disreputable one, and much of its output thus went unrecorded and many of its practitioners unrecognized" (51). Roland Domenig lends to this contestation of the birth of the *pinku eiga* in his essay "Market of Flesh and the Rise of the 'Pink Film'", where he claims the Pink film genre as a "history without beginning" (27), citing the presence of similar films made prior to *Flesh Market*.

⁶³ For Sato Tadao, in *Currents in Japanese Cinema*, although cinema could no longer "transcend social classes...this new state of affairs made it possible for cinema to become the spokesman for alienated minorities" (237). Jasper Sharp discusses the importance of the bullet train to the blue collar worker in his *Behind the Pink Curtain: The Complete History of Japanese Sex Cinema*, 55.

⁶⁴ "The Japanese Eroductio—Inside Out," *The Pink Book: The Japanese Eroductio and its Contexts*. Nornes also notes in his introduction in *The Pink Book: The Japanese Eroductio and its Contexts* that despite his dismissal, Richie "calls for more and better [pink films], not less" (9).

Although documentation of pornographic films have existed since the 1920's⁶⁵ in Japan, it would not be until after the war, in 1946, that the first public striptease show was performed, to be followed eleven years later by the precursor to the pink film, the *sho eiga* (show film)—one-reel strip shows with exotic backgrounds (Sharp 23). While Joseph L. Anderson and Donald Richie⁶⁶ place the first instance of nudity in Japanese mainstream cinema in 1954, occurring in the independently produced anti-war film *To the End of the Sun* (Yamamoto Satsuo), again aligning nudity and politics, Weisser⁶⁷ names new wave director Suzuki Seijun's *Nikutai no Mon*, (1964) as having the honor. What distinguished the new wave era porn film, though, from these earlier pornographic texts, as indicated earlier, was the role of censorship and state involvement in the Pink's specific evolution. Takechi Tetsuji, for example, would release the first big-budget, mainstream *pink film*, *Daydream*, in June 1964, almost one month after Suzuki's *Nikutai no Mon*. Although both films would stage the naked female body at the center of their works, it would be Takechi's film, which, screened at the Venice Film Festival, would become a national embarrassment to a Japanese government intent on promoting a sanctified national image to the world during the Tokyo Olympics of 1964⁶⁸. *Nikutai no Mon* would be produced

⁶⁵ Sharp argues in *Behind the Pink Curtain* that beneath the surface, "pornographic films had long proliferated. Hardcore stag films, one-reelers shot without sound on 8mm or 16mm film stock, featuring graphic, unsimulated sexual acts, devoid of cast and crew credits and with the bare minimum of artistic pretension, had been around virtually everywhere since almost day one, with the title *Le voyeur* allegedly representing something of a cinematic first in 1907" (24).

⁶⁶*The Japanese Film: Art and Industry (Expanded Edition)*, (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1982), 266.

⁶⁷ Thomas Weisser and Yuko Mihara Weisser, *Japanese Cinema Encyclopedia: The Sex Films* (Miami: Vital Books: Asian Cult Cinema Publications, 1998), 21.

⁶⁸ Miryam Sas in her text *Experimental Arts in Postwar Japan: Moments of Encounter, Engagement, and Imagined Return* (2011) examines the 'cleaning up' of Tokyo—including newly paved roads and flush toilets—in anticipation of the international presence for the 1964 Tokyo Olympics" (2). The tension between an official Japan and the Japan existing beneath that skin--although on the surface there was a concern with the Japanese image as contrite, as civilized, as advanced, the new wave films are concerned with filth, with the lower strata, with sweat, with sex, with bodily functions and denigration.

and distributed by *Nikkatsu* studios, while *Daydream* would be independently produced then released by *Shochiku* studios allowing it to maintain its Pink status while blurring the lines between the mainstream and the pornographic industry. Caught in constant censorship battles, which would ultimately pave the way for greater creative freedom for upcoming Pink filmmakers, *Daydream* would also be the first film to institute the common erotic element of ‘fogging’ in Japan. Through a merging of the theatre and the sexual, Takechi would employ the pornographic genre to break taboos and encourage its audiences to question society and notions of reality.

According to Kirsten Cather in her essay “Policing the Pinks”, censorship was a pertinent element of the 1960s Pink film and shaped the genre into “a legible, marketable, and policeable body of works recognizable for audiences and censors alike” (94). Although prewar and wartime censorship would be publicly banned⁶⁹ by the Occupying forces in 1945, in reality under the auspices of the MacArthur Government and the US military censorship would be quietly reinstated with the aim to promote democracy. The Occupation censors, though, were largely unconcerned with sexual representation in cinema, except, Cather observes, in the case of the Occupier’s own representation on film especially in terms of their relationships with Japanese prostitutes. Freed from the constraints of Occupation censorship at the end of the Occupation period (1945-1952), the Japanese new wave would place much attention on the politics of the sexual relationships between Occupation personnel and the Japanese individual. The censorship self-governing body *Eirin* or “Film Ethics” would emerge out of the Occupation censoring machine and model itself after the strict moral policing aims of the 1930s Hollywood

⁶⁹ Article 21 of the new Constitution (1946) would state: “All freedom of expression guaranteed. No censorship shall be maintained” (Cather 96).

Motion Picture Production (Hays) Code (Cather). Unlike the previous Occupation censors, *Eirin* would actively set in place laws targeting sexual representations in Japanese cinema.

It would be through the public outcry generated by the sexual violence of the *taiyozoku* films and a concern for the moral susceptibility of the Japanese youth that *Eirin* would come under pressure by government and social forces to effect further reforms, and, would consequently, incorporate ex-government officials into its system. Even though pornographic films existed prior to the 1960s, it would be the Pink films of the 1960s that would experience the combined assault of *Eirin*, government and major studio censors, an assault directly related to the political engagement with the erotic female body. Beginning with *Market of Flesh* (1962), the first Pink to be targeted by the police regardless of its ratings designation by *Eirin*, and Saijo Kenji's *Sexy Route 63* (1963), the "first successful prosecution"⁷⁰ of a Pink, Pink cinema has been embroiled in censorship battles that reworked the boundaries of what it meant to be a pornographic film. Government and police forces would, in fact, often unite against *Eirin* overturning *Eirin*'s vetting of controversial films and, as in the case of Takechi Tetsuji's 1965 *Black Snow (Kuroi Yuki)*, charging *Eirin* alongside studio and director with obscenity.

Oscillating around a U.S. military base and its adjacent brothel, *Black Snow* presents its political tale from the perspective of a young man, Jiro, whose awareness of his mother and aunt's sexual service to the military renders him impotent except through the employment of a gun. The family space is rotted, situated as it is within the brothel with its economic relationship to its American hosts. Both attracted and repulsed by the performative and excessive sexuality that surrounds him, Jiro lashes out in his trapped existence, seeking to twist the innocence of a young girl who falls in love with him. The extended sequence of this betrayed innocence,

⁷⁰ Kirsten Cather, "Policing the Pinks". *The Pink Book: The Japanese Eroduction and its Contexts*, 119.

embodied in the naked female form, running for almost five minutes alongside the Yokota military base⁷¹ becomes a highly charged metaphor for the contaminating presence of the colonizer-colonized power dynamics of the American base. Having confessed to killing his aunt and an African American serviceman who had frequented the brothel, Jiro is sentenced to death by the U.S. military. The staging of the pornographic female body in *Black Snow* instantly presents the Japan-United States relationship in sexual and aberrant terms. Relationships, especially familial ones, throughout *Black Snow* continue to be commercial and warped, set as they are to the constant soundtrack of U.S. army jets.

Sato Tado asserts that for Takechi Tetsuji, “sexual relations are usually an allegory for the relation between the rulers and the ruled in politics. In *Black Snow*...the powerless position of Japan vis-à-vis America, and of the Japanese populace in relation to its rulers is represented by the outraged Japanese women and the G.I. rapists” (232). In *Film Art*, published in October 1966, Takechi further illuminates his intent in *Black Snow*: “I made this film because I wanted to make an appeal to the people through art about the political state of affairs in which Japan is enmeshed, the feeling of crisis about the Vietnam War occurring in the Pacific, and claims of nationalism”⁷² (23-24). Even as many critics, like Jasper Sharp, criticize *Black Snow* for its Anti-American sentiment, which places the blame solely on outside forces in a recalling of earlier sentiments of Japan’s literary elite at the end of the war, *Black Snow* evocatively uses the medium of pornography to explore political themes of an occupied postwar landscape that corrupts both the foreign and domestic.

⁷¹ In “Policing the Pinks” Kirsten Cather observes how “the infamous scene in *Black Snow* in which the female protagonist runs naked around the Yokota base fence (Fig. 13) provoked the US base soldiers as well, who, in an unscripted moment that must have delighted Takechi, follow her in an army jeep with sirens ablaze on the inside of the gate attempting unsuccessfully to halt the actress or the camera from running” (127).

⁷² Isolde Standish, *Politics, Porn and Protest: Japanese Avant-Garde Cinema in the 1960s and 1970s*, 94.

In 1978, reflecting on his own persecution, Oshima Nagisa would advance in his essay, “On Trial for Obscenity”, that “one of the notable aspects of the history of the repression of films by the police and public prosecutors is that sexual expression in film is always sized upon when it marks the beginning of something new” (281). Galvanizing many intellectuals and artist to his defense, *Black Snow* would have the dubious honor of not only being the first post-World War II film to be prosecuted on obscenity charges, but, according to Oshima, “it was the first time that both the police and public prosecutors were directly involved in the repression of films”⁷³ (281). New wave directors Oshima Nagisa and Suzuki Seijun, alongside literary elite Mishima Yukio and Kobo Abe would testify in court in support of Takechi. The obscenity trial of *Black Snow* accordingly represents a very clear moment where new wave protest art saw themselves as allied ideological with the Pink against the repression of the State.

Sharp argues that what was truly offensive about *Black Snow* was not the nudity and sex scenes but rather “the manner in which it drew attention to the presence of American soldiers on Japanese soil” (74). Mishima⁷⁴, himself, before his own expression of government disillusionment through an attempted *coup d'état* and ritual suicide by *seppuku*, testified that

[*Black Snow*] expresses the sexuality of people caught in a different political system [from Mishima’s own film *Patriotism (Yukoku, 1966)*] in which their sexuality has become distorted in the extreme...Sexuality as it becomes distorted is presented in an

⁷³ Nagisa Oshima, “On Trial for Obscenity,” *Cinema, Censorship, and the State*. Further, Standish attests in *Politics, Porn and Protest* that “On 9 June 1965 [Black Snow] opened across the country in Nikkatsu cinemas. On 16 June, the police seized all prints under Article 175 of the ‘obscenity’ law. Takechi and the head of the Nikkatsu distribution office were duly charged. In July 1966 the case was brought to court and the debate centered on the question ‘Is the film art or is it obscene?’(geijitsu ka, waisetsu ka)” (93).

⁷⁴ To learn more about Mishima see Stephen Barber, “Mishima: Death-Fragments,” *Fractured Eye: A Journal of Subversive Film Arts, Volume One* (Creation Books: 2012), 93-94.

ugly form, as the audience watches this they begin to understand the causes of the distortion. In this way this film appeals to an anti-American sentiment. (Standish 95)⁷⁵

Despite Takechi's elucidation during his trial of the psychological nature of the nudity in his film, which "[symbolised] the defencelessness of the Japanese people in the face of American invasion," (Sharp 75), it would be a mistake to simply dismiss *Black Snow* as an anti-American film. Towards the conclusion of *Black Snow*, the father of Jiro's love interest (the young woman who runs naked alongside the military base) narrates to the incarcerated Jiro his story of being a university teacher in Manchuria during the war. When the war ended and they were forced to return to Japan, his wife and son died. "Retribution for my sins" the father speculates. The postwar trope of the absentee father haunts the frame in Takechi's *Black Snow*. A symbol of the generation of Japanese men who fought in and lost the war, the father confesses his war crimes, acknowledging the blame for military actions, which produces the *taiyozoku* youth like Jiro who are 'unhappy', or, rather, caught up in the frustration of a world not their making. Although *Black Snow* positions Jiro as victim to his landscape, the return of 'father' at the film's end intimates a laying blame for Japan's corrupt state and relationship with the United States on the Japanese male belonging to an older generation willing to 'get in bed' with the *gaijin* (foreigner) in order to survive.

Invested as new wave cinema is in a critique of power structures, pornography is a form of critique in *direct* opposition to government establishment; one which, as evidenced by *Black Snow*, the government actively sought to erase. Much can be understood about a culture from where lies the contested site/sight. The pornographic female body, with its ties to Japan's own history of colonial subjugation and its more current relationship with the United States, to this

⁷⁵ *Politics, Porn and Protest: Japanese Avant-Garde Cinema in the 1960s and 1970s.*

day remains a point of contention around which codes of censorship and silencing oscillates⁷⁶. Although in 1969 Takechi would finally be cleared of all obscenity charges after a longwinded and highly publicized trial, the importance of Takechi's films and his battle with the censors to the evolution of the *eroduction* remains only a vague memory in Japan. Jasper Sharp attests that "long deleted on video, Takechi's work has been given short shrift in the current nostalgic vogue for the heyday of *Nippon* erotica, which has concerned itself more with *Nikkatsu's* stylish Roman Porno line, the films of Wakamatsu Koji and the recently rediscovered Masao Adachi"⁷⁷. Although Takechi would manipulate the nude female body in his 1960s cinema to incriminate oppressive systems of power in Japan, it would be Wakamatsu Koji and Adachi Masao who would truly enter into a searing indictment of the postwar landscape through the penetration of the pornographic body and the subsequent creation of (fe)male spaces of desire.

3.4 WAKAMATSU AND ADACHI: TRANS-SIGHT AND QUEER SPACES OF DESIRE

On July 1956 the Economic Planning Agency (*Keizai Keikakucho*) would declare that the reconstruction effort following the end of the war was complete and thus Japan was "no longer postwar" (Chong 91). Almost a decade later, the 1964 Tokyo Olympics would stand as an international symbol of being post-postwar, its sheen of success hiding the discontent and

⁷⁶ Mindy Kotler, "The Comfort Women and Japan's War on Truth," *New York Times*, November 14, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/15/opinion/comfort-women-and-japans-war-on-truth.html?hp&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&module=c-column-top-span-region®ion=c-column-top-span-region&WT.nav=c-column-top-span-region&_r=1.

⁷⁷ Jasper Sharp, "Black Snow," *Midnight Eye*, November 21, 2002, <http://www.midnighteye.com/reviews/black-snow/>

oppression still shimmering below. Jasper Sharp observes that “the event signalled both the country’s emergence on the international podium as a major rising economic power, and also a newly founded confidence among the public after almost two decades spent rising from the doldrums of wartime devastation” (55). The artistic work emerging in the time period, would contradictorily expose that although Japan might on the surface appear past the humiliations and hardships of the war, beneath the signs of prosperity and spatial transformation, the country was beginning to reckon anew with the emotional devastation of its military past and disillusionments with State. Doryun Chong, in his in-depth look at the avant-garde in Tokyo between 1955-1970, writes that “Japan’s wholesale reconstruction in the first postwar decade and the period that followed was so thorough that it had to be engaged not only on the social and spatial strata, but also on the subjective levels of the individual and body itself. ...The entire city became a multilayered matrix of avant-garde production and energy at this time” (27). These ‘energies’, deriving largely from a landscape transformed by the destructive powers of the Second World War and the subsequent U.S. occupation, would infuse the new wave politics of cinema in the 1960s.

Whilst the *shinkansen* (bullet train) brought people who would be the chief audiences of the *pinku eiga* from the provinces to the center in 1964, the railway circled the problematic space of the imperial palace, which though just a figurehead for power, symbolized the ritualized systems of an unheeding state. The reorganization of the landscape in Tokyo after the war forced into being new art forms of voice and communication, with the urban streets becoming home not just to the *panpan* or female prostitute, but for anti-government movements from the public “guerilla style”⁷⁸ performances of artists to the growing radicalism of students. The

⁷⁸ Doryun Chong, *Tokyo 1955-1970: A New Avant-Garde* (New York: MOMA, 2012), 30.

decade of the 1960s was rife with tensions from the passing of the US-Japan Security Pact in 1960 despite public protest, to its ratification in 1970. For many, the security pact not only highlighted the continued existence of a pre-war militarism that oppressed the ideals of democracy, but threatened to subsume Japan to the expansionist and cold war ideologies of the United States. Furuhata⁷⁹ adds that

This decade in Japan opened, in 1960, with the first televised assassination—the assassination of Asanuma Inejiro, the head of the Socialist Party, by a young ultranationalist right-wing activist—which was followed by countless spectacles of violence relayed by television, from the images of armed riot police clashing with workers and student protesters to the images of U.S. military aggression in Vietnam, of the civil rights movement, and of the spread of decolonization struggles in Latin America and Africa. (160)

The 1960s to 1970s would be a rich decade proliferating with student movements, radicalism, the birth of art forms and manifestos resulting in collaborations across mediums. Filmmakers like Oshima and Wakamatsu would feed off the mediatization of political events, their films reflecting the sensationalism of the riotous times. Jasper Sharp argues that while the major studios generally avoided risks, it would be the independent sector “represented by its component parts of art, exploitation and experimental film, [who would readily engage] and indeed took gleeful delight, in stirring up the already muddy political scene of the time” (71).

The cinema of this decade would be marked by a steady deviation from the treatment of sex and

⁷⁹ In her essay “The Actuality of Wakamatsu: Repetition, Citation, Media Event”, Furuhata adds that “This was also the decade that witnessed the most air hijackings, seajackings, and other direct-action tactics carried out by media-conscious militant activists. It was within this general atmosphere of media saturation that Kim Hiro staged his hostage crisis, the Yodogo hijackers stole the Japan Airline’s flight 351 and defected to North Korea, and Mishima Yukio staged his failed coup d’état and performed his ritual suicide” (160).

sexuality to address the shock of youth culture to the employment of the pornographic to reference the political happening.

In his essay “The Demon of Expression and the Logic of Organized Struggle”, Oshima observes the distinctive shift that occurs in the representation of sexuality in the oeuvre of Wakamatsu Koji and his collaborator Adachi Masao from the *seiten mono* (films on sexuality) and ‘sun tribe’ films of the major studios, which both dealt with youth and sexuality in the 1950s (110). It is not that Wakamatsu’s films did not pertain to the youth, but rather than moments of violent sexual/social rebellion (*taiyozoku*) or sexual awakenings (*seiten mono*), the crisis of male penetration and the pornographic female body were the core focus or plot of films through which political and social insight occurred. For example, in the mid to late 1960s, Adachi and Wakamatsu produced several *pinku eiga* from *Birth Control Revolution (Hinin kakumei, 1966)* to *A Womb to Let (Haragashi onna, 1968)* that scrutinized postwar sexuality in light of impotence, sterility and abortion (Hayashi 269)⁸⁰. Wakamatsu’s *Secrets Behind the Wall* (1965), in particular, employs two interweaving narratives—an activist turned bored housewife engaged in an affair with a Hiroshima bomb survivor and a sexually frustrated high school student who breaks under the pressures of studying for his entrance exams—co-joined at the point of rape and habitation to apply scrutiny to, and make connections between, themes of alienation and the modern urban housing estates (*danchi*), the education system, the atomic bomb and the *hibakusha*, and the AMPO student protests. While the male high school student suffers from impotency and drives the narrative to its murderous conclusion through the wielding of a knife, it

⁸⁰ “Marquis de Sade Goes to Tokyo: The Gynecological-Political Allegories of Wakamatsu Koji and Adachi Masao.”

is the housewife who controls the flashback and thus history and memory through her orgasmic body.

Isolde Standish argues that in the films of Wakamatsu “the gloss of postwar recovery...is tarnished by characters who, in one way or another, either refuse to accept the present-day status quo, or alternatively, are in some way inadequate to participate...”⁸¹ (114). Whereas the films of the Sun Tribe often dealt with middle to upper middle class youth, perverse sexuality or sexual pathology, Wakamatsu’s films tended to demarcate the lower classes and, by extension, the student movements in a shared criminality. Transgressive sexuality, though, as David Desser articulates, does not necessarily correspond to a “revolutionary politics”, but, rather, “repressive politics goes hand in hand with repressive sexuality” (102). Pornographic and transgressive acts within Wakamatsu’s cinema pierce through ‘official’ representations of Japan as being past the postwar, revealing the emotional and social turmoil agitating still in a Japan reconstructed by the war. Standish draws a connection between the aims of new wave cinema, especially the cinema of Imamura Shohei, and Wakamatsu, in their shared desire to undermine “the narratives of history” being institutionalized through mainstream cinema in particular, and the media in general”⁸² (112). Imamura’s films are films of the unconscious, held up for critical study and observation, where characters often live not only in obscure locations but within their minds, driven by their desires and concepts of reality. His cinema acts as a vehicle which attempts to study sexual relations in Japan in light of repression and the incompatibility of an irrational⁸³

⁸¹ *Politics, Porn and Protest: Japanese Avant-Garde Cinema in the 1960s and 1970s*. New York: Continuum, 2011.

⁸² *Politics, Porn and Protest: Japanese Avant-Garde Cinema in the 1960s and 1970s*. New York: Continuum, 2011.

⁸³ Imamura’s cinema observes the results of repressing one’s irrational self in light of the indomitable tenacity of the natural instinct. Allan Casebier explains the Japanese concept of irrationality as, “the non-rational human capabilities...intuition, instinct, emotional response, and other such capacities possessed by humans independent of

nature in a rational world. Wakamatsu's cinema similarly examines explosions of sexual violence onto the Japanese body in order to engage in a social critique of the hierarchical norms and family systems that render the Japanese male impotent and sexually variant in the economic and democratic 'success' of postwar Japan. The penetration of the pornographic woman becomes a point of entry into history, memory and revolt in both Imamura and Wakamatsu's films.

A self-proclaimed *yakuza* thug, referred to by Burch as a "primitive" dependent on the rudimentaries of cinematic grammar (352), Wakamatsu initially entered the film industry through *Nikkatsu* studios in 1963 where he directed exploitation films. In 1965, *Nikkatsu* submitted Wakamatsu's *Secrets behind the Wall* (*Kabe no naka no himegoto*, 1965) to the 15th Berlin International Film Festival while still under review by *Eirin* (the Japanese film-rating committee) creating a national kerfuffle over the international image of Japan being tied to the pornographic. After *Nikkatsu*'s failure to support his film in the face of government disapproval despite the successes of the film abroad, Wakamatsu turned fully to *pinku eiga* to form his own company. Furuhata contends that "the controversial showings of [Wakamatsu's] earlier Pink Films, such as *Secret Acts behind Walls* and *The Embryo Hunts in Secret* (*Taiji ga mitsuryo suru toki*, 1966) at the Berlin International Film Festival in 1965 and 1966, attest to the permeability of generic boundaries that demarcate 'sex film' from 'art film'" (153). The political and erotic female body stands as a point of permeability between the pornographic and the new wave art film through which shared themes, concerned with postwar society and the 'problem' of the Japanese male, cross-pollinate.

the ability to use language," (90). Allan Casebier, "Images of Irrationality in Modern Japan: The films of Imamura Shohei". *Shohei Imamura*. Ed. James Quandt. Toronto International Film Festival, 1999.

The standard narrative formula of the Pink, according to Richie in his essay *The Japanese Eroductio—Inside Out*, involves a movement from “unbridled lust” (336) to impotence in the act of penetration, with blame assigned to woman, which ends ultimately in a concluding sequence built on the “repentance and remorse” (336) of the male character. Further, in a mass generalization that encourages a reductive reading of Pink cinema, Richie claims that the portrayal of the man in the *pinku* genre presents him as “above it all” (339). Although Donald Richie affixes a standard formula to the *pinku eiga*, Wakamatsu’s cinema is important in its ability to circumvent the limits imposed upon its form by scholars and the genre itself. *Go Go Second-Time Virgin* (Wakamatsu 1969), for example, interestingly escapes this paradigm. A rape story that plays out largely on the rooftop of a *danchi* (modern apartment housing), *Go Go Second-Time Virgin* contains a main male protagonist impotent from the outset and refusing to rape the female protagonist, while the other attackers (male, and later female) do achieve rape. The teenage girl, Poppo, is as, if not more, important than the teenage male protagonist, Tsukio, who although he stands apart from the action and observes as the girl is raped, is never “above it all” due to his own abusive history. In fact, through the use of camera movement and sound/song, Tsukio is presented as deeply aligned with Poppo and her space of memory during the rape scene.

Go Go Second-Time Virgin opens with the sounds of Poppo’s ragged breaths overlaid over shots of her exposed body, as four boys force her from an elevator to the rooftop of a *danchi*. The rape that ensues is presented chiefly from the point of view of Tsukio, an unassuming young man in glasses who observes from a distance, and Poppo, whose face, shown in extreme close up moves from resistance to passive acceptance as the musical score begins to unfold. Patty Waters’ anguished avant-garde jazz arrangement of “Black Is the Color of My

True Love's Hair" provides the first vocal for the film's soundtrack. Cutting back and forth between close-ups of Poppo's and Tsukio's faces framed by the soft focus background of the city lights, the juxtaposition of close shots and music link the two teenagers with each other as well as with the urban landscape. The choice of music, of what one might refer to as the 'feminine soundtrack' in a surprisingly music-driven pink film, also aids in the movement inwards into a female mental space. Although David Desser remarks on song choice and the "nostalgic feeling" (104) created through Wakamatsu's manipulation of the music in *Go Go Second Time Virgin*, he fails to examine the feminine texture of the musical score, and how music affiliates male and female in the film. While it appears as though the male gaze is what constructs the scene, caught as Poppo is under the gaze not only of her rapists, but of Tsukio himself, the subjectivity conferred is a feminine one, articulated through the female soundtrack that predominantly haunts the film. In this way, before we even learn of the young man's own emasculation by his caregivers (an allegory perhaps for the betrayal by emperor and government that presents itself as a violation against the young AMPO protesters), his feminization and marginalization becomes clear through his spatial positioning during the rape and his alignment with the female victim through the musical score.

Jazz, with its allusions to blackness and the American experience, introduces new routes into a postwar Japanese experience. Typically when jazz music is utilized in the Japanese new wave it tends to be masculine and hard in a likening or paralleling between the Japanese and the African American male, as in the staccato beats expressed in the cinema of Kurahara Koreyoshi or the lengthy two minute sequence devoted to a scating black serviceman (who is later murdered) in Takechi Tetsuji's *Black Snow*. In the case of *Go Go Second Time Virgin*, the songs are chiefly sung by women and articulate loss in light of the parent-child relationship along

slavery terms. The soundtrack taps into American racial history and insecurities to speak to a relationship with white America signified by MacArthur in which the fallen Japanese female's experience corresponds to that of the black female slave. Immediately after the title "Go Go Second Time Virgin" is superimposed over an extreme close-up of Poppo's face as she is raped, the song "Motherless Child"⁸⁴, a traditional Negro spiritual coopted by a Japanese singer, plays, further extenuating the line of recognition between the pornographic Japanese female body and the African American female slave.

Wakamatsu places the songs "Black is the Color of my True Love's Hair" and "Motherless Child" back to back to saturate the scene within a feminized subjectivity, the emotional tenor of which the emasculated male partakes. The continual use of close-ups force the viewer to take up the female position (rather than that of the male rapist) and enter into her subjectivity. The assumed viewer of the pink film is male, a subject-position which Tsukio occupies, positioned as he is as a spectator on the fringes of the rape event. Through the manipulation of camera and music's emotional cuing of a female interiority, *Go Go Second Time Virgin* sutures the male spectator onto the female body in another form of penetration, which brings weight to bear on the social ills of a rapidly modernized Japan. In this way, rather than a text exerting power over the female in common theoretical expectations of the controlling gaze⁸⁵, *Go Go Second Time Virgin* promotes an inversion of the male look in which the Japanese male,

⁸⁴ After Poppo is raped again for the third time, she asks Tsukio to kill her. He walks away to stare out at the city. The song *Summertime/Sometime I feel like a Motherless Child* sung by Mahalia Jackson begins to play as the two talk about suicide, continuing the connections to the black slave and parental love.

⁸⁵ Akin then to the philosophy of the Linda Williams' essay "When the Woman Looks", where the monster shares a look with the female protagonist in classic horror cinema. The horror is one of mutual recognition in their otherness and excessive sexuality. Sex is warped within a postwar universe of political power dynamics (the US and Japan security pact) and the voicelessness of the everyday man.

embodied in the character of Tsukio, sees his own disempowerment through his identification with the victimized woman.

In an interesting departure from the female soundtrack assigned to Poppo's brutalized body, a non-diegetic masculine voice sings a forlorn goodbye to Mama⁸⁶ as the image of the young girl's rape blurs to signal a movement into her blue-hued memories that indicate a prior rape on a seashore. The song "Black is the color of my true one's hair" replaces the male vocal; the haunting romantic overtones, heightened by the muted crashing waves in the background, at odds with the violence of the assault. Wakamatsu's restless camera moves between the men attacking the girl, to the waves crashing on shore, back to the girl's face against a backdrop of blue waves. Tied as these images are to a lament for mother and the pre-Lapsarian symbol of the ocean, the new wave trope of the failure of love and family ties is reinforced in the transformed urban city. Towards the end of the film, after killing two of Poppo's rapists, Tsukio will complete the song⁸⁷ started by the male vocalist, not only revealing himself as the author of the piece which frames Poppo's memory sequence but, in so doing, highlighting the female 'confessional space' produced through violence to her body, as always already male, and thus, a transgendered space of wounded longing. In other words, the male voice singing in voiceover as Poppo is raped is Tsukio's, blurring the idea of whose subjectivity the audience is experiencing

⁸⁶ A man sings: "Mama, I'm taking off. The tour bus stops. The cuckoo cries for mama. No seeing you again. Everyone betrays me, cuts me off. Jean, Miller, and Norman Mailer, are in the dumps. This is not an erect, all-red neon body. Though gathering on the edge of a tepid knife. Now the park is patrolled...My living room watched. My policeman's coffee. No seeing you again. The black list I made. The caesarean section of the map...."

⁸⁷ Mama, I'm taking off...For now, in the city night. A naked lunch, a blood-filled lunch. Slit my wrists from impotence and drugs. Mama, I'm taking off...To kill them all...to execute everything about me.)

in the midst of Poppo's sexual violation. The female mental space, then, is also the space of the emasculated or wounded male in the pornographic world of Wakamatsu's film.

As outlined earlier, even though Japanese cinema due to its specific codes of censorship is overtly softcore, many of the insights Linda Williams applies to hardcore cinema also applies to the Pink. Considering cinema a technology that produces the 'confessions' of a female body—a body that is increasingly regarded as saturated with sexuality (48), Williams argues that hardcore "obsessively seeks knowledge, through a voyeuristic record of confessional, involuntary paroxysm, of the 'thing' itself" (49). Rape then affords this 'paroxysm' in the tension between pain and pleasure that propels the violated woman into spaces of fantasy and memory intertwined as it is with history and politics. The invisible experience of the young girl is thus made visible not through the documentary-like 'realism'⁸⁸ of hardcore but through the internal lyricism of the softcore. In *Go Go Second Time Virgin* the voyeurism of the young Tsukio, as he gazes silently upon the young girl's painful thrashing, produces a line of knowledge between the two that spills out in the form of poetic confessions as the film unfolds. "Involuntary confessions" are wrung from characters through the penetrating experience of rape that forces a quest by the male for "[female] secrets that are best revealed when she herself is not in control" (Williams 51). The probing 'eye' of the Japanese male is turned back upon his own body, eliciting male secrets often through an experience of impotence or violence perpetrated upon the transgressive body. Opening the door to an apartment, in a point of view shot that switches from the general black and white of the film to an explosion of color, Tsukio shares his murderous secret of humiliation and rape, which results in the death of four people by his hand.

⁸⁸ See Linda Williams section on hardcore pornography in which she expounds on her theory of "maximum visibility" in *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure, and the "Frenzy of the Visible"* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1999) 48-49.

Feeling a connection with Poppo, yet unable to love, Tsukio wields his frustration through his knife, killing all her rapists. The jazz music playing jauntily during his murder spree stops, and in the sudden silence, the faces of all the people he has killed flashes before Tsukio's mind in a quick series of black and white close shots. *Go Go Second Time Virgin* breaks Richie's outlined convention of the Pink in a paralleling of male and female subjects that seek not to express gender inequalities but rather to propel its audience into an emotive space of remembrance and interrogation.

Rape operates in Wakamatsu's films as an extension of the trope of the failure of love in an alienating postmodern landscape that occupies the new wave films of Japan. In her text *A New History of Japanese Cinema*, Standish sets forth the argument that despite the attack on romance by new wave directors,

The corporeal individuality expressed through carnal desire was still framed within a political economy of masculine desire. Hence the recurrence of the same misogynistic themes and anxieties that were once played out in romance in terms of the containment of women's sexuality within the institution of marriage and the constraints of child rearing.
(257)

In the films of Wakamatsu Koji (and Imamura Shohei), though, the pornographic female body, destabilized through the penetration of sex, allows entrance into a female subjectivity that permits escape from 'misogyny' or 'containment', rather revealing a space of feminized protest. Further, the staging of the erotic female body within films like *Go Go Second-Time Virgin* provides pathways to a female space of subjectivity which is also, always, male and thereby transgendered—both through the eye of the director or through the voyeuristic gaze of the male spectator who shares the subjective space in an act of penetration which politicizes. Standish,

moreover, disputes the ability of new wave cinema to “free the individual through corporeal desire” (NH 257) when the narrative devices employed, saturated as they are in masculine desire and ways of looking, maintain a history of heterosexual relations that reinforce power structures. Despite Standish’s concerns, it is arguable whether masculine desire eclipses feminine desire for social rebirth in the pornographic film *Go Go Second-Time Virgin*, enmeshed as these two bodies are in film form and aesthetic techniques geared towards the formation of queer mental spaces of sexuality and resistance.

3.5 THE COMFORT BODY: *VIOLATED ANGELS* (1967)

Wakamatsu Koji’s *Violated Angels* provides another important example of trans-sight/site, one immersed in discourses of victim and violator so central to a Japanese postwar conception of self. Maureen Turim in her essay “The Erotic in Asian Cinema” situates the sadomasochism to be found in the pornographic works of Wakamatsu Koji in Japan’s violent sexual history of colonialism and comfort women during the Pacific War. Turim considers films like *The Embryo Hunts in Secret* (1966), which focuses on the torture of a woman within a room, to be history brought to pornographic life in an expression of male desire. Turim believes that “with the general denial and refusal to investigate this past [of sexual servitude from colonial others] comes the desire to repeat this experience...and so give it renewed, but indirect and imaginary, life in pornographic fantasy representations” (84). In her understanding of pornographic space then, the Japanese male character/audience/director is living out a “nostalgia for power over the Other” through pornography, making the pornographic expressions of the *pinku eiga* as resistance to postwar power systems even more problematic. In Wakamatsu’s *Violated Angels*

(1967), although male desire is connected to a history of colonial imperialism, it is one in which the sacred image of the Japanese nurse⁸⁹ as ‘comfort woman’ is brought to the center only to be violently interrogated. In this way, if male desire in *Violated Angels* is caught up in a “nostalgia for power over the Other”, the site of nostalgia (in this case the violation of the Japanese comfort woman) results in a stripping away of notions of male identity and national narratives, rather than a return to a colonial sexual enslavement. The problem of male penetration exposes the woundedness of the Japanese male in the face of the nurse rendered pornographic as metonym for a war-torn colonial landscape.

In his well quoted text on Japanese new wave cinema, David Desser writes that “the links between identity, politics, sexuality, and violence necessarily conflate with the image of women. ...A focus on women can reveal most of Japan’s inner tensions and contradictions” (107-8). While Desser observes the importance of woman to the question of identity—a main thematic of the new wave—he fails to take his observation that step further in recognition of the female as central to the Japanese new wave. Referencing the mass murder of eight student nurses by Richard Speck in 1966 in Chicago, *Violated Angels* reimagines the event within a Japanese context. Situation Theater founder and playwright Kara Juro, who would later act in Oshima’s *Diary of a Shinjuku Thief* (1968), stars as the unnamed protagonist in *Violated Angels*. Although many Western critics focus on the use of remediated images in *Violated Angels*, none examine the specific choices employed by Wakamatsu towards the pornographic nurse. For example, the assignation of the name *White Lily Nurse Dormitory* to designate where the torture, rape and murder of the women will occur, is a distinctly Japanese reference to the *Himeyuri* student

⁸⁹ Sato Tadao looks at the nursing profession “the first modern woman’s profession to be extolled in Japanese film” (74) in *Currents in Japanese Cinema*.

nursing unit for the Imperial Japanese army, known as the Lilies or the Lily Corps, canonized in Japanese war memory for their youthful innocence and sacrificial role in the 1945 Battle of Okinawa. The name of the dormitory could be a reference to the Lilies and the brutalizing of that sanctified image through the murder of the nurses within the film perhaps seeks to trouble a narrative of the nurse as comfort woman during the war. “Only a devil would knowingly kill a nurse. And you’re not a devil. We are nurses, angels in white dresses,” the oldest student nurse informs the male protagonist who holds the women hostage.

The narrative unfolds largely within two rooms, one in which the young man stands framed against the dead body of a nurse, while the other room holds the remaining cowering nurses. The head student-nurse stands at the threshold between the two rooms, as Wakamatsu’s camera roves between the head nurse, the dead body, and the rapist in a repeated holy trinity of images. Although David Desser examines the rapist’s torturous act of flaying the skin off the young nurse, he fails to discuss the choice of the nurse who is flayed—a young woman whom the head student-nurse forces to dress in a nurse’s uniform to reinforce the ideology that “nurses are angels” in hope that the sight would incite their captor to mercy. Instead, in a unique ellipsis of time mediated through the vehicle of sound (the sound of the wind suddenly rises as the diegetic music fades away) and a roving camera that reveals the displacement of bodies in time, Wakamatsu violently stages the young man’s response to the head nurse’s declaration in the visual sight of the nurse tied to a beam. Whistling, the young man lovingly cuts the young nurse’s uniform off her body with a scalpel, his reaction a communication of disdain and rejection of the rhetoric of the nurse as angel which gained a foothold in the popular consciousness during the war as a means to position the Japanese self as spiritual, virtuous and victim in the face of their atrocities. In an extended sequence, the rapist takes his time cutting off

the uniform from the girl's body, all the while whistling matter-of-factly. The scene takes on the aspect of a macabre striptease held in wide shot—the nurse dramatically side lit and at the very center of the screen, and the rapist in shadow, reminiscent of the theatrical innovation of Takechi Tetsuji.

Wakamatsu stages a massacre of the nurse uniform; the flaying of the skin working as an extension of what has already been done at the psychological level through the flaying of the uniform from the eroticized body. The rapist spends over 3 and a half minutes cutting off the uniform (the camera occasionally cutting to the other two surviving nurses) not only to heighten suspense but to make a point. “I will show you an angel” he says to the head nurse who had earlier lectured him about angels. Wakamatsu provides the first of only two color shots in *Violated Angels* in a point of view shot from the perspective of the head nurse as she views the rapist's handiwork. The shock of horror is expressed through color, as the tortured nurse is presented in wide shot, nude and covered in red blood with flowers in her hair.

“Do you want to be an angel?” He asks her.

“I am not an angel” she responds.

“Angel Whore” he will later call her, before killing the head student-nurse, after she martyrs herself for the last and youngest nurse.

The ‘comfort body’ of the nurse is revealed as a pornographic and horrifying one, an image set in tension with the ‘comfort body’ of the last remaining nurse whom the rapist takes ‘comfort’ in, returning to the womb in a series of images set to a lullaby. The dream sequence emerging out of this male-female sexual union circulates around images of mother and child, and the sight of a naked woman joyfully running along the shore, in an inversion perhaps of Takechi's famous sequence of a woman madly running alongside the perimeter gates of a

military base. In a 1993 interview⁹⁰ Wakamatsu revealed his understanding of woman as salvation, stating that in his films “[he] seeks comfort in womanhood as in the Holy Mother, or in the Goddess Kannon⁹¹ [the feminine incarnation of the Buddha of mercifulness]” (54). Woman in Wakamatsu’s oeuvre operate as ‘comfort’ woman, the penetration of their bodies holding a curative possibility, but also its opposite, as will be discussed in chapter three of this dissertation. Rather than perpetuating an erasure of the past and Japan’s war crimes, as suggested by Turim, *Violated Angels* offers up an examination of the historic war body of the Japanese nurse through the opposing images of angel and prostitute that reference Japan’s colonial past—a fraught history with which Japan still struggles to reconcile. In one of the film’s last images, the camera cuts from an image of the iconic red sun (over the ocean along which the nude nurse runs in the young man’s fantasy sequence), to the rapist lying with his head in the lap of the nude nurse within a circle of dead bodies. Blood fills the gaps between the dead bodies of the nurses, creating a circle of death against a backdrop of white in a facsimile of the Japanese flag. Employing dissolves that merge the rapist’s face with a baby’s in all its innocence, Wakamatsu complicates the figure of the young postwar Japanese male as both aggressor and victim of a violent national and imperialist history, the legacy of which proliferates despite narratives to the contrary. The other side of the ‘comfort’ woman is the ‘shadow’ man, or,

⁹⁰ Jack Hunter, *Eros in Hell: Sex, Blood and Madness in Japanese Cinema* (Creation Books, 2000). Koji Wakamatsu Interview by Romain Slocombe at The Deep Gallery in Nogizaka, Tokyo, on February 1993.

⁹¹ See *The Japan Times* for more info on Kannon <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/community/2011/06/25/our-lives/kannon-the-goddess-of-mercy-and-pets/#.VC6dpVLD85t>; Sharon Hayashi also discusses Wakamatsu’s 1977 film *Eros Eterna* (Seibo kannon daibosatsu, 1977) in her essay, “Marquis de Sade Goes to Tokyo: The Gynecological-Political Allegories of Wakamatsu Koji and Adachi Masao,” *The Pink Book*, 271, in which the female protagonist, believing herself a goddess of mercy, gives herself to men in order to save them. Saito Ayako, Japan’s leading feminist film critic, also traces Wakamatsu and Adachi’s filmic representation of women to a Buddhist imagining that structures women as male salvation, in “*Adachi eiga to feminizumu*,” (164-167).

rather, the shadow cast by the ‘comfort’ woman is that of the postwar man as neither can exist without the other. In a postwar world where conventional forms of companionship no longer work, there can only be the comfort woman-shadow man paradigm, a gendered doubling, which the films of Wakamatsu investigate.

Furuhata resists an understanding of Wakamatsu’s films as solely misogynistic in its “taken-for-granted primacy” of the male lead as “agent of resistance and narrative action” in Wakamatsu’s films. “As the feminist film scholar Saito Ayako rightly points out,” she writes, “women’s bodies in the work of Wakamatsu (as well as Adachi) are frequently put on screen simply to provide a blank canvas on which to paint vivid pictures of social contradictions. The women thus occupy the position of the passive object, an inert surface for masculine inscription.” While female bodies in the films of Wakamatsu are often conduits for male expression, appearing rather passive in their inability to prevent penetration of their bodies or often to change or control their own fate, women actively resist through control of dream or memory spaces that agitate and undermine knowledge systems. *Violated Angels*, for example, ostensibly a male driven text that situates the viewer within the male mindscape, ends ambiguously with the disappearance of the youngest nurse as the male protagonist lies curled in the fetal position within a circle of his victims, while the police storm the dormitory. Whether a figment of his imagination or the orchestrator of his defeat, the figure of the nurse escapes absolute definition by the male, even as her pornographic body becomes a site of “social contradictions”. Liberation, though, especially female sexual liberation, remains a fraught concept within the landscape of the Pink and the Japanese new wave.

The hermeneutic of the trans-eye is important to a project of recovering a female voice in the critical examination of a revolutionary time period whose ‘new’ cinema has been historically understood as masculinist. The oft violent merging of male and female bodies in the *pinku eiga*, especially at the point of the genitals, both opens multi-gendered confessional spaces and raises the specter of sexual violence as it infuses the present, from Japan’s history of aggressive colonial domination to the economic and military relationship with the United States. The penetration of the male into the pornographic body of the female results in a counter-penetration that, in compromising the integrity of the male self, gives rise to the figure of the transgendered.

In concluding this chapter I would like to touch on Matsumoto Toshio’s 1969 new wave film *Funeral Parade of the Roses* (*Bara no Soretsu*) in an effort to come full circle in a movement from queer sight or mental spaces of dreaming to the queer urban horror of the male postwar body. The examination of the transgendered body reveals a continued occupation at the end of the decade with the erotic female but one who is gendered male. Rather than mired in a rhetoric of oppression and liberation, queerness in *Funeral Parade of the Roses* situates the pornographic transgendered body within discourses of war memory and continued contemporary negotiations of Japanese identity. Queerness provides a sharp tool for an examination of the transformed urban space reflected through the transformed (fe)male body.

Funeral Parade of the Roses uses the revolutionary sight/site of the trans-woman⁹² to investigate and resist the heteronormative power structures that construct and constrict society.

⁹² Assigned male at birth, the trans-woman is a transgendered individual who identifies as female.

Performances of gender⁹³ rupture the rigidity of gender binaries but so too highlight alternative images of Japanese postwar prosperity and family systems. The experimental film commences with a line taken from the poem “The Man who tortures himself” (L’Héautontimorouménos) from Charles Baudelaire’s *Fleurs du Mal* (1857)—“I am the wound and the blade, both the torturer and he who is flayed.” The word “*bara*” translated as “rose” resonates with several meanings all tied to homosexuality within a postwar Japan. Arising in the 1960s, ‘*bara*’⁹⁴ referred to a genre of art and media invested in homosexual love. In 1961, respected experimental photographer and filmmaker Hosoe Eikoh (who also worked intimately with Hijikata Tatsumi) published *Bara Kei (Ordeal by Roses)*, a collection of artistically nude photographs of postwar gay author Mishima Yukio, further solidifying an understanding of *bara* or rose with homosexuality.

Funeral Parade of the Roses also draws inspiration from the French author Jean Genet, who in 1943 published the novel *Our Lady of the Flowers* about a drag Queen named Divine. Similarly, *Funeral Parade of the Roses* sets a transgendered male hostess or *gei-boi* (gay boy)⁹⁵ called Eddie, who works at Club Genet (an homage to the French author), at the center of its text. Stephen Barber, in his essay “Tokyo 1969: Image-thieves in the Disintegrating City” relates how Genet’s film *Un Chant d’Amour* (1950) “had been distributed internationally via filmmakers’ co-operatives and seen by directors in Japan; it exerts a strong stylistic influence on the filming of

⁹³ See Judith Butler’s *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), for an introduction to the idea of gender as performance.

⁹⁴ Jonathan Mackintosh, “Ito Bungaku and the Solidarity of the Rose Tribes [Barazoku]: Stirrings of Homo Solidarity in Early 1970s Japan,” *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context* 12 (2006), <http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue12/aoki.html>.

⁹⁵ See Mark McLelland, “From the Stage to the Clinic: Changing Transgender Identities in Post-War Japan”, *Japan Forum* 16, no. 1 (2004), 1-20, for detailed information on the *gei-boi* and the *gei-ba* (gay bars) that arose in the early 1960s in Japan.

sexual acts in *Funeral Parade of the Roses*” (56). A surrealist expression of male-male love in the face of authoritarian control and power that is both attracted to and repulsed by homosexuality, Genet’s only film is set primarily within a jail, where inmates dance and touch or flash themselves in an ecstasy of freedom. *Bara* tie neatly into the imaginary of Baudelaire’s *Fleurs du Mal* which translate as evil flowers, indicative of the perceived transgression of the gay culture of Tokyo in the late 1960s.

Funeral Parade of the Roses opens on the ambiguous landscape of two bodies joined in coitus that stylistically references the opening sequence of Alain Resnais’ *Hiroshima Mon Amour* (1959) in which a heterosexual couple make love. Instrumental notes hum as hard lighting overexposes body parts and hands play over flesh resolving the white landscape into two distinct men. The substitution of not just male bodies but a transgendered one, instead of Resnais’ straight protagonists, undermines the mythology of romantic love embedded in the image of the heterosexual couple and sutures the tenors of historical war trauma and the bomb onto the queer male body. Utilizing an extreme close-up, Matsumoto returns to the spectacular sight of the kiss, in a reworking of heteronormative expectations that places male-male love at the center of the diegesis. The democratic ideals of the screen kiss encouraged under the aegis of the Occupation entwines with the taboo nature of two men kissing bringing themes of American acculturation, politics and sexuality to bear on the text. The camera lazily circles Eddie caught in the throes of passion, the extreme lighting rendering her body akin to a corpse as the title “Funeral Parade of the Roses” scrolls across the screen. Due to its attendance to eroticism and decadence, as well as its historical pertinence, *Fleurs du Mal* is particularly apt to an initial inquiry into *Funeral Parade of the Roses*.

Funeral Parade of Roses stages the erotic figure of the transgressive (fe)male for audience spectatorship. Matsumoto's camera focuses on the discrepancies of gender—panning up from Eddie's naked buttocks to a freeze-frame of his flat chest, in a camera move typically used to fetishize the female body, as he takes a shower. The focus on the buttocks works also as a tongue in cheek reference to *okama* which McLelland highlights as “the most common term for a ‘passive’ male homosexual”, (and thus a reference to anal sex), which was used as early as the Tokugawa period and “remained a constant referent for effeminate homosexuals in post-war culture” (5)⁹⁶. Matsumoto cuts from the shock of Eddie's breastless chest, the very act of invisibility eroticizing the transgendered body, to a documentary interview of a Japanese drag queen who “looks exactly like a girl”. The movement and editing of Matsumoto's camera creates a striptease effect that simultaneously unmask the cross-dressing Japanese male and engages in a conversation concerned with Japanese identity in a modern world. From the very beginnings of *Funeral Parade of the Roses* a tension is revealed between masculine and feminine through a perusal and eroticization of the trans-body (exhibiting both male and female features and gestures) and its socially destabilizing difference. Always already aware of Eddie's maleness in the face of his female stylization, coupling in *Funeral Parade of the Roses* never has the safety of heteronormativity. More than an exploration of sexual difference, the cinematic conventions of looking which traditionally privilege the male sight are both reinforced and exploded through the double-sexed-site of the transgendered. Both object of desire and possessed of the ability to *look*, Eddie presents a new type of masculinity embedded in the feminine.

⁹⁶ Mark McLelland, “From the Stage to the Clinic: Changing Transgender Identities in Post-War Japan.”

Although *Funeral Parade of the Roses* does not belong to the *pinku eiga* genre, it was both produced and distributed by the Art Theatre Guild (ATG)⁹⁷, a Japanese company formed in 1961 that by the late 1960s generated independent ‘art house’ features often excluded by the mainstream. Many new wave directors from Oshima Nagisa, Imamura Shohei, Shindo Kaneto, Yoshishige Yoshida, and experimental and pink directors like Terayama Shuji and Wakamatsu Koji manufactured films under the ATG financial umbrella. *Funeral Parade of the Roses* remains one of the few cinematic texts in the 1960s morally arranged around the pornographic body of the transgendered individual. In light of the notion of the (fe)male, which this chapter delves into, the words from Baudelaire’s poem can be considered in two interesting ways that appeal to a Japanese historical context. On one hand, the idea of the Japanese male as both the “wound” and the “blade”, the “torturer” and “he who is flayed”, resonating with the tension of Japan’s position as both victim and aggressor in World War II, is brought to bear upon the male-female body of Eddie, played by Peter⁹⁸, one of Japan’s most iconic gay performers. Matsumoto’s clever opening of *Funeral Parade of the Roses* with Baudelaire’s poetic line works to both push against mythologies of Japan’s role in the war and address notions of male postwar feminization, affixed as it is to the specific postwar figure of the cross-dressing Japanese male. More explicitly, the “wound” and the “blade” operates as a metaphor for the transgendered individual, both female and male, vagina and penis, victim and torturer. Boundaries find themselves set adrift in a film that merges documentary with fiction and experimentation with

⁹⁷To read more on the Art Theatre Guild see Roland Domenig, “The Anticipation of Freedom: Art Theatre Guild and Japanese Independent Cinema,” *Midnight Eye*, June 28, 2004, <http://www.midnighteye.com/features/the-anticipation-of-freedom-art-theatre-guild-and-japanese-independent-cinema/>; Go Hirasawa “Underground Cinema and the Art Theater Guild,” *Midnight Eye*, August 25, 2005, http://www.midnighteye.com/features/underground_atg.shtml.

⁹⁸ Starred as the character of the court jester, Kyoami, in Kurosawa Akira’s *Ran* (1985).

pornography to illuminate the vivacity of a transformed landscape, even as it provides new entrance into discourses on Japanese identity—what is Japaneseness? What does it mean to be Japanese? One of the central questions continuing to haunt the Japanese new wave as the 1970 renewal of the Security Pact with the United States loomed, Matsumoto intersperses his film with interviews with ‘actual’ trans-women whose stark responses to questions concerning masculinity and marriage trouble the stability of normative social systems. *Funeral Parade of Roses* produces a counter-hegemonic eye through the staging of the polarizing spectacle of the trans-woman that interrogates not only the performance of gender but the marginalizing power of socio-political systems. Time is nonlinear and moves out of sequence and, accordingly, so does the storyline. Consequently vision is fragmented and occurs from different angles in Matsumoto’s film, representing a subculture in Tokyo not allowed to exist within the official narrative of Japan.

Gregory M. Pflugfelder discusses the *otoko-onna* (literally translated as man-woman) in his comprehensive text *Cartographies of Desire: Male-Male Sexuality in Japanese Discourse 1600-1950*, noting his rise under the Occupation where the cross-dressing male prostitute was as visible and marginalized a figure as the *panpan*, and as associated with the loss of the war and the subsequent en masse presence of the white foreigner. Although male prostitution in Japan existed centuries before the war, Pflugfelder observes how [many saw the *otoko-onna*’s “emergence as symptomatic of a more general social malaise, a product of the instability, both ideological and economic, that the war left in its wake” (332). Further Pflugfelder notes how authors like psychiatrist Minami Takao, who had performed clinical observations upon some twenty cross-dressing male prostitutes who plied their trade in Ueno Park, “were fond of noting that many such males acquired their ‘perversion’ while serving in the now disbanded imperial

army and navy, so that their descent into prostitution served metaphorically to recapitulate the emasculation of Japan's surrender, the humiliation of its occupation, and the confusion that surrounded its role in the postwar era" (332-333). *Funeral Parade of Roses* examines the subterranean world of the transgendered, prodding at the line of "perversion" connecting the feminized male, symbolic of a defeated Japan, with the U.S. military through the act of intercourse and the transgressive choice of an African American serviceman.

During the sex scene with the African American serviceman, the instrumental music for *Oh du lieber Augustin (The More We Get Together)* by Marx Augustin sounds, lending a note of humor to the hyperbolized sex scene. Filmed in extreme close up, Matsumoto times Augustin's music to allow pockets of silence for Eddie's moans of ecstasy to fall. The camera pans to show a wallet-sized picture of the uniformed African American serviceman posed with blindfolded Viet Cong prisoners in front of a bombed out war background, before presenting Eddie at a canted angle groaning as he is fucked by the soldier. Matsumoto immediately cuts to a wide angle overhead shot revealing the staging of the pornographic scene, where a camera crew (including the African American actor) watches Eddie as he feigns sexual pleasure for the camera. Despite the comedic portrayal, the 'filming' of the pornographic scene between Eddie and the serviceman is rife with the tensions of sexual domination stemming from the Japan-U.S. political relationship. The choice of an African American to symbolize the United States illuminates the transgressive quality of the military relationship, which feminizes the Japanese male body. The body of the African-American male operated as a site of both desire and deviance after the war, in a reflection of postwar fears and discriminations leveled upon the black GI occupying body. Michael Molasky reveals that despite postwar literature that often expressed solidarity with the black American, the black man is depicted as animalistic, primitive and

sensual in direct correlation thereby to the new Japanese modern youth infiltrated by the foreign, visualized by the *taiyozoku* films. Matsumoto's juxtaposing of the black body with a transgendered body, on the other hand, rather than creating a correlation of equality, adds to the general sense of exaggeration by emphasizing a mutually pleasurable sexual relationship that is ultimately feigned on both sides. "The black soldier is rarely permitted to represent anything but his race," (75) Molasky observes, noting how "blackness serves to mediate Japanese identity in relation to whiteness" (74). Matsumoto's film with the film structure creates distance, forcing a scrutiny of the sexual union between African-American and Japanese male bodies as the Japanese transgendered body is penetrated by the external force of camera and foreigner.

3.7 THE TRANS-BODY AND URBAN PERFORMANCE

The use of the Baudelaire quote in *Funeral Parade of Roses* draws a parallel between the 19th century world of the French Haussmann reforms and the disorienting new space of a Tokyo reimagined after the destruction of the Allied firebombs during the war. The Haussmann urban reforms of the 19th century demolished whole areas of Paris to make room for the trappings of modernity— shifting movement from the legendary arcades to the boulevards, building bridges, railways and introducing the department store. Vision was given primacy over the ear yet in reshaping not only the landscape but the social environment of Paris and thus opening up new perspectives that gave birth anew to the strolling flâneur, the 'artist of modernity', the shocked gaze became part and parcel of the urban experience. As the 20th century crept steadily closer, the city individual was continually exposed to spectacle and stimuli. Shinjuku, on the other hand, in the 1960s was the cultural epicenter of Tokyo, where the arts and student protests

coalesced in an explosion of dynamism and demand for change. After the war, whole areas of Tokyo had been rebuilt, the bullet train brought people from the margins to the interior, and the modernity of Tokyo transformed the site/sight, with art spilling outwards into the streets and cinema, more than ever before, merging with myriad art forms to communicate its political messages. Within this space the shocking figure of the cross-dressing Japanese male took to the streets alongside the performative arts to ‘spectacularly’ rebel and shock awake⁹⁹ the people on the streets.

In the opening sentence of the text, *In a Queer Time and Place*, Judith Halberstam argues that “there is such a thing as ‘queer time’ and ‘queer space’ [which develops] in opposition to the institutes of family, heterosexuality, and reproduction” (1). Queerness, consequently, possesses the ability to provide a counter-discourse to time and space. *Funeral Parade of Roses* queers postwar urban space—both in terms of underground transgendered representations of alternative lifestyles, and the live street performances that render space strange—through the site and sight, respectively, of the postwar trans-woman. Chong positions the streets of Tokyo in the 1960s as a site or “form of public performance” (30), from the political protests of the masses to the artists who staged “guerrilla-style events [as] responses to the wholesale spatial, topographic, and social reorganization of Tokyo, as well as to the city’s lack of infrastructure for art and artists” (30). *Funeral Parade of Roses* represents the urban as a landscape in the act of disintegration where the past, embodied in gravestones sinking beneath water, is being subsumed. Simultaneously, through Eddie’s urban spectatorship, we witness a live art collaboration with the group *Zero*

⁹⁹ References Antonin Artaud’s “Theater of Cruelty” that sought to awaken the masses, outlined in *The Theater and Its Double*. New York: Grove Press, 1958.

*Jigen*¹⁰⁰ that refuses historical erasure by way of a street performance of a funeral performance taken from an earlier protest performance against the Vietnam War. The intersection of live and staged performance agitates cinematic space in a revisiting of history and memory that forces public reflexivity to occur.

The performative, as defined by Joseph Roach, is “a cultural act, a critical perspective, a political intervention” (46) that has an interest in liminal spaces of desire, transgression and newness. Performative art necessitates both the presentation of the body as medium through which the artwork is created as well as the witnessing of the event by an audience in a realization of mutual responsibility and complicity in the production of the artwork. The performative plays a crucial role by bringing the body as history to the very center of the text and, in opening a space which interrogates performance as utterance, presenting the space of cinema itself as counter-discourse or new mode of historical writing through its very ephemerality. Following his interaction with *Zero Jigen*, the perspective of the camera shifts from Eddie’s external sight to his internal subjectivity in a flashback sequence that reveals his childhood molestation in a perversion of the father-son relationship, echoing the reverberations of the State betrayal intimated by the live performance of the funeral procession. Like the wandering flâneur in Baudelaire’s poetry, the trans-woman serves to remove the hegemonic male eye from the camera to replace it with a feminized eye, with an aim to provide entrance to the underground, to another perspective into the landscape of Tokyo and notions of Japanese-ness removed from the authoritarian strictures of the Father.

¹⁰⁰ Julian Ross writes in “Filmed Rituals: Zero Jigen Incarnates on Screen” that Zero Jigen drew from their previous performance *Vietnam Hansen Koshin* [March against the Vietnam War] in 1967 in their ‘funeral procession’ in *Funeral Parade of the Roses*. <http://desistfilm.com/filmed-rituals-zero-jigen-incarnates-on-screen/>. Jim O’Rourke also expounds on Zero Jigen in his essay “Timeline for a Timeless Story” provided with the DVD package.

Funeral Parade of the Roses draws from the Greek mythology of Oedipus. Whereas in the Greek myth the tragic hero Oedipus kills his father and marries his mother despite his attempts to avoid a prophecy, in *Funeral Parade of the Roses*, Eddie kills his mother and engages in sexual relations with his father. On discovering the truth Eddie's father stabs himself with a knife while Eddie stabs his eyes with the same knife, in a parallel to Oedipus whose mother-wife hangs herself, whilst Oedipus (in the Sophocles version) takes two pins from his wife's dress and blinds himself. Transgendered vision is important in its alignment with the urban experience and its re-articulation from the margins. Eddie is the only character privileged with a point of view shot that adopts the camera's position and therefore her eye becomes that of the audience, forging an identification with this doubly gendered body. It is only in the censoring of vision through self-mutilation that the trans-body of Eddie is truly presented as monstrous spectacle to the urban crowds on the streets. In alluding to the Oedipus myth, *Funeral Parade of the Roses* encourages an understanding of Eddie's blinding along western terms with eyes as the seat of knowledge and site of truth or the soul. The wound of the trans-woman is articulated as occurring at the point of the eyes, rather than the genitals, in Matsumoto's film, in his desire to erase his knowledge.

Funeral Parade of the Roses exists as a new wave text both through its experimental aesthetics and its troubling of the male body rendered female. The sight of the cross-dressing male exists as a site of tension and desirability. Eddie's mutilation at the film's end does not release this tension rendering the world safe and returned to its stable moorings, but instead his gouged appearance becomes another live performance for the gathering crowds, demanding their witnessing. The pornographic political site/sight is explicitly about the 'wound', which the male both inflicts and bears through an intersection with the female body that gives sight to new

narratives. The dropping of the atomic bomb provided Japan with a new historical beginning with different powers attempting a re-writing of Japanese history and war memory. *Funeral Parade of the Roses* accentuates the tension of (fe)male bodies as postmodern texts, underscoring the problem of modern space itself through the duality of gender. Through its camera work and pornographic sequences, Matsumoto's film stresses that gender is always already multiple, exposing the question of whether the modern Japanese individual, like the city of Tokyo, is an amalgamation of histories in a re-imagining of modern spaces as not 'new' but trans-bodied or queer. The refusal of queer bodies to submit aligns with a new wave protest agenda to re-imagine one's own body and notions of nation in ways counter to the dominant discourses of State and Foreign powers. Rather than a singular understanding of gender and the new wave, the pornographic orchestrates a political transgenderism in which a constant interplay between masculine and feminine occurs. A reworking of the categories that delineate both the Japanese new wave and the *pinku eiga* genre can offer up not only new scholarship into each arena but a different reading of gender and sexuality in cinema that arises out of a new wave politics of seeing.

4.0 THE COMFORT WOMAN: SANITIZED BODIES AND THE INSTITUTIONALIZING OF DESIRE

Since the 1900s an ideology existed in Japan which saw the Japanese male body as a machine in constant need of maintenance and the sexual female body as the means of preventing the spiritual breakdown of the male. For Mark McLellan, in *Queer Japan from the Pacific War to the Internet Age*, this “hydraulic model of male sexuality” (36) gave rise to the ‘comfort woman’, women forced into varying modes of sexual slavery and prostitution to be “semen toilets” (41) for the physical release and hygienic protection of the Japanese military. During the 1930s until the end of World War II, comfort stations constructed across a swath of brutally occupied Asian colonies became the physical manifestation of a state institutionalization of sexuality on a scale never before seen in history¹⁰¹. Although the numbers continue to be contested by the Japanese government¹⁰², scholars agree that between 100, 000 to 200, 000 women¹⁰³, most foreign nationals, were forced into sexual slavery within these camps. These comfort stations, though, were an expression of increasing State control and sponsorship emerging out of a long history of

¹⁰¹In *Sandakan Brothel No.8: An Episode in the history of lower-class Japanese women*, Yamazaki Tomoko describes the phenomena of the comfort station as “the legalized military rape of subject women on a scale and over a period of time previously unknown in history” (xxv).

¹⁰² See Yoshida Reiji’s “Japanese Historians Seek Revision of U.S. Textbook over ‘Comfort Women’ Depiction.” *Japan Times*. March 18, 2015. <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/03/18/national/history/japanese-historians-see-revision-of-u-s-textbook-over-comfort-women-depiction/#.VSFseBFFCM9>.

¹⁰³Yamazaki Tomoko, *Sandakan Brothel No.8: An Episode in the history of lower-class Japanese women* (Armonk: An East Gate Book, 1999) xxv.

prostitution within Japan's own shores—from the pleasure quarters of the geisha to the exploited and stolen *karayuki-san*¹⁰⁴ shipped to service Japanese businessmen abroad, to the 'recreation centers' hastily arranged with Japan's 1945 military defeat to keep the expected lusts of the foreign occupiers at bay. Although spanning pre-and-post World War II time periods, the perception of Japanese lower class, and non-Japanese, female bodies as receptacles for male sexuality was normalized during the 1930s and early 1940s with the institution of the *jugun ianfu* (military comfort women), positioning the comfort body as a type of war body—a non-reproductive, sexual machinery—in its enforced service to the war effort.

The comfort woman in Japanese new wave cinema, I argue, is one discursively, physically and psychologically fashioned by war and its nationalistic rhetoric. Her sexualized body creates a bridge between past and present Japan, standing at the nexus of competing discourses and memories that seek to make sense of a shared experience. An abject body, the body of the comfort woman often resists control and the amnesia of hegemonic systems that call into being an overarching nationalism and revisionist histories. Her body forces a confrontation with the tragic hero narrative embedded in Japanese *jidaigeki* (historical films) and war films, and thus images of nation and Japanese masculinity that encourage an erasure of memory. This chapter will investigate how the comfort body, as a particular instance of a body born out of war, is a necessary filter for understanding Japanese new wave cinema and postwar society. By examining new wave directors Masumura Yasuzo's war film *Red Angel (Akai Tenshi, 1966)* and Suzuki Seijun's *Gate of Flesh (Nikutai no Mon, 1964)*, including its sequel *Story of a Prostitute*

¹⁰⁴In *Sandakan Brothel No.8: An Episode in the history of lower-class Japanese women*, Yamazaki Tomoko defines *karayuki-san* as "impoverished Japanese women sold into overseas prostitution between the 1860s and 1930s" (xiii) as well as "...impoverished women who sought work in China, Southeast Asia, or Siberia during the Meiji (1868-1912) and Taisho (1912-1926) periods" (xiv).

(*Shunpu den*, 1964), I will examine why and how the war body as comfort body returns in Japanese new wave cinema. Key to parsing out this question will be a focus on the prostitute and the nurse—two figures that constitute a type of ‘Japanese’ comfort woman—in an exploration of woman as liminal, sexual space for Japanese negotiation of the war.

In his nominal text, *Bodies of Memory: Narratives of War in Japanese Postwar culture 1945-1970*, Igarashi Yoshikuni investigates the Japanese “wartime” body before and after the Second World War, examining this “discursively constructed body [as] the central site for the reconfiguration of Japan’s national image” (13). Due to his attention to the Japanese postwar body as loci of memory and desire, this chapter will take up themes from Igarashi’s text. The shortcomings of Igarashi’s text is that it largely ignores a more focused look at the war body as sexualized and feminized entity on the screen, and a more specialized survey of Japanese new wave cinema. My study, on the other hand, activates the term “comfort body” to illuminate how the Japanese new wave repurposes the war body, as carnal female body, during the 1950s and 60s to politicize its audiences into critical remembrance and examination of collective identity.

Igarashi’s work, although important, only mentions the comfort women system in its conclusion. In a pertinent paragraph that observes Japanese bodies’ ‘long rehabilitation’ from wartime memories, Igarashi reveals how by the 1990s, rather than their own bodies, “Japanese society sought out Asian bodies, which remained outside the postwar paradigm. The suffering bodies of Asian people came to constitute the ground for remembering the traumatic experiences during the Asia Pacific War” (204). The notion of an “unseen femininity” becomes particularly apt when applied to the comfort woman, being a figure prevalent in her visible invisibility throughout the Japanese new wave. While this chapter focuses on the ‘Japanese’ comfort woman in light of the prostitute and the eroticization of the nurse, ‘voluntary’ comfort women,

their bodies bring with them the shadow of the *karayuki-san* and the thousands of non-Japanese *jugun ianfu* (military comfort women) forced into state sanctioned comfort stations. These Japanese comfort bodies evoke the ‘unseen femininity’ of the colonial *other* in a paralleling that privileges the Japanese voice thereby rendering the politically divisive non-Japanese *jugun ianfu* invisible within the Japanese new wave. Typically appearing at the periphery, as compared to the Japanese comfort woman’s central diegetic placement in postwar new cinema, a line of connection is drawn between Japanese and non-Japanese bodies fostering an erotic space of social criticism and remembering. These non-Japanese comfort women further inhabit a site of cultural invisibility not only through the glaring lack of discursive images in a new wave cinema geared towards undermining the unthought, but in the constant collective attempts by Japanese government and historians to sanitize their sexualized bodies and voices from critical discourses. For example, although acknowledging Japan’s culpability in the sexual exploitation of the *jugun ianfu* in 1993, in 2007, and again in 2014¹⁰⁵, Prime Minister Abe denied the forcing of these women into prostitution. In 2014, a hostile mass media and public also launched a campaign attacking universities and academics for including materials referencing the comfort women in their classes¹⁰⁶. Few Japanese journals are willing to publish stories on the comfort woman, afraid of the backlash from a public invested in its national image. In 2015, Japan moved its war against literature on the comfort woman overseas in a continued sanitization of their own image. Nineteen Japanese historians and scholars plan to file against U.S. publisher McGraw-Hill over

¹⁰⁵ “New NHK head’s ‘comfort women’ remark stirs controversy,” *Japan Today*, January 26, 2014, <http://www.japantoday.com/category/national/view/new-nhk-heads-comfort-women-remark-stirs-controversy>.

¹⁰⁶ Tessa Morris-Suzuki, “Japan’s Feminism Stumbles Over ‘Comfort Women’,” September 30, 2014, http://womensenews.org/story/prostitution-and-trafficking/140929/japans-feminism-stumbles-over-comfort-women#.VI_4dBESqS.

“factual errors” concerning the comfort women system in a 2011 history text book¹⁰⁷. The comfort body continues to be a destabilizing point of contention within Japanese society in her ability to undermine official narratives and demand a reconciliation with the past. This chapter breaks new ground in an attempt to make visible the comfort woman and her disruptive diegetic and political practices in Japanese new wave cinema.

There has always been a desire at the level of State to transform the national body. With the end of the war and the changing of the power structures at play, this impetus did not disappear, but rather become more hybrid in appearance. The Japanese new wave, I contend, speaks back to a national impulse to transform the nation-body, utilizing the discursive body of the carnal woman as a means to gain voice and power after the Second World War. Thinking through this discursive female body as comfort body enriches a study of Japanese new wave cinema as a distinct cinema interested in transgressing boundaries politically and aesthetically in its cinema. Through the figures of the nurse and the prostitute a focus is placed on the erotic eye, not just of the female but of the cinema spectator who adopts her gaze and thus participates in the creation of a feminized truth space within which the nation and the self are interrogated. In short, Japanese new wave cinema privileges a particular conversation, which is distinctly Japanese and articulated through the body of the desirable female. The new wave war films of Masumura and Suzuki trigger the figure of what this chapter terms the Japanese comfort woman, drawing history out of her sexualized body and reconstituting it for its own purposes. It is her ‘war body’ and subsequent subjectivity rather than the male’s in Japanese new wave cinema, which provides a transmission across time, communicating a cinematic scrutiny of power

¹⁰⁷ See Yoshida Reiji’s “Japanese historians seek revision of U.S. textbook over ‘comfort women’ depiction,” *The Japan Times*.

systems long denied to audiences. In acceding to eroticism through the body of the Japanese comfort woman, Japanese masculinity is reconstructed and politicized, opening the possibility of a new Japan.

The choice of Masumura and Suzuki's films is important due to their release dates, which situates Suzuki and Masumura's respective films within a period still tense with the failed US-Japan Mutual Security Act (AMPO) riots, which revolutionized a country, and the attempted image clean-up of the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. It is the return to the themes of war and the centrality of the sexual female to the politics of these films, though, that set *Nikutai no Mon* and *Red Angel* apart. Although released in 1964 and 1966 respectively, *Nikutai no Mon* and *Red Angel* set their narratives in Japan's (post)war past. The representation of the carnal female set in the past is used as a tool to negotiate the present experience, opening up a deeper insight into Japanese new wave cinema as political artwork organized around the Japanese female body. Before analyzing *Nikutai no Mon* and *Red Angel* it is important to foreground these films, and how the figures of the nurse and the prostitute operate in the national imaginary prior to the Japanese new wave period, through a sketching of the historical context and the representation of the female war body during and immediately after the war.

4.1 SANITIZING MEMORY: THE POSTWAR PROSTITUTE AND FILM CENSORSHIP

The Japanese were not 'human' before the bomb that ended the Second World War. Rather, they were bodies that existed purely toward service to the empire, to be regurgitated by the war machine of earlier military efforts begun since the 1930s with the Manchurian war. In other

words, an exhausted Japan had already been at war for over a decade by the time the atomic bomb fell. Considered as simply bodies to be regulated by the systems of power, ordinary Japanese individuals could not be more than subjects to the State's imperialist policies. They could not accede to personhood or ownership of their own bodies. Damaged and old bodies that could no longer serve, for example, had no purpose and were often hidden from view. By the end of the war, according to Dower, close to three million Japanese were dead, with the amounts committing suicide in fear of the invaders ranging from three hundred to five hundred (37). Igarashi argues that it is this regulatory practice, due to the wartime regime's strong focus on the body as *kokutai* or nation, and thereby vested interest in its usage and health, that led to postwar Japan's immediate discursive construction of war memories through bodily tropes (5). When the Second World War ended, the body of the Japanese individual continued to be the focus not only for Japanese intellectuals and writers, but so too for the occupation forces invested in healthy bodies that could produce democratic and docile bodies.

Under pressure from occupation forces in 1946, Emperor Hirohito relinquished his ties to deity in an imperial script remembered as the 'declaration of humanity' (*ningen sengen*)¹⁰⁸. The 'declaration of humanity' operated as part of a campaign to place the Emperor within the realm of the human in order to represent to the world Japan's democratic turn and push for peace. The declaration though, following the stigma of Japan's humiliation in the war, had the additional effect of transforming the Emperor into a feminized symbol of a defeated Japan. After the war, the body stood at the very center of negotiations not just of the war experience but of the future.

¹⁰⁸ For more on this issue read, John Dower's *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*. New York: Norton, 2000. Dower writes that the Japanese Emperor "[offered] himself as the embodiment of the nation's suffering, its ultimate victim, transforming the sacrifices of his people into his own agony with a classical turn of phrase. ... 'my vital organs are torn asunder'" (36).

Juxtaposed to the masculine might of the American forces encapsulated by the imposing figure of General MacArthur, Emperor Hirohito's body appeared feminized to its own people, heightening the sense of emasculation felt after the fall of the bomb. To the war weary yet jubilant Japanese, momentarily liberated by the war, their bodies were often all the capital they owned. Sex provided an outlet of escape from the rigid control of government before and after the atomic bomb. An avenue of empowerment and articulation, the staging of flesh (*nikutai*) would occupy Japanese new wave cinema in a reflection of a postwar desire to be something more than Japanese (*nihonjinron*) — something transgressive and human.

The atomic bomb represented a metonym, a stand in for a larger devastation—both psychological and national, for, by the conclusion of the war, Japan was grappling not just with the atrocity of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki and Hiroshima but with an entire nation reduced to ruin. John Dower writes that “Sixty-six major cities, including Hiroshima and Nagasaki, had been heavily bombed, destroying 40 percent of these urban areas overall and rendering 30 percent of their populations homeless” (45). This burnt-out landscape was transformed and reshaped to accommodate the thousands of incoming servicemen, and the prostitution dens that arose to acclimatize them. While Dower places the numbers of invading occupiers as over a quarter of a million (43), Sarah Kovner expounds on the domestic devastation:

New buildings and whole neighborhoods in base towns and larger cities rose up to accommodate a veritable industry in sexual services. As the built environment changed, so too did Japan's psychological landscape. The visible presence of ‘objectionable’ women served as a constant reminder of defeat. It was written on their very bodies, apparent to both the occupiers and the occupied. Dressed in brightly colored dresses, wearing pancake makeup and with cigarettes dangling from their lips, the *panpan*—or

streetwalkers—seemed to embody both the fall of Japan’s empire and the rise of something shockingly new” (2).

Although for the ordinary Japanese citizen depleted by the demands of the war, defeat was initially met with a sense of relief often tied to the sexual liberty of the body (a reaction highlighted by the rapid growth of *kasutori*¹⁰⁹ culture), the postwar body soon revealed itself to be a censored body still caught up in the systems of power at play.

In reality, the Japanese, feminized body wore its defeat through its supplication to the demands of power embodied by the MacArthur administration. Compared to the nationalistic bodies rigidly enforced during the war, Igarashi highlights how with the signing of the peace agreement, “the official narrative of the war, complicitly produced by American occupation forces and the Japanese government, expressed the new alliance between the United States and Japan through images of hygienic, democratic bodies” (13). On a daily basis, Japanese bodies could be rounded up without provocation by the occupation forces and made subject to medical tests and questioning. And, this happened to no body more so than women’s bodies. Women’s bodies especially, considered harbingers of disease due to their sexual liaisons with the allied forces, became translatable objects of ownership and desire between the males of both Japanese and American camps.

The political interaction between the United States and Japan based on a mutual desire for international security, economic prosperity and social transformation found itself imagined in

¹⁰⁹ A lifestyle at the margins that promoted decadence as the only truth and encouraged the reverence of the carnal body (as compared to the historical veneration of the more abstracted *kokutai* (the emperor centered national body), *kasutori* centered on a spectatorship of the erotic female body that directly correlated with underground discourses concerned with Japanese male subjectivity and the mass need to grasp hold of the experience of the war, to negotiate the traumatic erasure of one’s national reality and self closed to the individual by postwar censorship practices.

sexualized terms through the figure of the *panpan* or prostitute. As mentioned earlier, fearing the carnal appetite of the foreigner and expecting a return of the sexual trauma that they themselves had inflicted upon their own colonies conquered during the war, the Japanese government built comfort houses called the Recreational Amusement Association (RAA) where women could be purchased cheaply by the Allied Servicemen. Considered a line of defense to safeguard Japanese women of virtue, prostitutes often refused to work in these exploitative facilities. In a continuation of the comfort woman ideology predating World War II, women with little to no experience, homeless and hungry from the war, swayed by a rhetoric which called for a sacrifice to country, were often the ones to fill the role of sex worker within these institutions. The arrival of the Occupying forces thus did not mark the end of, but rather the participation of the foreigner in, Japan's system of sexual and economic exploitation.

Kovner, though, argues that “the *panpan* was not simply a symbol of defeat but that they could actively negotiate their relationship with the occupiers and thus had a pivotal role during the postwar period, where for a moment those typically thought as powerless and most victimized acceded to some level of power” (17). Whether victim or opportunist, the postwar prostitute in Japan shed light on a peculiar tendency during and after the war for ‘comfort’ from Japanese (and other Asian) women. Fraternization between Japanese women and western servicemen occurred to such a high extent after the war that the fall of the Japanese female and the weakness of the Japanese male became integral thematics to a consideration of gender relations and social change in postwar Japanese new cinema. The female body as ‘comfort body’, one from which liberties could be taken with or without consent, would become a common trope in Japanese new wave cinema. The notion of the female (post)war body as one existing for the psychological needs of the postwar male gains traction in a new cinema rife with

rapes, disillusionment and unrequited love, capturing the national discourse of the times. The prostitute arose within this new landscape as a body not simply reflecting the literal and metaphorical sexual relationship between the United States and Japan, but through which the Japanese people could negotiate their own memories and hopes for the Japanese individual. Capturing the imagination and social times of the period, the figure of the *panpan* came to dominate the cinematic scene.

4.2 CENSORING MEMORY: THE WAR FILM

Even before the official American entrance into the war with Japan courtesy the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, Japan's policy towards its cinema was largely embedded in censorship and propagandistic practices to encourage support of an imperialist agenda towards China. A 1939 film law was instituted that banned films deemed sexual and inconsequential, promoting instead the production of films stressing bushido, self-sacrifice and the nation as victorious even as these films hid the realities of the *jugun ianfu* and monumental losses of the war from its spectators. Films like Akira Kurosawa's *The Most Beautiful* (1944), Mitsuyo Seo's animation, *Momotaro no Umiwashi* (1943), and Kajiro Yamamoto's *The War at Sea from Hawaii to Malay* (1942) for example glorified Japan and the struggle of the Japanese people in aiding in the war effort. National policy films or *kokusaku eiga*, war news reels, samurai and spy films to name a few abounded during the time period, increasing in frequency as the war drew towards its fateful conclusion. Often extending past national borders to influence the war efforts of its colonies, the war films and *jidaigeki* of the 1930s and mid-1940s, sought to produce citizens eager to serve through the visualization of such regimented and honorable bodies. Although the 1945 defeat by

the Allied forces brought a freedom of the body across the Japanese social landscape denied during the strict regulations, sacrifices and financial hardships of the war, the Occupation forces continued to use censorship in Japanese cinema to rewrite the Japanese body and its experience of war. At the level of the social experience and the artistic, bodily censorship preoccupied the occupation period of 1945-1952.

There was a national impetus to create a new *kokutai* (nation) or rather to transition to a new kind of body after the Second World War. Cinema's attempt to deal with this impetus was hampered by the censorship practices of both domestic and occupation governments. Concerned with their reception in Japan, an apprehension augmented by their own war guilt over the launching of the atomic bombs, the MacArthur administration sought to control their image through censorship practices aimed acutely at the media and cinema. Films considered threatening in their representation of the occupying forces and the bomb were banned or forced to edit pieces out, as were samurai and other period films thought as harboring the feudal ideology blamed for the war. Hirano Kyoko adds that "the Americans were invested in "[creating and cultivating an] image as uncompromising fighters for freedom" (105) to the extent that they wanted to hide the fact that the country was occupied. Mentions of crimes committed by American soldiers was also taboo (106)¹¹⁰. While some directors were able to thrive during this period, others found their voices curtailed like Fumio Kamei, a director according to Donald Richie in his 1961 essay "'Mono no aware': Hiroshima in Film" perhaps responsible for more a-bomb pictures than any other director during the time period. Annexed reminders of the bomb and of the American occupation, as simple as a lone plane flying above, lent a vagueness to the

¹¹⁰ Kyoko Hirano, "Depiction of the Atomic Bombings in Japanese cinema during the U.S. Occupation Period," *Hibakusha Cinema: Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and the Nuclear Image in Japanese Film* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1996).

occupation cinema, discursive ellipses noticed but sutured over by audiences conditioned to the powerlessness of their defeat.

In the ‘Noriko films’ of Ozu Yasujiro, for example, (*Late Spring* 1949, *Early Summer* 1951, *Tokyo Story* 1953), featuring Hara Setsuko as representative of the modern single woman in postwar Japan, memories of the war operate as an oblique backdrop to the larger happenings within the films. According to Lars-Martin Sorensen in *Censorship of Japanese Films During the U.S. Occupation of Japan: The Cases of Yasujirō Ozu and Akira Kurosawa*, the occupation censors removed any reference to the ruin in *Late Spring*. When a character remarked that Kyoto is a nice place, unlike Tokyo and its ruins, the censors deleted mention of the ruin and its recalling of the Allies role in the bombed out state of Japan, replacing the term with the word “hokorippoi” (“dusty”). The body of Hara Setsuko, the “eternal virgin”, functions as a sanitized postwar body; the modern woman existing between the traditional and the liberated body. Despite her resistances, she finds herself re-contained within the *ie* (home) or social systems of Japan. While in *Early Summer*, the war enters fleetingly into the plot through the delivery of a gift from a childhood friend who was killed during World War II, in *Tokyo Story*, produced after the occupation, Noriko is a war widow, whose kindness to her parents-in-law and loyalty to her dead spouse, mark her virtue. The indicators of war are still subtle— the rapidly transforming metropolis bringing with it a breakdown in community and love, a distancing and resentment for the old, while the female body marked by war (Noriko) acts as the unwavering moral center of the film and struggles to forget.

Due to continued censorship practices, the freedom of cinema to negotiate the memories of wartime was hamstrung during the Occupation period. This tendency encouraged a focus on the body in a transference of discourses and artistic negotiations onto the Japanese female. The

term 'lacuna' presents an interesting way to consider the ellipses and silences that occupation brought to bear upon Japanese cinema in the immediate postwar period, and to theorize on its impact upon the return of the war body in Japanese new wave cinema. The lacuna acts as a type of present-absent where everyone knows the context behind the particular narrative staging of the postwar film but there is no real visual reference. The war and the devastation of the bomb becomes a non-thing, that which is never said. Within this framework, the female body acts as an intervention during the censorship period, a stand in for something else, for this lacuna. Even though the censorship of the occupation authorities attempted to control the ways in which the defeat was articulated and remembered, especially in terms of the bomb, the legacy of war was still ever present within the society. It is with the films of the new wave, that the figure of the female as war body begins to actively address postwar Japan and its body politics from an unflinching yet compromised ethical stance.

4.3 SITUATING THE COMFORT BODY: THE SACRED AND THE PROFANE

Second only to the figure of the mother, which I will discuss in the next chapter, the prostitute or geisha is the most frequent archetype of womanhood that occurs in Japanese cinema. Suzuki and Masumura re-politicize the familiar cinematic body of the prostitute, in a re-visioning that removes the prostitute from the realm of the sacred or morality of the tragedy to a space of the profane within a war-torn landscape. In classical Japanese cinema the prostitute's story,

articulated through the genre of melodrama, often ends in tragedy¹¹¹ due to her function as social symbol of class and gender oppression. Director Mizoguchi Kenji, whose oeuvre spans the 1920s to 1950s, is most famous for his beautiful manipulation of the long take and mise-en-scene to illuminate the suffering of women, especially the prostitute or geisha, within patriarchal society. The centering of the prostitute in Suzuki and Masumura's films both actively recall Mizoguchi's unfortunate women who cleanse men through their self-sacrifice, and reject the creation of sentiment that disempower and entrap the prostitute.

Mizoguchi's *The Life of Oharu* (1952), for example, stars the popular Tanaka Kinuyo as Oharu, a dutiful daughter who suffers silently and with dignity as she descends the social ladder from a daimyo's concubine to geisha to old prostitute in a story of a life marked by the economics of sexual desire. *The Life of Oharu* is based on the 1686 erotic work, *The Life of an Amorous Woman*, by popular "floating world" author and genre creator Ihara Saikaku. Although the novel is a pornographic one, in which a nun recounts her life of eroticism and service, Mizoguchi rejects eroticism as a choice for his female protagonist. Instead Mizoguchi tells his tale from the point of view of the old prostitute or crone, underscoring Oharu's misfortune due to economic and power relations that make her a commodity easily used and discarded by Japan's patriarchal system. Bound as Oharu is by a family system that stresses filial duty, Mizoguchi removes the film from the realm of the pornographic. Rather, by transforming Oharu to a nun only by the film's end, Mizoguchi further stresses the ability of women to suffer and bear (Sato's Japanese feminism) and thus spiritually transcend their hardships. The difference between the book and film lie at the juncture of the erotic. Mizoguchi's decision to represent the prostitute in light of a noble woman's social fall rather than a young woman eager for experiences of the

¹¹¹ Tadao Sato, *Currents in Japanese Cinema*, 73.

flesh, “[creates] the image of the prostitute as sacred, the attempt to discover a higher spirit in a woman who otherwise lives an appalling life” (Sato, 106-107). The choice of Tanaka Kinuyo in the title role further facilitates the sanctification of the prostitute.

Sato describes Tanaka as “one of the most popular actresses in the history of Japanese cinema, embodying chaste, healthy, pure, winsome characters—the very models of the ‘pink flower of Yamato’” (108). The *Yamato nadeshiko* or ‘pink flower of Yamato’ represents the resiliency yet demure beauty of the Japanese ideal woman. The overlaying of the *Yamato nadeshiko* onto the prostitute’s monstrous crone body (the lowest form of prostitute who hide their faces in the dark in order to feign youth to their customers) both emphasizes the dehumanizing horror of a system that normalizes the exploitation of women, and raises the prostitute to the level of saint through her acceptance and forgiveness. The prostitute embodied by Tanaka in *The Life of Oharu*, is, Sato reiterates, “an ideal, sacred woman, a woman who would take on herself all the sins of men, their meanness, weakness and ugliness; a woman who, through her misery would make men ashamed of themselves; a saint of a woman” (108). Interestingly, Tanaka would later reprise her role as an old prostitute in Kumai Kei’s *Sandakan No. 8* (1975), where she played a *karayuki-san*. The manipulation of Tanaka’s star image layers the figure of the *karayuki-san* with the sacred and suffering Japanese ideal, thereby conflating the fallen female body with the innocence of youth and the betrayal by society and its systems of power that crush the voices of women.

In Japanese new wave cinema the eroticization of the wartime prostitute becomes the conduit through which the “ugliness” and “sins” of man are excised rather than silently forgiven and absorbed as seen with Oharu’s turning to religion at the end of *The Life of Oharu*. From the

fallen women of Mizoguchi¹¹² and Naruse Mikio to the war widows of Ozu Yasujiro and Kurosawa Akira, women's ability to transcend their suffering becomes women's glory in their fall in the new wave cinema of the late 1950s and 1960s. *Story of a Prostitute* (1964), directed by Suzuki Seijun, is a film adaptation of the Tamura Taijiro novel, *Shunpuden* (1947), set during the Sino-Japanese war. *Escape at Dawn (Akatsuki no Dasso)*, written by Kurosawa and directed by Taniguchi Senkichi in 1950, remains the first film iteration of *Shunpuden*. While Tamura's novel sets as its female protagonist a Korean comfort woman within a military brothel, Taniguchi's film, after several enforced rewrites by Occupation censors, transforms Tamura's Korean protagonist to a Chinese entertainer and the brothel to a bar¹¹³. *Escape at Dawn* thus focuses on the love between a Japanese soldier and a Chinese performer played by Yamaguchi Yoshiko, a Japanese actress known for playing Chinese roles in Japanese propaganda films during the late 1930s-early 1940s. Although the romance between the couple leads to the soldier's desertion and death in a criticism of war, the sanitizing of the comfort woman from the narrative de-politicizes the filmic text. In *The Attractive Empire: Transnational Film Culture in Imperial Japan*, Michael Baskett argues that *Escape at Dawn* "helped revive nostalgia for the Japanese empire by taking audiences back to the prewar era, not to commiserate or atone, but rather to watch and sing" (137). Through the love between the Chinese performer and the Japanese soldier in *Escape at Dawn*, Taniguchi creates an anti-war film that romanticizes Japan's relationship with its colonies.

¹¹² For more on Mizoguchi Kenji's fallen women read David Desser's *Eros Plus Massacre: An Introduction to the Japanese New Wave Cinema*, 111 -114.

¹¹³ H. Eleanor Kerkham, "Pleading for the Body: Tamura Taijiro's 1947 Korean Comfort Woman Story, Biography of a Prostitute," *War, Occupation, and Creativity: Japan and East Asia, 1920-1960* (Honolulu: U of Hawai'i P, 2001), 339.

Suzuki's *Story of a Prostitute*, on the other hand, is rare in its placement of both a non-Japanese and a Japanese comfort woman at the center of its diegesis. *Story of a Prostitute* presents its narrative from the point of view of a Japanese prostitute, Harumi (Nogawa Yumiko), who eagerly joins a military brothel in a distant Manchurian outpost in a desire to steep herself in strong military bodies as a means of forgetting an earlier love affair. Harumi soon finds herself at the center of a love triangle between a cruel adjutant and his aide, Makimi. Although Harumi appears a willing 'comfort woman' serving the Japanese army, she instantly takes a dislike to the abusive and controlling adjutant who operates as stand-in for the military system. Caught between two representations of the Japanese soldier, one symbolizing Japan's aggressive and punitive war philosophy, the other the soldier a victim of a doctrine that defines masculinity through death in the name of country and Emperor, resistance and criticism occurs at the level of Harumi's 'comfort' body. "This place is like a washing place for the soldiers," an officer informs the Japanese comfort women. "When the dirty stuff piles up, they come here to wash their minds and their bodies. When they leave here, they're as good as new." Despite the notion of the female body as healing or cleansing war body, it is Harumi's body in its aggressive sexuality that both challenges the mechanical aspect of militarism and the 'honorability' of the soldier that depends on a system of sexual exploitation.

The excess of emotion that Suzuki infuses into Harumi's body overwhelms the sentiment of melodrama turning the text absurd, in its representation of militarism and nationalist philosophies, rather than tragically 'realist' through a melodramatic arc. A highly experimental text, Suzuki's film moves from theatrical lighting to slow motion, freeze frames and manipulations of sound in abrupt transitions that echo the irrationality of Harumi's emotions within the regimented space of the military. Space within *Story of a Prostitute* is keyed to

Harumi's subjectivity, moving in and out of reality in a feminization of space that renders the war illogical. The defiant excess of Harumi's sexual body duels the punishing militarism of the adjutant, creating a building tension at the site of the soldier, Mikami's, body, for it is at the juncture of the sexual body that seat of humanity rests. Suzuki's prostitute is the opposite of the *Yamato nadeshiko*—there is nothing demure about her. She does not feel bound by ties to duty and service to the Japanese male, and if there is innocence to her, it is an innocence connected to love for Makimi, which leads to their double suicide by hand grenade as Mikami chooses *seppuku* over the dishonor of desertion. Standish understands Mikami as “torn between these conflicting personalized moralities [of the adjutant and Harumi], which ultimately destroy him” (NH 259). Suzuki's substitution of a Japanese comfort woman for the non-Japanese prostitute depicted in both the novel and the earlier film, places these ‘moralities’ within a Japanese context in a gendering of military ideals (male) and the human desires (female) that duel constantly with one another. The rape and abuse of Harumi's comfort body at the hands of the adjutant becomes an allegory for the Japanese soldier's own experience during the war, emphasizing the complexity of Japan's war experience that positions him simultaneously as victim and aggressor. Harumi's wild and uncontrollable sexuality articulates a liberation politics which is as unsustainable within such a warscape as the punishing militarism of the adjutant. The death of Harumi, who leaps upon Mikami's body as the bomb detonates, underscore the loss of humanity that Japan's specific form of militarism engenders.

The double suicide of Harumi and Mikami transpires from Harumi's point of view in a theatrical staging where doors open and close emphasizing blocked avenues. Suzuki concludes *Story of a Prostitute* with a parallel movement from the explosion of the lovers' bodies to the

sound of male voices chanting the military Field Service Code¹¹⁴, softly at first then louder, while smoke from the bomb obscures the sight. The camera pans and dissolves through the smoke to reveal the source of these voices: a line of fresh recruits. In this single camera pan time passes from the present of Mikami and Harumi's deaths to the present after their deaths, revealing the military's official narrative on Mikami's death as honorably in the field. Only the surviving comfort women though are present at the couple's funeral pyre, as unofficially the military considers Mikami a disgraceful traitor. It is the non-Japanese comfort woman, who throughout the film has lurked along the periphery of the narrative, whom Suzuki privileges with voice as the moral center of the text. Dressed in white and standing, while the other three comfort women sit before the funeral pyre, she observes: "The Japanese are in such a hurry to die. No matter how hard it is we must go on living. To live is the difficult task. It's dying that's cowardly." Turning, she walks into the empty landscape of China, away from the funeral pyre watched over only by the surviving comfort women.

War memory and counter-discourse is displaced onto the body of the comfort woman, who act as witness in the face of military and government obfuscation. Suzuki returns to the past in *Story of a Prostitute* in an effort to negotiate the socio-political landscape of 1960s Japan and the exposure of the hollowness of democracy. Igarashi contends that in postwar Japan, democracy was linked to past memories of the war and a reemerging sense of nationalism (133). On January 29, 1960, Japanese Prime Minister Kishi Nobusuke and President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the revised Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between Japan and the United States of America. The new treaty highlighted the United States' continued

¹¹⁴ The soldiers chant, "never let wine or women distract your thoughts from battle, nor lose your mind and ruin the imperial army's dignity, never bring disgrace to the military. Discipline yourself and live up to a warrior's honor. Control your anger and suppress your dissatisfaction. Consider anger the enemy."

hegemony over Japan, as Japan's political desires were only recognized through granting and participating in the United States' interests in East Asia. Many of the Japanese felt that Japan was being turned towards a trajectory tuned to the United States' cold war agenda at odds with Japan's own peaceful aims.

“Due to the forceful tactics used to pass the Security treaty's revision employed by Kishi, for many he symbolized the darker forces in Japanese politics that challenged the postwar democratic order. ...Many called Kishi 'yokai of the Showa era' (yokai are monstrous premodern creatures that survived in the liminal space of modern Japan defying scientific explanations), for he embodied the return of wartime Japan. This monster was the heart of the political turmoil of 1960” (134-6, Igarashi).

Incarcerated as a Class A war criminal, immediately after the war, Igarashi argues that Kishi brought back with him the monstrous qualities of the repressive pre-1945 Japanese political system. The anti-revision movement, described in the previous chapter, became an opportunity to tackle the unresolved past in postwar Japan, where Kishi functioned as stand in for the military regime as well as the humiliation that regime brought to Japan (136). Many of the films considered new wave cinema today emerged during the period of the AMPO political turmoil. Fifteen years after the end of the Second World War, the experience and legacy of the war was now being negotiated in earnest at the level of culture as well as cinema. The films deemed new cinema often share this concern for the present through an appropriation of the past.

In *Nikutai no Mon* and *Red Angel*, which will be examined in the next section, the image of the female war body represented by the prostitute and the nurse is one evacuated of content and used as a site for reconstructing Japanese masculinity. Through the erotic use of their bodies, these women return the Japanese individual to the realm of the human—a space of

freedom promised by the democratic reforms of the Occupying forces but revealed ultimately as secondary to budding cold war ideologies and war agendas of the time period.

4.4 MASUMURA YASUZO'S *RED ANGEL* (1966): THE NURSE AS COMFORT WOMAN

On May 03, 1946 the International Military Tribunals for the Far East, otherwise known as the Tokyo War Crimes Trial, began, concluding two years later with twenty-five of twenty-eight Japanese military and government officials found guilty of crimes against humanity and seven men sentenced to death. Additionally, in tribunals held outside of Japan, approximately 5,000 Japanese were found guilty of war crimes, with more than nine hundred of the sentenced executed¹¹⁵. The McArthur Government protected Emperor Hirohito from war culpability both preserving a system of conservatism and preventing the Japanese from fully engaging with a military past embedded in cultural and nationalistic rhetoric. By the 1950s, Japan's sense of war guilt and desire to assign blame to their military leaders and politicians, according to the rhetoric permitted by the Occupying forces, was replaced by a sense of their own suffering and victimhood¹¹⁶ that absolved them from any responsibility towards their colonies and need to remember their own war aggression. Standish contends that "...in the light of the judgements following the War Crimes Trials, the 'tragic hero' mythic form took on new life as emblematic

¹¹⁵ Tokyo War Crimes Trial, May 03, 1946, <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/japanese-war-crimes-trial-begins>.

¹¹⁶ Michael Baskett, *The Attractive Empire: Transnational Film Culture in Imperial Japan* (U of Hawaii P: 2008), 136.

of (a) Japan's purity of spirit - expressed through a willingness to die for a cause; and (b) through the allegoric meaning of death which increasingly became encoded as victimisation and not, as previously, sacrifice" (MM 3). While Standish embeds the 'tragic hero' form chiefly within the *jidaigeki* (period) film, and more specifically with the popularity of *Chushingura* (*the 47 Ronin*), which present loyal and steadfast samurai who commit *seppuku* after avenging their slain leader, the box office success¹¹⁷ of Imai Tadashi's 1953 film *Himeyuri no To* (*Tower of Lilies*¹¹⁸) presents an alternative vision of the tragic hero as female.

Based on the true story of two hundred and twenty-two female high school students in Okinawa who were sent to the frontlines as war nurses, *Himeyuri no To* perseveres as an enduring classic that has been remade at least four times, speaking to the pertinence of the film to the Japanese imaginary. Standish notes that "...the 'reality' of the experiences of this group of girls as 'tragic heroes' of their age has become fixed within the narrative structure and the collective memories of the war generation who saw the films" (MM 197). Considered the first film to "spark a 'boom' in war-retro films"¹¹⁹, the figure of the nurse linked to the purity and victimhood of the young Japanese girls sent into war is essential to the popular nostalgia of *Himeyuri no To*. Sheltered young women suddenly tossed into the middle of war, these unprepared 'war nurses' worked in a war hospital consisting of a network of caves and tunnels known after the deaths of these 'lilies' as 'the cave of the virgins'. The caves, in which 200 of these student bodies are entombed, make up the focal point of the Himeyuri Monument and the

¹¹⁷ Standish states that "the first version, directed by Imai, was the largest grossing film of the year breaking box office records and earning a place in the *Kinema Junpo* top ten ratings for 1953" (MM 196).

¹¹⁸ Also called "Memorial to the Lilies" in English, the book was written by Nakasone Seizan, one of the teachers of the student-nurses who survived the war. See Isolde Standish's *Politics, Porn and Protest: Japanese Avant-Garde Cinema in the 1960s and 1970s*, 53-54, for more information.

¹¹⁹ Isolde Standish, *Politics, Porn and Protest*, 53-54.

adjacent Himeyuri Peace museum dedicated to the memory of these young women. The most visited war sites in Okinawa, the cultural attention implicit in the monuments, museums, articles, memoirs and films dedicated to the martyrdom of these young war nurses, highlight why the nurse remains one of the pertinent places to look to representation of the female body as war body in Japanese cinema. The majority of these young women died days before the end of the war, when the extreme fervor of the Japanese military encouraged their sacrifice for nation, rather than negotiating their release with the invading American troops. Imai heightens the sense of innocence betrayed in his film through framing images of these young Okinawan girls singing and dancing against images of death and suffering soldiers. The devotion of the teachers towards their students paralleled against the self-serving interests of the military officials, presents the Japanese and American military in an unflattering light while still presenting the Japanese as victim to their circumstances.

The impact of this film and the memory of the horror of the event, which have infused Japanese society, must have influenced the political aesthetics of Masumura's *Red Angel* produced over a decade later. Playing off the idea of the nurse as angel, the sacred entity of the nurse in Imai's film mutates into the prostitute in her sexual accessibility to all men in Masumura's *Red Angel*. Although an anti-war film casting the Japanese military negatively, thematically, *Himeyuri no To* continues the trend of films produced during, and after, the occupation that stress the endurance, sacrifice, and, most importantly, suffering of the virtuous Japanese woman emblematic of a new narrative of Japan as war victim. New wave cinema in its discontent would push back against the pervasive figure of tragedy rooted in the sacred, the hierarchical and the militaristic through the eroticizing of the nurse as comfort body.

As discussed in the first chapter, Yasuzo Masumura is credited by many film critics¹²⁰, Oshima Nagisa among them, as being the pioneer of a new cinema directly influencing the publicized birth of the Japanese new wave. Considered antiquated by the time the New Wave term hopped into existence in 1959, the films of Masumura though adhere to an overarching politics of new cinema, showing an investment in both a critique of Japanese society and the transformation of the entrapped Japanese individual. Inspired by his time spent living and studying film in Rome in 1950 with guest lecturers such as Federico Fellini, Luchino Visconti and Michelangelo Antonioni, he returned to Japan in 1953 to work with the likes of Mizoguchi Kenji and Ichikawa Kon, only to create his debut film *Kisses* (1957) which, due to its revolutionary aesthetics, would bring about a major shift in Japanese cinema. Citing from Masumura's manifesto, Michael Raine explains how Masumura argued that "a new film culture, not simply new films, would be necessary if cinema was to play a role in creating postwar Japanese subjectivity" previously denied under the militarist state and Allied Occupation which prevented filmmakers from critiquing power (156)¹²¹.

Masumura Yasuzo demanded a cinema of shocks that would blast spectators out of their comfortable orbit around a naturalist cinema of everyday life (*shizenshugi-teki fuzoku eiga*), typified by what he saw as Ozu Yasujiro's idealized middle-class passivity, and the abstract 'so-called realism' of Imai Tadashi's social concern. (152)¹²²

¹²⁰ Sato Tado, for example, in *Nihon Eiga no Kyosho* describes Masumura as the 'start' of the Japanese new wave (Patrick Alan Terry, 54).

¹²¹ "Modernization without Modernity: Masumura Yasuzo's Giants and Toys (1958)," *Japanese Cinema: Texts and Contexts* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

¹²² Ibid.

The notion of *shutaisei*¹²³ or subjectivity, which initiated debates on self-transformation and immersed the Japanese intellectual community immediately after the war, was important to the work of Masumura who believed that true liberation from the past could only occur in Japan through the political self-actualization of *shutaisei*.

Set during the Second Sino-Japanese war and based on the novel by Yorichika Arima, *Red Angel* presents the story of a young nurse, Nishi Sakura, sent to work in the frontlines of China in 1939. Named after the ephemeral sakura flower, also known as the death flower—the most beautiful before it dies—the choice of naming the main protagonist after cherry blossoms works to recall and counteract the militarist propaganda that extended from the Manchurian war into World War II. The sakura has a rich and contradictory history in Japan, from the sensual symbolism of the geisha world during the Edo period to its connection to militarism in a targeted construction of Japanese national identity. In 1930, for example, a secret society called the *Sakurakai* (the Cherry Blossom Society) was established within the Imperial Army with the idea of restructuring the state under totalitarian militaristic lines (414, McClain)¹²⁴. According to Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney¹²⁵, the government used the sakura to promote nationalism and militarism during the Second World War, taking their cues from its earlier usage which compared the transient blossoms to the young men sent into the war in China. As Japan pressed further into its colonial expansion, the planting of sakura trees claimed occupied land as now belonging to Japan. Kamikaze pilots would also notoriously have the sakura painted on the sides

¹²³ For more on Masumura and *shutaisei* see Michael Raine, “Modernization without Modernity: Masumura Yasuzo’s Giants and Toys”, 155.

¹²⁴ James McClain, *Japan: A Modern History* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company Inc, 2002), 414.

¹²⁵ Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, *Kamikaze, Cherry Blossoms, and Nationalisms: The Militarization of Aesthetics in Japanese History* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2002), 9-10.

of their airplanes or take branches with them on their suicide missions during the Pacific War. In the Japanese imaginary, the sakura came to represent falling youth or rather, the sacrifice of youth for the honor of the Emperor. Ohnuki-Tierney further contends that “at a more abstract level, [the sakura] represents subversions of the norm—the anti-self (madness, changes of social identity) and non-reproductive sexuality (geisha, medieval temple boys), both of which negate the reproduction of normative society” (11). Applying the appellation of Sakura to the female war body at the center of his narrative, a war body drawing different time periods, different wars and discourses, all into one diegetic space, repurposes the war connotations of the national flower to one perhaps invested in sexual and non-reproductive subversions. Masumura paints a target on the history of militarism in Japan that extends into the present. Representative of nation, her situation as an angel, albeit a ‘red’ angel, and a nurse who uses her body to cure the war wounded destabilizes the ‘holy’ agenda and uniform war narrative of the Japanese government.

Although the female protagonist is also given the moniker of angel, (the adjective of ‘red’ perhaps applying to the color of the rising sun insignia embedded on the Japanese military flag or the blood that drenches Nurse Nishi’s body, symbolic of national discourses, in a useless and unwinnable war) she both is and is not the ethical center of the film. She is the point of stability in a world gone mad, and yet she herself is not uncompromised in the film. She inhabits her own pathology which positions herself as savior of the war wounded, and yet she inadvertently brings about the death of all she seeks to help. Nishi is only as important as she is a body that men can work their trauma and confusion through. She is an agent of the thing that allows men to inhabit a truth space. Throughout the film, the male characters—a morphine-addicted military doctor called Dr. Okabe and various servicemen mutilated by the war, only speak their criticisms of the

war, revealing their own sense of impotence, through Nurse Nishi's sexuality. These male bodies only have agency through her initiating it. It is her questions that allow them political speech. For example, when the war surgeon Dr. Okabe speaks of his longing to again be a doctor rather than someone who decides who lives and dies, it is Nurse Nishi who asks the probing questions. Framed by surgeon and furniture, Nishi literally stands as the focal point of the frame. Alongside a questioning of duty and loyalty, the weak subject balanced against the might of the State remains one of the themes most prevalent in Masumura's oeuvre, which often starred the celebrated Wakao Ayako¹²⁶. From a working girl in Mizoguchi's *Street of Shame* (1956), to a seductress in Ozu's *Floating Weeds* (1959) and a young girl obsessed with her rapist in Ichikawa's *Punishment Room* (1956), the choice of Wakao Ayako, known for her erotic roles, for the main character in Masumura's *Red Angel* immediately troubles the imagined saintliness of the figure of the nurse.

A cinema of shocks, *Red Angel* begins with freeze frames illuminating images of war: from men crouched in trenches within a landscape composed of ruin and rubble to stills of the Japanese invading army juxtaposed against gravestones. Masumura overlays these black and white opening images with the sounds of explosions and gun fire, ending on a still shot of human skulls where the film officially accedes to movement. The use of black and white cinematography brings a certain documentary realism to bear on the warscape and prevents the spectator from becoming desensitized to the violence and bloodshed of Masumura's specific representation of the Sino-Japanese war. In the midst of a war hospital, where wounded bodies seem to spill over the screen, Masumura geometrically orders the space. The eye of the spectator

¹²⁶ For more on the collaboration between Masumura and Wakao, read the essay by Ayako Saito, "Reading as a Woman: The Collaboration of Ayako Wakao and Yasuzo Masumura," *Reclaiming the Archive: Feminism and Film History* (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 2010).

is directed immediately to lines of soldiers carrying the wounded or to young female war nurses as they march, from the right, into the disorderly screen in the opening sequence. It is in these spaces filled with excess, where the screen seems ready to burst from the chaos that Nishi finds herself enclosed. Often Masumura has architecture provide frames within the frame, pushing the characters or movement within the scene to one half of the screen, in this way heightening the chaotic movement of war by placing it adjacent to a stationary object. Such stylistic choices also have the additional benefit of forcing a greater focus on Nurse Nishi and the men who narratively surround her. Masumura's camera utilizes long shots, resting on scenes in an effort to communicate agony and the sense of the endless—endless lines of dying human beings, of limbs amputated, of bloodshed and waiting to go home—haunting these soldiers. Despite the humanist agenda, the shock aesthetics of Masumura's new wave cinema break from the elegy of occupation cinema and its focus on human tragedy, to send forth a searing indictment of an uncaring Japanese government and a society unthinkingly subjugated to the dictates of power. *Red Angel* stresses the sensory to heighten the horror of the war and shock the audience awake to the militarist currents present in the current political situation. Masumura forces his audience to observe for long minutes as a doctor cuts off the leg of a fallen soldier with only local anesthesia, the sound of the saw unrelenting, as the soldier cries out "Mother". "Soldiers aren't human beings. They are just weapons" the war weary surgeon, Dr. Okabe, states, recognizing Japanese bodies as just another tool to be used by and for power and discarded without thought.

The first words spoken in *Red Angel*, after the opening images of war, occur in voiceover by Sakura Nishi. Female image and voice are privileged almost concurrently, placing the figure of the nurse immediately at the center of the diegetic world. Throughout the film Masumura manipulates space, through the movement of bodies and framings of camera, to highlight the

centrality of the nurse to the politics of his work. Once in the ward, for example, Nurse Nishi's first encounter with the soldier finds her physically encircled by men led by a private called Sakamoto. The geometric placement of male bodies makes Nurse Nishi the foci of the spectator's vision both on and off-screen. Immediately she is lessened to a body to be gazed upon. The rape which occurs later that night by the same soldiers is one that calls for spectatorship—not only by the men in the ward who are bored and looking forward to a show, but by the cinema audience who through camera placement momentarily adopt the soldiers' gaze. When Private Sakamoto rapes her, Nishi becomes the live strip show for men both physically and psychically wounded by the war. It is the puncturing of the female body that mediates the war experience (for the male). What remains interesting to the rape sequence, is the staging of the body, which conceals Nurse Nishi's face even as her gartered legs are bared to the view. In every sexual encounter between Nishi and the war wounded, Masumura hinders the view of Nishi's face, either by covering her face with cloth (as occurs during the rape) or by framing her from the neck down, effectively reducing her to an erotic body. There is something maternal in her eroticism, where her pleasure arises from 'healing' the wounded psyches of the male victims of war. It is through the body of the female that Japanese men articulate their distress with the war situation and the loss of control over their own bodies.

I have been trying to examine *Red Angel* as an example of new wave cinema engaged in an ethics of desire mandating modes of remembering centered on the carnal female body. The erotic staging of the female body operates as a core aspect of Japanese new wave cinema in the presentation of screens of desire that recall or re-imagine the past in order to engage anew with the present. In *Red Angel*, Masumura utilizes Nurse Nishi's sexual relationships with paraplegic, Private Orihara, and Dr. Okabe, who has been indirectly rendered impotent by the war, to

criticize systems of power that make men powerless. In Orihara, Masumura presents a man whose ruined body acts as a signifier of loss and pending defeat to be hidden and silenced by the home government's unwillingness to reveal to the general populace the horror of war. Sexually-frustrated due to the loss of both arms, Orihara asks Nishi-san to help relieve the relentless ache. The sound of sawing fills the space, providing a sound bridge to the memory of Dr. Okabe amputating Sakamoto's leg and a bucket filled with amputated arms and legs. Sex becomes the doorway to memory and a re-engagement with the present-past, allowing a pathway to empowerment. Similarly, Nishi's relationship with Dr. Okabe cures him of his impotence returning him to his old self, to his manhood, to a human being. In both the love scenes between Nurse Nishi and Orihara/Okabe, Masumura focuses his camera and lighting on Nurse Nishi's body through which both men recover their 'manhood'. Hours later, they are dead.

Unlike the innocence of the young nurses in *Himeyuri no To*, the nurse in Masumura's oeuvre exists as a sub-category of the prostitute, a comfort woman harboring both healing properties and pathology, for she herself is a casualty of war. The figures of the nurse and the prostitute seem to have a reverse logic but they actually have the same logic. The nurse in *Red Angel*, appearing as a healthy body, welcomes the sick and through her body they regain their manhood, finding freedom from the past. The prostitute, on the other hand, as imagined diseased body, contaminates those around her that appear healthy—the idealized soldier (whether Japanese or American) bursting with health. And yet, both figures have the capacity to lead men to death or rebirth. In *Red Angel*, the soldiers conflate the Chinese comfort women held captive and dying of cholera with the nurses come to provide medical assistance, demanding sex and willing to rape, despite the apparent contagion, to gain what they consider the wages of war. Nurse Nishi's body absorbs the wounds of the nation even as her own body becomes an open

and sacrificial wound. It is through the body of the Japanese comfort woman that the unhealthy bodies of the Japanese military find their trauma mitigated.

4.5 *NIKUTAI NO MON* (1964): THE PROSTITUTE'S LAMENT

Little has been written in depth about Suzuki Suzuki's 1964 film *Nikutai no Mon*, particularly in light of the representation of the female body. Originally a novel by 'body writer' Tamura Taijiro published in 1947, then made into an equally successful play, *Nikutai no Mon* has been produced as a film five times. Belonging to the literary genre of *nikutai bungaku* (literature of the flesh), the sensation of the narrative revolves around its focus on the prostitute as rebellious war body through which the oppression of official thought (thought to have sent Japan into war) could be acknowledged and undermined. The popularity of the text speaks to the shared feeling of betrayal and bodily alienation after the war that lent itself to sexual excess and revelry (*katsutori* culture). For Tamura the body stands at the center of the politics of his novel:

...The Japanese people thoroughly distrust thought. We believe in nothing other than our own bodies. The body is the truth. The pain of the body, desire of the body, anger of the body, ecstasy of the body, confusion of the body, sleep of the body—these are the only truths (Igarashi, 56).

Igarashi argues that because the Japanese individual was left with only his body at the end of the war, for Tamura, it was only in the body that hope for the future lay. The prostitute, dependent solely upon her body, is important to his philosophy. Power and voice tied to the desirability of her body, she is the path through which discourses arise. Similar to *Red Angel*, *Nikutai no Mon* is important in its bringing of the female war body to the very forefront in a movement past

postwar notions of victimhood and external blame to a critique of the very real, corporeal and domestic body of the Japanese self and nation.

A decade after Japan's defeat, the new wave emerged with a return of the flesh, in a desire to speak back to the failure of democracy exposed by the forced renewal of the AMPO and the memories of the bomb that still shrouded the politics of self and nation. In 1961 Donald Richie observed that sixteen years after the bombing of the cities Hiroshima and Nagasaki where 240,000 were killed in the later and about 80,000 in the former, "there are in Hiroshima alone more than 90,000, suffering from radiation illness. These people are dying at the rate of about 50 a year" (20). Even though the censorship of the occupation authorities attempted to control the ways in which the defeat was articulated and remembered, especially in terms of the bomb, the legacy of the bomb was still ever present within the society and the rigidity of the government in terms of the AMPO renewals only served to recall the militarist time period within the minds of its citizens. The postwar prostitute stood as a powerful mnemonic device, tied as she was to the memory of defeat and the politics of the Japan-American union after the war. For Tamura, in the early stages of the occupation period, only through eroticism could the Japanese individual become more than he was, ascending to a 'true' humanity through the power of the erotic body. In a 1963 essay, Tamura Taijiro explains the title, *Nikutai no mon (Gate of Flesh)* as speaking to how, "...the enfeebled and, in a way, medievalistic Japanese, saddled with a long spiritual tradition, had to go through the gate of the body at least once to modernize themselves as human beings. In short...'the gate of the body' means 'gate of the modern'" (61, Igarashi). In other words, to move towards a new Japan, a transformation of the self through the body was called for. After the earlier disillusionment of the AMPO riots and the government's efforts to export a vision of self to international audiences courtesy its hosting of the 1964 Olympics, Suzuki

Suzuki's decision to remake *Nikutai no Mon* in 1964, with its stress on the eroticized female body and criticism of systems of power, intimates a retaliatory politics against "thought". The (post)war body of the prostitute mediates the political landscape, creating a 'truth' space that calls into question the very commodification of the national body (*kokutai*) and power embodied in a politics of sexuality.

Set in the burnt-out ruins of a post-warscape Japan, *Nikutai no Mon* presents the story of a group of rebellious prostitutes who form a business and family together as they squat in the midst of a bombed out Tokyo. The film follows the viewpoint of the new girl, Maya, played by Yumiko Nogawa¹²⁷, who falls into prostitution as a means to survive and gain power in a landscape where only 'demons' thrive. Joining the group of prostitutes whose only rule, brutally enforced, is no sex for free, Maya begins her transformation from ingenue to professional. No system of power—from Japanese government, to yakuza, to Christianity and the American government, are safe from the stinging cynicism that these transgressive female bodies bring to bear. It is not until an ex-serviceman, Shintaro Ibuki, joins the girls that the group begins to unravel. Maya falls the hardest. Seeing in Shintaro her brother who died in the war, Maya breaks the rules leading to the climax scene where she is stripped naked and whipped viciously by the other prostitutes¹²⁸. As with most of the Japanese new wave films, if what Maya and Shintaro feel for each other is love, it is not possible within a postwar landscape. Shintaro dies in a double cross as he plans to run away with Maya, leaving Maya to continue to struggle on her own as a woman of the night, without the protective coven of the other prostitutes.

¹²⁷ Nogawa Yumiko starred in a trilogy of films made with Suzuki Seijun—*Nikutai no Mon* (1964), *Story of a Prostitute* (1965), after another novel by Taijiro Tamura, and *Carmen from Kawachi* (1966)—known as Nogawa's 'Flesh Trilogy'.

¹²⁸ Igarashi states that the play, *Nikutai no Mon*, was "consumed largely as a striptease" its popularity arising from the scene where Maya is stripped naked and whipped by the other prostitutes (58).

Many letters were written by Japanese citizens at the end of the war to MacArthur, the face of the conqueror, and to the Japanese newspapers expounding upon their (post)war experiences and hopes or faces for the future. In his Pulitzer winning book, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*, John Dower writes about the role of media in the emerging face of the prostitute in the aftermath of the war. In 1946, a letter written by a young woman expatriated from Manchuria, detailing how she became a prostitute due to her desperation for food, (she became a fallen woman for the price of two rice balls), struck a chord in the society and inspired the creation of a song entitled “In the Flow of the Stars” released in December 1947. “Its refrain,” Dower expounds, “of *konna onna ni dare ga shita*—essentially, “Who made me such a woman?”—was taken up as a serious social question. The proper answer was usually understood not to be the sleazy procurers and pimps who took advantage of such destitute young women, but an incompetent government and bureaucracy” (123). Suzuki Suzuki’s decision to incorporate this lyric as a repeating refrain within the film *Nikutai no Mon*, speaks to how the female body on display, embodied in the figure of the prostitute, becomes the lens through which the political system in Japan is examined and criticized. In recalling the postwar period through popular music and sound organized around the figure of the prostitute, the film works to use the recollection of the past to politicize contemporary audiences, making connections between past and present hegemonic systems.

Nikutai no Mon opens with a title sequence composed of drawings of tortured female bodies set against a red and black backdrop. The sound of an air raid siren signals immediately to an audience still navigating the effects of the Second World War the time and place of what presents itself as ambiguous space—a burning Tokyo during the war. It is out of this hellish space that the postwar prostitute is born. Suzuki subjects his audience to a series of artwork

featuring suffering female bodies prior to opening his film on the image of its protagonist, Maya, whose voyeurism we adopt as she walks the black market streets to the theme music—the 1947 “In the Flow of the Stars”. The paralleling of these naked female bodies caught in the misery of war to the young prostitute, Maya, struggling to survive in a postwar world, is indicative of a temporal boundary crossing that situates Maya’s body within the category of war body. Unceremoniously gathered with other women by a military raid of the district, Maya’s eyes take us on a sweeping perusal of the postwar Occupation-era prostitute in all her defiant glory, a group to which Maya herself now belongs. “In the Flow of the Stars” was made popular by postwar child actress and singing sensation Hibari Misora, whose innocent presentation in films in the face of the aftermath of the war turned her into a national symbol of hardship yet hope. The layering of Hibari Misora over Maya’s cynical body, produced through the choice of song, pushes against the image of the prostitute as innocent victim of the war.

Although her creation is placed squarely at the feet of both Japanese and American governments, there is nothing childlike about the postwar prostitute. She is angry in a world where everyone is the enemy—Japanese and American alike—and her eroticism both empowers and allows her critical insight into this postwar world. By de-familiarizing the popular song in a displacement upon the familiar figure of the *panpan*, new meanings are affixed to the postwar text through the fostering of desire which lend themselves to a deeper questioning of the present experience. Towards the end of the film, Suzuki repeats the lyrics from “In the Flow of the Stars”, in the most famous scene of the text. Center-stage, Maya is hung naked and whipped gleefully by her fellow prostitutes for breaking the rules. As her prostitute-sisters sing, again positing the question, “*Konna onna ni, dare ga shita?*” Maya’s body is laid bare to the spectatorship of the other women in the room. In this space of shared female gazing and

subjectivity, song operates at a crossroads of female looking within which memory and protest reside in a call for social dialogue. Postwar song and the erotic war body operate in tangent to open space, time and meaning in the film. The erotic body as site of transgressive transformation, Tamura's hope for the future, presents another way to examine space and memory outside the paradigm of trauma. Placed at the center of vision, performances of the naked female body foster negotiations with world, opening vision and official knowledge into systems of multiplicity and ambiguity. The merging of song and female war body works to heighten the sense of an uncaring world occupied by foreign powers in which the marginalized individual finds herself powerless to effect change.

4.5.1 The Prostitute and the Soldier

In Suzuki's *Nikutai no mon*, sound acts as vehicle to enter into the space of memory embodied by the prostitute, overlapping past and present temporalities of the occupation period reflected in the film with the disillusionment of contemporary cinema audiences, caught like the characters in the story in a wasteland of broken ideals and faith in government. The spectatorship of the prostitute operates alongside song to pierce through the façade of the defeated postwar Japanese male. Shintaro Ibuki is an ex-soldier who served in China and holes up with the prostitutes after being wounded. In his excessive masculinity, Shintaro becomes a temptation for the women, yet his mask of gender drops beneath the counter-pressure of song and female sight. Framed by a bevy of women shaped by the war, Shintaro reflects on the words written on a cloth map of Japan previously owned by Maya's brother who died in Japan's imperialist expansions during the war: "Congratulations on your call to colors. So sad isn't it this flag? So many men got one of these, only to get themselves killed." Pulling the Japanese flag with its distinctive blood-red

signifier over his head Shintaro continues to sing a popular war song in his drunken reminiscing, intertwining song with the politics of war and national self.

“With wounded buddy on his back, he treads the pathless way. A dark march through battlegrounds as the night turns to rain. Sorry to be such a burden says a voice—”

Shintaro’s voice breaks, preventing him from finishing the tough and unyielding words of the idealized Japanese soldier before the war certain of his spiritual and victorious might—“Forget it, he says and marches firmly on. The steps of the soldier...” Unable to finish the song, Shintaro’s fists twisting into the material of his pants legs and his sudden silence are the only indicators of the effect of the song and his memories on him. For Judith Butler, with the slippage of gender so too falls the masquerade of the human, as entwined as gender is with identity. The women stare at the creature that Shintaro has become in his weakness, a weakness which lost the war, overturning conceptions of masculinity and thus the human in a revelation of the monstrosity which is the postwar Japanese male—feminized in his movement outside the hegemony of gender and abandoned at the margins of society.

In the Western tradition, cinema has typically been considered an instrument of the male gaze, generating images of women and ways of seeing that privilege a male subjectivity. Even though recent writings on the New Wave, for example that of Genevieve Sellier and Isolde Standish, have recognized the importance of the female body to postwar new cinema, New Wave cinema still remains conceptualized as a male centered vehicle authored by male directors in which the female character holds no real agency or significance outside of meaning for the male author or protagonist. As articulated by theorists from John Berger to Laura Mulvey, men look while women operate as objects of voyeuristic pleasure, emptied of all meaning outside of male definition and desire. The male gaze in classical cinema thereby presupposes the spectator as

male, creating an erotically coded landscape where men control the gaze or point of view and women are there to represent the desire of the male. Standish, for instance, argues that even though it is the women in *Nikutai no Mon* who “maintain their power hierarchy” through being “the agents of their economic exchange [instead of the pimps]” (259), “the man is still in control. The camera takes Ibuki’s point of view and positions him as the controlling gaze through which audience desire is channeled...” (259). *Nikutai no Mon*, however, overturns the expectations of the gaze, placing the female carnal body in the power position of the film. It is Maya’s desiring gaze and subjectivity that we follow throughout Suzuki’s film, and it is the female gaze that fetishes the postwar body, both in terms of Shintaro (whom all the women lust after) and Maya herself, strung up and whipped for female enjoyment. Suzuki encourages the consumption of Shintaro’s body, often filming the star body from low angles to highlight his powerful physique and exposed body. Through the prostitute’s spectatorship of the Japanese soldier a truth-space opens up which forces a rethinking of the heroism of war, and a re-visioning of the postwar male bursting with vigor and sexuality embodied in earlier occupation cinema.

4.5.2 The Prostitute and the Fall

In making the prostitute the focal point of his film, Suzuki cues the audience to a new way of seeing, one focused upon the flesh rather than the abstract body composed of spiritual ideals inherited from an antiquated emperor system. During the first two years of western occupation after the war, the invading forces were largely considered positive additions to the Japanese landscape, the image of G.I.s passing out candy to young children a common sight. Dower observes that for the occupation forces entering the country en masse, “Japan—only yesterday a menacing, masculine threat—had been transformed...into a compliant, feminine body on which

the white victors could impose their will” (138). *Nikutai no Mon* presents an alternative narrative where a critique of the postwar system is carried out through the figure of the prostitute, the counterpart to the white invader, whose presence alongside the foreigner emphasized the emasculation of the Japanese male certain of victory in the war and the need for social change. Engaged in a mutually exploitative relationship with the military personnel and black marketers that troll the area, there is nothing compliant about the female war bodies that eke out their living in the hellish landscape of *Nikutai no Mon*. Portrayed as animalistic and opportunistic, even while the prostitute’s theme song lends an empathy to their plight, the prostitute in *Nikutai no Mon* holds no real vulnerability. It is only through the pleasure of sex that they move from the margins to the center of society and transcend to the human—a place of mutual recognition and voice.

One of the ways in which *Nikutai no Mon* criticizes the American occupation alongside that of an uncaring Japanese government is through a focus on the church and the African-American. When Maya has sex with the African American priest who tries to help her, it highlights both the sexual relation between Japan and American, but also the wrongness of such a union, through the abject figure of the black man. Maya seeks her own descent, and thereby ascendancy into power, through sexual assimilation with the black body—the ultimate transgression—caught up as it is in a flux of religion, alienness and bestiality. Upset on seeing her love-interest, Shintaro, with another prostitute, Machiko, Maya accepts the sexual propositions of a white American military officer only to be thwarted by the African American priest (played by Chico Roland) who tries to save her from her fate. Blackness calls into being an anxiety with space and its relations with whiteness and power structures. Determined to become a demon in order to have power, Maya’s seduction of the black priest takes place in an

ambiguous burnt-out landscape upon which a church rests— a heterotopic space of otherness. The desire to transform into a demon pervades Japanese new cinema. The black body in its otherness, as compared to a notion of normalcy and power steeped in whiteness, becomes a doorway into the human in which, through the contamination of bodies, new sight and understanding is born. While the gaze of the priest finds itself diminished and turned inwards (he ultimately commits suicide), Maya appropriates the power of the male look in her consumptive sexuality, staring down at the priest's crumpled form dispassionately from a distance as he sobs over his own fall from grace. Portrayed with both identification and repulsed distance, the African-American body speaks to a concern with the human. Ultimately, the power Maya gains through her transformation into a demon proves largely illusionary as she descends further into her own hell by the conclusion of the film. "I've fallen by the wayside but I was determined to cling to the happiness of the fallen, even if it dragged me to the depths of hell," Maya's voiceover states. Suzuki's camera rises above the market place to show a flag of America flapping in the wind—the promise of the horizon and the expected rising sun (reference to the Japanese national flag) compromised by the presence of an American flag. As revealed with Nurse Nishi in Masumura's *Red Angel*, the prostitute, positioned at the center of the film, operates as a questionable ethical center, destabilizing older ideas that present Japan and its relationship with its conqueror in more oblique or obscure ways. Within the erotic space of the prostitute body two forms of masculine power coexist—the Japanese and the American. It is only through the wounded Japanese male that Maya is able to gain true pleasure and humanity, and only through the healing force of the prostitute's body that the Japanese male is able to reckon anew with the legacies of the war and his own disempowerment.

The comfort body operates as a means of destabilizing hegemonic systems of archiving that erase alternative historical accounts and encourage critical sight through the ‘humanity’ of sexual intercourse. During the 1945-1952 censorship period there was a building up of lacunae in Japanese cinema. Films seeking to represent the time period had to work around censorship to tell its stories. In Mizoguchi Kenji’s films the prostitute exists in a landscape sans Occupiers and military personnel. His films speak more generally about prostitution, the role of war and the respective military occupations of Japan and the United States in an enforced sanitizing of bodies and politics from his postwar texts. Although Mizoguchi’s 1948 film *Women of the Night*, for example, presents a postwar landscape where prostitution is normalized, the film very carefully stays away from an anger more directly focused on the war machine of desire that participates in a culture dependent on the comfort system. The films of Masumura and Suzuki on the other hand are not held in check by such censorship constraints and place the figure of the comfort woman squarely at the center of discourses concerned with love and family systems, war and man’s fall, and how a descent into decadence and eroticism results in becoming human.

The end of occupation slowly brought with it a rise of a new type of cinema that aimed to redress the imbalance—speaking back to the tension built up as a result of these gaps and using that energy to mobilize audiences in terms of their present experience. The mid-1950s saw the emergence of the *taiyozoku* films organized around the wild sexuality and disillusionment of the Japanese postwar youth. Soon after, the films of the much touted Oshima Nagisa, Yoshida Yoshishige, Imamura Shohei, Masumura and Shindo Kaneto, to name a few key directors, began to flood the market, presenting themes of sexuality and the postwar-scape that placed the carnal female body squarely at the center of their politics. The emergence of new wave cinema turned a

more critical light on the legacies of the war leading directly to the disillusionments of the US-Japan Mutual Security Act. Through the spectacle of sex and a focus on the erotic female body, the Japanese social imaginary was able to navigate the socio-political issues denied by the occupation censorship. Evoking the silenced figure of the non-Japanese comfort woman through the sexual body of the prostitute and the nurse, the suffering woman stands as more than a metaphor for the trauma of the atomic bomb in postwar cinema. Even as the new wave and sun tribe films were actively undermining the victim cinema of the 1950s, popular Japanese cinema continued to illuminate configurations of the *47 Ronin*. Alternative and more popular films and television programs were being consumed by the Japanese populace that highlighted a traditionalism or conservatism within the modern nation, reflected politically in the steady turn to conservatism of the Japanese government in the 1960s, evident still today. The continued division of the comfort woman in contemporary Japan points to the importance of the comfort body to the politics of the Japanese new wave. Weaving together various time periods pre-and-post war, the comfort body in new wave cinema asks us to question official narrative and ideology in an attempt to accede to a new Japaneseness or human in communion with Japan's own war guilt and victimhood, and thus Japan's responsibility to its own citizens and the wider Asian community.

5.0 THE DEMON MOTHER RISES

The tale of *Obasuteyama*: A peasant, adhering to local custom, carries his aged mother up the mountain to abandon her to die. As they go along the trail through the wilderness, he notices her breaking off twigs from the surrounding bushes. When he asks her why, she replies: ‘So you will not get lost on your way home.’ Overwhelmed by gratitude and shocked by the magnitude of the offense he was about to commit, the son defies custom, turns around, returns home, and vows to keep his mother until her natural death. Her accumulated wisdom later turns out to be invaluable, for it saves the village from disaster” (Cornell 71-72)¹²⁹.

A widely known Japanese folktale disseminating across literature and cinema¹³⁰, *Obasuteyama* provides one of the foundations for the discourse of the old mother as selfless and invested in the care of her son beyond her own life. The ‘goodness’ of the mother in the abovementioned narrative gives the son the strength to be honorable, leading to the changing of ideology. Conversely, it is the old mother’s wisdom and memory that serves to maintain the hegemony of the family system (*ie*) structuring Japan. The sustained popularity of the tale of *Obasuteyama* in

¹²⁹ Laurel L Cornell, “The Deaths of Old Women: Folklore and Differential Mortality in Nineteenth-Century Japan,” *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600 – 1945* (Berkeley, U of California P: 1991).

¹³⁰ The themes of *giri* and *ninjo* inherent in the tale are explored in the cinema of Japanese director Kinoshita Keisuke's *The Ballad of Narayama* (1958), and Imamura Shohei 's *The Ballad of Narayama* (1983), which won the Palme d'Or in 1983. Many versions of the tale of *Obasuteyama* exist. The specific story from which I draw can be found at <http://writing.wikinut.com/Legend-of-Ubasuteyama,-a-famous-Japanese-folktale/1gep0jqy/>

Japanese culture highlights the deeply rooted reverence for the ‘good’ mother that pervades Japanese society still. Also important to the consideration of the ‘good’ mother is the mutual respect and devotion inherent in the mother-son relationship. The son’s decision in the folktale, not to commit matricide despite the law, underscores the tension between the themes of *giri* (duty) and *ninjo* (compassion) intrinsic in the mother-son relationship that gain new life in Japanese postwar cinema.

The *ie*¹³¹ is another term to describe a traditional family structure which grew out of premodern Confucian ideals privileging the male head of the household and lineage under the State. Legislated under the law, the Japanese family became a means of unifying the nation at the expense of women who were buried within the household. Collette Balmain describes the *ie* system as a “rigid vertical structure of Japanese society [which places the samurai on top and the outcast at the bottom]...predicated on the repression and oppression of women, for whom the rules of appropriate behavior were dictated by her obedience to her parents, husband and children, in that order” (36). Within this system, according to Isolde Standish, the parent-child relationship takes a dominant position (PPP 80), and, “the long-term good of the *ie* as an institution takes precedence over individual desire; hence the classic dichotomy between *giri* and *ninjo*—obligation and human desires—that drives the narrative of many mainstream genre films” (PPP 81). In short, the stability of the *ie* made for a stable nation, and the *ie* came to be understood in social discourse as a metonym for nation.

It would not be until the early twentieth century that the State became interested in the productive maternal body as necessary to its nation-building and imperialist endeavors. The

¹³¹ For a more in-depth delineation of the *ie* family system and its postwar transformation see Emiko Ochiai’s *The Japanese Family System in Transition: A Sociological Analysis of Family Change in Postwar Japan* (Tokyo: LTCB International Library Foundation, 1997).

figuration of the ‘good’ mother, and, by extension, the mother-son dynamic, in turn, began to gain traction in Japanese cinema. Japan’s defeat in 1945, signaled by the merciless blast of atomic light obliterating the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, brought with it the beginnings of a significant change to the iconic mother. Families were destroyed and separated by the war, thousands would never return from the colonies, and those that did joined the millions at home invested in reconstruction. By the 1950s and 1960s, a new postwar family emerged, ushered in by the ‘economic miracle’. The Japanese salaryman, never at home, became the shadow head of the family while the wife managed the home. Within the postwar landscape, Japanese male power in the home seemed to weaken further—the prewar *ie* system no longer fit. At the level of nation, the State was engaging in foreign policy through a relationship with the United States that indicated a return to prewar ideologies. Postwar Japanese cinema would quickly reflect the shift in the *ie* and gender dynamics within the home, while new wave cinema, in particular, would additionally challenge the philosophies of the *ie* as nation through the eroticism of the mother so central to the home. In the cinema of new wave director Shindo Kaneto, this resistance to the prewar *ie* system, which lead Japan blindly into war and developed hierarchies of power that subjugated women, found expression through sentiment and the horror genre. In a movement from the victim discourse of the 1930s-50s, in the 1960s, the ‘good’ mother transforms into the ‘demon’.

In previous chapters I have argued for the importance of woman in Japanese new wave cinema. I have sought to show how through the erotic staging of the female body a throughway is provided in Japanese new wave cinema that politicizes the spectator, inciting new ways of considering self and world. It is within this ‘new’ cinema, which de-familiarizes ‘old’ female archetypes that the familiar figure of the ‘good’ mother arises as a transgressive one in 1960s

Japan. Associated with the survival of the *ie*, the good mother is replaced by the monstrous—a mother made horrific by the war in her overt, non-reproductive sexuality and domestic resistances. It is in her desirability and emotive performances that the pathology, and rupture, of the *ie* in Japan enters into critical dialogue. Tracing the transformation of the mother in Japanese cinema from ‘good’ mother to ‘erotic’ or ‘monstrous’ mother in the 1960s, this paper will examine the films of prominent director Shindo Kaneto.

A focus on Shindo allows me to examine the translation of the erotic mother motif into the horror genre, more specifically the ghost story, giving rise to the political entity of the “demon” mother. Often excluded from critical discourses concerning the Japanese new wave, Shindo shares with the more popular Imamura Shohei an interest in the fractured Japanese family and the powerful sexuality of the Japanese female that pierces through official narratives and forces a rethinking of the modern *ie*. Shindo is important because, unlike Imamura Shohei, he uniquely enters into the feudal past of the ghost story to critically interrogate the *ie* through the old body—the lowest equivalent of the hierarchical nation-state due to her non-reproductive status. In an interview with Joan Mellen, Shindo explains his tendency to work within the *jidaigeki* genre. “When I want to dissect a modern problem, I actually find many similar problems in ancient days,” Shindo reveals. “...By using a comprehensible social structure such as we had in the past, it is much easier for me to convey or recreate modern situations” (Mellen, 92). A review of Shindo’s oeuvre not only reveals the narrative shift from the young mother as victim to the vengeful crone important to this chapter, but complicates both categories of the mother through a sexual aesthetics key to the creation of a critical feminism.

By concentrating more specifically on Shindo’s *kaibyō eiga* (ghost cat film) *Kuroneko* (1968) and how it draws from earlier traditions of *kaidan* (Japanese ghost story), traditional

Japanese theater, and Japanese new wave itself, this chapter will explore the sexual old mother turned demon as she departs from prior filmic representations, de-familiarizing the archetype of the sacred mother in an attempt to force a questioning of the *ie* system. Although much more has been written by theorists on Shindo's nominal 1964 film *Onibaba* (Adam Lowenstein, Linnie Blake), *Kuroneko*, as a later work, hones the continued struggle with the legacy of the war and the need for transformation that haunts new wave cinema and finds itself best articulated through the horror elements of the ghost story. I hope to lend further credence to the overarching idea of the new wave cinema as a cinema of desire focused on woman which re-imagines the 'old' as a means to bring about social transformation.

5.1 LEGISLATING THE MOTHER: GOOD MOTHERS, WEAK FATHERS

In order to examine the representation and transformation of the mother in Japanese cinema, it is first important to understand the representation of the mother culturally as a figure fully inscribed within the *ie* and at the level of state legislature. The mother as symbolic of the 'home' is vital to the sustained imaginary of the saintly mother dedicated to her child that connects Japanese cinema across varying genres and time periods. It is telling that the child referred to above is more often than not a son, important both to the class system and war efforts of an imperialist Japan.

The notion of *ryosai kenbo* (Good Wife, Wise Mother) rose into being during the Meiji Period (1868-1912)¹³² with the start of the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-5. Endorsed by

¹³² The Meiji Period brought into being a centralized nation-state, in which the nation that previously pursued an isolationist policy (*sakoku*) opened its doors to Western commerce and diplomacy, ushering in a time filled with

government and educators alike, *ryosai kenbo* re-imagined women as central to the wellbeing of the *ie*¹³³, chiefly through care of her children. Invested in the strength of the nation, as compared to the revealed technological and military strength of the West¹³⁴, Megan McKinlay argues that “the government ascribed the responsibility for its goals of prosperity and strength to the family, as an extension of itself, and within that system, to women as mothers, who would bear and raise children to support the state”. Within the rigid social hierarchy of Japan’s *ie* system, the mother was held in high regard¹³⁵, especially with the disappearance of the father during times of war¹³⁶. During the war, for example, state protection of motherhood allowed for the drafting of chiefly young and unmarried women, while awards were often given to mothers with many children to

rapid reforms and the questioning of old customs in an attempt to become a more ‘enlightened’ and powerful nation. In an effort to modernize Japan, the Meiji government sought to create a new type of citizen loyal to both emperor and nation. Gail Lee Bernstein observes in *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600 – 1945* that here we see for the first time woman defined at least partly in terms of motherhood. The remaking of the female as part of the remaking of Japan, she argues, was captured in the slogan “Good Wife, Wise Mother” (7). The mother became vital to the maintenance of the family, and by extension the nation.

¹³³ The Meiji Civil Code of 1898 made legal the domination of women within the strict hierarchical structure of the *ie* which privileged the male as head of the household. This constitution made the patriarchal and class structure of the *ie* system the norm for families nationwide.

¹³⁴ Arriving in the bay of Yokohama in 1853 with the technological force of what would come to be known to the Japanese as the *kurofune* or the Black Ships, Commodore Matthew Perry made his first overture for trade with the Japanese. Returning a year later, this time with seven warships as compared to the previous four, Perry forced open Japan’s borders ending her isolation. Japan was made to sign the Treaty of Peace and Amity in 1854. By 1858, another treaty which favored the United States, the Harris Treaty, was foisted on Japan by the United States reinforcing their military might and imperialist aims in Asia. Held hostage by the United States’ displayed technological advances and enforced relationship, by 1868 Japan would seek to transform itself into a greater imperial power through political and economic reforms. Having colonized Taiwan and Korea, in 1931 Japan began to turn its eyes towards Manchuria and China in a rejection of the League of Nations and the United States’ protests. These rising tensions with their historical basis would add to others, lending to Japan’s entrance into World War II.

¹³⁵ During the war, state protection of motherhood allowed for the drafting of chiefly young and unmarried women, while awards were often given to mothers with many children to promote childbearing for the imperialist agenda of the nation (Bernstein 11-12).

¹³⁶ For more on the weakening position of men in the household and the rise of the mother, see Yoshiko Miyake, “Doubling Expectations: Motherhood and Women’s Factory Work under State Management in Japan in the 1930s and 1940s,” *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600 – 1945*, 267-295.

promote childbearing for the imperialist agenda of the nation (Bernstein, 11-12). *Ryosai Kenbo*, as a state-fueled ideology, infiltrated all levels of society through its media and educational institutions from the 1890s to the end of World War II. The loss of World War II resulted in a backlash in society against the ideology of the ‘good wife, wise mother’, embedded as the philosophy was in the pre-war militaristic state blamed for Japan’s humiliating defeat and postwar suffering.

The occupying forces led by General Douglas MacArthur enforced democratic reforms through a newly drafted constitution aimed especially at women in an attempt to destroy the feudalistic ideology and social relationships of the *ie* system¹³⁷. The 1947 document demanded the equality and individuality of all citizens allowing women to inherit, work and assemble, an edict directly counter to the hierarchical needs of the *ie* system. Kathleen S. Uno adds that many women felt distanced from the demands of *ryosai kenbo* due to their own experiences during and after the war, while “the critical voices of educators, leftists and feminists spread dissonant visions of womanhood through their writings, protests, and alternative institutions” (294). The mid-1950s especially saw the primacy of the female voice and body in Japan from the threat of a Prostitution Law triggering prostitutes to form unions in order to have a voice in governing their own bodies to political organizations formed by women against rearmament. The Mothers’ Congress, markedly, sought to educate housewives on the connection between economic hardship, sexual inequality and the structure of Japanese society in an attempt to increase the

¹³⁷ Even though the *ie* system, with its relationships based on loyalty and obedience, was abolished by the Occupation forces during the early postwar period, the strains of the system can still be seen within the family and corporations to this day.

political activism of the Japanese woman¹³⁸. In June 1955, the Japan Mothers' Congress held its first meeting, in which mother was presented not only as victim but as harbinger of peace, anti-nuclear discourse and parental love and memory (Yoneyama, 189). Hiroshima's mothers were seen as allies of mothers in other areas of the world, all victims of, and fighting against, U.S. militarism and global nuclear politics. Within that same year the discourse of the A-Bomb maiden (*genbaku otome*) would gain new ground with twenty-five young Japanese women sent to New York in 1955 for orthopedic surgery. Often paraded before foreign audiences either to reveal their awful scars or their oriental beauty, as in the Miss Atom Bomb competitions held yearly in Japan, the image of the *genbaku otome* would parallel that of the selfless and suffering mother in Japanese cinema.

These 'mad' mothers of the Mothers' Conference, who had lost husbands and sons during the extended warring period leading to WWII, soon moved from symbolic victims of the war with its devastating atomic bombings, to powerful adversaries of the state. In her essay "A Short History of the Feminist Movement in Japan," Sandra Buckley argues that the peace discourse after the war, "one of the defining principles of Japanese feminism" (168), found its staunchest allies and earliest expression in the women's movement of the 1960s. Buckley cites the Mothers' Congress, held annually in Japan, "as perhaps the strongest continuous antiwar and antinuclear voice in postwar Japan" (168), aiding in the mobilizing of thousands of women in the formation of a nationwide coalition geared towards protestation of the AMPO treaty (Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan) renewal of 1960¹³⁹.

¹³⁸ See <http://femjapan.pbworks.com/w/page/8848002/Housewife%20Movement> for a chronology of the Mother's Movement in Japan.

¹³⁹ The Mothers' Congress rallied and picketed over issues concerned with the continued American Occupation of Okinawa as well as atomic and hydrogen bomb testing and gender inequality, while also helping to increase the

Despite the strong showing of these angry mothers ‘maddened’ by grief over the war and a sense of betrayal by government, the deeply embedded ideology of *ryosai kenbo* with its stress on maternal love and devotion, continued to dominate social discourse and state policy until the late 1980s (McKinlay).

The schema of the ‘good’ mother was pivotal to the economic success and nationalist interests of Japan. Although the ideal of the ‘good’ Japanese mother was one nurtured initially by the State, the image of mother as self-sacrificing, virtuous woman suffering in the name of the family found traction in Japanese cinema in the years leading up to, and after the, Second World War. There was a movement away from the *moga* or modern girl and the threat of her sexual liberty in the 1930s to the safe harbor of the mother by the late 1930s. Ozu, for example, produced some of the more successful films of what became known as the “home drama” in 1930s Japan. Ozu’s first “talkie” within this genre, *The Only Son* (*Hitori Musuko*, 1936), presents a single mother who sacrifices her own land in order to finance her only son’s education only to be disappointed by his failed effort to “become a great man” and support his own family. Shamed by his mother’s disappointment, he vows to work harder to transform himself. Ozu continually cuts to shots of the mother in tears over her love for her son. He utilizes the sentiment engendered to stress the hardships the mother willingly undergoes to educate her son for the good of the *ie*, and the power of her disillusionment in her inability to save the family unit on the verge of collapse.

Despite, or perhaps because of, the politicism of mothers’ unions during the immediate period after the departure of the Occupation forces, cinema of the 1950s would become pregnant

political awareness of housewives in regards to the inherent problems of the very structure of the *ie* system upon which the Japanese nation stood.

with images of the mother suffering within a war-torn landscape. From Mikio Naruse's *Mother* (*Okaasan*, 1952) to Kinoshita Keisuke's *Twenty Four Eyes* (*Nijushi no Hitomi*, 1954)¹⁴⁰ to name a few, mothers are mournful and filled with regret. In his nominal text, *Currents in Japanese Cinema*, Sato Tadao observes that "as a rule the 1950s produced hardly any films with a happy mother in the leading role. The mothers were played by middle-aged and older actresses, and the more miserable they looked the nobler they appeared" (242). Beacons of an anti-war and humanitarian impulse, these mother films promoted a victim ideology that, while not removed from assigning blame, in their focus on the mother as sacred avoid a direct remembering of Japan's own war guilt. Kinoshita Keisuke's *Tragedy of Japan* (1953)¹⁴¹, Mizoguchi's *Street of Shame* (1956) and Ozu's *Tokyo Story* (1953), all contain absent or weak fathers and old mothers who, abandoned by their adult children in the materialism and disillusionment of a postwar world grow mad or die. The body of the postwar sacrificial mother oscillates around a melancholia for the traditional family unit and silent suffering of the good mother who erases her own body in her great sorrow.

Even when the father is at the center of the diegesis, he often tends to be a loving but weak individual. For instance, Ozu's 1932 silent film *I Was Born, But* (*Otona no miru ehon - Umarete wa mita keredo* "An Adult's Picture Book View — I Was Born, But..."), told from the perspective of two young brothers highlight their budding disillusionment with their father and the embedded hierarchical system at his work that removes him from the place of authority held within the home. Ozu's post-Occupation *Street of Shame*, similarly presents a sickly husband

¹⁴⁰ See William B. Hauser's "Women and War: The Japanese Film Image," *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600 – 1945*, 296-313, for more on the figure of the teacher as mother to the nation.

¹⁴¹ See Isolde Standish's *A New History of Japanese Cinema: A Century of Narrative Film*, 152-154, for more on this film.

whose wife must nightly sell herself in order to support her son and maintain the *ie*. Ozu's films, as representative of the home drama, are accordingly marked by the disappointing father, either in his absence or his powerlessness. It is in the father's absence, often as a result of being forcibly drafted into one of Japan's colonizing endeavors, or weakness, also often as a result of the hardships caused by the war, that the 'good' mother trope occurs. These films came to reflect the rising focus and dependency on the image of the mother around which (dis)belief and trust in the *ie* was organized.

Sato argues that the prewar cinema of Ozu (*I was born but*, *The only son*, *Passing Fancy* (1933)) reflect the very real social situation in Japan of the fall of the patriarchal system of which the mother arose to fill the vacuum in an attempt to cover the frailty of the system:

As indicated in Ozu's films before 1937, when the Sino-Japanese War broke out, the fall of the Japanese patriarchal family system was not brought about by the new postwar constitution. It was rather the result of a new education system and Japan's rapid industrialization, which drew youths away from the farming villages, which had been the core of the old feudal society. (138-9)

The presence of the disappointing father in these prewar films is important to a critical engagement with the Japanese new wave. With resonances related to Japan's defeat in the war and the enforced relationship with its Occupier, the trope of the weak Japanese male recurs in the Japanese new cinema of the 1950s and 60s. Humiliated by their lost in the war, the figure of the absent father or weak male proliferates across postwar cinema, taking on its sharpest critical edge within Japanese New Wave cinema. What is essential here is how the trope of the disappointing father gives rise to the idolatry of the 'good' mother and how the 'absent father-weak son' tendency in these prewar films are re-articulated in Shindo Kaneto's oeuvre. While I

will speak more to this tendency later in the chapter, it must be noted that rather than giving rise to the ‘good’ mother, in Shindo’s ‘new’ cinema the reverse happens— it is in the father’s absence from the home and the weakness of the son (in short the female’s disappointment in the male and patriarchal systems of power) that the mother turns demon in the director’s manipulation of the Japanese horror genre.

5.2 1950S SHINDO KANETO: THE *HIBAKUSHA* MAIDEN

Unlike other Japanese new wave filmmakers who worked within the film studio system, Shindo Kaneto left *Shochiku* film studio early in his career with director Yoshimura Kosaburo to form the independent company *Kindai Eiga Kyokai* in 1950. Translating as “The Society of Modern Cinema”, the name of Shindo’s film company suggests his interest in creating films that at the level of topic and style sought to investigate the modern dilemma of a postwar Japan. Ironically, Shindo would often employ the period drama (*jidaigeki*), which drew on the *kabuki* tradition¹⁴², and the modern melodrama, which drew on the *shinpa* or new school¹⁴³ (28) in his films giving the appearance of a more conservative cinema. In reality, Shindo would engage in a subversion of these classical film forms in a sensual politicism embedded in his aesthetics and the sexual

¹⁴² See Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto, *Kurosawa: Film Studies and Japanese Cinema* (Durham: Duke UP, 2000) for more on the *kabuki* tradition in Japanese cinema.

¹⁴³ A form of cinema first appearing around 1890 in Japan, *shinpa* typically involved melodramatic stories of suffering women within the rigid class system. Considered the beginning form of the *gendaijeki* or contemporary film, in *A Hundred Years of Japanese Film* Donald Richie observes that *shinpa* (or *shimpa*) “was originally designed as a typically Meiji-era compromise. It was written for a rapidly modernizing Japan which had thrown off feudal rule. The language was colloquial, the topic was largely concerned with the contemporary scene, and the performance was acted out not through the strict stylized movements of *kabuki* but through movement closer to life itself” (22-23).

resistances of the female body. In *Shocking Representation: Historical Trauma, National Cinema, and the Modern Horror Film*, Adam Lowenstein contends that Shindo's name should be added to the list of filmmakers during the 1960s period who are "political innovators in their own right" (104) and yet have been routinely excluded from the political significance of the new wave. Looking specifically at Shindo's 1964 film *Onibaba* as allegory for the wounds of Hiroshima, Lowenstein writes, "I would argue that Shindo's name must be added to this list, that his Hiroshima-centered work challenges the influential definitions of Japanese national identity and national cinema anchored to the figures of Kurosawa, on the one hand, and Oshima, on the other (104). In this section I will take the time to discuss the appearance of the mother in Shindo's films occurring within the 1950s period of Japan's victim cinema. Invested in a social realism that begins to politicize the mother, it is with Shindo's fully realized turn towards the erotic in his 1960s work that the mother would become a demon figure. Tying both decades together are the themes of Hiroshima and the human condition, which underline Shindo's work.

One of the most important independent directors operating in the 1950s and 60s, Shindo was both a script-writer and director, scripting films for the likes of Mikio Naruse (*The Dancer/Maihime*, 1951) and Masumura Yasuzo (*Manji* [1964] and *Irezumi* [1966]), among other filmmakers (Jasper Sharp, 217). Born in Hiroshima in 1912 of once rich landowning parents forced to become farmers, Shindo recalls at a young age the sight of his mother silently working the land and struggling day to day to survive. His oeuvre returns again and again to themes of Hiroshima and the atomic bomb, as well as the figure of the mother caught in circumstances beyond her control. In 1935, Shindo Kaneto entered Shinko Kinema's Tokyo studios as a set designer, where he would have the privilege of working on Mizoguchi Kenji's first postwar feature, *The Victory of Women (Josei no Shori*, 1946); a film about the feudal state

of Japanese women at the end of the Second World War, which encourages filicide. Known as the “woman’s director”, Mizoguchi directed many critically acclaimed ‘women’s weepies’¹⁴⁴ or melodramas within the *jidaigeki* (historical film) genre, from *The Life of Oharu* (1952) to the ghost story *Ugetsu* (1953) and *Sansho the Bailiff* (1954), which would highlight the plight of the suffering mother within a feudal landscape. Shindo would later cite his mentor Mizoguchi as a major influence in his postwar cinematic works, and indeed one can easily see his influence in the thematics and aesthetics of the ghost story *Kuroneko* (1968), which I will discuss at length later in this chapter. Although Shindo and Mizoguchi share an interest in woman at the center of their cinema, Shindo departs from Mizoguchi’s oeuvre in his fascination with the independence and erotic power of the female. Mizoguchi, on the other hand, tends towards the emotive positioning of his women as victims betrayed by their dependence on the Japanese family structure that positioned the male at the center.

Throughout his filmic work (of both the 1950s and 60s), Shindo was often criticized for the sentimentality of his films. While Joseph Anderson and Donald Richie observe that “Shindo’s style is one of the most distinctive, full of flashes of insight, the like of which is very rare in Japanese cinema,” they also notice in his films a “predilection for the extremes of pathos” (185). Shindo’s first film, the 1951 *Story of a Beloved Wife*, was both praised for its “brilliant contribution to postwar realism and for opening up a new genre concerned with the

¹⁴⁴ With the growing interest in Japanese cinema by western audiences after the war, the weeping image of the virtuous mother became a means for Japan to transform its aggressive war image to one in which regret and loss haunted the cinematic frame. Director Mizoguchi Kenji, for instance, came to international attention in 1952 with *The Life of Oharu*, which succeeded in winning the International Prize at the 1952 Venice International Film Festival and was nominated for a Golden Lion—the highest prize given to a film at the Venice Film Festival. Belonging to the *jidaigeki* genre, *The Life of Oharu* utilizes the figure of a young mother to criticize a society that misuses her.

characterization of wives as individuals,” and simultaneously heavily criticized for its sentimentality. Furthermore, in 1952, tasked by the Japan Teachers’ Union with making a film version of the novel *Children of the Atomic Bomb* (Arata Osada), the Japan Teachers’ Union decided to go with another director (Hideo Sekigawa, *Hiroshima*¹⁴⁵ [1953]) claiming that Shindo had “made [the story] into a tear-jerker and destroyed its political orientation.” The Teachers’ Union believed that the sentimentality of the piece would not “genuinely help to fight to preserve peace” (Anderson et al, 219). Although I would concede that Shindo’s *Children of Hiroshima* (*Genbaku no Ko*, 1952)¹⁴⁶ is ultimately conservative in its re-inscription of the main female lead within the codes of the family system by the film’s end, the sentimental acts as a tool within the cinematic text to force the spectator to critically see the aftereffects of the bomb through the eyes of the female positioned at the center of the diegesis. In light of modernity and the alienation it produces, sentimentality becomes an entrance into the human; an opposing way of entering into the politics of a transforming world from Oshima, with his cinema of shocks and cruelties, but no less pertinent.

The end of the American Occupation in 1952 removed a ban on Japanese cinema that prevented filmmakers from creating films directly concerned with Hiroshima and the atomic

¹⁴⁵To read a brief background about Hideo Sekigawa’s *Hiroshima* (1953) see “Poignant 1953 film on Hiroshima A-bomb returns after 6 decades,” *Asahi Shimbun*, October 12, 2012, http://ajw.asahi.com/article/behind_news/social_affairs/AJ201210180005. About 90,000 Hiroshima residents were extras and famed actress Yumeji Tsukioka, a native of Hiroshima, starred in the film. Around 500,000 teachers nationwide aided monetarily to the financing of the film. *Hiroshima* won the best feature-length movie prize at the Berlin International Film Festival in 1955.

¹⁴⁶ *Children of Hiroshima* is Shindo’s first film produced through his independent company, *Kindai Eiga Kyokai*—made soon after the end of the Occupation. It was entered into the 1953 Cannes Festival. The film draws from actual essays written by Hiroshima school children who experienced, and survived, the bomb.

bomb¹⁴⁷. Suddenly with Japan's sovereignty restored, the image of the mother began to be played against that of the *hibakusha* maiden, embedded as this figure was in narratives of atomic bomb victimhood and innocence lost. Shindo Kaneto's *Children of Hiroshima* starred his wife Otowa Nobuko in the role of kindergarten teacher Ishikawa Takako, a native of Hiroshima who returns to her home-city after an absence of four years. Shot on location, the film adopts a semi-documentary style as Takako provides the incentive for old friends and students to meditate about the very human consequences of the war. The black and white film is narrated with flashbacks through the perspective of Takako, who acts as witness to the stories unburdened upon her.

Children of Hiroshima was one of the first films produced after the occupation that dealt with the symbol of the ruin, placing woman and bomb at the center of the narrative. Maintaining enduring popularity in Japan, *Children of Hiroshima* would address the war through an emphasis on human tragedy, which positioned Japan as victim. For example, in one surreal sequence, images set to choral music and ending with the sound of a woman screaming are used to underscore the recalling of the bomb—the ticking of the clock and images of children caught in innocent play, a lone plane in the sky, a flash of light followed by half burnt female bodies with breasts bared. Women are staged not only to hold the trauma of the war experience, but, as protagonist and mediator, walking the audience through the scenes and memories of the wound of Hiroshima. Donald Richie notes the 'elegiac' element that extends in films past the occupation period that "do not emphasize the horror and suffering, as do later films, but the

¹⁴⁷ See *Hibakusha Cinema: Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and the Nuclear Image in Japanese Film*. Edited by Mick Broderick for more information on the censorship of the bomb in Japanese cinema. "Filmmakers were only permitted to show the bomb contextualized as a strategic instrument which was the only way to end the war. The visual effect of the war was to be avoided, as was any depiction of civilian victims" (9).

tenacity of the inhabitants, their industry and bravery” (22). Although the end of censorship is clear in the war images presented, Shindo’s film presents the war through a series of maimed atomic bodies and stories of destroyed lives, encouraging the consumption of an official narrative of victimhood through the body of the innocent woman.

Although the film was criticized for its sentimentality and lack of politicism, it remains one of the first films to address the trauma of the bomb through a female point of view. The emotive tones of the film generated through music, storytelling and a surrealist visualization of the moments before and after the fall of the bomb drive the audience to inhabit the feminine space of witness, alongside the main character. As a teacher, Takako occupies the space of mother of the nation, due to the many minds under her jurisdiction. Aligned with the young (and often sterile) *hibakusha* maidens, it is the ‘young’ mother who leads the charge for a pacifist approach to the lessons of the war in Shindo’s 1952 film. Her primary concern still the preservation of the home, the tragedy of the bomb in *Children of Hiroshima* is organized around the possibility of being a good wife and mother in order to maintain the *ie* and thus the nation after the war. For example, a fellow teacher named Natsue becomes sterile from the bomb’s radioactive fallout and seeks to adopt one of the many children orphaned by the bomb, while another, marred with a limp, leaves her family to marry into another. Takako also adopts a young boy from a grandfather who, unable to support the household, immolates himself in protest against a war where only the innocent seem to suffer. The conservative impulse of the young female victim of the bomb to create a family in the face of destruction, signals reproductive hope in the midst of tragedy. Here, the imaginary of the wounded Hiroshima maiden is entwined with the figure of the ‘good’ mother as teacher in a re-imagining of the *ie*

along the lines of the educational institution and, thus, the education of new citizens invested in peace and the creation of a successful Japan.

Lisa Yoneyama uses the term “feminine memory” or “feminized memory” to “characterize the dominant national and global representations in which past experiences, whether remembered by men or women, are marked and distinguished exclusively as those of ‘Japanese Women’” (189). The young mother stands as bearer of war memory, and, so too, as victim, in what Yoneyama terms a forgetting in the form of remembering (Yoneyama, 165). *Children of Hiroshima*, for example, with its young female center seems to be remembering and making a statement about the war, but actually ‘forgets’ to acknowledge the role of Japan itself. Yoneyama argues that “remembering the atomic destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as events in the history of humanity has significantly contributed to the forgetting of the history of colonialism and racism in [Japan],” (12). She uses the concept of “amnesic remembering” (166) to explain how history in nations becomes established as truth. Yoneyama explores how Hiroshima as the atom-bombed icon of Japan's victimization focused memories on Japan's victimhood, thus indirectly pushing memory of Japan as a victimizer in other parts of Asia into a fuzzy forget zone. Cinema dealing with the bomb in 1950s Japan often followed a trend of the amnesiac, promoting the creation of a spectatorship of forgetting and misremembering. To this day, Japan still struggles with how they want to remember the Second World War, (and be remembered), most explicitly seen in their continued denial of their colonial aggressions and the forced sexual slavery of young girls and women placed in ‘comfort’ stations throughout Asia. The current Prime Minister of Japan, Abe Shinzo, continues to not only visit the *Yasukuni*¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁸ The Yasukuni Shrine provides another example of Japan's disavowal of wrongdoing. Hannah Beech explains that “Yasukuni honors the nation's 2.5 million wartime dead, including those convicted of committing atrocities during imperial Japan's march across Asia in the past century. A history museum located on the shrine's leafy

shrine, dedicated to the Japanese war dead who died serving the Japanese empire and containing over 1000 enshrined war criminals, but defends his belief that Japanese Class A war criminals are not criminals under the domestic law. In December 2013, Abe announced a five-year-plan to expand Japan's military in what he has described as a "proactive contribution to peace"¹⁴⁹ in a return to a more active military role in world affairs. Shindo Kaneto's focus on Hiroshima in his films showcases an important attempt, through a criticism of the *ie* or system of power, to shatter an archiving of a conservative or official version of history seen as still pervading Japanese politics. By turning the mother, traditionally intertwined with the house and the raising of indoctrinated citizens, demon, Shindo undermines the very stable base of memory and history that the traditional figure of the mother occupies.

grounds downplays Japan's brutal World War II record, labeling the Nanking Massacre, in which Japanese soldiers engaged in a weeks'-long slaughter in the former Chinese capital, a mere "incident," among other revisionist claims." See Hannah Beech's article, "Japan's Hawkish PM Abe Visits Controversial Shrine That Honors War Criminals," *Time*, December 25, 2013, <http://world.time.com/2013/12/25/japans-hawkish-pm-abe-visits-controversial-shrine-that-honors-war-criminals/>

Although no Emperor or Empress has visited *Yasukuni* Shrine since 1975, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and his predecessor Koizumi visited the shrine several times during their political terms. Abe is both the youngest postwar prime minister and the first to be born after WWII. In April 2014, BBC News observed that "almost 150 Japanese lawmakers have visited the Yasukuni Shrine, in a move likely to further sour ties with regional neighbours. ... China and South Korea view the shrine as a symbol of Japan's wartime aggression and have accused Tokyo of failing to show the necessary remorse for wartime atrocities." See "Japanese Lawmakers Visit Yasukuni Shrine," *BBC News*, April 22, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-27107257>.

¹⁴⁹"Abe's 'proactive' pacifism should not be used to promote collective self-defense," *Asahi Shimbun*, September 28, 2013, <http://ajw.asahi.com/article/views/editorial/AJ201309280023>. Abe supported the largest increase in the defense budget in almost two decades in December 2013.

In *Voices from the Japanese Cinema*, Joan Mellen argues that the central theme in Shindo Kaneto's work is the reconstruction of the family, which she hypothesizes stems from the rupture of Shindo's own family when he was young (72). Although Mellen rightly points to the concern with familial reunification apparent in his earlier works, Shindo's oeuvre begins to shift its trajectory in the 1960s in line with a general Japanese new wave aesthetics focused on the erotic, where families, not only become, but, often remain fractured. Mellen argues though that “the treatment of sex in Shindo's films was never exploitative or gratuitous. It has been employed by the director as a means of looking into the heart of the human being and of exploring human nature in general” (78). In her text *Japanese Classical Theater in Films*, Keiko McDonald adds that Shindo's oeuvre of the 1960s show a “persistent concern with female sexuality. [Many of his films] share a central theme of woman using her sexual prowess to challenge feudal social structure” (272). The trope of the sexualized mother, of the erotic mature woman, rises up in new wave cinema as a main mode of articulation concerned with gender relations and nation that sought to reconsider national discourses of the past that inflect the present. In the 1960s films of Shindo, the lament of the 1950s postwar mother over the horrors of the bomb turns to anger directed at the feudal system which Shindo blames for Japan's involvement in the war. Through metamorphosing the body of the ‘good’ mother into a sexual mother who defies the codes of state and social expectations in order to survive within a postwar world, Shindo politicizes the mother by making her ‘strange’, forcing an examination of Japanese self and society.

A brief consideration of Shindo Kaneto's 1963 *Mother (Haha)* against the specter of Naruse Mikio's 1952 film of the same name, *Mother (Okaasan)*, provides an excellent closer look at this phenomenon of the rise of the mad/angry sexual mother. Of note here, are the

different honorifics used to represent ‘mother’ in the titles of these aforesaid films. *Haha* and *Okaasan*, both translate as ‘Mother’ but *haha* suggests the presence of an audience to whom the figure of mother is being discussed, alluding to a conversation concerned with the topic of Mother. *Okaasan*, meanwhile speaks to a more intimate and personal relationship, to one’s own mother, the ‘O’ showing respect and honoring the figure of mother. Naruse’s film, in fact, tells the story of a mother as narrated by her daughter and is caught up in a more traditional minded idea of mother. In other words, Shindo’s *Mother* suggests an examination of said figure, whereas in honoring the mother, Naruse’s film remains embedded in the *ryosai kenbo* philosophy, raising no real tension between mother’s idealized form and her cinematic representation. “A mother must be strong” is a phrase uttered in Naruse’s *Mother*, which sets the tone for a film proliferating with mothers suffering in a postwar Japan who have lost sons and husbands as a consequence of the Second World War. A hardworking mother, Masako Fukuhara, played by the legendary Tanaka Kinuyo ¹⁵⁰, struggles to take care of an ill son and husband, whose deaths result in the fracturing of the family. Masako’s home will ultimately operate as a conduit through which other households are (or will be) formed through the care of her remaining daughters and her sister’s son. For example, Masako takes care of her sister’s son Tetsuo until she can support him herself and start her own home. She gives up her youngest daughter for adoption to relatives who have lost their only son in the war. Her oldest daughter, Toshiko, who narrates the film, will eventually get married and the hard work of her mother supports her career ambitions. Naruse’s mother becomes a “holy mother”¹⁵¹ in her selfless

¹⁵⁰ The second Japanese woman to work as a film director, Kinuyo Tanaka began her career as an actress in the late 1920s/early 1930s and would perform in 15 of Mizoguchi Kenji’s films.

¹⁵¹ A Tadao Sato reference to *Ugetsu*’s maternal ghost, Miyagi, in *Kenji Mizoguchi and the Art of Japanese Cinema* (Oxford: Berg, 2008), 115.

desire to support the community of the *ie*. In company with Naruse Mikio's 1952 *Mother*, Tanaka famously plays the 'good' mother in Mizoguchi's *Ugetsu* (1953) and *Sansho the Bailiff* (1954). These films present 'mother' as unerringly noble and as the one who maintains the family unit, even to the extent of returning from the dead.

As in most of his films, Shindo's *Mother* (1963) stars Otowa Nobuko as a young single mother, Tamiko, in a much different role than her earnest performance in *Children of Hiroshima*. Discovering that her young son is dying from a brain tumor that will render him blind, Tamiko marries, unbeknownst to her, an old Korean man, Tajima, with the intention of running away once he has paid for her son's expensive operation. Many of the film's scenes are set against the backdrop of the Genbaku Dome¹⁵² in Hiroshima, lending the cadence of atomic devastation to a narrative that sentimentally grapples with the death of a child and the turn from social rebellion to madness, which Tamiko's life takes. *Mother* teems with the postwar trope of absent fathers and weak or disappointing sons. Looking down at Hiroshima from the same eyesight (he speculates) as the people who dropped the bomb, Haruo, Tamiko's brother, queries, "the person who made the bomb must think of himself as a God. What are people? Beasts? Monsters?" Later, Tamiko's own mother would ask whether Tajima was not human because of his Korean heritage. The introduction of this theme of the human, within these dueling discourses of the American atomic assault on Hiroshima and Japan's own colonial aggressions toward Asia, navigates the intersections between victim and aggressor in Japanese official memory of the war.

Tamiko does not fall into the category of the *ryosai kenbo* mother as, rather than suffer in silence she runs away from poor marriages or plots her escape, destroying the family unit. She

¹⁵² The *Genbaku* dome also known as the Atomic bomb dome or the Hiroshima War Memorial was the lone structure to survive near the epicenter of the blast.

controls the voiceover of the piece which places her in a position of power and provides the social critique of the film. Shindo's camera plays with lights and lighting, with voiceover and shot movement and angles to challenge a more classical cinema of the 1950s Japanese golden age cinema. "I must give pleasure to this man" Tamiko says in voiceover to the sounds of a press system with its rhythmic movement and mechanic repetition, after remarrying (for the third time) in order to save her child's life in a system of social obligations. Sound often ushering in female subjectivity, the acoustic and visual close up given to press machine, serves to heighten tension and expose the entrapment felt by the young mother, Tamiko. Through voiceover, the resentment of the traditionally displayed silent, suffering mother, spills over. Monstrous in her cynicism toward the Japanese home, this mother makes it clear that she receives no pleasure in the act, with any man, in a rejection of the gender relations expected of her as a woman. In Shindo's text, although the mother sacrifices for the son, her sacrifices are ultimately futile. Tamiko's son dies despite the operation and she descends into madness, entering into the realm of Balmain's "*bukimi-na haha: the nightmare mother*" (373).

With Tamiko's surprise pregnancy at the film's end, *Mother* returns the angry mother to the familiar figure of the traditional mother in her acceptance of the roles of wife and mother. Willing to lose herself to madness or death in order to gift her husband with a child, with the next generation, Tamiko states, "I am a woman and I can't do a lot, but I can give life to another human." Despite the seeming politics of the piece, Tamiko choices reveal a conservative impulse and does not escape the expectations of her femininity. She stays with her husband and despite the dangers to her health wants to give him a child, in memory of her lost child. A more generous reading of the film's conclusion takes into consideration the figure of the Korean husband, Tajima, and an awareness of the implications of a child between the two in a

notoriously racially prejudiced Japan. The creation of a Japanese-Korean child from the body of the Japanese mother perhaps hints at a reconciliation with and recognition of Japan's destructive role as invader in the war, in which they forced colonials to work on their behalf for the war effort. Tamiko's hybrid child signals a changing face of Japan and a potential renewal of nation. A transgressive figure in her madness and derision towards the Japanese hierarchical *ie*, Tamiko presents the beginnings of what will become the demon mother in Shindo's *Onibaba* and *Kuroneko*.

5.4 THE SCARRED MOTHER: OIWA AND ONIBABA

In her essay, "Demons in the Family: Tracking the Japanese 'Uncanny Mother Film' from *A Page of Madness* to *Ringu*" Ruth Goldberg examines the *bukimi-na haha-mono* (the 'Uncanny Mother' film), which she traces back to its earliest incarnation in Teinosuke Kinugasa's silent film *A Page of Madness* (1926). She believes that *A Page of Madness* "shows the beginnings of an idea of monstrous motherhood which has never left the popular imagination in Japan" (372). Set in an asylum where an old man gains employment as a custodian to be near his incarcerated wife, *A Page of Madness* highlights the broken family composed of an old mother, who years earlier had tried to drown her infant son, and an ineffectual husband who eventually descends into madness. An early example of what Goldberg calls "the Uncanny Mother", *A Page of Madness* "[revolves] around the Uncanny Mother, once familiar, now unfamiliar, who [has] abandoned her family...and has retreated into a world that no one else can access" (372). Goldberg's 'uncanny' mother bears much resemblance to what this chapter terms the demon mother—a de-familiarized old mother (often represented within the realm of the supernatural)

whose sexuality and angry resistance towards a unification of the traditional family both places her outside the category of “good wife-wise mother” and generates a searing indictment of contemporary Japanese society. Goldberg takes an understanding of the uncanny from Freud’s essay of the same name, arguing that the “preoccupations and constructs” from which the horror film emerged stems from the “intellectual uncertainty, the return of the repressed, the appearance of the double, the eerie, atmospheric transformation of what is most familiar into something unfamiliar” (371) embodied in Freud’s uncanny. If we understand the “Uncanny Mother” within these terms, the figure of the ‘uncanny mother’ can disputably be traced even earlier than *A Page of Madness* in the ghost story of *Yotsuya* which was first filmed in Japan in 1911 by the Yoshizawa Company.

Madness, anarchy, maternal filicide and the fracture of the family—these components, which mark *A Page of Madness*, also take place in *Yotsuya Kaidan* (*Yotsuya Ghost Story*). Originally a kabuki ghost play written by Tsuruya Nanboku in 1824, *Yotsuya Kaidan* is important to the horror genre as “the most frequently adapted horror play” with at least eleven cited versions occurring in Japanese cinema between 1928 and 1994¹⁵³ (Richard Hand, 22), and continues to be influential to the genre of Japanese horror to this day. Colette Balmain, on the other hand, contends that the number of times the *Ghost Story of Yotsuya* has been adapted for the screen is closer to thirty (16), as compared to Hand’s estimations. Beginning with a *noh* performance elucidating an understanding of the greatest horror as a woman driven mad,

¹⁵³ According to Richard Hand, these eleven versions of *Yotsuya Kaidan* all recount the same tale but shift in emphasis “from the cerebral to the violent or the sexual to the farcical” (22).

Nakagawa Nobuo's¹⁵⁴ 1959 *Tokaido Yotsuya Kaidan*¹⁵⁵ remains the most highly regarded version of *Yotsuya Kaidan*. Originally a tale in which a *ronin* (masterless samurai), Iemon, in want of a better life, betrays and poisons his wife, Oiwa, and is plagued by her disfigured ghost, Nakagawa's 1959 film assumes a version in which Oiwa is not just a loyal wife but a loving mother.

The main element that haunts the notion of the 'uncanny mother' in *A Page of Madness* is the mother-child, or more specifically the mother-son, element. In *A Page of Madness*, the mad mother tries to drown her infant son and it is in this attempted murder—the severing of the sacrificial bond (signaling maternal devotion) expected between mother and son—that truly makes the mother monstrous. In Nakagawa's *Yotsuya Kaidan*, the monstrosity or rather unfamiliarity of devoted young wife and mother Oiwa finds itself expressed both through her ruined face (a side effect of the poison) and through her murder of her young son, a murder born out of love. It is the inherent social condemnation and rejection of expected structures of duty over emotion that makes the act of Oiwa so shocking, and yet the valences of World War II embodied in her disfigurement, which makes her action so understandable. Nakagawa's camera holds Oiwa in a mid-shot exposing her grossly disfigured face as she cradles her child, bemoaning the cruelty of her husband and her subsequent fate. A mother's love is palpable in the tableau as is a mother's monstrosity. "Die with your mother," Oiwa cries. "I could never rest in peace if I left you to such a fate." In the background music swells, heightening the

¹⁵⁴ Nakagawa Nobuo, also known as 'the Nippon Hitchcock' according to Richard Hand (22), is considered one of the foremost pioneers of Japanese horror during the 1950s and 1960s. He directed the first color version of *Yotsuya Kaidan* in 1959. His most internationally known film remains *Jigoku* (1960).

¹⁵⁵ *The Ghost of Yotsuya* as directed by Nakagawa Nobuo remains one of horror's most influential films. For instance in Kobayashi Masaki's *Kwaidan* (1964), the first tale entitled "the Hair" draws stylistically from Nakagawa's *Yotsuya Kaidan*. In "the Hair"'s narrative of an unemployed ronin who divorces his wife and marries another and while married is haunted by her image, *Kwaidan* provides a modern take on the *Yotsuya Kaidan*.

emotional moment in its juxtaposition to the director's prior uses of silence, punctuated by fireworks, as Oiwa fully realizes the extent of her husband's hatred and treachery. When vengeance occurs it is the mother scarred and wronged who seeks justice—the monstrous mother driven to madness. Madness here is as much aligned with a seething anger as with a state of turmoil or bedlam.

Colette Balmain argues that the iconic image of mother and child becomes a key feature of Japanese horror cinema from the 1950s onward (41). With the end of censorship on films related to the Second World War and the devastation of the atomic bomb, horror falls naturally as the genre to negotiate the war experience. In particular, the Japanese *onryou* or vengeful ghost is typically a wronged female who, at the center of the narrative, drives the plot forward. With her beauty horribly marred and the hair falling in bloody clumps from her head, Oiwa, the most popular female ghost, calls to mind the *hibakusha* maiden. In many of the recountings of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the images that repeat in the recollections and drawings of survivors are those of mothers holding their children—dead mothers with crying babies, injured mothers with dead babies, dead mothers with dead babies. These images find themselves played out in Japanese postwar/bomb cinema of the 1950s and onwards. For example, the opening credits of Suzuki's *Nikutai no Mon* highlight images of women and children burning during fire-bombings of Tokyo, while Imamura Shohei's *Black Rain (Kuroi Ame, 1989)* showcase women and children suffering after the bomb in Hiroshima. In her suturing to the *hibakusha* maiden, the disfigured young mother operates as the ultimate symbol of the travesty of the bomb.

The trauma of defeat left scars on Japan's national psyche which have never fully gone away, and many horror films from the 1950s onwards would use the scarred face of the

archetypal Japanese wronged woman, 'Oiwa', to signal metonymically the continued impact of the Second World War on Japan. (Balmain, 21)

Masaki Mori, for instance, would produce a black and white version of *Yotsuya Kaidan* in 1956, and the *Ghost of Kagami Pond* in 1959, both featuring alliterations of the scarred visage of Oiwa in their wronged female characters. Although Oiwa wreaks havoc as an *onryou*, she is still represented largely as victim rather than simply assailant, for she never actively kills. Oiwa's image haunts the main male character causing him to murder and eventually kill himself. The story is never told from Oiwa's perspective, rather Iemon holds the privilege of sight and knowledge, over Oiwa's own body itself. Framed from his perspective reality and illusion blur, making it uncertain to what extent it is Iemon's own guilt that haunts him, or the actual manifestation of Oiwa as vengeful ghost. Additionally, when vengeance is achieved, Oiwa returns to the image of the traditional mother who is no longer facially disfigured. It is her status as 'good' mother which lends the film its true melancholia and social commentary. The director represents Oiwa's salvation through the return to her former beauty and the sight of mother and son, dressed in white and reunited in death—a return to the sacred.

Shindo's *Onibaba* moves in opposition to Nakagawa's version of *Yotsuya Kaidan* in his placement of an old 'demon' woman, an *onibaba*¹⁵⁶, at the center of his supernatural tale. Set in the midst of one of many civil wars before the establishment of the Tokugawa Shogunate in 1600¹⁵⁷ *Onibaba* is a historical tale about a mother (Otowa Nobuko) and daughter(-in-law) who lure samurai to their deaths within a deep pit, then sell their armor in order to survive in a war ravaged Japan. When the daughter threatens to leave, due to a new romantic interest, the mother

¹⁵⁶ To see more on demon women and masks, see Noriko Mizuta "'Unconventional Women': From the Body as the Site of Domination to the Body as the Site of Expression," *U.S. Japan's Women's Journal* no.20 (2001): 3-16.

¹⁵⁷ Desser, *Eros Plus Massacre*, 121.

murders a samurai and dons his *noh hannya* (jealous female demon) mask in an attempt to scare her into submission. The old woman assumes the mask in an effort to rid herself of the threat of dangerous change that would mean her own death, but the plan fails and she finds herself unable to remove the mask. After convincing the daughter that she is indeed human and not a demon, the younger woman forcibly removes the mask in a painful sequence revealing the now horribly scarred and ravaged visage of the old woman who has truly become a demon.

The supernatural is used to speak to the human as site of disappearance. Even before the mask is donned, the women in *Onibaba* are presented as monstrous. The performance of these women's bodies, hunched over with only the whites of their eyes visible as they drag dead bodies behind them, introduces the image of the otherworldly or the non-human within the eerie landscape of the susuki fields. Woman stands at the crossroads of the animal, the demon and the human through the inhumanity both of war and their oppression in society. The mother and daughter, though, are clearly differentiated from each other, not only in terms of age but in terms of sexuality. Sex returns the young woman to the human in its representation of life and hope, while the old barren body remains caught in a paroxysm of sexual desire, sorrow and frustration as the mother grinds against a dead, twisted tree in a clearing after secretly watching her daughter have sex. The wounds of the past are embodied in the figure of the old rather than the young who seeks to create a new family unit.

The *hannya* mask exhibits twin characteristics of the visible and the invisible as on one hand it reveals the façade of the samurai and philosophy of *bushido* (propaganda used with the *jidaigeki* films proffered by government controlled cinemas during the war to foster an image of self and nation for militarist and imperialist agendas) that leads to war, but so too the façade of the mother. The mask that tears off flesh simply tears off the illusion of what the mother

represents in terms of the sanctity of the Japanese home, thereby revealing the damage that the war and her own government has wrought upon the *ie*. Expressing the fury of a woman turned demon, the samurai's *hannya* mask also feminizes the samurai and lends an aggression to wounded face beneath in a merging of samurai and atomic maiden that demonizes the *hibakusha*. When the old woman dons the mask in turn, the older generation and the female join the samurai in culpability for the war and the devastation of the atomic bomb. Lowenstein describes how in *Onibaba* "war responsibility emerges as intertwined between victimizer and victimized, upper class and lower class, male and female, to complicate the very notion of demarcating 'demons' and 'human beings' in the face of Hiroshima" (90). Both demonic and tormented, the *hannya* mask operates to pierce through official Hiroshima narratives of victimhood embedded in the figure of the young atomic maiden.

While *Yotsuya*'s Oiwa in death becomes a beautiful traditional image of motherhood in a maintenance of the victim narratives surrounding the young atomic maiden, the old scarred and sexual mother in *Onibaba*, bearing the tensions of humanity and monstrosity, is caught in suspension as if in a reflection of Japan's continued inability to reconcile its own twin natures. "If the typical 'A-bomb maiden' stands for the enduring beauty and innocence of traditional 'Japaneseness' despite the technological onslaught of the atomic bomb," Lowenstein contends, "then the old woman of *Onibaba* presents the painful, occluded underside of this image. The harrowing difference between the two speaks to the trauma of Hiroshima, not its wishful redemption via an idealized femininity" (93). The old woman never reverts to her former wholeness, rather Shindo freezes her image as she leaps over the deep pit, a wound that mars the sensuous landscape filled with the dead she has murdered. Shindo, though, does not fully remove hope from the body of the old woman, instead he leaves his film open-ended. "By

destroying her face,” Shindo expounds in an interview with Joan Mellen, “I said something about the beginning of a new life for people who are assaulted by unexpected social events” (86)¹⁵⁸. While Oiwa is purely a victim of an oppressive patriarchal system, *Onibaba*’s demon mother is active, bitter and violent, both victim and aggressor, sexual yet barren; a frenzy of pent up need that overturns the image of the suffering mother celebrated in earlier films. When the mask is torn away leaving her face scarred in a recalling of the *hibakusha* victims, she denies her monstrosity, declaring her humanity, perhaps exactly because of her monstrosity, with the hope for something unknown and uncertain in the future as she leaps over the chasm.

Shindo’s choice of the ghost story in *Kuroneko* again places the avenging demon woman at the center of the narrative, allowing her the freedom to wreak her vengeance on the world/system that has wronged her. Unlike the *onryou* Oiwa, *Kuroneko*’s mother is not a young, beautiful woman who is blameless and innocent, rather she is a mother who is angry, sexual and bears witness. She does not forgive and will not be stopped, not even for her son.

5.5 *KURONEKO (1968): JIDAIGEKI AND THE SAMURAI*

Jay McRoy, in his informative text *Japanese Horror Film*, describes Japanese horror as involved in a hodgepodge of genres from folklore to the theatrical forms of *noh* and *kabuki*. “These films,” he continues, “engage a myriad of complex political, social and ecological anxieties, including—but by no means limited to—apprehensions over the impact of western cultural and military imperialism, and the struggle to establish a coherent and distinctly Japanese national

¹⁵⁸ Joan Mellen, *Voices from the Japanese Cinema* (New York: Library of Congress, 1975).

identity” (1). With the failure to prevent the reinstatement of the US-Japan Mutual Security Treaty, the 1960s brought with it a sense of impotence and failure to the people involved in the anti-Ampo demonstrations, provoking a renewed sense of betrayal and disillusionment in the emperor system and its institutional values and mythologies. The Japanese new wave saw a return to the old with the lifting of the ban on *jidaigeki eiga*, in a desire to critique these older systems steeped in the traditions. The post-*shingeki* also rose up as a key theatrical movement, composed of many of the Ampo protesters, which sought to use art to make sense of the meaninglessness of the times, interacting with cinema accordingly. David Goodman remarks that the *post-shingeki* movement was quite literally a movement ‘to liberate Japanese ghosts,’ not to affirm them, but to acknowledge and negate them” (23)¹⁵⁹. A concern for ghosts and their return in new wave cinema solidified itself into the recalling of the *Kaidan* or ghost story, which had gained popularity in the 1950s as a means of negotiating the horrors of the war. Like many Japanese intellectuals, Shindo blamed the patriarchal and exploitative class system of *bushido* for Japan’s inscription in, and devastation by, the war. Often set within the *jidaigeki* period landscape—a war era cinema key to Japanese glorification of the self and canonization of the past with its traditional aesthetics and hierarchical family structures (intrinsic to the *bushido* code), the ghost story lent itself to a questioning of the Japanese self within the new wave context of Shindo Kaneto’s cinema. The Japanese New Wave movement thus incorporated into its cinema *post-shingeki* themes concerned with Japanese-ness and the need to be (non)human.

¹⁵⁹ David Goodman, *The Return of the Gods: Japanese Drama and Culture in the 1960s* (New York: Cornell University East Asian Program, 2003), 23.

Linnie Blake examines the narrative of the *onryou* in Japanese cinema, crediting Shindo with the ‘resurrection’ of the abject woman to speak to the Japanese postwar experience and to the issue of *nihonjinron* (47). Furthermore Blake contends:

Since the 1960s, Japanese horror cinema has repeatedly had the female corpse return from the dead to demand retribution for the hitherto concealed wounds inflicted on the nation by unpunished historical crimes. ...[In the onryou narrative] the vengeful ghost’s target is not merely ‘the living’ but the repressive and totalising ideologies that they have internalised as a means of denying the dislocations to national self-image wrought by traumatic events such as war. (44-45)

For this reason perhaps we see the *onryou* in Shindo’s 1960s cinema at the center of discourses surrounding the samurai, war, the *ie* and the role of the mother/wife and her sexuality. Sexuality and the onryou narrative of the ghost story become vehicles through which these films question tenements of Japanese-ness and seek to rewrite ideas of humanity and the politics of power in Japan. Using the term “feminine principle” (47) to speak to the Japanese postwar ghost story’s feminine targeting of what he considers “the macho militarism of the bushido code” (47), Blake recognizes the female at the center as important to Japanese horror’s formation and its desire for retribution. While Blake asserts that the justice demanded by the female ghost in postwar horror “restores balance, or Wa, to Japanese social life” (47), I would argue that the ghost of the Japanese new wave resists being laid to rest. Whether male, as in Teshigahara Hiroshi’s *Pitfall* (1962) or female as represented in Shindo’s *Kuroneko*, the avenging spirit seeks not to restore *balance* to social life (as do the ghosts in the 1950s cinema) but rather agitates for change and transformation into something other than the Japanese self.

In *Kuroneko* the *jidaigeki* period film enters into the genre of horror when two common women, a mother, Yone, and her daughter(-in-law), Shige, are raped and murdered by samurai soldiers during a nameless war. Yone's son, Gintoki, returns from the war in which he has been forced to become a samurai to discover his family mysteriously vanished and in their place two beautiful demon women or *onryou*, intent on killing all samurai. Ordered to resolve the problem, Gintoki must decide whether to do his duty as instructed by the samurai code of *bushido* or do his duty as a son towards his mother. A variation of her role as an *onibaba* or old demon hag in the earlier Shindo film *Onibaba* (1964), the image of Otowa grows dense with the shadow of the Second World War and the deformation that occurs within a disillusioning and hierarchical world. Powerless in the physical world, the transformation of the women into hybrid cat-women returns power to the hands of those rendered invisible by government and social systems.

The narrative of *Kuroneko* emerges out of the *Konjaku monogatari* story of a robber who meets a mysterious woman at the *Rojomon*¹⁶⁰ Gate. In the film the body of the robber is substituted for that of the deemed virtuous body of the samurai during the war underscoring a condemnation of the samurai as the ideal Japanese self. As the credits roll, *Kuroneko* begins with the sounds of drumming and the bodily movement inward of the camera eye into a bamboo¹⁶¹ forest. Perched at the edge of a clearing, within which a lone hut stands, a wide shot reveals samurai emerging like animals from the forest. As they approach the hut, the only sound is that of a lone cricket and the sound of the samurai's gulping as they crouch and drink water

¹⁶⁰ Also provided the basis for Akutagawa Ryunosuke's short story *Rashomon*, which was made into a film of the same name by Kurosawa Akira (1950).

¹⁶¹ Shindo Kaneto interview with Joan Mellen: "the tall, swaying reeds [in *Onibaba*] are my symbol of the world, the society which surrounds people. In *Kuroneko* bushes are used for the same symbolic end. Tall, dense, swaying reeds represent the world in which these commoners live and to which the eyes of lords and politicians do not reach" (Mellen, 80). His eyes, the camera's eyes, view the world from the very lowest level of society.

from the canal surrounding the house. The seat of Japanese honor, civility and loyalty to a higher authority, the site of the Japanese self, becomes subverted in the blurring between animal and human that undermines the class expectations of the samurai. Similar to the deep pit of bones in *Onibaba*, the hut which the samurai enter to brutally murder the women within becomes a site of trauma and death in its revelation of the flawed humanness of the samurai. As the two women are repeatedly raped, Shindo's camera moves from their unconscious faces and bodies to the intent faces of the samurai above them who crouch as a group watching the spectacle—their rapacity and barbarity emphasized by the rice and bread they consume as they look on, the rags they wear—their only communication that of grunts and silences. Shindo actively uses his camera to destabilize the mythologized image of the samurai and the *bushido* system through the structuring of spectatorship codes into his diegesis. Similar to the *jidaigeki* period film which depended upon its audience's knowledge of traditional expectations and allusions, *Kuroneko* relies on its contemporary audience's familiarity both with the *jidaigeki* and with its own ritualistic practices. For example, paralleled against the opening animalistic depiction of samurai in war, Shindo presents a sequence exposing the hypocrisy and performativity of the samurai within the hierarchical emperor system. Bowing before a high official or noble, sweating profusely and clearly uncomfortable, a puddle forms before the samurai leader from his dripping sweat. "Samurai means men who are proud of being strong warriors," the high official states, the positioning between the two speaking clearly to class difference, and thus power, in the face of which the samurai is made ordinary. The following shot shows the samurai leader surrounded by a bevy of young women who dress him. Occupying the power position held previously by the now absent high official, the samurai leader performs power to a group of samurai who now bow respectfully before him. The lines created by the bowing samurai's bodies propel the spectator's

eye towards the head samurai, stressing the emptiness of his performance. The performative reveals itself through revelation of the stage in an othering of ritualized space that forces the spectator out of the unthinking space of the habitual and into a consideration of the ritual and its collective thought.

A tension exists between inside and outside in *Kuroneko*, which Shindo emphasizes through spectatorship practices that remove both the theater and the body from its known settings and settles characters within stages, that trouble the realism of the narrative, upon which they perform. Yone's son, Gintoki, makes up a name to sound stronger in battle and on his victorious return, performs his imagined 'defeat' of a notorious warrior to an audience composed of giggling women and his leader who clap appreciatively at his skilled performance. The subsequent washing and dressing of Gintoki, the repetition of the ritual revealing the appearance of civility beneath, present the samurai as social construction. Claiming Mizoguchi as his chief influence, it is understandable that criticism of the samurai in *Kuroneko* pulls from Mizoguchi Kenji's famous film, *Ugetsu Monogatari* (1953)¹⁶², which Shindo names as one of his favorite films. Colette Balmain alleges that next to *Godzilla* (1954), *Ugetsu Monogatari*¹⁶³ one of the most important films that would influence the horror genre in Japan and encourage contemporary J-horror's success in the global market (31). *Ugetsu* is a *jidaigeki* ghost story in which two peasant families are separated then united during a violent civil war due to the husbands' greed, ambition and the interference of the ghostly. One half of the narrative follows the peasant Tobei

¹⁶² Credited, alongside Kurosawa's *Rashomon*, for opening Western eyes to Japanese cinema, *Ugetsu* won the Silver Lion Award for Best Direction at the Venice Film Festival in 1953.

¹⁶³ For an in-depth look at *Ugetsu*, see Keiko I. McDonald's *Cinema East: A Critical Study of Major Japanese Films*, (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 1983), 103-122, and Sato Tadao, *Kenji Mizoguchi and the Art of Japanese Cinema*, 110-116.

who dreams of becoming a samurai and his wife Ohama, while the other half tracks the potter Genjuro who leaves his wife Miyagi and their young son behind in economic pursuit of his art. Despite his wife's protests, Tobei abandons his wife to seek out his fortunes in the war. Having stolen the severed head of a general, Tobei presents it to the leader of the victorious army and is granted his wish of becoming a samurai. Mizoguchi's camera captures the pomp and ceremony of Tobei's entrance into town, cleaned and dressed up like a samurai, with a procession of loyal retainers following his lead. Later in a brothel, as Tobei pantomimes his victory in battle and preens under the attention and prestige of being a samurai, he discovers that his wife has become a prostitute in his absence. The audience's knowledge of Tobei's duplicity and the suffering of his wife while he was at war, undermines the typical reverence felt for the samurai. Using the past period to negotiate the present moment, both *Ugetsu* and *Kuroneko* handle themes concerned with how war deforms and distorts all levels of society. These two films' placement in a similar past (somewhere in the 16th century) marked by obvious social codes of hierarchy, provide a platform to examine the *ie* system. While *Ugetsu* and *Kuroneko* both unmask the samurai as mere performance, *Ugetsu* seeks to break the system in order to preserve it and *Kuroneko* to permanently tear away the veil from our eyes in an attempt to expose the animality beneath the costume of the samurai and how war strips the individual of their humanity. In opening his film with the new wave trope of the violation and penetration of rape, in the brutalizing of the women in *Kuroneko*'s distinctive hut, Shindo brings attention to bear on the brutality of a system that reduces men to beasts that claw and scrape to survive¹⁶⁴. These

¹⁶⁴ In his interview with Joan Mellen, Shindo stated, "...I am interested in man, the solitary person who is placed in the midst of chaotic surroundings, and when I try to grasp and unfold the problems of society which surround him, I have to know what is within man himself. I cannot escape from looking more closely into what is the essence, the root existence of man. This led me to locate the vital energy of man. This energy to live is expressed by many in the sexual drive. I consider the focal point of a man's existence to be in sex. This is the basis of my interest. ...the sex I

selfsame drives are what Shige and Yone utilize in order to gain revenge and force a remembering on the spectator. In this way, while the women wear their animality on the surface, these selfsame beasts crawl beneath the skin of the war-animal otherwise known as the samurai. *Ugetsu* is a morality tale that highlights the systems that hold the *ie* together. By focusing on the married couple and one man's foolish decision to turn samurai that threaten the sanctity of the home, *Ugetsu* teaches that the husband should have stayed within the home rather than chasing his own ambitions. *Kuroneko*, on the other hand, targets *all* samurai in an indictment of the entire system and the need for change. Balmain¹⁶⁵ writes, "as such, *Kuroneko* sets the trend for contemporary Japanese horror cinema, in that the revenge of the wronged women is not just contained to those that have committed an offence against them, but is taken more generally against Japanese paternalism as a whole" (75). *Kuroneko* heralds a new type of Japanese cinema where the revenge meted out against all, not just the specific, highlights an overarching social critique that leaves no one exempt. *Kuroneko*'s reproduction of an earlier visual statement unmapping the samurai in *Ugetsu*, draws attention to the continuation, nine years later, of social anxieties expressed in *Ugetsu* in 1952.

5.5.1 The *Kaibyō* and the Ghost House

Calling forth discourses of powerlessness and invisibility, themes central to a shared feeling of impotence felt with the failure of the Ampo demonstrations, the inbetween becomes the site of discourse in Shindo's film—the ghost body caught between two worlds of the animal and the

have in mind here is not the sex enjoyed behind closed doors. My idea of sex is nothing by the expression of the vitality of man, his urge for survival" (Mellen, 88).

¹⁶⁵ Balmain confuses the names of the mother and daughter in her text. In my citations I will correct the oversight.

human, of the visible and the invisible. Akira Mizuta Lippit observes that the crisis initiated at the end of the world war two was “a crisis in the constitution of the human body”:

Under the glare of atomic radiation, the human body was exposed: revealed and opened, but also displaced, thrust outward into the distant reaches of the visible world. It situated the body between not only two worlds but two universes: two separate orders of all things, or even of the same things. Visibility and invisibility, exteriority and interiority, the living and the dead, this world and that other world....¹⁶⁶

The atomic experience of the bomb opened wide the human body, propelling it between worlds. The performances of the female ghost body in *Kuroneko* echoes the despairing frenzy of an atomic experience that strips the body and places the human in the inbetween, in elsewhere spaces that operate as stages for the shared communication of delirium and flesh.

Shindo Kaneto uses the familiarity of the conventions of Japanese horror and the unfamiliarity of the ‘uncanny’ or demon mother to engage in a social critique, which conjures up memories of Hiroshima and the atomic bomb. The traditional horror archetypes of ‘the tragic lovers’ ‘the wronged woman’, the ‘vengeful ghost’ all come to play in *Kuroneko*. Utilizing the genre and the expectations of its tropes, Shindo depends on the audience’s awareness of the genre to apply criticism. Shindo’s camera highlights the rough hut after the murder of its two inhabitants in a series of repetitions moving from inside the hut, with its hidden trauma, to outside in a façade of quiet normalcy. Lowenstein argues that to ‘speak to historical trauma, is to recognize events as wounds. He argues that ‘these wounds in the fabric of culture and history bleed through conventional confines of time and space’ (1), citing the hole in *Onibaba*, where samurai fall to their deaths, as one such bleeding wound drawing upon the remembered trauma

¹⁶⁶ *Atomic Light (Shadow Optics)* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 4.

of the a-bomb. Similarly, the hut in *Kuroneko* presents a “wound”, the place where it all begins. Set aflame by the rampaging samurai, the ruin of the home will eventually transform into a beautiful ghost mansion, revealing the (non)humanity of the samurai and its codes, as well as the necessary transformation of the powerless into demon (noble women) in order to gain visibility and thereby ascend to the human. Both films place a lens on the figure of the samurai, with *Kuroneko* fine-tuning the themes of Shindo’s earlier films and more explicitly making the samurai and thereby the system of *bushido* places of mockery and social critique.

The cinema of the new wave harkens back to the female body as site of renewal and trauma—demon bodies, *hibakusha* (the surviving victims of the atomic bombing) bodies, transformed by the fallout of the Pacific War. Only the cat, the lowest animal in society, sees or cares in Shindo’s film, privileged by close-ups and the sounds of its meowing aligned with the female body. Signaled by the sight of a black cat lapping blood from the remains of the murdered women amongst the burnt ruins of the hut, an act important to their transformation into avenging cat-women in Japanese lore, *Kuroneko* belongs to the genre of *bakeneko-mono* (monster cat tales) or *kaibyō eiga* (ghost cat films). Made as earlier as 1914 and emerging from folklore and kabuki traditions, the ghost cat genre disappeared during wartime to reemerge largely in the 1950s. Slantchev Branislav proposes in his review of the ghost cat films that “as a metaphor of all those people who died violently and were never properly buried (as in the recent war), the cat spirit embodies the search for retribution that would let the dead rest in peace.”¹⁶⁷ Unlike the female *onryō* of the 1950 ghost films written about earlier in this chapter, the female cat demon of the *kaibyō* is typically an old woman or old mother embodying the agility and

¹⁶⁷ Nakagawa Nobuo who produced *Jigoku* (1960) and the most highly acclaimed version of *Yotsuya Kaidan*, also directed *kaibyō eiga* as with his *Black Cat Mansion/Mansion of the Ghost Cat (Borei Kaibyō Yashiki, 1958)*, films all having to do with the afterlife, especially in terms of betrayed and restless spirits seeking retribution.

sensual characteristics of a cat, who actively pursues and kills her chosen victims. The mass murder of samurai in *Kuroneko* by Yone and Shige confuse notions of victim and aggressor so related to considerations of Japan's role in the Second World War. In undermining the expectations of wife and mother in their transformation to demon, Shindo compels a reckoning with memory in his text. Although the women in *Kuroneko* accede to ghost cats in a thirst for revenge, there is a hopelessness of escaping one's trapped existence even in death, which Shindo utilizes the body of the female to bring to the center of his narrative—the notion of salvation as inseparable from damnation.

Possessed of an empowerment that ultimately fails, Colette Balmain believes Yone to be simply a “repository of male anxieties, or an embodiment of Creed's ‘monstrous feminine’¹⁶⁸” (78), not giving her the full political agency that is her due. As the center of the narrative, Yone is given the power to watch, to spectate and bear witness. It is her gaze that bears the moral weight in the film and organizes the audiences' own feelings, not Gintoki's sight. Balmain acknowledges though that “the inability of the son to defeat his monstrous mother can be interpreted as a feminist protest against the restrictive definitions of maternity in Japanese society” (79). Although valid, Balmain's reading of Yone's “feminine protest” limits the power of the cinematic text which seeks to utilize the horrifying maternal to speak to the system of the *ie*, in terms of archival memory (not simply gender politics) and the failure at the level of government to empower the Japanese people through a transformation into something more.

¹⁶⁸ For another way to think about the monstrous female look at Barbara Creed's *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* (Routledge: New York: 1993). Barbara Creed argues against the theories that position the female solely as victim in horror cinema, arguing for a more nuanced reading which takes into consideration woman's monstrosity as entwined with her reproductive capacities and male anxieties related to woman's ability to castrate rather than be castrated in horror cinema. Creed analyses the seven faces of the monstrous-feminine: archaic mother, monstrous womb, vampire, witch, possessed body, monstrous mother and castrator.

5.5.2 Theater and Traversing the Inbetween in *Kuroneko*

“Strange things happen in a war torn land,” a travelling samurai explains to the mother (Yone) and daughter (Shige) who have invited him to their home, before attempting to take what he believes is his right as a samurai. *Kuroneko* re-imagines the suffering woman of the *haha-mono*, presenting the spectator with a mother who refuses to sacrifice and disappear silently in the name of the status quo and the needs of her son to become samurai. Richard J. Hand considers the way in which Japanese theater provides “the most developed template for Japanese horror cinema” (26). He observes that transformation and mutation are central motifs in Japanese horror. “Time and again in Noh and Kabuki theatre,” Hand writes, “we see the iconography of demonic women and other horrors in worlds that oscillate between the real and the supernatural in a manipulated structure of suspense” (27). From *A Page of Madness* to Mizoguchi’s *Ugetsu*, Nakagawa’s *Yotsuya Kaidan* to Kobayashi Masaki’s *Kwaidan* (1964), the legacy of Japanese theatrical forms infuse the respective texts, operating to communicate mood and meaning in compelling ways to the spectator. In this manner, sound operates in Shindo’s film to further destabilize the audience. The sound of bamboo that surrounds the home at the end of a bamboo trail create an eerie sensation, for instance, cuing the spectator in to their presence within an otherworldly space. The ghost house composed of towering bamboo, which sits in the same space as the small hut burned down by the pillaging samurai to hide their murder of the mother and daughter, connects the concept of trauma to the supernatural in a return to an earlier discourse of the bombs that devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki as evil, contaminating spirits. In the representation of the otherworldly, the theatrical overtones of the *noh* and *kabuki* theatre are removed from its stately moorings and placed within the realms of horror and history, where the trope of the good mother and virtuous wife is made uncanny.

Kuroneko draws heavily from the enduring imagery of the ghost story in Mizoguchi's *Ugetsu*, especially in terms of the haunting Lady Wakasa played by Machiko Kyo—a young noble woman slain before she knew love who remains as a spirit in the land of the living. Framed by an old nurse and the young Lady Wakasa who seek in their guest Genjuro a husband for Lady Wakasa, the two women accord Genjuro the rites of guesthood. In a wonderfully graceful sequence in which the Lady Wakasa performs a *noh* dance for her guest, Genjuro, the camera pans to maintain the shot and the lights dim to suggest a movement to the otherworldly as Lady Wakasa's dead father sings in pleasure over the match. The sound of a single *noh* flute resonates aiding in the transformation of space to the otherworldly and the generation of pity for the ghosts trapped in this existence. In his text *Kenji Mizoguchi and the Art of Japanese Cinema*, Sato Tadao notes Mizoguchi's decision to make Lady Wakasa “a very gentle and sad ghost” (115) as compared to the frightening snake of the original work, *The Lust of the Snake Character*. Music and dance operate to heighten the romantic and pitiable elements of the ghost in *Ugetsu*. *Kuroneko*, I argue, plays homage to Mizoguchi's famous theater sequence in a reworking that undermines the rituals of the home and removes the old and young female ghosts from victims to vicious demons.

Through gesture and haunting repetition in *Kuroneko*, Shindo cues the cinema-spectator's expectations to what will occur each time Shige invites a samurai home— Shige's traversing of the bamboo pathway with a samurai atop a horse, echoed by Yone approaching with sake, moving in and out of light and shadow as she welcomes the samurai in. In *Kuroneko* the promise of the host to his guest finds itself undermined. The mother and daughter engage in the ritual of welcoming guests into their homes but when the guests take advantage of their position, they murder the samurai. In this breach of etiquette executed at the hands of the female, the

social and gendered space of the home finds itself tossed both into visibility and the unknown. The edges of the mansion's doorways catch the light to create the illusion of an interior bamboo forest and resolves itself into a long hallway reminiscent of the *hanamichi*¹⁶⁹ in *Kabuki Theater*, ambiguous space between worlds of the real and the supernatural, upon which Yone will perform her dance. The extension of the *hanamichi* away from the main stage and into the audience facilitates, according to Darrell Davis, "the continuation of an intimate relation between the performers and larger numbers of the spectators."¹⁷⁰ As the samurai attempts to have sex with the daughter, in a repeated parallel return to the mother, Yone dances to the beat of drums in a recalling of the ritual performance of *noh*¹⁷¹. The heightened moment of the performative, which others both space and the human, brings us closer to the human by taking us outside the human, outside power structures and representations of the human and normative vision, into the realm of the transgressive. As the daughter feasts animal-like upon the samurai's neck amidst her growls, the camera echoes the previous shot from the beginning of the film moving to a long shot outside the wealthy residence of the ghost house, panning across the bamboo framed house to a shot of the mother watching the shadows of the on-goings within. Shindo's camera then cuts to the dead samurai with his throat ruptured and discarded upon the burnt remains of the original hut where the mother and her daughter's bodies had been so callously left. Although the women

¹⁶⁹ Generally used for asides or scenes taking place apart from the main action, the *hanamichi* runs through the audience. For more information see Yoshinobu Inoura and Toshio Kawatake, *The Traditional Theater of Japan* (Connecticut: Floating World Editions, 2006).

¹⁷⁰ Darrell William Davis, "Saving Face: Spectator and Spectacle in Japanese Theatre and Film," LEWI Working Paper Series 30 (2004): 9.

¹⁷¹ According to Keiko McDonald in *Japanese Classical Theater in Films*, during the postwar post-occupation period, the horror film emerged which took its cues from *Kabuki's kizewamono* ('living' domestic pieces) (72). "Although the *kizewamono* deals in supernatural matters, it does so in the context of ordinary life, and low life at that. ... Here, the hero lives on the seamy side of life and is that much more inclined to follow the urgings of *ninjo* (compassion/emotion) at the expense of dictates of *giri*" (73).

murder a samurai, the empathy is felt for the women through the staging of the *hanamichi*, which keeps us linked to the feminine, rather than the male experience.

Shindo's use of the theater to stage the maternal body allows an alternative, non-linguistic entrance into history in a re-visioning that troubles our perception of the cultural spaces which surround us. Only able to occur within a world in discord, the inbetween space of the half human-half animal maternal engenders a critical and conflicting thought that questions the knowledge systems and power structures in place. The women perform and we *witness* the performance vibrating as the image does with the original moment of rupture. Yone stands not only as performer but as witness to the performance of the body. The gazing body becomes its own technology to foster relations with self and world. The bodies of the mother and the daughter are staged as spectacle for the spectatorship of the audience, at once distancing the spectator but also, due to the theatrical cues and overlaying of different registers of time contained in the tormented body, drawing the spectator into these critical spaces of transformation.

[...] the audience does not see the performance as a concentrated whole, for the attention of a member of the audience may shift alternately from an actor five feet away to one fifty feet away. This visual readjustment contributes much to the audience's sense of the liveliness of the performance, but it also creates a lack of visual continuity; the performance is realized in a succession of bits of the play isolated in space.¹⁷²

Connected to a vision of discontinuity where the gaze constantly moves, to settle upon different sites/sights, in a constant mobility that never freezes the possibilities of meaning, considering the

¹⁷²Darrell William Davis, "Saving Face: Spectator and Spectacle in Japanese Theatre and Film," LEWI Working Paper Series 30 (2004): 9-10.

spectatorship cues of the *kabuki* theater in Japan sheds further light into the encoded spectatorship of the corporeal gendered specter in Shindo's *Kuroneko*.

The idea of female eroticized performance in Japanese New Wave cinema finds itself placed outside that of the narrative action. The sight is propelled outwards, away from the main staging of events, and yet simultaneously inwards, in its' positioning within the audience or rather the audience within the new space of visualization. The audience, then, becomes invested in the moment of performance not primarily through identification but through physical movement and the positioning of the spectatorial body both before the image as witness and alongside the image as character within the diegesis. In a continuous spiral of repetition, each time Shige brings a samurai home, the camera opens up the space around Yone's performance, moving from a close up of her *aiguma* made-up face—a visual *kabuki* shorthand to indicate the presence of the *onryou* or ghost on stage— to a mid-shot to a long shot. Juxtaposed against the nude body of Shige as she seduces the samurai, the camera moves between the aging body and the erotic young body, on one hand providing a titillating peep show of Shige as we await her attack upon the samurai and on the other, through the deliberate movements of the mother's body, centering the old body within discourses of tradition, trauma and the (im)possibility of freedom and redemption. The third time we see Yone's performance, the space of the dancing mother widens furthers, like a fissure unfurling, to allow an even greater entrance onto the stage. We see the mother full length, framed by the hallway columns and strange mists that pass through. The light highlights her old body as she point us to the latest victim, the camera cutting swiftly in a zoom onto the dead samurai, hand curled out and frozen in terror. In *Kuroneko* there is a demand for remembrance of the crimes committed, a bearing witness or voyeurism that challenges the myth of the victim espoused in Japanese 1950s cinema. The act of sexuality

between the samurai (with his feudalist and warring connotations) and the beautiful young Shige who suddenly turns monstrous provides a mechanism to elicit the *hibakusha* maiden, but so too to speak to her anger. Instead of the young innocent victim at the center, *Kuroneko* also presents a vengeful older woman who inverts the notion of mother and a mother's love, which demands her self-sacrifice in order to sustain the militaristic agendas of the State. Yone and Shite exist in a space of the 'spectral', an externalization of the inside that resist reinstitution into the older models of the family by the returned son— a samurai entrapped in ritual that disempower the ordinary individual.

For theorists like Edward S. Casey, the lived body forms the loci through which memory and place, and their intimate interrelation, come into being. Thus as memory can be turned to flesh, so can memory be turned or attuned to sound. In many of the films of the new wave appear the use of sound and the desirable body signals an entrance not only into the arena of memory and its historical contexts but so too the unthought. "Body memory alludes to memory that is intrinsic to the body, to its own ways of remembering: how we remember in and by and through the body," Casey remarks (146). Aligned with memory and national landscape, the site of the desirable female body alongside her own specific spectatorship and subjectivity encourages new sight and imaginings of self and nation.

5.6 THE *IE* AND THE RETURN OF THE MOTHER

Shindo Kaneto draws upon the pathos of earlier horror in its dealings with the vengeful mother. Sentimentality and the erotic work together to highlight the tragedy of the war torn Japanese landscape and the awful power of the female at its center. Thus far, this chapter has been

attempting to outline the political and social intersections between the mother and the *ie* in Japanese society. The horror genre serves to agitate the state-driven system of the *ie* which depends on the imaginary of the ideal woman as the dutiful mother in order to manufacture obedient citizens in service to the state. Even though historically the horror film has always been a subversive medium intent on exposing the nation to social critique, typically the ghost films belonging to the Japanese horror genre ultimately operate to sustain the *ie* through the laying of the mother to rest after her actions have reunited the family unit. The mother refuses to go quietly in the work of the new wave, unlike the ghost mother glorified and martyred in the films of the two horror greats: Mizoguchi's *Ugetsu* and Nakagawa's *Yotsuya Kaidan*.

In its second narrative arc, *Ugetsu Monogatari* follows the cautionary tale of the potter Genjuro and, wife and mother, Miyagi. Lured away from hearth and home by the desire of economic wealth and the seductions of the tragic ghost Lady Wakasa (Machiko Kyo), Genjuro finally escapes and penniless returns home after an absence of years to find he is too late—his wife (Tanaka Kinuyo). Miyagi though returns from the grave to reunite her husband and young son. Her subjectivity given privilege through voiceover in the concluding sequence as she bemoans the belatedness of her husband's understanding. Balmain maintains that the ghostly mother in *Ugetsu* makes the home 'un-homelike' appearing first "to be a familiar, comforting presence, but is actually an agent of the Uncanny who is meant to illustrate that there will be no rest until the husband learns what the demons have come to teach him" (373-4). In reality, as mother, Miyagi embodies the familiar, literally undying, devotion of the traditional mother, in her return from the dead. In the original story of *Ugetsu Monogatari (Tales of Moonlight and Rain)* by Ueda Akinari (1734-1809), the wife is simply a wife and returns, after dying from grief, because of her love for her husband. Mizoguchi transforms this character to a loving mother to

heighten her status and importance, and thereby increase the tragedy of her death and the lesson that needs to be learned by the audience and the husband respectively. In the sequence where Genjuro returns home to find it momentarily abandoned and in ruins, the home begins in an “un-homelike”, fractured state to be made familiar and ‘home-like’ by the appearance of the ghostly mother. In a panning move that follows Genjuro as he runs through the ruined house and returns again through the front door to find the fire going and Miyagi waiting for him, Mizoguchi’s camera introduces the supernatural to the scene, (in a recalling of Lady Wakasa, his other abandoned wife). The dead mother returns to reunite the family, restoring her son to her husband’s arms to ensure the continuation of the *ie* now that the lesson has been learnt.

Sato observes that mothers in Mizoguchi’s cinema “shoulder alone the evil of men and cleanse it by their self-sacrifice. With these strong, almost divine heroines, Mizoguchi’s films become hymns to womanhood” (80). He considers Shindo, who studied scrip-writing [and filmmaking] under Mizoguchi, as “the inheritor of this theme”, even if under a “different hue” (81). *Kuroneko* continues to draw associations from Mizoguchi’s *Ugetsu* as it relates to the house as wound, yet if his women are divine it is a divinity concerned with a survival or death impulse that transforms one into a demon. Like *Ugetsu*’s Genjuro, Gintoki returns home to a faithful wife and mother who have been waiting for him only to discover they are dead. Unlike the ghosts of *Ugetsu*, there is no rest for the cat women of *Kuroneko* who ultimately reject the reunification of the *ie* around the male figure of the *samurai* system. Shige, for example, in freely having relations with her husband descends into hell, in a recalling of the concern offered up by Maya in *Gates of Flesh*— does becoming human mean transforming into something else, something outside Japaneseness, outside the self? Yone disavows the needs of her son in defense of her own needs for vengeance, resisting stepping back into her traditional role as

nurturer in order to salvage the *ie*. The film ends with Gintoki returning to the ghost mansion haunted by hallucinations of him and his wife making love in the rooms around him. Faced with the realization that his mother is a demon, he screams, “*Okaasan*” (mother) using the honorific and signaling his desire for a traditional rendering of mother in the face of what she has become, but also his sustained respect and love for her. Despite her transformation, he feels a tension between his duty as a samurai to destroy her as a destabilizing element and his budding realization that she will not be put to rest, not even for him. Slashing wildly about him, he collapses on his back as the camera pans upwards to settle on a shot of Gintoki lying still, as snow falls around him, in the original ruins of his burnt down home.

The home as ruin suggests what the bushido system has wrought—the failure of the home, of Japan—but so too the *ie* as wound through which the repercussions of the war are negotiated. Shindo manipulates the horror genre to reveal national silences and challenge the hegemonic systems which aided in the breakdown of family and a questioning of the very nature of Japanese-ness at the end of the war. It is uncertain whether or not Gintoki dies through his encounter with his demon mother and her subsequent rejection of him and the codes of the *ie* system which he embodies. Nevertheless, theorists like Balmain argue that with the return of Gintoki to the narrative as a powerful samurai the film takes a shift to that of the doomed lovers trope, one where the “protagonist becomes caught up in the classic *ninjo* (compassion, emotion and love) and *giri* (duty) conflict” (77) mandating his death. Yone and Shite bring the classic ‘good wife, wise mother’ trope to bear in Shindo’s text, in an undermining which challenges class and gender relations within the ravaged landscape. Ultimately what makes Gintoki important is his status as son, and his presence is used to make tragic the system of *ie*,

highlighting the destruction of the family through the mechanisms of government (directly correlated to the war and the government militarist ideology in 1960s Japan).

Balmain argues that in Shige's choosing love over eternal life and revenge, "in the well-worn archetype of the self-sacrificing woman, *Kuroneko* seems to emphasise traditional Japanese paternalistic values rather than transgressing them" (77). Shige, though, is actually balanced finally against the figure of the old mother. There is a paralleling between the mother who shirks her maternal responsibilities and the young wife who "fulfils her social duties" (78) to her husband, perhaps highlighting the tension between the official narrative of victimhood implied through the figure of the young *hibakusha* and the realities of Japan's role in the war which forced husbands and sons to their deaths and gave rise to the angry and monstrous mother who refuses to be silenced. Any resonances of the victim personified in the discourse of the violated young woman, often used after the Second World War to redefine Japanese memory and understanding of the atomic bomb, is mitigated by the anger of the 'mad' mother aimed directly at the war symbol of the Japanese idealized self. There is no room for the self-sacrificing woman who reinforces a problematic Japanese social structure, in fact she goes to hell. *Kuroneko* utilizes the new wave trope of the failure of love within a postwar world to induce a questioning of Japanese ideologues. In a feminist reading, Shige's *choice* to go to hell suggests its own refutation of the mores of Japanese society that seek to keep the wife "good". It is the mother, Yone, who holds the strength to transform into something other than Japanese, other than human, to bring about true social change. Yone and Shige are not the self-sacrificing mother/daughter presented and valorized in Japanese cinema. These women refuse to be appeased or appealed to.

Gintoki screams at his mother, “I know not what you are! Evil gods or ghosts— supernatural powers can make you look human?” There is an uncertainty about the human in Japanese new wave cinema, and embodied in the films of Shindo Kaneto, that finds expression in the destabilizing images of good mother and virtuous wife made strange. What happens when these images of woman as victim, as naïve virgin or good mother, become substituted for the demon-hag or hypersexual young woman? Shige’s constant traversing of the forest pathway, a type of traversing of space which takes the character nowhere, transposes the motif of the wandering woman in new wave cinema to the Japanese ghost story. Space here exists as a type of quasi-no man’s land within which performances of politicized and social revolt can ensue. The settings of these de-familiarized and theatrical stages, where the focus lies primarily on the erotic female body, communicate a sense of futility and horror, of false empowerment, to the spectator, which has everything to do with Japan’s continued negotiation with the experience of the a-bomb and a system of power that (re)constructs history and memory of the war for its own survival.

The horror film’s obsession with the illusion of the home that unveils itself to be a burnt out ruin speaks directly to postwar anxieties, with *Kuroneko* utilizing the burnt-out ruin as allegory for the bombing of Japan during the war and failure of the *ie*. In a critical turn that looks at the role of Japan in her own brutalization, the ghost house perhaps represents the horror of the bomb and its domestic revelations, but also a celebration of the destroyed home which has empowered the female by liberating her from the obligations of the *ie* system. And yet, the film does not fully escape the mournful tenor of a wrong placed squarely upon the female body to be parsed out—where the son turned samurai is rendered weak and ineffectual, leaving it up to the mother-wife to find her own justice in a descent to hell.

In rejecting her son, Yone refuses the reinstatement of a traditional *ie* system that places the male at the center of the household and reimagines history in order to uphold a glorification of self and nation. The notion of the *ie* as home and its ruination becomes wrapped up in the archive¹⁷³ and questions of memory: how the mother provides entrance to a reconsideration of Japan's memory of the war which places them as victim in terms of the bomb but erases the reality of their own colonial aggressions. In rejecting the tenements of the *ie*, refusing to sacrifice herself to the failings of memory and country, the staging of the transgressive mother creates a shocking inversion which allows for a re-reading of gender relations as well as history in a mournful elegy that demands justice and change.

In *Onibaba* and *Kuroneko* the old and sexual mother transformed into a demon stands at the very epicenter of the cinematic work. The mother's rejection of the expectations of society, and her removed association with fecundity, empowers her within a system that historically sought to disempower. In turning the mother-figure against the ideology of the *ie*, Shindo's new cinema, which utilizes the ghost story, communicates a powerful message of social change and transformation. Both *Onibaba* and *Kuroneko* question the notion of the human caught in a world of chaos and unknowable events, drawing from the supernatural undertones of the experience of the bomb and the discourses of *nihonjinron*¹⁷⁴ which arose soon after. Within the battle-weary worlds represented on film in a recalling of the events leading up to and after the Pacific War, only demons can survive (and thrive).

¹⁷³ See Derrida's *Archive Fever* for more on the notion of archive as artificial form of remembering and forgetting. "History and fiction may blur in the haunted selves that suffer from "archive fever" (mal d'archive)" (7). *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression (Religion and Postmodernism)*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1996.

¹⁷⁴ A concept that became popular after the Second World War, *nihonjinron* speaks to discourse concerned with notions of Japaneseness, particularly as compared to the West.

6.0 EPILOGUE – THE JAPANESE NEW WAVE TODAY: A CINEMA OF RETURN?

Ten years after the ignominious end of World War II, a new wave of cinema rose up in Japan tied to a particular set of circumstances related to *kokutai* or the nation-body, and Japan's long militaristic and sexual history both domestically and abroad. Debates surrounding the U.S.-Japan Security Pact (AMPO), the institution of comfort stations by the imperial army, the occupation of U.S. bases in Okinawa among other Japanese sites, the threat of a return to militarism signaled by the presence of accused war criminals in government and the aggressive targeting of student and radical groups, always underscored by the fear and the memory of the atomic bomb, fed the creation of this new cinema by a group of young directors emerging out of the ruins of war. In my project I have sought to redefine the Japanese new wave in a feminization that seeks not to ignore the importance of the Japanese male anti-hero to new wave critical discourses, but to stress the necessity of also interrogating the erotic female body of the Japanese 'anti-heroine' lying at the center of many of these new wave texts.

The new wave is a protest cinema that communicates a call to arms; a cinema invested in negotiating the contemporary experience and the everyday individual. The politics of the new wave, I argue, is entrenched in desire in resistance to the spirituality of discourses surrounding the Japanese emperor that were used as an impetus for colonial expansion and the blind entry into war. Desire, as a tool of opposition, centered on the carnality and sight/site of the female

body in postwar texts, and, thereby, operated counter to the abstract, spiritual body and values of the emperor system that kept Japanese bodies rigidly under control. Further, the expression of frustrated desire within these new films, often articulated through rape and explosions of violence, brings the politics of the times into sharp dialogue with the Japanese body, speaking to relationships between power systems in sexual terms-- namely relations between the victorious United States and the defeated Japanese Government, which filtered into other bodily relationships between Japan and its colonies, as well as incestuous and familial bodies. Fallen female bodies consequently take on additional meaning in their ties to failure, profanity (a movement away from the spiritual ideologies of nation that encourage a conservatism of thought), and transgression, which make these bodies antithetical to systems that encourage reductive historical revisionisms and social inequalities. It is through these female spaces of subversion and desire that the Japanese new wave, I contend, takes the normative and queers it, turning in opposition to hegemonic institutions of family, heteronormativity and reproduction. Although the pertinence of the Japanese new wave to the postwar period of the mid-1950s to the early 1970s is clear, the question still remains—why is it important to study the new wave now? Does the new wave still exist? What would a future study or continuation of this current project look like?

Japan today still struggles with gender politics and a legacy of war that struggles against a desire to present itself as victim, or, rather, to simply forget the past. The frictions that surround these earlier new wave texts continue to resonate in the political and international dissensions currently visible in contemporary Japan. *Heisei-27* August 15¹⁷⁵ will mark the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II. Already tensions swirl around the anticipated event with the revival

¹⁷⁵ August 15, 2015.

of dangerous nationalisms in Japan heralded by the Abe administration exposing the frailty of peace accords between Japan and the rest of Asia. Two historical statements—the 1993 Kono Statement¹⁷⁶ acknowledging Japan’s coercion of ‘comfort women’ to work in military brothels during World War II, and the 1995 Murayama Statement¹⁷⁷ in which Japan officially apologized for its war aggression particularly toward other Asian nations—have long outlined the Japanese Government’s official position on the War. Simultaneously, these statements have always also been points of contention, exposing spaces of national ambiguity within which Japan often rests—the space between victim and aggressor, *giri* and *ninjo*, male and female, and, arising culturally out of these historical pressure points, high art and the popular. The Abe Administration’s current intimation of a more ‘historically balanced’ rewording of the Murayama Statement to be given on the eve of the World War II anniversary, falls in with a party-line that continually questions the validity of the internationally accepted Kono Statement and encourages a history of forgetting in its national textbooks. Abe who, in his equivocating over Japan’s war aggression as well as his desire to return Japan to a pre-defeat ‘normalcy’ untainted by war guilt and the constraints of pacifism¹⁷⁸, inadvertently seeks to dismantle any progress made in Japan’s mediation with her past.

¹⁷⁶ The Kono Statement was released by Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kon. To learn more on the Abe administration’s current reaction to the Kono statement see Jeff Kingston, “The Politics and pitfalls of war memory and apology,” *The Japan Times*, July 11, 2015, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2015/07/11/commentary/politics-pitfalls-war-memory-apology/>

¹⁷⁷ The Murayama Statement was issued by Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama. To read the full Statement officially entitled “On the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the War’s End” see <http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/press/pm/murayama/9508.html>. To read more on Murayama’s possible changing of the Murayama Statement see “Abe hints at changes to wording of 1995 Murayama statement on WWII,” *The Japan Times*, January 26, 2015, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/01/26/national/politics-diplomacy/abe-hints-at-changes-to-wording-of-1995-murayama-statement-on-wwii/#.VaKDHbHbKM9>.

¹⁷⁸ Jonathan Soble, “Japan Moves to Allow Military Combat for First Time in 70 Years,” *The New York Times*, July 16, 2015, http://mobile.nytimes.com/2015/07/17/world/asia/japans-lower-house-passes-bills-giving-military-freer-hand-to-fight.html?smid=tw-share&_r=1&referrer=

Intriguingly, Japan today seems caught up in a moment of return ironically evoked by the presence of Prime Minister Abe in cabinet, grandson of then Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi (*showa no yoki*)¹⁷⁹ who was instrumental in aggressively passing the US-Japan Mutual Security Treaty in 1960 despite mass protests. In the last two decades, Japan has seen a sudden upswell in conditions that previously gave rise to the counter-discursive Japanese new wave movement in the 1950s-70s. As a conservative movement to reword and re-imagine the past in ways that ossify history and reopen old wounds grows, the Japanese government aims to revive its military, led by a nationalist majority invested in the divinity of nation and the strengthening of ties to the United States. On July 16, 2015, for example, the Abe administration won a majority in Parliament for legislature that would allow the Japanese Special Forces to enter into global conflicts, especially in aid to the United States¹⁸⁰. With no real assurances that Japan will not be pulled into conflicts against their will, this undermining of the postwar constitution that caters to a US-Japan political alliance, threatens to enact legislature regardless of the wants of the masses in a direct recalling of the AMPO riots and Japan's prewar militaristic and colonial interactions that led Japan into World War II. In fact, according to New York Times author Jonathan Soble, the threat of Japan's re-militarism augured by Abe's win in Parliament has prompted "the largest anti-government demonstration in Japan since protests in 2012 against the proposed restart of nuclear power plants, a year after the nuclear accident in Fukushima." Even in Okinawa, home to over twelve military bases and 25, 000 American military personnel¹⁸¹, large organized and increasingly volatile demonstrations have arisen to prevent the construction and relocation of the

¹⁷⁹ The Showa era demon

¹⁸⁰ Jonathan Soble, "Japan Moves to Allow Military Combat for First Time in 70 Years."

¹⁸¹ Martin Fackler, "Shinzo Abe Faces Growing Wrath of Okinawans over U.S. Base," *The New York Times*, July 3, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/05/world/asia/shinzo-abe-faces-growing-wrath-of-okinawans-over-us-base.html?_r=1.

Futenma airbase, an agreement between Tokyo and Washington, which ignores mass local opposition as well as environmental concerns. Fear of the nuclear, of a return to militaristic agendas and power structures that sacrifice the Japanese individual lend to a national space still grappling with its 'history problem'.

If, as suggested earlier, current socio-political conditions in Japan highlight a return or gathering of many of the same issues that plagued Japan a decade after their defeat in the Pacific War, is there also a return to the thematics of the Japanese new wave cinema almost 45 years later? The new wave remains pertinent today in light of a rapidly strengthening conservatism in government that seeks to not just revision but to revisit history in a whitewashing that threatens to return nation to the militaristic and emperor centered status that led explicitly to the war. In a future articulation of this dissertation project, I would pursue the Japanese new wave into contemporaneity by continuing to trace the figure of the subversive and erotic female in its cinema. As we see a return to the political conditions that prompted the Japanese new wave, we might also productively return to the central questions of the movement itself. What then is the new wave within a Japanese context and the importance of the erotic to the politics of memory and memorizing (archiving)? Did the cinematic politics of the Japanese new wave dissipate with the failure of the Left to prevent the 1970 US-Japan AMPO security pact and the collapse of the studio system in the 1980s? How can a re-interpretation of the 1950s-70s Japanese new wave, open fresh ways to examine both the cinematic and socio-political space of Japan today?

My thematic focus on desire and the subversive female body in Japanese new wave cinema provides a multi-gendered counter-discourse that repudiates a cinema of victimhood or nostalgia, even as it utilizes the fringe and the popular—be it genres of pornography, underground and experimental cinema, horror and melodrama, as well as music and current

events and images—as a means to examine notions of Japaneseness or humanity in a specific undermining of rigid social categories of gender and the *ie*/family household. It is generally understood that the Japanese new wave reached its apex within the 1960s, during the tense political standoff between ratifications of the 1960 and 1970 Ampo treaties, and that the wave tapered off by the end of the 1970s. Michael H. Gibbs for example observes how by the late 1970s, “Japanese feature film had lost its central place in national culture, pushed to the margins by television, manga, anime, popular song, and Hollywood blockbusters” (95). Leftist independent cinema, Gibbs further argues, waned as a result in the 1980s. Standish notes how “the decline in the Left was mirrored in a decline in the avant-garde film movement” (PPP 155)¹⁸², taking notice of Oshima’s increasing turn to European financiers and production for his films, and Yoshida’s preference for television documentary and opera in the 1970s until his film production of *The Human Promise* (*Ningen no yakusoku*) in 1986 (155). In trouble with the authorities for his left-wing associations, Wakamatsu Koji, on the other hand, closed down his production company in the early 1970s to return to producing adult fare for other film companies. It would not be until 1990 with *Ready to Shoot* that Wakamatsu’s films would once again begin to reflect overtly ero-political themes. So too Suzuki Seijun was blacklisted for a decade from all major production companies, and forced to turn momentarily to television for daring to take Nikkatsu Studios to court over a breach of contract related to cinematic freedom of expression. Other new wave directors also suffered disillusionment over a lack of funding support and produced more commercial fare in the 1970s in order to survive, entered other creative arenas or simply faded into conformist obscurity by the 1980s.

¹⁸² Imamura Shohei is unique here in his steady continuation of ero-political films throughout 1970 – 2002, but even he dabbled in television and documentary during the 1970s.

With the decline of the studio system¹⁸³ and the subsequent rise of the independent director in the 1980s, a new conservatism (related to Japan's changing economy and the new power of the producer/financier) surfaced despite the increased freedom gained by new directors¹⁸⁴. "These larger issues [of the new wave]—the collapse of prewar Japan, the Western 'invasion,' the problems of the new individuality—did not concern young directors," Richie contends, "all born after WWII and nurtured by a then burgeoning economy" (214). The independent cinema that developed in the 1980s although new in terms of aesthetics, in their focus on genre and audience, became, Richie maintains, ironically "mainstream", rather than a new subversive and liberal cinema at the level of the cinema that preceded it.

In the international breakdown of consolidated film production and distribution, the proliferation of new production companies, and the emergence of a variety of distribution circuits one senses something like the beginnings of film all over again. Once more we have a cinema of views and scenes, of raw sensations and rudimentary narrative. ...And, again, as a century before, we have the merchandizing of the self-proclaimed new. (Richie 217)¹⁸⁵

In *The Midnight Eye Guide to New Japanese Film*, Tom Mes and Jasper Sharp lend to Richie's contention that the 1980s failed to see a new wave of young directors following in the steps of the Japanese new wave tradition. Mes and Sharp argue that while "the 1980s was a period in which even former iconoclasts became conformists, churning out crowd-pleasers for wealthy but cinematically challenged private film producers, simply to be able to keep working" (xii), it was

¹⁸³ Nikkatsu would become bankrupt in 1993, while Shochiku closed in 2000 marking the end of two of the five main studios in Japan and a transformation of the film industry.

¹⁸⁴ Donald Richie, *A Hundred Years of Japanese Film*, 216.

¹⁸⁵ *A Hundred Years of Japanese Film*.

within the 1990s that a new generation of filmmaker arose largely from the fringes of the traditional film industry—within backgrounds in underground experimentalism, film criticism, pornography, television and video.

I propose that the new wave can be thought of as a wave, a return that has happened throughout Japanese cinematic history, and, further, that it is extrapolated through the subversive female figure. A future study would consider both the tropes currently activating the politically charged female archetype in Japanese cinema, and the nexus of Fukushima, history, memory and nation as it intersects with Japan's military past. It is clear that although the 1980s was a rich time period¹⁸⁶ for Japanese cinema in general, one in which the genre film gained prominence, something else was happening within Japanese cinema in the 1990s to the 2000s as the political arena in Japan steadily grew in conservatism, film funding scarcer and thematics of the new wave began to find themselves reactivated. With the Bubble economy's (1986-1991) burst at the start of the 1990s and the crashing of the Japanese stock market, Japan entered an economic stagnation known as the Lost Two Decades (1991-2010). Film production and audience attendance decreased even further in the 1990s, while by the latter part of the decade the conservatives gained exclusive power in the Japanese government where "[they] would continue...to slop-feed vested interests and delay engagement with the many pressing issues facing Japanese society" (Gibbs 126). Mark Schilling¹⁸⁷ situates the birth of a *new* Japanese new wave cinema within this transitional period of the nineties; a cinema produced by Gen Xers

¹⁸⁶ *The Emperor's Naked Army Marches On* (Yuki yukite shingun, 1987), made by documentary filmmaker Hara Kazuo with support from Imamura Shohei, Itami Juzo's *The Funeral* (1984) and *Tampopo* (1985), while Morita Yoshimitsu screened *Family Game* (1983) and Oguri Kohei *Muddy River* (1981) to name a few stand out films in the 1980s.

¹⁸⁷ Mark Schilling's list of 'new wave' directors in the 1990s: Kitano Takeshi, Koreeda Hirokazu, Miike Takeshi, Shunji Iwai, Jun Ichikawa, Makoto Shinozaki, Ryuichi Hiroki, Rokuro Mochizuki, Nobuhiro Suwa, Shinji Aoyama and Shinya Tsukamoto.

whose “resistance to the conforming pressures of Japanese society manifested itself more in small individual gestures of defiance...than in organized acts of protest” (37). Schilling notes, though, how young directors like Shunji Iwai, Satoshi Isaka, and Shinji Aoyama, although invested in “reinventing” Japanese cinema through experimentation in form, would fail in addressing contemporary or group concerns unlike their contemporaries Koreeda Hirokazu, Makoto Shinozaki and Nobuhiro Suwa, who frequently focused on the modern female and the disintegration of the family unit in films like *Maborosi* (1995), *Okaeri* (1996) and *2/Duo* (1997) respectively. The divergence between these aforementioned group of directors suggest the absence of a shared new wave consciousness or ethics invested in social protest and criticism, and raises the question to what extent these young directors represent a new wave movement in cinema as compared to simply a new experimentation in cinema. The distinction is an important one. Currently Japanese film scholars remain disappointed in what they consider the commercialization and repetition inherent in Japanese cinema today. But, even if what is being produced in Japan does not fully resemble the new wave traditions of the 1950s-1970s, it is important to examine the ways in which the female archetype is being manipulated because it is in this politicized space that agitation and social critique continues to take place.

It is perhaps the horror genre with its transgression of social body boundaries, and prerequisite female monster and protagonist that most closely approximates a modern-day entrance into a new wave protest cinema. Horror cinema exploded in the 1990s in a re-imagination, which not only translated the atomic resonances of the postwar ‘dance of darkness’ (*butoh*) into the performances of its vengeful female ghosts, but delved into searing social criticisms in its targeting of modern life with Kurosawa Kiyoshi’s *Cure* (1997), for example,

Miike Takeshi's¹⁸⁸ *Audition* (1999), and Nakata Hideo's *Ring* (1998). New wave themes continue to inform this popular cinema in 2000 with the presence of horror director Sion Sono whose oeuvre extends from a social critique of the disenfranchised youth in Japanese society in his 2002 *Suicide Club*, to nuclear disaster themes in *Himizu* (2011) and *The Land of Hope (Kibo no Kuni)*, 2012). Miike has also directed a modern take of the *Yotsuya Kaidan* with his 2014 film *Over My Dead Body*, which recalls the *hibakusha* (atomic maiden) through its disfigured female protagonist. In witnessing the return of the repressed, the horror film enters into the realm of new wave cinema in its defamiliarizing of the familiar, making apparent the new wave's transformation, rather than disappearance, in its turning towards the horrible in an effort to interrogate the modern experience.

In the denial of horror and its repression, conservatism in Japanese society has taken the form of a rejection of traumatic history in favor of pre-modern or ahistorical notions of divine nationhood. In May 2000, Prime Minister Mori announced to the world that Japan was “a divine country centered on the Emperor (*Tennou o chuushin o shiteiru kami no kuni*)” (Gibbs 126), highlighting the increased conservatism and budding rejection of war guilt that would mark the Japanese political landscape for the next two decades. Less than ten years after Mori's statement, secret nuclear agreements between Japan and the United States allowing the entry of nuclear weapons within Japan, despite anti-nuclear policies, would be revealed to the Japanese public further destabilizing trust between government and citizens, and heightening nuclear fears in a foreshadowing of the Fukushima nuclear disaster in 2011. The aggravated tensions related to the resurgence of the atomic ghost, the comfort woman debate, Japan's rearmament and the emperor/family system that have continued into the 21st century create a clear sense that World

¹⁸⁸ Miike Takeshi was an assistant to Imamura Shohei.

War II, and its resonances, is not over. Of interest to this project is the return of Wakamatsu during this decade to themes of the Japanese self and war often articulated through the erotic female in films like *Cycling Chronicles: Landscapes the Boy Saw* (2004), which examined the phenomenon of the comfort woman (a topic frequently untouched in Japanese cinema), and his critically acclaimed *United Red Army* (2008), and *Caterpillar* (2010). Although not ostensibly of the horror genre, the cinema of lone new wave director Wakamatsu, forces a critical and nuanced contemplation of history, protest and horror and the ways in which it still ricochets in present-day Japan.

In this dissertation I have attempted to argue not simply for the centrality of the transgressive female to new wave discourses but to a new understanding of new wave cinema in critical studies. Marked by its preponderance of male directors, I have made a case for the feminization of the Japanese male both behind and in front of the camera through a theory of the trans-eye and transgenderism, in which the feminine acts as site of social wound and thus its negotiation. Contemporary Japanese cinema has seen a surge in Japanese female directors creating socially critical texts, thus generating protagonists communicating social concerns through a female lens as compared to the transgendered or ‘male’ eye of earlier Japanese new wave directors. Future work can begin to look at how penetration of the female director within contemporary Japanese cinema begins to change the new wave politics of the archetypical female figures that emerge in its cinema—the housewife, the mother, the daughter, the transgendered etc.—and introduces new ways of examining new wave concerns. Female directors like Nishikawa Miwa, Ninagawa Mika, Tanada Yuki, Ando Momoko, Yang Yong-hi (second generation Korean-Japanese), Oh Mipo (third generation Korean-Japanese) and Sakamoto Ayumi are currently creating films invested in questioning social expectations, privilege and

desire in relation to gender and identity within Japanese society. But the question still remains, is the new cinema of these emergent young directors truly challenging the establishment, or, is the cinema of contemporary Japan invested more in private concerns rather than those that haunted a generation who experienced the war and its immediate aftermath? Is desire, and the staging of the archetypical female body still important to a politics of resistance and transformation today? What does this mean for the future of new wave scholarship? What is apparent, is that a new critical engagement is needed for Japanese new wave studies that makes room for allegorical representations of woman and the importance of the popular to contemporary modes of protest and re-imaginings of self and nation.

APPENDIX A

A SELECT FILMOGRAPHY

Adachi, Masao

Gushing Prayer (Funshutsu kigan - 15-sai no baishunfu, 1971)

Hani, Susumu

Bad Boys (Furyō shōnen, 1961)

She and He (Kanojo to Kare, 1963)

Fukasaku, Kinji

Black Lizard (Kurotokage, 1968)

Ichikawa, Kon

Punishment Room (Shokei no heya, 1956)

Imai, Tadashi

Tower of the Lilies (Himeyuri no Tō, 1953)

Story of Pure Love (Jun'ai monogatari, 1957)

Ishii, Teruo

The Joy of Torture (Tokugawa onna keibatsu-shi, 1968)

Horrors of Malformed Men (Kyōfu kikei ningen: Edogawa Rampo zenshū, 1969)

Masaki, Mori

The Ghosts of Kagami Pond (Kaidan Kagami-ga-fuchi, 1959)

Masumura, Yasuzo

The Blue Sky Maiden (Aozora musume, 1957)

Kisses (Kuchizuke, 1957)

Afraid to Die (Karakkaze yarō, 1960)

A Wife Confesses (Tsuma wa kokuhaku suru, 1961)

Manji (1964)

The Hoodlum Soldier (Heitai yakuza, 1965)
Seisaku's Wife (Seisaku no tsuma, 1965)
Red Angel (Akai Tenshi, 1966)
Blind Beast (Môjû, 1969)

Matsumoto, Toshio
Funeral Parade of Roses (Bara no sôretsu, 1969)

Mizoguchi, Kenji
Sisters of the Gion (Gion no kyodai, 1936)
Women of the Night (Yoru no onnatachi, 1948)
The Life of Oharu (Saikaku ichidai onna, 1952)
Ugetsu (Ugetsu monogatari, 1953)
Sansho the Bailiff (Sansho dayu, 1954)
Street of Shame (Akasen Chitai, 1956)

Nakagawa, Nobuo
Black Cat Mansion (Bôrei kaibyô yashiki, 1958)
The Ghost of Yotsuya (Tôkaidô Yotsuya kaidan, 1959)
The Sinners of Hell (Jigoku, 1960)

Naruse, Mikio
Mother (Okaasan, 1952)

Oshima, Nagisa
A Town of Love and Hope (Ai to Kibono Machi, 1959)
Cruel Story of Youth (Seishun Zankoku Monogatari, 1960)
Night and Fog in Japan (Nihon no yoru to kiri, 1960)
The Sun's Burial (Taiyo no Hakaba, 1960)
The Catch (Shiiku, 1961)
The Pleasures of the Flesh (Etsuraku, 1965)
Violence at Noon (Hakuchu no Torima, 1966)
Death by Hanging (Koshikei, 1968)
Man Who Left His Will On Film (Tokyo Senso Sengo Hiwa, 1970)
In the Realm of the Senses (Ai no Corrida, 1976)

Ozu, Yasujiro
I was born, but... (Umarete wa mita keredo, 1932)
The Only Son (Hitori Musuko, 1936)
Late Spring (Banshun, 1949)
Tokyo Story (Tokyo Monogatarai, 1953)

Shindo, Kaneto
Children of Hiroshima (Genbaku no ko, 1952)
Mother (Haha, 1963)
Onibaba (1964)

Kuroneko (Yabu no naka no kuroneko, 1968)

Shinoda, Masahiro

Youth in Fury (Kawaita mizuumi, 1960)

Pale Flower (Kawaita hana, 1964)

Imamura, Shohei

Pigs and Battleships (Buta to gunkan, 1961)

The Insect Woman (Nippon konchûki, 1963)

Unholy Desire/Intentions of Murder (Akai Satsui, 1964)

The Pornographers (Erogotoshi-tachi yori: Jinruigaku nyûmon, 1966)

Karayuki-san, the Making of a Prostitute (Karayuki-san, 1975)

Black Rain (Kuroi ame, 1989)

Suzuki, Seijun

Gate of Flesh (Nikutai no Mon, 1964)

Story of a Prostitute (Shunpu den, 1965)

Fighting Elegy (Kenka Erejii, 1966)

Takechi, Tetsuji

Daydream (Hakujitsumu, 1964)

Black Snow (Kuroi yuki, 1965)

Wakamatsu, Koji

Secrets Behind the Wall (Kabe no naka no himegoto, 1965)

The Embryo Hunts in Secret (Taiji ga mitsuryô suru toki, 1966)

Violated Angels (Okasareta hakui, 1967)

Go, Go Second Time Virgin (Yuke yuke nidome no shojo, 1969)

The Notorious Concubines (Kinpeibai, 1969)

Running in Madness, Dying in Love (Kyôsô jôshi-kô, 1969)

Ecstasy of the Angels (Tenshi no kôkotsu, 1972)

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