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THE FLAVOUR OF TOFU

Ozu, History and the Representation of the Everyday

by

Woojeong Joo

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Film and Television Studies

University of Warwick, Department of Film and Television

September 2011

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Completing a thesis is a ‘non-everyday’ event, which, however, consists of innumerable everyday experiences. In this small space, I would like to express my gratitude for the people who helped me to make this unlikely transformation possible.

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Lastly, I want to thank my families who have long waited for me to reach this goal. For my son, Sebin, I hope this thesis can be a little answer for his question about my life for the past few years. Above all, I owe so many things to my parents. Without their support and encouragement, this work could neither have started nor finished. I dedicate this small, belated achievement to them.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis represents my own work and it contains no materials previously published. I also confirm that it has not been submitted for the award of any other degree at the University of Warwick or any other educational institution.

ABSTRACT

This thesis deals with the issue of the everyday represented in the films of Japanese film director Ozu Yasujiro (1903-1963) from a socio-historical perspective. Recognised as one of the masters of Japanese cinema, Ozu is well-known for his depiction of the everyday life of Japanese people consistently throughout his long career. Ozu's cinema, however, has been mainly studied from a formal point of view that pays attention to his particular cinematic styles. This thesis aims to revise this tendency by adopting the socio-historical methodology that actively draws upon the knowledge of modern Japanese history, and combining it with the analyses of Ozu's films.

Following a chronological order of the prewar, war and the postwar in Japanese history as well as in Ozu's career, this thesis is structured to investigate two main issues – the modern and the postwar – at both textual and contextual levels. My discussion thus includes historical backgrounds of how these two issues defined Japanese society, their influences on Japanese film industry (especially with regard to Shochiku, where Ozu worked), and their interaction with Ozu's films as appearing in the form of everyday lives of different kinds of subjects.

The result suggests a much more multifaceted shape of Ozu's oeuvre. Each of the different subjects I analyse exhibits contrasting aspects of the everyday in terms of both spatiality and temporality, which are closely related to the changing history of modern Japan. I also argue that Ozu consistently provided his representation of the everyday a critical dimension of Japanese modernity, which I conceptualise with the notion of 'deviation'. This thesis thus concludes that Ozu, as a filmmaker of everyday life, was always conscious of his contemporary society, and in this sense, the everyday in his films is more dynamic than empty.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

1. All the films quoted were produced in Japan except when specified.
2. All Ozu's films referred to were produced in Shochiku except when specified.
3. The Japanese film titles are presented first in original Japanese, followed by English translation. (e.g. *Tōkyō monogatari/ Tokyo Story*) After the first reference, which accompanies other information (i.e. director's name, production company and production year), only English titles are mentioned, except when the extra information is considered helpful.
4. Names of East Asian origin (i.e. Chinese, Japanese and Korean) are written in the order of last name followed by first name except when a name appears in the opposite order in a foreign publication. (Example: Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto as an author of *Kurosawa*)
5. Japanese words are Romanised following Hepburn system (with long vowels indicated by a macron), except the proper nouns that have already been widely used in English publications without a macron. (Example: Ozu Yasujiro, Shochiku, Tokyo) But in the case of Japanese publication, macron was used (e.g. Ozu Yasujirō, Shōchiku) except Tokyo when it is used as the place of publication (e.g. Tokyo: Iwanamishoten, 2005).
6. Japanese words are written in italics except 1) the words that have already been widely used in English (example: geisha); 2) proper nouns (example: Ofuna).
7. The title of Japanese articles and books in citation and bibliography are translated in English. They follow its original Japanese title distinguished by square brackets. (e.g. *Kantoku Ozu Yasujirō* [*The Director Ozu Yasujiro*])

INTRODUCTION

'Someday, foreigners will understand my films. ... I'm making films from the life of Japanese people. So, [through watching my films,] they can understand that this is what life in Japan is like'.¹

– Ozu Yasujiro

'I'm a tofu seller, so even if you ordered eel, I couldn't serve it'.²

– Ozu Yasujiro

Among Japanese filmmakers, Ozu Yasujiro (1903-1963) has long occupied a particular status. Generally recognised as one of the three most representative masters of Japanese cinema – along with Kurosawa Akira and Mizoguchi Kenji – he is best known as ‘the most Japanese’ director who, ‘as a kind of spokesman’, represents ‘the Japanese flavour’ with his films.³ But no other term describing Ozu’s cinema is as much misrepresented and misunderstood as this ‘Japaneseness’. Ozu was initially introduced to Western countries as something ‘foreign’ that required a special effort to be understood. Legend has it that the Japanese film industry was reluctant to export Ozu’s films to the West for fear that they would not be understood

¹ Quoted by his cinematographer Atsuta Yūharu in Atsuta Yūharu and Hasumi Shigehiko, *Ozu yasujirō monogatari [Ozu Yasujiro Story]* (Tokyo: Chikumashobō, 1989), p. 236.

² ‘Ozu kantoku geijutsuinshō jushō no yorokobi [Ozu’s Comment on Receiving Japan Art Academy Award]’, *Hōchishinbun* (27 February 1959), reprinted in Tanaka Masasumi (ed.), *Ozu Yasujirō sengo goroku shūsei [Ozu Yasujiro, Compilation of His Utterances]: 1946 – 1963* (Tokyo: Firumu Ahto sha, 1993), p. 324.

³ Donald Richie, ‘The Later Films of Yasujiro Ozu’ in *Film Quarterly*, 13:1 (Autumn, 1959), p. 18.

by Western audiences. In retrospect, this is absolute nonsense, if not an inverse form of Orientalism. It might be true that the real intention of Japanese producers was to continue the initial success of such *jidaigeki* (period drama) films as *Rashōmon/Rashomon* (Kurosawa Akira, Daiei, 1950), *Ugetsu monogatari/Ugetsu* (Mizoguchi Kenji, Daiei, 1953), or *Jigokumon/Gate of Hell* (Kinugasa Teinosuke, Daiei, 1953) in the West in the early 1950s.⁴ But even so, I think it is very unlikely to imagine that contemporary Western audiences would have struggled any harder to understand Ozu's urban family drama *Tōkyō monogatari/Tokyo Story* (1953) than Kurosawa or Mizoguchi's period films.⁵

The studies of Ozu that followed in the West also contributed to the mystification of the meaning of Japaneseness. Donald Richie argued that Ozu's cinema was Japanese because it actualised on screen 'traditional virtues of [Japan]', for example, the 'quality of restraint', which was expressed through a strictly low-height and static camera work that produces the famous '*tatami* shot'.⁶ Richie's aesthetic approach was too arbitrary when he tried to locate the concept of *mono no aware* ('sympathetic sadness ... caused by the contemplation of this world') in Ozu and connect the director's restricted style to Japanese traditions of Noh, tea ceremony, haiku, and Buddhism.⁷ Richie's traditionalism would be later denied by David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson in the 1980s, whose formalistic approach articulated the influence of the classical Hollywood narrative system on Ozu. However, they still positioned 'Ozu' as a 'relative concept' to the West. Ozu's unique formal style was the result of the director's aberrant playfulness with Hollywood norms after he first learned them faithfully.⁸ Thus Bordwell and Thompson's perspective was as much confined to the matter of Ozu's peculiar aesthetic form as Richie's, and left aside what Ozu was really saying to Japanese audiences through his films.

⁴ Kristin Thompson, *Breaking the Glass Armor: Neoformalist Film Analysis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 329-330.

⁵ In fact, already in 1956, Japanese film companies realised the limitations of *jidaigeki*, and attempted to introduce *gendai geki* (contemporary drama) to the West. The first such event held in Los Angeles showed the films of Gosho Heinosuke, Naruse Mikio, Toyoda Shirō as well as Ozu, whose 'treatment of modern Japanese life' was appreciated for being 'truly international in its universal human appeal'. Earl Roy Miner, 'Japanese Film Art in Modern Dress' in *The Quarterly of Film Radio and Television*, 10:4 (Summer, 1956), pp. 355, 363.

⁶ Donald Richie, *Ozu* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), p. xii.

⁷ Richie, *Ozu*, pp. xii-xiii, 52.

⁸ Thompson, pp. 19-20, 327-331; David Bordwell, *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 73-74.

I do not intend to argue here that Ozu's works are devoid of 'Japanese flavour'. Even Ozu himself seemed to regard his films as being of a particular kind, which had not yet been properly 'understood' by foreigners. What I want to argue is that the meaning of that 'Japaneseness' should be looked for in the lives of Japanese people rather than from a formal point of view. It should not be underestimated that Ozu was a *gendaijeki* (contemporary drama) director, who was always conscious of contemporary Japanese society. Thus Ozu's 'Japaneseness' was far from traditional, but very modern, confronting life as experienced in the present tense. Bordwell was in fact aware of this point when he mentioned the 'referential and thematic dimensions' of Ozu, which he summarised as 'the modernized, urbanized life of the contemporary Japanese' with a sense of 'a lost past and a fleeting present'.⁹ Recognising in the late 1980s that the 'social category of everyday life [was] only now beginning to receive intensive scholarly analysis', Bordwell anticipated that the very concept of the everyday, 'upon which Ozu's work concentrates', would be a significant academic subject to explore.¹⁰ The starting point of this thesis is to share such a perspective, and resume what was suggested more than twenty years ago, but has not yet been sufficiently investigated.

Thus firstly, this thesis will be an effort to draw our attention back to the 'life in Japan' that Ozu not only dealt with as his primary subject matter but also considered essential in order to 'understand' his works. As will be discussed in the following literature review, such an approach requires a socio-historical perspective with regards to the phenomena and changes in the everyday life in Japan, and I will investigate and present wide contextual evidences from Ozu's biographical records to modern Japanese history to support my argument. But this does not mean that discussion of visual forms and styles will be disregarded. Rather, stylistic issues will often become a central point in my analysis in order to examine how effectively cinematic expression on screen can represent the concept of the everyday on a social level. Cautioning against what Bordwell calls 'reflectionism' – a belief that cinema can be a 'barometer of broad-scale social changes' by assuming 'spurious and far-fetched correlations between films and social or political events' – I will nevertheless prove that Ozu's cinema is a case that actually requires that 'correlation' between

⁹ Ibid., pp. 32, 33, 50.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 172.

film and society because of the essence of the everyday that the director was continuously involved with.¹¹

The everyday that Ozu dealt with in his films, however, was not a universal entity. As I will discuss in the literature review, the everyday is an ambiguous and ubiquitous phenomenon that appeals throughout different spaces and times. Thus we have to pay attention to the specificity of the everyday in Ozu; both temporally and spatially demarcated, it signifies a plural number of possibilities. For example, eating in a family in good peace and harmony was the epitome of Ozu's everyday as seen in the breakfast scene in *Bakushū/Early Summer* (1951). (Fig I.1) For viewers familiar with this kind of image, however, similar family dining scenes in such films as *Nani ga kanojo o sō saseta ka/What Made Her Do It?* (Suzuki Shigeyoshi, Teikoku Kinema, 1930) or *Dokkoi ikiteru/And Yet We Live* (Imai Tadashi, Shinsei Eiga, 1951) come as a great shock in their realistic depictions of poverty-ridden family life. (Fig I.2) Closely related to a contemporary cinematic trend in the nation (leftist tendency



(Fig I.1)



(Fig I.2) Meal scenes in *What Made Her Do It?* (left and middle) and *And Yet We Live* (right)

films [*What Made Her Do It?*] and postwar Italian neorealism [*And Yet We Live*]), each film (and its everyday life inside) not only represents an unstable social atmosphere during the Great Depression and the Occupation era respectively, but also reveals how much proletarian experience of the everyday can differ from that of the suburban upper-middle classes in Ozu's films. Such criteria of the everyday are

¹¹ David Bordwell, *Poetics of Cinema* (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 30-31.

not limited to historical period and economic class but expand to other categories such as gender, generation, and geographical location. This is also related to genre and studio because, in Japan, usually a major film studio specialised in a certain stylistic flavour and subject matter for a specific target audience. For instance, the drastic difference of Ozu's everyday from that of *What Made Her Do It?* can be attributable to the production policy of Shochiku, the studio Ozu worked for, which was 'more oriented toward the female audience' and hence 'found little reason to inject politics into tear-jerkers' as found in other studio's tendency films.¹²

These kinds of differences inevitably raise the significant question of realism with regard to the interpretation of the everyday (i.e. which is truer to real life?). In fact, Ozu was always prone to harsh criticism from Japanese critics of a progressive political tendency, who thought Ozu was a conservative director, avoiding or distorting the reality of Japanese people's life. Ozu actively responded to this condemnation, defending his thematic position that consistently emphasised the encouragement of warm humanity. The famous reference of *tofu* – 'I can make only *tofu* [and nothing else]' – came out of this exact situation, where he strongly argued for the justification of the kind of the everyday he always depicted.¹³ Whether he avoided (or could ever avoid) reality will be an important issue to be discussed throughout the following chapters. I would just like to articulate here a slightly different point that this *tofu* reference is another example to underline the importance of properly placing Ozu within a context. *Tofu* does not merely indicate Ozu's idiosyncratic formal style, but is more related to his subject matter and thematic concerns, which cannot be properly understood without considering the long history of the debate between Ozu and Japanese critics over what reality cinematic art should pursue and in what way this should be done.

It should not be forgotten that Ozu's *tofu* was not a single kind but had variations of its own. His corpus of a total of 54 films spanned 35 years from the 1920s to the 1960s, reacting with the changing historical conditions of modern Japan throughout the prewar, war and the postwar eras. His typical characters were generally known to be middle class, but there were many other cases where the

¹² Joseph L. Anderson and Donald Richie, *The Japanese Film: Art and Industry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 67.

¹³ 'Ozu kantoku tōfu ya dangi [Director Ozu Discusses Tofu Shop]' in Tanaka (ed.), *Sengo goroku*, p. 118.

director moved higher or lower within the social stratum to present different sides of everyday life. The contrasts or conflicts among males and females, and the young and the old were also a fundamental element of Ozu's films, varying the face of his everyday that has been simply understood as a repetitive (and thus oppressive) entity. In other words, Ozu's everyday was like an open battlefield on which various cultural contradictions confronted each other to generate trouble in searching for a resolution. Thus the everyday this thesis will investigate is not so much a contemplative, detached observation of a static, external world as an active rendezvous with the real, lived experiences of various characters and their surrounding society. Paul Schrader once said, 'In the everyday nothing is expressive, all is coldness'; my major position in this thesis will be the complete opposite, i.e. 'In the everyday, nothing is cold, all is expressive'.¹⁴

In order to capitalise on the changing shapes of the everyday in Japanese society as well as in Ozu's work, the main structure of this thesis will follow a chronological order. The main body consists of two major parts, the Kamata Years (1923~1935) and the Ofuna Years (1936~1963), each corresponding to a different period in Shochiku's history as well as Ozu's silent and sound film periods. In terms of Japanese history, the former corresponds to the prewar period and the latter mainly to the postwar, although the latter includes discussion of the wartime period, which is inseparable from development of postwar society. There are five chapters in each of the two main parts: two contextual and three textual, even though each chapter contains discussions of both aspects. The first contextual chapter surveys the most central issue of each historical period – i.e. the concept of modernity in the prewar and 'the postwar (*sengo*)' in the postwar section – that suggests the main problematic for the following chapters. The second contextual chapter mainly deals with the historical changes in Japanese film industry with the emphasis on Shochiku, which played a major role in constructing the genre terms of Ozu's films.

¹⁴ Paul Schrader, *Transcendental Style in Film: Ozu, Bresson, Dryer* (New York: Da Capo, 1988), p. 39.

Each of the three textual chapters deals with the different subjects of the everyday, which I think are quintessential in Ozu's works: the modernised urban (or suburban) middle class family, the *shomin* (lower-middle class) people particularly residing in Tokyo's *shitamachi* region, and Ozu's female characters such as the modern girl. They are organised in an asymmetrical order; hence the middle class chapter comes at the beginning of the prewar and the end of the postwar section to produce a kind of circular structure for the whole thesis, articulating a historical interconnectivity between the chapters. The films selected for the discussion in these chapters are representative models of each subject area; for instance, *I Was Born But...* (1932) and *Tokyo Chorus* (1931) (Chapter 3) are Ozu's most successful middle class films, and the Kihachi series (Chapter 4) is the best example to show *shitamachi*'s everyday life. The postwar part also mainly deals with Ozu's canonical works such as *Late Spring* (1949) and *Tokyo Story* (1953), and later films such as *An Autumn Afternoon* (1962), which is one of the earliest Ozu films introduced to the West. Thus in regard to the selection of the text, this thesis is not so much an attempt to newly discover Ozu's obscure films that have not been well discussed so far, as a rigorous re-examination of the well-known examples from a different perspective and with re-designed analytic tools. Further explanation about individual films will be provided in each textual chapter.

Lastly, I would like to emphasise the organic unity of this thesis. Though each of the two main parts – Kamata Years and Ofuna Years – are separated into five chapters, I intend them to be read as one interlinked discussion and argument about the prewar (or modernity) and the postwar (or *senjo*). And considering that the '*senjo*' is actually a particular phenomenon of the 'modernity', this thesis, with all the complex components and varied arguments, consistently deals with one thematic issue of the Japanese modern through the lens of the everyday. In the next section, before these main parts begin, I will firstly review the previous literature on both the theories of the everyday and Ozu scholarship so far in order to situate my study within a larger intellectual framework and explain the structure of my thesis in more detail.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The two main subjects of this thesis – Ozu and the everyday – are both terms that have been taken for granted. Or at least the linkage between them, which I want to examine in this thesis, has been taken for granted. Ozu has always been regarded as a filmmaker of the everyday. Richie sees his work as ‘traditional’ and Bordwell sees it as ‘modern’, but there is an agreement that Ozu’s primary subject matter is the ordinary Japanese family and their everyday life. However, there has not yet been a study that actually attempted to specifically address the issue of the everyday with regard to Ozu’s cinema. The first two decades of Ozu scholarship in the English language were spent debating his formal characteristics and their cultural background (i.e. traditional or modern). More recent socio-historical studies pay attention to the particularities of Japanese history, but the everyday that they deal with still remains a social phenomenon and they do not confront the complexity expressed on screen. Elsewhere in academia there has been a growing popularity of the study of the everyday as a social discourse and critique. Not only have French theorists’ works been newly translated into English but also many introductory materials, anthologies, and journal articles relating to the issue have been written and published.¹ However, no matter how numerous these studies are, and no matter how extensive their scope is, what these Western social theories can offer the understanding of the everyday in

¹ Examples include; Ben Highmore’s *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory: An Introduction* (2002) and *The Everyday Life Reader* (2002); Michael Sherringham’s *Everyday Life: Theories and Practices from Surrealism to the Present* (2006); John Roberts’ *Philosophizing the Everyday: Revolutionary Praxis and the fate of Cultural Theory* (2006); Stephen Johnstone’s *The Everyday* (2008); and the special issue on the everyday in *Cultural Studies* (2004).

Film Studies (not to mention Ozu Studies) has been largely left unquestioned and unexamined.

This first part of my thesis is an attempt to reveal the discrepancies existing in the various discourses surrounding the issue of Ozu and the everyday, and to search for the possibility of integrating them within the context of my study. The first section will review various critiques of the everyday, centring on three Western thinkers – Lefebvre, De Certeau and Benjamin – whose theories suggest the most essential ideas in the study of the everyday. The second section applies the general issues discussed in the first section to two particular subjects – women and Japan – that are more directly relevant to the analysis of the everyday in Ozu's films. Lastly, I will discuss the key academic tendencies that have occupied Ozu scholarship so far, in order to suggest a new direction that will combine the problematic presented in the first two sections with the cinematic experiences of Ozu.

Critiques of the Everyday: Lefebvre, De Certeau and Benjamin

The everyday is a confusing concept. If there is one thing that can be agreed upon in studies of the everyday, it is the difficulty involved in presenting a definition of the concept that can satisfactorily explain its various different aspects. Henri Lefebvre has thus declared that 'ambiguity is a category of everyday life, and perhaps an essential category'.² Maurice Blanchot has also said, 'the everyday ... always escapes the clear decision of the law'.³ This difficulty seems even more disturbing if the concept's naturalness ('transparency' in Highmore's term) is considered.⁴ The everyday is quite naturally 'every' 'day', the life we, as human beings, live on a daily (i.e. repetitive) basis, which can be found all around us, and at an intimate proximity. In this sense, the everyday is also universal; all human activities and institutions contain aspects of the everyday. War – actual combat and triumphant heroism – cannot be 'everyday', but 'the army has its everyday life: life

² Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life, Vol. 1: Introduction*, transl. by John Moore (London: Verso, 2002), p. 18.

³ Maurice Blanchot, 'Everyday Speech' in *Yale French Studies*, 73, *Everyday Life* (1987), p. 13.

⁴ Ben Highmore (ed.), *The Everyday Life Reader* (Oxon: Routledge, 2002), p. 1.

in barracks and ... among the troops'.⁵ Such universality thus leads us to ask whether the study of the everyday should encompass 'everything' that we experience in our lives.

The ambiguity and multiplicity of the everyday that these questions suggest can only be resolved when our perspective and scope are transformed to the extent that we do not see it as a fixed concept but as a *modal* concept. The problem of the everyday lies less in the difficulty inherent in finding its general concept, one that would be valid whether in the East or the West, or in the past or the present, than in observing and analysing its variation according to differing geographical entities and historical phases. Lefebvre explains this point by saying that the goal of a critique of everyday life should not simply be 'describing, comparing and discovering what might be identical or analogous in Teheran, in Paris, in Timbuktu or in Moscow', but rather 'discovering what must and can change and be transformed in people's lives in [such diverse places]'.⁶ Thus the eyes of the researcher of the everyday focus on actual life, practice, and concrete methodology in order to recognise and interpret the variations, rather than maintaining critical distance and focussing on theory and abstraction in order to generalise the concept. But this does not mean that the critique of the everyday stops at the phenomenological stage of describing lived experiences; it also includes the process of abstraction that makes the everyday meaningful within a 'structure', and ultimately strives for a 'totality'.⁷ Without this metamorphosis of 'level' from the everyday into the totality, 'structure' itself (e.g. religion, philosophy, history, science, politics, the state, art and culture) cannot achieve its aspiration to universality (i.e. totality). It remains 'fragmented', leading to 'dialectical movements of "alienation/disalienation/new alienation"' from totality.⁸

As implied in such terms as structure and dialectics, Lefebvre's basic standpoint is Marxist. For him, 'Marxism ... is a critical knowledge of everyday life.

⁵ Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life, Vol. 2: Foundations for a Sociology of the Everyday*, transl. by John Moore (London: Verso, 2002), p. 41.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁷ In Lefebvre's 'critique', 'structure' means 'a system of coherent relations', which, 'located on a certain level above phenomena', is constructed with a view to studying and understanding them. Inversely, 'structure' itself also becomes 'discrete, distinct and discontinuous units' of 'totality' (which means a universal entity such as whole society or mankind). Thus 'structure' is 'an intermediary and a mediation' between phenomena (or 'reality', where the everyday is located) and totality (or 'abstraction'). *Ibid.*, pp. 157-159, 180.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 182-183.

By a process of rational integration it is able to pass ... from the level of the individual to the level of society and the nation'.⁹ The key critical issues thus include work, alienation and money. His critique aims to elucidate 'everydayness (*la quotidienneté*)', the 'modality of capital's administration of atomisation and repetition' inherent in these issues, and to differentiate it from the possibility of 'the everyday (*le quotidien*)', which means the 'modality of social transformation and class resistance'.¹⁰ However, he also distances himself from dogmatic Marxism, which distinguishes the everyday of the proletariat from that of the bourgeoisie and tends to reduce every problematic to labour and class struggle. Rather, the working classes are subject to 'needs and desires' as much as the bourgeoisie are.¹¹ The need (for a specific thing) and desire (for totality) exist in a dialectical relationship: 'the transition from need to desire and the vital return of desire back to need, in order to reabsorb itself within it'.¹² However, this movement is interrupted in a consumer society, the expansion of which Lefebvre witnessed in postwar France. There, 'the consumer does not desire. He submits. ... He obeys the suggestions and the orders given to him by advertising, sales agencies or the demands of social prestige'.¹³ In this way, everyday life becomes 'alienated' or 'colonised' by consumerism.¹⁴

Although Ozu's rendition of everyday life was hardly Marxist, Lefebvre's critique suggests a few points to consider with regard to the director's position. As we will repeatedly see, Ozu was consistently criticised by Japanese progressive (if not Marxist) critics throughout his career due to the thematic ambiguity of his films,

⁹ Lefebvre, *Introduction*, p. 148.

¹⁰ John Roberts, *Philosophising the Everyday: Revolutionary Praxis and the Fate of Cultural Theory* (London: Pluto Press, 2006), p. 67.

¹¹ 'Do the needs of the working class differ absolutely from the needs of the bourgeoisie? This study demonstrates that they do not. ... While there is a quantitative and qualitative disparity (of "standards of living") between the extent to which these needs and desires are satisfied, needs tend to equalise. ... Proletariat as such contains the total human phenomenon – need, work, pleasure'. Lefebvre, *Foundations*, pp. 32-33.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 11. This tendency would worsen as postwar French society moved on to the 1950s and 60s, making the possibility of the transformation of the everyday increasingly difficult. Lefebvre's position changed accordingly; while *Critique of Everyday Life*, written in 1947 and supplemented in 1958, was 'suffused with the heady optimism of the post-liberation France', his later work *Everyday Life in the Modern World* became less optimistic. In the book he defined the modern world (i.e. the 1950s) as 'Bureaucratic Society of Controlled Consumption', and stated that 'everyday life had ceased to be a "subject" rich in potential subjectivity; it had become an "object" of social organisation'. Michael E. Gardiner, *Critiques of Everyday Life* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 74, 86; Henri Lefebvre, *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, transl. by Sacha Rabinovitch (London, Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1971), pp. 59-60.

which ‘never reached the essence of a matter but remained a superficial phenomenon’.¹⁵ This criticism focussed especially on the petit-bourgeois characteristics of his so-called prewar *shōshimin* films (Chapter 3), which dealt with white-collar middle class life with ‘humour’ and ‘pathos’ instead of articulating ‘class struggle’. With its apparently ‘complacent’ approach to reality, Ozu’s everyday may be classified as an ‘object’ of Lefebvre’s critique, which is fundamentally a search for the possibility of change. However, this thesis will argue that Ozu’s approach was not without consideration of the ‘dialectical movement’ between the everyday and ‘structure’ at the upper levels (i.e. various social institutions such as school or company), and in this sense, did not in fact champion a ‘private’ life separated from social reality. This point becomes even clearer in Ozu’s later films about the postwar middle classes (Chapter 10), where he, as Lefebvre does, closely analyses contemporary Japanese society in terms of technological development, consumerism and urbanisation.

If Lefebvre’s critique pays attention to the possibility of transforming the everyday from its alienated state, de Certeau’s interest is drawn more to the actual practices of everyday life, and their variety. These ‘practices’, contrasted with ‘systems of production’ that impose rational order, construct another order of production, which is more creative, individualised and devious. They can subvert the system ‘not by rejecting or altering [it], but by *using* [it] with respect to ends and references foreign to [it]’.¹⁶ The basic attitude underlying this use (or ‘operation’, ‘making do’ [*bricolage*]) is expressed as ‘manipulation’, ‘appropriation’, ‘trickery’, ‘ruse’ or ‘deception’. De Certeau’s perspective is thus both optimistic – he admits the possibility of change within a system – and pessimistic – the everyday cannot fundamentally escape the rule of the system. He conceptualises the essential characteristics of the two contrasting notions of systematic control and the everyday practice with the terms ‘strategy’ and ‘tactic’. The former denotes the effort to secure a ‘proper’ place, that is, ‘the place of its own power and will’ separated ‘from an

¹⁵ Sekino Yoshio, ‘Shinkyōbutsu no hasan to ozu yasujirō no zento [The Bankruptcy of the State of Mind Film and the Future of Ozu Yasujiro]’ in *Eiga hyōron* 9:1 (July, 1930), p. 22.

¹⁶ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, transl. by Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. xiii. De Certeau uses an example of the relationship between the Spanish colonisers and the indigenous Indians. Although the former imposed their culture and law on the latter’s everyday life, the latter made use of them to produce ‘something quite different from what their conquerors had in mind’. Ibid.

environment’, and to establish a rational system with its powers of panoptic sight and knowledge.¹⁷ In contrast, ‘tactic’ is ‘determined by the absence of a proper locus’; it instead has ‘space’, a different spatiality from ‘place’, composed of ‘intersections of mobile elements’ with ‘vectors of direction, velocities and time variables’.¹⁸ Thus it waits for an opportunity to infiltrate the ‘cracks ... open in the surveillance of the proprietary powers’ and to ‘play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organised by the law of a foreign power’.¹⁹

This relationship between strategy and tactic (or place and space) can be verified and illustrated in various actual circumstances. In terms of speaking, strategy corresponds to ‘an established vocabulary and syntax’ (i.e. ‘scientific practices’), which is consistently modified and adjusted by the actual ‘enunciation’ of individuals (i.e. ‘everyday linguistic practices’).²⁰ Similarly, an ‘act of reading’ is the ‘space produced by the practice of a particular place: a written text, i.e., a place constituted by a system of signs’.²¹ In a capitalistic society, commodity production is the realm of scientific, rational knowledge controlled by a system. However, its cultural meaning is not directly transferred to consumers but rather reinterpreted through their behaviours of consumption. In urban geography, there is a difference between mapping and touring, where the former’s ‘totalising eye’, which creates a ‘transparent text’ or ‘theoretical ... simulacrum’, is counterbalanced by the latter’s ‘contradictory movements’, a ‘process of appropriation of the topographical system on the part of the pedestrian’.²² As Baudelaire noted, such walking practices within tactical space became the key methodology of the *flâneur*, a modern subject who,

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 36. By separating the area inside the reach of its power from the outside, strategy can ‘transform foreign forces into objects that can be *observed and measured*, and thus control and “include” them within its scope of vision’. Through this mechanism, it can also ‘transform the uncertainties of history into readable spaces’, which accumulate in the form of knowledge. In other words, strategy detests temporal variation; it pursues a universality that operates regardless of time, and hence is ‘a triumph of place over time’. Such is the ‘typical attitude of modern science, politics and military strategy’. Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 37, 117. ‘Space’ has ‘none of the univocity or stability of a “proper”’ as inherent in ‘place’. Ibid., p. 117.

¹⁹ Ibid., p.37.

²⁰ Ibid., pp. xiii, 20. In Saussure’s term, strategy and tactic correspond to *langue* and *parole* respectively.

²¹ Ibid., p. 117.

²² Ibid., pp. 92, 97. Such movements include a pedestrian’s sudden turns, detours, crossings, wanderings and avoidings, making the consequential paths ‘opaque’ and ‘invisible’ to the panoptic viewer’s effort to map. In Merleau-Ponty’s terminology, these pedestrian movements constitute an ‘anthropological space’, which is contrasted with a ‘geometrical space’ (“a homogeneous and isotropic spatiality,” analogous to [de Certeau’s] “place”). Ibid., p. 117.

strolling the streets of nineteenth century Paris, extracted ‘the eternal’ out of ‘the transitory’.²³

De Certeau’s conception of space versus place is adopted in Wada-Marciano’s analysis of national identity appearing in Japan’s underworld genre films. She differentiates an ‘actual geographical location’ (i.e. ‘place’) from a ‘specific space as one’s recognition of locale’; for example, Yokohama Bay, a geographical place in Japan, was encountered by audiences as a ‘de-Japanised’, ‘foreign experience’, the kind that they had seen in Hollywood gangster films, due to various foreign elements used to depict the place.²⁴ This kind of ‘dis-place-ment’ also performs an important function in Ozu’s films, the best example of which is the empty lot in the Tokyo suburb of *I Was Born But...* (Chapter 3), which becomes a liberated space for the children who investigate and subvert the capitalistic order that originally contributed to the construction of such suburbs. Throughout this thesis, I will expand upon this point in order to develop a concept I call ‘deviation’ – a variation on de Certeau’s notion of ‘trickery’ or ‘deception’ in the practice of everyday life set against the operation of a system. Ozu’s everyday never escapes from the constrictions of the order imposed upon it by society, but it deviates from it (and permeates it as well) in order to exhibit alternative possibilities for modern life. Tokyo’s *shitamachi* region (Chapter 4, 9), the middle class residences of Kamakura (Chapter 8), and the ‘new *sararīman* films’ (Chapter 10) will be analysed from the perspective of ‘deviation’ from an enforced spatiality.

‘Deviation’, however, is not confined to the spatial alone; rather, this concept cannot be complete without consideration of its temporal aspects. If explained in Lefebvre’s terminology, deviation is a movement from ‘linear rhythm’ – the product of ‘homogeneous’ and ‘quantified’ time characterised by ‘brutal repetitions’ and subordinated to the logic of capitalistic labour – towards ‘cyclical rhythm’, that is, ‘great cosmic and vital rhythms: day and night, the months and the seasons, and still more precisely biological rhythms’.²⁵ Although de Certeau does not assume any

²³ Charles Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, transl. by Jonathan Mayne (New York: Da Capo Press, 1986), p. 12.

²⁴ Mitsuyo Wada-Marciano, *Nippon Modern: Japanese Cinema of the 1920s and 1930s* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2008), pp. 37-38.

²⁵ Henri Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life* (London: Continuum, 2004), pp. 73-74. What Lefebvre aims to achieve with his ‘rhythmanalysis’ is a re-evaluation of the rhythm of the ‘human species’, whose ‘physical and physiological being’ can correspond to ‘universe movements’,

temporality in his conception of ‘strategy’, to which Lefebvre might have assigned ‘linear rhythm’, he recognises that ‘tactics’, composed of rapid movements through different points of a space, are essentially ‘procedures’, ‘durations’ and ‘heterogeneous rhythms’.²⁶ Moreover, unlike Lefebvre’s analysis, de Certeau notices that the rhythm generated by the practice of the everyday necessarily accompanies a historical perspective: ‘Objects and words ... have hollow places in which a past sleeps, as in the everyday acts of walking, eating, going to bed’.²⁷ Various everyday practices are thus ‘an exploration of the deserted places of [one’s] memory’, a ‘detour’ for the ‘discovery of relics and legends’.²⁸

The discovery of lost time in the present everyday becomes the central issue for Walter Benjamin. Founded upon studies of modern urbanity by both Baudelaire and Simmel, Benjamin pays attention to the incessant shocks of modern urban everyday life, which make the sensory system of city-dwellers unresponsive or ‘silent’.²⁹ He calls such instantaneous but fleeting experiences ‘isolated experience’ or ‘*Erlebnis*’.³⁰ *Erlebnis* elicits an explicit and conscious response from the human mind; it registers information at the level of consciousness, and generates ‘*m émoire volontaire*’ (voluntary memory) in Proust’s terminology.³¹ However, consciousness cannot filter out all the threatening shocks of modern lives; some experiences (called ‘*Erfahrung*’) penetrate into the unconscious to shake up dormant memory (‘*m émoire involontaire*’), which is historically registered and accumulated. When *Erfahrung* occurs in the appreciation of art (i.e. when our gaze upon a work is met by the object’s returning gaze), it creates an ‘aura’ - the ‘authenticity’ that endows a work of art with a ‘unique existence’ through the ‘data of *m émoire involontaire*’ or the ‘mark of the history’.³² Such involuntary memory is not merely a private phenomenon;

and to find a dialectical way to unify this cyclical rhythm with the linear rhythm of modern society in order to invent ‘polyrhythm’. Ibid., p. 83.

²⁶ De Certeau, p. 38. De Certeau explains with an example of walking and mapping; after the ‘practice’ of the former has *passed* through a space, the latter attempts to gather the ‘trace left behind’, becoming a ‘relic set in the *nowhen*’. Ibid., p. 97.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 108 For example, while engaged in everyday walking, people often notice the ‘presences of diverse absences’ and say, ‘here, there used to be ...’. Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 107.

²⁹ Ben Highmore, *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 66.

³⁰ Walter Benjamin, ‘On Some Motifs in Baudelaire’ in *Selected Writings, Vol. 4, 1938-1940*, transl. by Edmund Jephcott et al. (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2003), p. 317.

³¹ Ibid., p. 315.

³² Benjamin, ‘On Some Motifs in Baudelaire’, p. 337-338; Walter Benjamin, ‘The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility’ in *Selected Writings, Vol. 4*, pp. 253-254. In contrast, the

what is restored is a ‘tradition, in collective existence as well as private life’.³³ Such experience rooted in the collective unconscious is, by its nature, communicable between and amongst constituents of society.

Benjamin’s conception of memory and history, however, is different from nostalgia, a passive reflection on time passed; it is rather based upon the dialectical and critical relationship between the past and the present. The way these two temporalities dialectically react is through an ‘image’ that ‘flashes up at the moment of [the past’s] recognisability’.³⁴ Thus the past and the present, whose relationship is a ‘purely temporal, continuous one’, should be differentiated from ‘the Then [or What-Has-Been] and the Now’ that are in dialectical relation.³⁵ History, then, is born out of this ‘dialectical image’, not from a mere accumulated set of knowledge of the past; it ‘wishes to hold fast that image of the past which unexpectedly appears to the historical subject in a moment of danger ... of becoming a tool of the ruling classes’.³⁶ The goal of this historicism is ‘redemption’, which means a ‘redeeming of possibilities’ that were missed or distorted in the past but still remain to be fulfilled.³⁷

Conversely, it is also important that the temporal site upon which this historical redemption is attempted is the ‘Now’ of the present not the future or the past. In other words, history can be constituted only when it is critically ‘read’ through the ‘historical index’ that the ‘Then’ (or ‘what-has-been’) carries for the ‘Now’ of the present, which should be a particular ‘Now’ among the plural, distinguishable ‘Nows’. (Hence, ‘each now is the Now of a particular recognisability’ or ‘legibility’.)³⁸ The everyday, then, is not a routine repetition (‘everydayness’ in Lefebvre’s term), but serves as a catalysis of multilayered temporalisation among the

‘technology of reproduction’ prevailing in modern art ‘detaches the reproduced object from the sphere of tradition. By replicating the work many times over, it substitutes a mass existence for a unique existence’. *Ibid.*, p. 254.

³³ Benjamin, ‘On Some Motifs in Baudelaire’, p. 314.

³⁴ Walter Benjamin, ‘On the Concept of History’ in *Selected Writings, Vol. 4, 1938-1940*, transl. by Edmund Jephcott et al. (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2003), p. 390. ‘It’s not that what is past casts its light on what is present, or what is present its light on what is past; rather an image is that in which the Then [or ‘what-has-been’] and the Now come into a constellation like a flash of lightning. In other words: image is dialectics at a standstill’. Walter Benjamin, ‘N2a, 3’ in *The Arcades Project*, quoted in Georges Didi-Huberman, ‘The Supposition of the Aura: The Now, The Then, and Modernity’ in Andrew Benjamin (ed.), *Walter Benjamin and History* (London: Continuum, 2005), p. 8.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Benjamin, ‘On the Concept of History’, p. 391.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 390; Werner Hamacher, ‘“Now”: Walter Benjamin on Historical Time’ in Benjamin (ed.), pp. 40-41.

³⁸ Walter Benjamin, ‘N3, 1’ in *The Arcades Project*; quoted in Hamacher, p. 57.

past, present and future, and in this process the role of historical materialism that Benjamin advocates is essential. However, whilst being historical and critical, Benjamin's everyday is not about 'systematic political strategy and class agency' founded upon a 'Hegelian unification of reason and praxis'; rather it belongs to a 'cultural category' that deals with 'unconscious symptom[s] and sign[s]' as evidenced in his emphasis on 'image'.³⁹

As such, I think Benjamin's theory offers more insights for the analysis of aesthetic materials than other social theories can do. This is not to say that Ozu's films are representative examples of Benjamin's 'dialectical image'; the shocking nature of Benjamin's images, which are derived from the experiences of urban modernity in European cities, are not easily correlated with Ozu's more stable images. Studies so far tend to regard the fleeting instantaneity of the cinematic image as the essential point of Benjamin's theory. Leo Charney, for example, emphasises the fact that it is the fleeting, fragmentary and shocking effects of images that lead modern subjects into 'tangible reawareness of the presence of the present'.⁴⁰ The present tends to constantly drift away, leaving an empty, wasted space behind, but there are many artistic efforts to overcome this 'absence of presence' through the 'perceptual extension of the single moment', and Benjamin's proposed method of achieving this is the shock effect (i.e. *Erlebnis*).⁴¹ But it is also important to understand that for Benjamin, the key issue is not the fragmentary experience of modernity *per se*, but the historical consciousness that it brings from the past to generate the 'dialectical image' in the present. *Erlebnis* should not stand alone without the experience of *Erfahrung*. Benjamin makes this point clear in his critique of modern art forms that have the characteristic of reproducibility (most of all, cinema), where a 'decay of the aura' (or 'overcoming each thing's uniqueness by assimilating it as a reproduction') is predominant.⁴² After all, what he desires is that the dialectical image can 'criticise modernity [the forgetting of the aura] through an

³⁹ Roberts, p. 62.

⁴⁰ Leo Charney, *Empty Moments: Cinema, Modernity and Drift* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), p. 48.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 35.

⁴² Benjamin, 'Work of Art', p. 255.

act of memory and, at the same time, ... criticise archaism [nostalgia for the aura] through an act of essentially modern invention, substitution and de-signification'.⁴³

In this sense, Ozu offers an interesting counterproof to the 'decay of the aura' Benjamin witnesses in cinema. The permeation of the past by the present in the form of memory becomes the central issue of the director's postwar films (Chapter 8, 9, 10), where the two temporalities intersect with each other with regard to gender, space and generation, to construct a sense of the postwar as history. This historical consciousness is also preceded by the so-called 'Kihachi films' in the prewar period (Chapter 4), where the notion of the temporal past (the Edo era, in this case) overlaps with the present space of Tokyo's *shitamachi* region. This temporal multilayeredness may not be presented in a 'dialectical' form, affecting viewers with a 'momentary shock', but it essentially demonstrates the same critique of modernity through history that Benjamin attempted. The way that Ozu deals with it, however, is not necessarily by slowing down the passage of time and emphasising the inertia of stilled objects as generally considered. As I will argue, the everyday in Ozu – its present temporality that interacts with historical indexes – exists in the form of actions and movements. With conflicts, negotiations and deviations among different temporal and spatial elements, there is hardly any 'empty' time and space in Ozu's everyday.

Particularities of the Everyday: Women and the Case of Japan

One of the key points of this thesis is to examine those subjects of the everyday that actively bring history to the foreground, whilst resisting the degeneration of memory into the area of nostalgia. The figure of the Japanese woman is important in this regard, particularly in Ozu, whose films emerged from within the influence of the feminine focus of the Shochiku studio he worked for. The matter of femininity, however, is not dealt with as an independent issue in the theories of the everyday discussed here so far. Lefebvre, accepting that 'women in general bear all the weight of everyday life ... much more than men', nevertheless wants his critique to be about

⁴³ Didi-Huberman, p. 8.

‘problems of society as a whole’ or ‘modernity in general’, more than ‘the requirements of particular groups’.⁴⁴ The object of the study – women – is a ‘vaguely defined social group’, whose substance is ‘underdeveloped’, making it a ‘concept of ambiguity’.⁴⁵ Lefebvre finds evidence of this ambiguity in postwar French women’s magazines, which advertised the ‘pseudo-everyday’; while dealing with ‘issues of current affairs, fashion, art, politics and history’, they contradictorily offer an ‘escape from the genuine problems of art, politics, history, and, in the end, of modern life’.⁴⁶ Such a ‘marvellous muddle’ of everything without an essence or ‘philosophy’ would not suffice as an object of his critique.

It is ironic, however, that such an argument sounds quite similar to that of the established disciplines, against which Lefebvre strives to justify his critique of the everyday. It seems that the matter of femininity is simply branded undeserving of critical attention. The sociologist Dorothy E. Smith sought to redress this irony, having noticed that the most central agent of everyday life was deprived of its status as a subject in the discourses of the everyday. For her, the exclusion of women is a fundamental problem pervading every aspect of a capitalistic society that is designed to serve the interests of men. She describes the complex of power institutions (‘government, law, business and financial management, professional organisation and educational institutions’) that manage this male-oriented society as ‘relations of ruling’ or ‘ruling apparatus’.⁴⁷ The discourses of ‘texts’ (including academic disciplines as well as media) are also part of this ruling apparatus. Smith’s main point is that ‘within the discourses embedded in the relations of ruling, women [are] the Other’, alienated by men.⁴⁸ ‘The everyday world as problematic’ is suggested as a methodology to overcome this problem, which articulates the actual, concrete experiences of women before conceptual and theoretical discourses on texts. As such,

⁴⁴ Lefebvre, *Foundations*, pp. 11, 86-87.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 84. Readers of woman’s magazines would find that ‘cookery becomes a fairyland and fantastic stories are like recipes in a magic cookery book, flanked by articles on fashion and stories about the romantic agonies of a famous star or an oriental princess’. *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Dorothy E. Smith, *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1987), p. 3.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 7. She explains this point in relation to her own experience as a student of sociology, which, being ‘a world organised textually’ and ‘conceptually ordered’, was a ‘male world in its assumptions, its language, its patterns of relating’, and thus incompatible with her everyday life as a single mother, which is another world of ‘endless detailing of particulars’. *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

the woman can become an ‘embodied subject located in a particular actual local historical setting’ with ‘immediacy in the now’.⁴⁹

On the other hand, Kristin Ross’s study of postwar French culture builds upon Lefebvre’s approach in order to emphasise the socio-historic conditions that determined women’s everyday life. Analysing the articles and advertisements from postwar French women’s magazines, she discovers a certain pattern of obsessive female desire to achieve efficiency and orderliness in domesticity, as represented by the words ‘hygiene’ and ‘cleanliness’. Thus various kinds of domestic products and appliances, such as laundry soap, refrigerators, washing machines and electric kitchenware, formed the object of French housewives’ commodity fetish, as manipulated by magazine advertisements. Out of this phenomenon, which Lefebvre would have included in his argument for ‘ambiguity’, Ross identifies a symptom of more general tendencies of the postwar French society. First of all, the cleaning ideology that the women’s magazines disseminated represents the ‘state-led modernisation effort’ of the postwar era, modelled after the image of ‘the *joie de vivre*, the optimism, the generosity’ of American culture.⁵⁰ The idealised virtue here is the rationalisation or functionalisation of space and time, which would transform the home into a kind of workplace. But more importantly, such a sanitisation process initiated ‘the colonisation of everyday life’, as advocated by Lefebvre, which replayed the relationship of colony and coloniser (as between Algeria and France) on a domestic scale. The cleansed/colonised middle class home suggests a fantasy of safe haven, protected from the threats of the sordid exterior, which resulted in the ‘movement of retreat, or *repliement*’ from history and society, a conspicuous postwar tendency called ‘reprivatisation’.⁵¹

Women, in the end, became the primary victims of this ‘interior colonialism’ of everyday life through modernisation and consumerism. In Smith’s terms, it is a

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 108. Although Lefebvre’s critique is evaluated as an attempt to reunite the ‘everyday world of experience’ with the ‘larger social and economic relations’, Smith asserts that it starts from the latter in order to grasp the former, instead of the other way around, which I believe explains the limits of Lefebvre’s position with regard to women’s issues. Ibid., p. 90.

⁵⁰ Kristin Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonisation and the Reordering of French Culture* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1996), pp. 78-79. Hence, ‘[m]odernity was measured against American standards’. Ibid., p. 90.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 106. In Lefebvre’s words, the ‘reprivatisation of everyday life’ from the 1950s onwards consisted of ‘an escape from the nuclear threat and from the setbacks of history’, accompanied by the ‘growth of needs, alienation of desire’, the satisfaction of which was possible through objects, mediated through advertising. Lefebvre, *Foundations*, p. 88.

domination of the female everyday by the ‘relations of ruling’; women’s magazines are ‘texts’ which mediate and justify the ideology of that dominant force. It is, however, important to note that the meaning of modernisation and the extent of female subjectivity may vary greatly according to specific socio-historical circumstance. For example, Ross introduces Edgar Morin’s interpretation of a tale about a provincial girl, who, adoring commodity culture, moves from the countryside to Paris; rather than a ‘colonisation’ of the rural by the urban, Morin reads it as a ‘decolonisation narrative’, whereby the peasant woman achieves the ‘formation of a new subjectivity’.⁵² Ross, pointing to the corrupting influence of urban life on the girl, who returns home heavily in debt, does not agree with the liberating effects of modernisation with regard to feminine subjectivity. However, it is certain that the issue cannot simply be viewed from the perspective of a critique of consumerist society without also considering the complex cultural, as well as psychological, influences that consumerism exerts on women.

The discourses around Japanese women’s experiences of the modern everyday in the 1920s and 1930s, which has drawn the interest of many academics, including Barbara Sato and Miriam Silverberg, display the same level of complexity. Here issues of feminine subjectivity are bound up with the intricate workings of Japanese modernity. Studies so far have tended to acknowledge the role of the modern Japanese woman as an active subject in the construction of a new femininity, which was placed in tension with the pre-modern, patriarchal norms of traditional Japanese society. On the radical end of the spectrum was the modern girl, who was more of a ‘highly commodified cultural construct crafted by journalists’ than an authentic being representing the ‘actual beliefs or practices of the young women of that era’.⁵³ Nevertheless, their image as such reflects the anxiety of patriarchal power over the advancement of modern femininity, which Silverberg praises, describing the modern consumerist girl as ‘militant’, and as actively resisting oppressive social conventions. On a more realistic level, there were housewives and working women, whose subjectivities, along with the modern girl, formed the multi-layered structure of Japanese femininity during the interwar period. Discussing each of them, Barbara Sato emphasises the role of women’s magazines in the formation of a ‘new mass

⁵² Ross, pp. 91-93.

⁵³ Miriam Silverberg, *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense: The Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), p. 51.

culture' that 'revolutionised women's status, and in the process destroyed traditional family, the operational site of ... the "good wife and wise mother" ideology'.⁵⁴ This more positive view of women's autonomy (compared to the French case) not only reflects the historical difference between the interwar and the postwar period, but also articulates the particularity of the problem of modernity that each society had to deal with in its own way. I will continue to discuss the discourses of modern Japanese women in Chapter 5, preceded by a more general investigation of Japanese modernity in Chapter 1.

Ozu's representation of modern femininity provides direct evidence of the complexity of the issue. First of all, his films do not articulate the phenomenon of consumerism at the level of everyday life. The depiction of extravagant modern girl characters is in fact bounded by sensationalism and moral drama, leading to the reassurance of social conventions and patriarchal values (Chapter 5). The only conspicuous cases of the permeation of consumerism into everyday life can be found in his very late films in the late 1950s and early 1960s (Chapter 10), where the concept of commodity fetishism, as Ross analysed in relation to postwar French society, may be applied. In the case of the middle class housewives of the *shōshimin* films (Chapter 3), their confinement in the home, and the obscure existence that this produces, confirm Smith's idea of a gender division designated by a patriarchal 'ruling'. Female subjectivity, however, still occupies a central position for Ozu as the counter-identity against masculinity. In some cases in the prewar, the gender division rather works as a foundation upon which to consolidate the women's position, which is expressed through the attachment to everyday objects and space, as well as the gaze between female characters. (Chapter 5) In the postwar years, this solidarity would obtain a new metaphoric dimension as an alternative to the male-driven history of war and totalitarianism, though its method was not total rejection of the past, but rather deviation and temporal mediation in Benjamin's sense, conveyed through the narrative of marriage. (Chapter 8)

The intersecting (but diverging) relation of Japanese women's experience to the more general discourses on women and the everyday suggests a significant (but difficult) problem of weighing the particularities against the generality of the

⁵⁴ Barbara Sato, *The New Japanese Woman: Modernity, Media and Women in Interwar Japan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), p. 79.

everyday. It is also related to the problem of interpreting and differentiating the varying experiences of modernity around the world. If ‘everyday life ... came into being only with the rise of the masses’, as Ross explains with an example of the development of European cities, then Japan shared a similar experience in the 1920s when ‘many of the hallmarks of modernity – urbanisation, the experience of simultaneity, the proliferation of new media [such as film, radio and popular music], the transformation of gender roles – occupied the centre of national attention’.⁵⁵ ‘[T]he diversity of everyday lives’ became an even weaker tendency in the postwar, because ‘technological or industrial civilization tends to narrow the gaps between lifestyles ... in the world as a whole’.⁵⁶ However, acknowledging the idea of ‘peripheral modernities ... , in which all societies shared a common reference provided by global capital and its requirements’, Harry Harootunian still thinks that ‘each society ... differed according to specific times and places’.⁵⁷ Thus, according to a subject's cultural and historical experience, there existed ‘coeval modernities’ (not ‘alternative modernities’), which challenged the ‘universalising and homogenising claims of the Western example’.⁵⁸ What in fact makes these heterogeneous modernities possible is the everyday, which does not consist simply of routine and repetition, but ‘negotiate[s] the compelling demands of homogeneity through the mediations of a past that constantly stood in a tense, often antagonistic, relationship to the present of the new’.⁵⁹

In Japan's case, the fundamental difference of its modernity and modernisation process comes from the nation's complicated historical relationship with the West, which firstly made a shocking impact on the former, and afterwards became the ideal model to emulate. These ‘mimetic processes of non-Western modernities’ had the dual effects of ‘reifying the West as the site of seamless and fully realised modernity

⁵⁵ Kristin Ross, ‘French Quotidian’, in Lynn Gumpert (ed.), *The Art of the Everyday: The Quotidian in Postwar French Culture* (New York: Grey Art Gallery, 1997), p. 21; William O. Gardner, *Advertising Tower: Japanese Modernism and Modernity in the 1920s* (Cambridge, Harvard University Asia Centre, 2006), p. 8. William Gardner thus argues that the ‘mass society’ in Japan, along with the ‘delineation of individual subjectivity’, became the central issue for Japanese modernist writers in the 20s, such as Hagiwara Kyōjirō and Hayashi Fumiko, the latter of whom especially suggested an ‘understanding of everyday life as the interface between individual subjectivity and a highly mediated environment’. *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9, 12.

⁵⁶ Lefebvre, *Foundations*, p. 19.

⁵⁷ Harry Harootunian, *History's Disquiet: Modernity, Cultural Practice, and the Question of Everyday Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), p. 62-63.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

... and of ensuring that modernity in the non-West [was] regarded as deficient'.⁶⁰ On the other hand, as Takeuchi Yoshimi acknowledges, this self-humiliating consciousness was accompanied by the continuous resistance of the Japanese to the European 'instinct for self-expansion', which was 'deeply intertwined with the essence of what is called "modernity"'.⁶¹ It is true that in the course of these resistances, Japanese modernisation was possible. But as far as that modernisation meant Westernisation (i.e. adopting the West's belief in historical progress, scientific quantification, positivism and empiricism), the eventual fate of the resistance was nothing other than defeat. 'Oriental resistance' is bound only to merge with the more complete form of world history as devised by the West. 'Hence the continuation of resistance is the continuation of the sense of defeat'.⁶² In order to understand this deeply disturbing sense of defeatism (and frustration), it is necessary to note that Takeuchi wrote this in 1948 when Japan was under US occupation after being devastated by the recent war. The problem that he had with examining and reconfiguring Japan's modernity would continue to develop into his argument for re-evaluating the discourses of Overcoming Modernity (a conference on the modernity issue held during war) in the new context of the postwar. (Chapter 6) The postwar in Japan thus has a very different historical and cultural dimension to, for instance, that of France, with the experience of nationalism and militarism ended by the defeat in war, but also the more fundamental problem of the relationship with the West (which won the war) with regard to the nation's accumulated history of modernisation. For Ozu also, Japanese modernity was a much more quintessential problem than consumerism in relation to the domination of the postwar everyday, as will be discussed in Chapter 8 and 9.

In a similar sense, the tendency of 'reprivatisation' in the postwar, which became a central issue for Lefebvre and Ross, also has a different connotation in the context of Japan. After suffering through the fifteen-year war since 1931, postwar Japanese society was ready to steer its way from the nationalistic ideological excess that had long dominated the country, and return to 'private life' as an idealised form of liberated individualism. Thus wartime slogans such as '*taibōseikatsu* (life in

⁶⁰ Gardner, p. 14.

⁶¹ Takeuchi Yoshimi, *What Is Modernity?: Writings of Takeuchi Yoshimi*, transl. by Richard F. Calichman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), p. 54.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 57.

austerity)' or '*messhihōkō* (devoting one's self for the sake of the public)' were replaced by a particular respect for people's everyday life built on the foundation of a new political democracy.⁶³ As in the case of Europe, however, there was another perspective on this privatisation, which interpreted it as a symptom of a fragmented society composed of de-politicised individuals, whose main concern was confined to economic affluence. The Japanese leftists of the 60s thus criticised and rejected the privatised everyday as a bourgeois ideology serving to stabilise the Establishment, and attempted to overcome it through 'non-everyday' methods such as theory and revolution. Observing this segregation between the everyday and the non-everyday, Takabatake Michitoshi asserted that the contemporary Japanese student activists and left-wing academics were ignoring the possibility of a 'reciprocating movement' between the former and the latter. Although the 'theories' from Marx to Lefebvre were a product of the actual 'everyday life' of Western society, they were transformed into 'the non-everyday' once imported by the Japanese leftists, whose attitude was one of 'enlightening the commons from above' while 'escaping from the masses'.⁶⁴ Takabatake suggests that the solution could be found within the concept of the everyday, which is a 'thought that places more weight on the process of developing relations with actuality over theory or systems'.⁶⁵

Even Lefebvre, who largely criticised the tendency toward 'reprivatisation', acknowledged its positive potential; '[reprivatisation] cannot be defined simply as the search for an alibi or a means of escape from history. In its reactions to the setbacks of revolution or the danger of planetary extermination, *it is not simply burying its head in the sand*. Clumsily but insistently, it is seeking an acceptable way forward: not an absolute barrier between the private and the public, between the individual and the social and the historical'.⁶⁶ I will also approach Ozu's postwar films with this positive perspective on 'reprivatisation' in mind, which, when connected to the resilience of domestic everyday life (especially that of female characters) amidst the ruins of war, actively raises question about the justification of the nation's previous history of war. (Chapter 8)

⁶³ Takabatake Michitoshi, 'Nichijō no shisō to wa nanika [What Is the Thought of the Everyday?]' in Takabatake Michitoshi (ed.) *Nichijō no shisō [The Thought of the Everyday]* (Tokyo:Chikumashobō, 1970), p. 27.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 24.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 27-28.

⁶⁶ Lefebvre, *Foundations*, p. 94.

Takabatake's emphasis on the actuality of the everyday has a precedent in Tosaka Jun's theories in the prewar period. As an antithetical reaction to the conservative tendencies of contemporary Japanese intellectuals, who, facing the impending war, tried to grasp the problem of the everyday from a metaphysical and ethnocentric stance, Tosaka's thoughts strongly objected to such an abstract, non-scientific and 'philistine' approach, and 'redefine[d] the task of philosophy as the problem of the present, the now (*ima*) of everyday life' in its 'totality' and 'actuality'.⁶⁷ Thus he rejects any kind of methodology which, lacking the key step of observation of actual reality, allows 'hermeneutic' manipulation – be it political, economic, historic, literary or philological – that deploys 'the order of *meaning* in place of the order of *reality*'.⁶⁸ In a similar way, the 'common sense' that pervades the everyday life of a society became the object of Tosaka's criticism, if it meant just a quantitative average of the majority's opinions (the 'bourgeois-democratic concept of common sense'). He rather advocated a common sense that is based upon the '*jissaisei* (act-uality, Wirklichkeit in German, where *wirk-* means to act)' of the everyday.⁶⁹ An idea can be common sense not because many people (a vague quantity) agree (or believe) but because it reflects the actual reality of our everyday lives.

Thus for Tosaka, the 'principle of everyday life' is 'actuality'.⁷⁰ And actuality is closely linked to current affairs and the problems of an ever-changing society. He thus evaluated the role of journalism more highly than philosophy or literature as a practice of actuality. The emphasis on actuality is also present in his theory of film, which he regards as 'the most realistic art form that can visually represent the actual existence'.⁷¹ This reality (*shajitsusei*) or 'actual reality' of film, which can show the everyday of society as well as nature in 'live action', is what grants the medium its

⁶⁷ Harootunian, *History's Disquiet*, p. 141. Harootunian also points to the anti-religious nature of Tosaka's philosophy, which, in effect, rejects those views that 'see the everyday life as vulgar and base' and 'judge its unwanted presence in the present as a decline from an original, higher form of existence'. For Tosaka, 'talking about another world is the subject of theology, not philosophy'. His 'vision of everydayness offered a realm of imminence, as contrasted to a world that put life outside and beyond human reach'. Ibid., p. 146.

⁶⁸ Tosaka Jun, *Nihon ideorogi-ron [A Study of Japanese Ideology]* (Tokyo: Iwanamishoten, 1977), pp. 21-22.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 88-89.

⁷⁰ Tosaka Jun, 'Nichijōsei ni tsuite [On Everydayness]' in Tosaka Jun, *Tosaka jun zenshū [The Complete Collection of Tosaka Jun]*, Vol. 4 (Tokyo: Keisōshobō, 1966), p. 137.

⁷¹ Tosaka Jun, 'Eiga no shajitsuteki tokusei to fūzokusei oyobi taishūsei [The Relationship between the Realistic Quality of Film and Manners and Customs or the Mass Culture]' in *ibid.*, p. 284.

high artistic value.⁷² We experience daily the beauty of the materiality of the world and the joy of watching the movement of material things, but it is ‘only after such beauty is transferred to the screen that we notice it’.⁷³ At the social level, reality can be experienced through customs, manners and lifestyles, the exhibition of which is ‘the principal condition of cinema’.⁷⁴ Customs and manners in cinema, such as clothing, architecture, behaviour and facial expression, are not only a material and sensory experience but the representation of the moral consciousness that defines and distinguishes a society from others. Thus Japanese cinema, by showing Japanese customs and manners, may become the ‘concrete expression of Japanese people’s thoughts’.⁷⁵ Or from the audiences’ point of view, their moral consciousness is confronted and affected by the customs and manners depicted on screen.

Tosaka’s view of actuality, and its realisation in the medium of film, establishes the central connection between the everyday and Ozu’s cinema, which this thesis will discuss. Just as Tosaka does with his theory, Ozu refuses to allow everyday life in his films to degenerate into vague, metaphysical ideas without any concrete anchor to reality. When actuality is conveyed through the close depiction of everyday life, the customs and manners of ordinary Japanese people are revealed. Thus, as quoted in the Introduction, he said, ‘I’m making films *from* the life of Japanese people. So, [through watching my films,] they can understand that this is what life in Japan is like’.⁷⁶ In fact, this close attention to the actual everyday life of the Japanese is not Ozu’s personal invention but the basic principle of production at Shochiku’s Kamata studio and of its head Kido Shirō. Chapters 2 and 7 will discuss the idea that their desire for the faithful representation of reality eventually became a form of modernism, the meaning of which was differentiated according to the changing historical condition that it was situated within.

⁷² Tosaka thus speaks highly of documentary or news film as the genre that actualises this quality of cinema.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 286.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 287.

⁷⁶ Quoted by his cinematographer Atsuta Yūharu in Atsuta and Hasumi, *Ozu yasujirō monogatari*, p. 236.

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Ozu, however, can be understood to be more complex than Tosaka; if the present is the priority for the latter, the former's main concerns always include the past that can disrupt the flow of the contemporary. Ozu's cinema is thus a contradiction between the present and the past, or the everyday and history, the tension of which studies have so far been unable to fully resolve or articulate appropriately. Ozu has been more regarded, so to speak, as an extremist who represents a number of specific tendencies, rather than a moderator of contradictory elements. The result is an unbalanced body of criticism that wavers in emphasis between form and content or text and context.

As mentioned in the Introduction, if calculated from the 1950s, when postwar *gendaigeki* films began to be introduced in the US, Western critical writing on Ozu now has more than half a century worth of history, and has played a key role in the development of Japanese cinema studies. Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto, for example, has categorised Ozu studies by the early 1990s into four groups according to the combination of two different paradigms: Ozu's aesthetic style (traditional or modern) and its political implications (reactionary or radical).⁷⁷ The traditional-reactionary group, which includes critics such as David Desser, reads traditional Japanese elements (for example, Zen Buddhism) into Ozu's films, and interprets them as evidence of the director's conservative political stance. In contrast, for Noel Burch, such traditional Japanese aesthetics imply a radical political instrument used to deconstruct what he calls the 'institutional mode of representation' as found in classical Hollywood cinema, which serves to solidify Western bourgeois ideology. The third group corresponds to Japan's new wave cinema directors of the late 1950s and early 60s, who saw in Ozu a 'total indifference to contemporary social reality' hidden behind 'restrained aestheticism and a skilful formal exercise' – hence aesthetically modern but politically reactionary.⁷⁸ For so-called 'neo-formalists' such as David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, Ozu's modern formal experiments,

⁷⁷ By tradition, Yoshimoto means 'manifestations, representations or reflections of the traditional Japanese world view, sensibility or aesthetic principles'. The critics who are against seeing Ozu from this viewpoint are 'modern'. Being reactionary or radical indicates the political implication of such a traditional or modern style. Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto, *Logic of Sentiment: The Postwar Japanese Cinema and Questions of Modernity*, Ph.D. Thesis, University of California, San Diego, 1993, p. 114.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

especially in narrative mode (which they call ‘parametric’), contrast with that of classical Hollywood films, which concentrate on story construction. They are thus in line with Burch’s critique of Hollywood cinema, but attribute Ozu’s style to the influences of modern Western culture rather than Japanese aesthetic traditions as Burch does. Yoshimoto also separately classifies the fifth group, ‘apolitical culturalists’ (such as Donald Richie and Paul Schrader), who, at the beginning stage of Ozu studies, resorted to the concepts of quintessential Japaneseness and universal humanity to present Ozu as an ‘auteur’.⁷⁹

Though not without its problems, this categorisation encompasses all the major tendencies in Ozu studies up until Bordwell’s work in the late 1980s, and still remains a valid framework for understanding the general topography of the history of Ozu scholarship (and its problems) in the West. In his introduction to Yoshida Kiju’s book *Ozu’s Anti-Cinema* (2003), Daisuke Miyao almost directly adopts Yoshimoto’s categories to review Ozu scholarship up until that point, although he rightly points out that ‘Bordwell and Thompson do not share Burch’s political position that poses Japanese cinema as a challenger to capitalism’, thus disagreeing with Yoshimoto’s decision to include the neoformalists within the politically radical group.⁸⁰ More recently, Abé Mark Nornes also repeats a similar historiography of Ozu studies with regards to the criticism of *Late Spring*: beginning with the ‘culturalists’ (Schrader and Richie), whose methodologies are based upon religion, traditional aesthetics and humanism, moving to Burch, who perceives Ozu as a ‘radical alternative to the Hollywood continuity system’ and then connecting to Bordwell and Thompson’s formalistic interpretations.⁸¹ Nornes suggests that what characterises the post-Bordwell phase is a socio-historical approach – for example, paying attention to the social conditions of the US occupation era in an analysis of *Late Spring* – as found in Eric Cazdyn’s *The Flash of Capital* (2003). I will discuss this new tendency in more detail later in this section.

⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 113.

⁸⁰ ‘[N]eoformalists ... never try to use their film analyses for any ideological agendas’. Daisuke Miyao, ‘Translator’s Introduction’ in Yoshida Kiju, *Ozu’s Anti-Cinema*, transl. by Daisuke Miyao and Kyoko Hirano (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, 2003), p. xvi.

⁸¹ Abé Mark Nornes, ‘The Riddle of the Vase: Ozu Yasujiro’s *Late Spring* (1949)’ in Alastair Phillips and Julian Stringer (eds.), *Japanese Cinema: Texts and Contexts* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 81-85.

The importance of Yoshimoto, however, is that he presents his historiography of Ozu studies as a broader critique of Japanese film studies as it has been practiced by Western academics. Very obviously, the framework he has described – the ‘binary oppositions as modern/traditional and reactionary/radical’ – is intrinsically flawed; Ozu is never *either* modern *or* traditional, or *either* reactionary *or* radical. Such a simple dichotomy is, as I mentioned earlier, too extremist. Yoshimoto recognises this fundamental problem in Western Ozu scholarship and warns that ‘as long as we keep using such binary oppositions ... we will inevitably end up taking one of the four critical positions’, which he believes to be a ‘logical closure’.⁸² In fact, as seen in Burch and Bordwell’s cases, whether Ozu’s films have a certain stylistic or political characteristic or not has only been considered from the West’s point of view and as the West’s problematic; the radical nature of Ozu’s cinema is measured only by its potential as an alternative to classical Hollywood.⁸³ Yoshimoto also explains that the dichotomy between the modern and the traditional has the same problem for it ignores the actual circumstances of modern Japanese history, where tradition coexisted with modernity as relative concepts for each other. Thus we must recognise that designating Ozu as modern, traditional, reactionary or radical is a ‘discursive practice’ (i.e. more ideological than textual), and ask ‘why the West/Japan dichotomy plays such a hegemonic role in the discussion of modern Japan; and why this dichotomy has been dominating the discussions of Ozu’s films in particular’.⁸⁴

Agreeing that Ozu studies so far have largely been a discursive construction of the Western academic, I do not, however, think that the constructed discourse does not have some valid origin in the texts themselves. In fact, Ozu himself was as ideological in his filmmaking as any critic, even though the tendency was not as explicit as other politically oriented directors. Above all, it should not be overlooked

⁸² Yoshimoto, *Logic of Sentiment*, p. 119.

⁸³ At this point, Yoshimoto’s definition of the binary between reactionary versus radical cannot help but be confusing, for while the standard for being ‘radical’ is based on the artistic implications of Ozu in the context of Hollywood cinema, being ‘reactionary’ is decided by the actual ideological relation of his films to the contemporary Japanese society, as argued by both Desser and the Japanese new wave directors. Conversely, this double standard can be seen as a counterproof of the West-centric position of Ozu critics, for whom whether Ozu’s films have a political function in *Western society* is a nonsensical or unnecessary question.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 124, 128. For Mitsuyo Wada-Marciano, such a dichotomy is a result of an ‘enlightenment historiography’ or ‘colonial model of history’, which ‘situates a Western subject as the viewer and reader’ and frames the Japanese cinema as a ‘belated national cinema following the trajectory of Hollywood’. Mitsuyo Wada-Marciano, *The Production of Modernity in Japanese Cinema: Shochiku Kamata Style in the 1920s and 1930s*, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Iowa, 2000, p. 16.

that Ozu intentionally deployed Japanese iconography in order to evoke a feeling of Japaneseness, the purpose of which may be related to the specific historical conditions of the immediate postwar. (Chapter 8) In other words, it cannot be asserted that Ozu is traditional or is not traditional; only a certain part of a certain film from a specific period is ‘traditional’, and for a specific reason. Most studies so far, which confine their scope to a few representative films by the director, miss this important point about Ozu’s cinema; that it is not a homogeneous corpus detached from historical specificity. The same principle applies to the dichotomy of radical/reactionary; Ozu was almost always regarded as a ‘conservative’ director by many Japanese critics, but the context of conservativeness changes from the prewar to the postwar along with Ozu’s historical consciousness. (Chapter 3, 4, 7, 8) The discursive field thus has a valid connection with the director’s actual filmmaking practice, which corresponds to specific historical conditions. As discussed in the previous sections, the study of the everyday should eventually be more about actuality than hermeneutics.

Amongst the classical schools of Ozu studies mentioned by Yoshimoto and others, it is worth saying more about Bordwell’s work, not only because it is the most extensive study on the director so far, with refined formal analyses that have had a lasting influence, but it also reveals the difficulties of connecting textual analysis to its contextual basis. First of all, it should be noted that what Bordwell is aiming for is a comprehensive ‘poetics’, rather than simple ‘formalism’. Although the primary methodology in his work, *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema* (1988), uses close shot-to-shot analyses to demonstrate Ozu’s formal deviations from the Hollywood standard, Bordwell’s ‘poetics’ attempts to find ‘norms arising from formal principles, conventional practices of film production and consumption, and proximate features of the social context’.⁸⁵ In other words, the ‘poetics’ are dependent upon three distinguishable ‘frames of reference’ – ‘cultural norms’ such as Zen Buddhism or traditional Japanese aesthetics, the ‘mode of film production and consumption’, and finally, the question of ‘formal norms’. Bordwell argues that ‘through [these] norms, we can make our poetics historical; only by *comparison* with prevailing standards and practices can we specify the particular workings of one film or a body of films’

⁸⁵ David Bordwell, *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*, p. 1

(italics added).⁸⁶ Thus it is not correct to say that Bordwell disregards a more contextual dimension in his analysis, although his primary standpoint is cinematic form. As he clarifies in the new introduction to *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*, the book in fact was devised in order to correct the ‘ahistorical’ tendencies of his previous studies and to supply ‘a sense of [Ozu’s] proximate cultural context’.⁸⁷ Thus in several chapters of the book (especially, Chapter 3) and in analyses of individual films, Bordwell deals with the socio-cultural conditions surrounding Ozu’s cinema, mentioning the director’s relationship with the Japanese film industry, the influences of Westernised urban mass culture and the everyday life of different social classes (e.g. *sararīman*, college students and proletariat).⁸⁸

The problem, however, is that Bordwell’s poetics does not clearly explain the interrelation amongst different norms. What does Ozu’s following (or violating) of Hollywood’s formal norms – e.g. 180-degree rule, eyeline and graphic matching, low-height camera etc. – have to do with, for instance, the proliferation of urban mass culture or the advancement of militarism during the war? Can we easily prove that Ozu’s relationship with his studio exerted a meaningful influence on his decisions to delay or cut shots? Without confronting this problem, Bordwell’s poetics isolates each textual or contextual analysis, either refraining from examining the relations between them altogether, or attempting to form an arbitrary connection between them.⁸⁹ Such a problem is inherent in the poetics’ mechanical view of the text-context relationship, which Bordwell explains with a so-called ‘concentric

⁸⁶ Ibid., pp. 1, 17.

⁸⁷ Bordwell mentions the article ‘Space and Narrative in the Films of Ozu’ published in *Screen* in 1976 as an example of his ‘mistake’ in defining Ozu as a ‘modernist’ without producing a ‘causal account of its historical sources and premises’. David Bordwell, ‘Konban-wa Ozu-san [Hello, Mr. Ozu]’, a new introduction to *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Library, Scholarly Publishing Office, 2004), pp. 4-5 <<http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.0920054.0001.001>>, accessed 31 August 2011.

⁸⁸ The same strategy is applied in his more recent writing on Japanese cinema, where he combines the discussion of the main stylistic characteristics of Japanese films in the period of 1925 to 1945 with the investigation of the tense relationship between modernity and Japaneseness throughout the period. David Bordwell, *Poetics of Cinema*, pp. 337-374.

⁸⁹ An example of this unfounded connection is extracting the notion of ‘Japaneseness’ from a wide-angled or high-angled shot because it resembles the composition of traditional painting or woodblock prints, and then connecting it to Japanese directors’ accommodation of the conservative intellectual trend of the ‘return to Japan’ in the 1930s. Ibid., pp. 353-356. The loose connection can also lead to a logical contradiction; according to Bordwell, during the war, when the militarist’s demand for pure Japanese culture was high, the contemporary film style became rather more faithful to Hollywood’s international decoupage norms. Ibid., p. 372. The opposite argument, with more concrete evidence of the relation between wartime political conservatism and filmic form, can be found in Davis’ conception of monumental style. Darrell William Davis, *Picturing Japaneseness: Monumental Style, National Identity, Japanese Film* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), pp. 41-46.

circle' model, where each different norm is situated within hierarchical layers.⁹⁰ Since the everyday is a matter that is relevant to any of these layers, my major methodological concern is to prioritise the linkages amongst them. And for a text to have a connection with a context, the analysis of the former needs to be broadened out from the restricted formal perspective in order to encompass questions of 'meaning' and 'effect' (i.e. why? instead of how?).⁹¹ The 'why' question inevitably positions everyday life on screen as an 'ideological construct bearing symptomatic significance' for society, as Bordwell acknowledges.⁹² And the resulting 'effect' may be explained by what Yoshimoto refers to as a 'structure of feeling', which has 'too amorphous' an atmosphere to be captured by an explicitly discursive language, but still has enough of 'a concrete presence in people's social experiences' to evoke an emotion.⁹³ I do not intend to argue that every textual element contains a meaning that directly corresponds to a certain context, but will selectively confine my discussion to the materials with connotations such that the everyday in Ozu's films can have a concrete relationship with socio-historical circumstances.

Many studies on Ozu have been written in Japanese language, and some of them contain extensively detailed factual or biographical researches, which I will often refer to as valuable resources.⁹⁴ The problem of the studies in Japanese, however, is that most of them are intended and structured to 'describe' information rather than to raise an academic question, either textual or contextual, and 'analyse' it. Notable exceptions are Hasumi Shigehiko and Yoshida Kiju. In his book *Kantoku Ozu Yasujirō/The Director Ozu Yasujiro* (1983), Hasumi Shigehiko criticises the tendency in Ozu studies up until the 1970s, which has defined Ozu's cinema

⁹⁰ In the concentric circles, Ozu's films are located at the centre, then towards the outside are his working environment (colleagues and their craft practices) and the circumstances of film industry and its trends (successively) placed, and at the outermost circle are the broader cultural forces of Japanese society and history. As such, Ozu's films at centre lose direct touch with marginal social forces; in fact, for Bordwell, the direct connection between them is something to be cautioned, a mistake often found in what he calls 'reflectionism'. Bordwell, *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*, p. 17; Bordwell, *Poetics of Cinema*, pp. 30-32.

⁹¹ For example, asking why (for what effect) a vase shot has to appear in *Late Spring* instead of how it is presented within a frame as a shot.

⁹² Bordwell, *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*, p. 172.

⁹³ Yoshimoto, p. 124. Nornes, referring to the concept, notes that it pays attention to what Bordwell and Thompson have missed in their formal approach to Ozu, i.e. the powerful effect of a style that originally occupied Richie and Schrader's interests. Nornes, p. 86.

⁹⁴ Examples include Satō Tadao's *Ozu Yasujirō no geijutsu/The Art of Ozu Yasujiro* (2000) and Tanaka Masasumi's *Ozu Yasujirō shūyū/An Excursion to Ozu Yasujiro* (2003), along with Tanaka's compilations of Ozu's interviews and roundtable talks.

according to its various formal restraints, and suggests a more relaxed and expanded perspective on the director's style. Thus Hasumi, just as Bordwell does, pays attention to Ozu's stylistic 'playfulness', that suddenly protrudes from within an otherwise restrained form. Hasumi describes such aberrations as part of a 'thematic system', because they are not usually integral to narrative construction, but rather can be grouped according to peculiar elements – such as 'eating outside', 'changing clothes', 'watching together in one direction' – that recur throughout Ozu's films. As more of a cinematic (mostly visual) attraction rather than a narrational structure, the thematic system disrupts the usually restrained and refined continuity in Ozu's films in order to stir up the viewer's cinematic sensitivity.⁹⁵ It is also important that the examples he uses to explain the thematic system are all closely related to everyday experience. Hasumi could thus be considered to be the first critic who consciously foregrounded the working of the everyday at the textual level, though he does not explicitly emphasise the word 'everyday' in his discussion. However, unlike Bordwell, he does not want to correlate context with the pure textual concept of the thematic system; in fact, the thematic system itself 'is introduced to affirm the [textual] details that may be regarded as surplus seen from the [social reality's] point of view'.⁹⁶

Yoshida Kiju also foregrounds the role of the everyday at the textual level as a factor antithetical to narrative order, as Hasumi's thematic structure is. Yoshida pays attention to the 'anonymous and ambiguous' characteristics of the everyday objects, scenery and activities in Ozu's films. A scene of a staircase, a signboard on a street, or of doing chores around the house hardly contributes to a development of a story, yet is filled with rich expressions of space and movement, that are barely noticeable and necessary at the level of narrative. Yoshida thinks the unnoticed everyday in Ozu's films exists at the margin of narrative flow, watching us with its 'deeply silent gaze'.⁹⁷ The everyday as such betrays the viewers' anticipation for drama and reveals the 'artificiality of the film narrative' by defamiliarising it; thus Ozu's cinema

⁹⁵ Hasumi Shigehiko, *Kantoku Ozu Yasujiro [The Director Ozu Yasujiro]*, transl. by Yun Yongsun (Seoul: Hannarae, 2001), pp. 98-104. At this point, Hasumi seems to suggest a similar concept to what I call 'effect' or Yoshimoto's 'feeling', though he does not clarify what that 'cinematic sensitivity' or 'experience' is.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.

⁹⁷ Yoshida, p. 7.

is ‘anti-cinema’, where essentially nothing happens.⁹⁸ Andrew Klevan calls this anti-narrative characteristic of the everyday ‘undramatic’. Dramatization, which plays a significant role in the genres of fantasy or melodrama, is a sceptical technique, which, suspicious of the certainty of objective knowledge, attempts to avoid facing reality as it is. Film, as a dramatic tool, has been a ‘moving image of scepticism’; but, as Cavell admits, it can also be a medium for recording the ‘ordinary without necessarily transforming it beyond recognition’.⁹⁹ Klevan, contrasting the festive, romanticized, eventful everyday of conventional cinema with the undramatic, uneventful one in Ozu's films, argues that the latter can be a more truthful method for revealing what is ‘important but hidden only because it is always – every day – before our eyes’.¹⁰⁰ For example, *Late Spring* deliberately avoids reaching an emotional crisis, instead showing us the inconsequential aspects of everyday life, as demonstrated by the train ride sequence to Ginza, the effectiveness of which is based upon the joy of experiencing the dynamic movements of a train. It is rather a ‘celebration of the routine’ than the ‘despondent boredom’ of daily life.¹⁰¹

However, can Ozu’s everyday be understood without considering narrative or drama as Yoshida and Klevan believe? Neither of them (nor Hasumi also) argue that the ‘anti-narrative’ or ‘undramatic’ everyday is devoid of effect, and I think that effect cannot be produced in a form completely irrelevant to narrative as long as Ozu’s film is something other than an arbitrary succession of shots. I believe that Ozu himself was very conscious of this principle, as revealed in his last words to Yoshida on his deathbed: ‘Cinema is drama, not accident’.¹⁰² For example, the abovementioned train ride in *Late Spring* is not an ‘accidental’ protrusion out of the flow of the ‘drama’, but is fully functional *within* it. Three minutes long and deliberately edited, the sequence is not only about a fortuitous outing on a sunny day to show the ‘pleasure in the routine rhythms of ... daily lives’ as Klevan argues, but

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 62.

⁹⁹ Andrew Klevan, *Disclosure of the Everyday: Undramatic Achievement in Narrative Film* (Wiltshire: Flicks Books, 2000), pp. 17, 30.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 30.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., pp. 138-140.

¹⁰² Yoshida, p. 2. For Yoshida, who thinks Ozu ‘eschewed dramatic elements in his films as much as possible, rendering events as if they were simple, spontaneous accidents’, these last words of Ozu’s conveyed the opposite of what he believed Ozu’s cinema to be, and thus made him ‘astonished and confused’. Given the circumstance (Ozu would die a month after saying this to Yoshida), I think that Ozu intended this not as an irony or playful joke of the kind that he used to enjoy, but as a final statement of his true belief, which had not been properly understood by others. Ibid.

it also suggests the narrative element of ‘going to Tokyo’ from the distant city of Kamakura, the relative spatiality of which plays a significant role in the film (Chapter 8).¹⁰³ Moreover, it should be noted that such spatial displacement from Tokyo is a recurring narrative element in Ozu’s films of this period, which can be related to the director’s deep consciousness of the broader historical conditions of the postwar. (Chapter 6-9) Thus there is hardly an ‘empty’ moment in Ozu’s representation of the everyday; it is rather a textual experience of constant happenings, movements and interactions amongst different elements, which are always open to contextual references.

The tendency in more recent studies – the ‘socio-historical’ as Nornes designates – approaches Ozu’s films from these multifaceted analytical viewpoints. Some of them are structured as historiographies, which deal with Ozu’s films within the context of the history of Japanese cinema, including discussions of industrial foundations, the star system, genre conventions and audience responses, as well as broader political influences. Isolde Standish’s *A New History of Japanese Cinema* (2005) takes the position that ‘[i]mages and cinema should be understood as part of the social process of the creation of meaning’, but recognises that the social process must be understood and described in relation to local terms, specific to Japan’s historical experiences.¹⁰⁴ She thus reconstructs the national cinema according to changes of the predominant discourses in Japanese society, e.g. modernism in the interwar period, nationalism during war and humanism (or democracy) in the 1950s and so on. Seen from this historical framework, Ozu’s cinema can be evaluated as a critique of modernity; in the prewar it was against the ‘economic base of industrial capitalism’ as expressed through the ‘documentary-style “slice-of-life” view of a segment of the life course of [the middle classes]’, and in the postwar the object of the critique was transferred to materialism as associated with the desire for various consumer commodities (Chapter 3, 10).¹⁰⁵ To prove this point, her analysis comes down to the textual level, looking at examples such as the *mise-en-scène* of wasted suburban landscapes in Ozu’s prewar films, which are not only ‘crucial in establishing location as “place” in the narrative’, but also ‘political in that it sets up a

¹⁰³ Klevan, p. 139.

¹⁰⁴ Isolde Standish, *A New History of Japanese Cinema: A Century of Narrative Film* (New York: Continuum, 2005), p. 25.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 50, 208.

counterimage to the idealised, but not depicted, image of the *furusato*, the rural country home'.¹⁰⁶

There are other studies sharing the same socio-historical problematic as Standish but with a more concentrated view on a specific period in history. Peter High's *Imperial Screen* (2003) is the most comprehensive work to date on Japanese film history during the fifteen years' war (the so-called 'Dark Valley') from 1931 to 1945. Examining the advancement, reign and decline of Japanese nationalism at that time, High interweaves this political situation with the transformations in the Japanese film industry, dealing with the issues of studio production policy, genre invention and critical discourses, which were involved in a close relationship with the militarists' media policies and censorship (Chapter 7). However, High does not present a simple, unidirectional model of the influence of politics upon cinema; in fact the big picture he suggests is much more complex, with the 'commercial instincts' of film entrepreneurs and the 'liberalism' or 'humanism' of filmmakers interacting with the state's ideological control.¹⁰⁷ Compared to the extensive contextual information he provides to prove this point, however, his discussion of individual films, including Ozu's, is often sketchy, remaining at the level of narrative analysis. This is a potential problem for any study predicated on a historical methodology, the grand scope of which tends not only to be oblivious to the actual form of filmic texts but also vulnerable to the dangers of reducing every textual phenomenon to contextual reference, as a 'reflectionist' would do in Bordwell's terminology.¹⁰⁸

Although retaining the same historical perspective, Mitsuyo Wada-Marciano's study of Japanese cinema in the 1920s and 30s concentrate on the specific issue of Japanese modernity, which is directly related to my discussion of the everyday. Her major concerns accordingly include city space, the Japanese urban middle classes

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., pp. 43-44.

¹⁰⁷ Peter B. High, *Imperial Screen: Japanese Film Culture in the Fifteen Years' War, 1931-1945* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), p. 151. Even the Film Law, enacted in 1939 to control the Japanese film industry, 'did not add up to a system of total vertical control. This was never attained, even in the latter stages of the Pacific War'. Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Bordwell, *Poetics of Cinema*, p. 31. Thus the most interesting points about Ozu in High's book are contextual questions, such as the director's attitude towards the war. As will be discussed in Chapter 7, Ozu was one of the very few filmmakers who actually fought on the front, and how this experience influenced him – if he 'shared much of the militarist's thinking about the war' as High argues – can be a controversial issue. Ibid., pp. 180-189 (p. 186).

(*shōshimin*), modern subjectivity (especially feminine) and national identity, as represented in the style of Shochiku's Kamata studio (where Ozu also worked) (Chapter 2). Wada-Marciano takes a comprehensive approach to connecting these separate elements of Japanese modernity; Shochiku's Kamata style was not only a genre that capitalised on the subject matter of the urban middle class's everyday life, but also a 'mode of reception' that encouraged the formation of modern subjectivities and national identity through the viewing experiences of cinema. The effect, however, was a complicated one, for the ideology that Shochiku's Kamata style conveyed to audiences reflected the unstable interactions of Western influence and traditional Japaneseness, or modernism and nationalism, as they coexisted in 1920s and 30s' Japan. For example, the modern girl figures appearing in the woman's film may represent the Westernised modern female subjectivity inclined towards material culture, but as such the image was also susceptible to 'moralised exclusion or marginalisation ... [to be] contained within alternately patriarchal and national discourses' (Chapter 5).¹⁰⁹ Such a doubled nature of Japanese modernity can be also found in 'liminal' or 'contested' spaces, such as harbour, where domestic everyday life and criminality attached to foreignness can coexist.¹¹⁰

Alastair Phillips' major concern is also this 'contested' nature of Japanese modernity as expressed in the form of everyday life. For example, his analysis of the middle class suburban space in Ozu's *I Was Born But...* articulates its 'intermediary location' at the 'peripheries of the capital', where the expanding 'frontier space' filled with new buildings is contrasted with a disappearing 'naturalness' as represented by the children's playground (Chapter 3).¹¹¹ For Phillips, however, the contestation in modernity is not only spatial but also temporal, between tradition and progress, which results in a 'more consensual version of continuity, a sense of the past within the present'.¹¹² Ozu, Phillips argues, appropriates this temporal sensitivity in the construction of femininity, as exemplified by the representative postwar character Noriko, who, involved with the

¹⁰⁹ Wada-Marciano, *Nippon Modern*, p. 84.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 32, 40.

¹¹¹ Alastair Phillips, 'The Salaryman's Panic Time: Ozu Yasujirō's *I Was Born, But ...* (1932)' in Alastair Phillips and Julian Stringer (eds.), *Japanese Cinema: Texts and Contexts* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 29-30.

¹¹² Alastair Phillips, 'Pictures of the Past in the Present: Modernity, Femininity and Stardom in the Postwar Films of Ozu Yasujiro' in *Screen*, 44:2 (July, 2003), p. 163.

narrative of marriage and death, 'is literally embodied as the important link between one generation and the other' (Chapter 8, 9).¹¹³ Thus if Wada-Marciano conceptualises female subjectivity as an ultimately ideological construct subordinate to the patriarchal order, Phillips' position is more accepting of the possibility of a woman's independent subject formation, which can lead to intergenerational 'camaraderie' among females, beyond the segregation of traditional and modern femininity (Chapter 5, 8).

Female subjectivity also becomes a central issue in Catherine Russell's study of Naruse Mikio's works. As Wada-Marciano and Phillips do, Russell places the construction of femininity within the specific historical circumstance of Japanese modernity and its appearance in everyday life, though the conceptualisation of this is not as temporally multilayered as in Phillips' case. Her broad investigation of modern mass culture in interwar Japan provides a useful framework for interpreting Naruse's female characters, who, often as working women such as barmaids or waitresses, are able to 'negotiate [their] own terms' in the midst of a materialistic urban environment.¹¹⁴ Even domesticity, the site of patriarchal oppression from Wada-Marciano's viewpoint, is a 'complex site of femininity', becoming 'at once the site of [women's] repression and their only token of identity' (Chapter 5, 8-10).¹¹⁵ What also distinguishes Russell's work is her close attention to textual analysis, which delves into the 'effects' of details such as everyday domestic objects and Naruse's flamboyant camera work and editing. Along with a wide array of contextual knowledge – from Naruse's biography and his relationship with the studio to the genre conventions of Japanese melodrama and critical responses, this comprehensive perspective on a director suggests a new possibility for auteurism, which Russell believes can become 'a method of *historical* research that takes the author's work as a case study or sample of a complex historical-cultural formation' (*italics added*).¹¹⁶

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 160.

¹¹⁴ Catherine Russell, 'Naruse Mikio's Silent Films: Gender and the Discourse of Everyday Life in Interwar Japan' in *Camera Obscura* 20:60 (2005), p. 81.

¹¹⁵ Catherine Russell, *The Cinema of Naruse Mikio: Women and Japanese Modernity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), pp. 32-33. Russell thus disagrees with Joan Mellen's view that Naruse 'almost obscenely idealise[d] the Japanese woman as housewife', evading 'the kind of upheaval that would make possible true equality for women in Japan'. Such a description, Russell argues, 'betrays a serious misunderstanding of the Japanese context'. Ibid., p. 25.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 27.

Conclusion

In terms of the principal methodology, this thesis – a director study with a focus on a socio-historical subject – will mainly adopt the positions and approaches of the latter three scholars, i.e. Wada-Maricano, Phillips and Russell. This will require a discussion of the way in which Japanese modernity provided the major historical basis for everyday life (Chapter 1), and of Shochiku Kamata studio, which primarily produced the films about modern urban life, but at the same time negotiated older cinematic styles and subject matter (Chapter 2). The middle classes (Chapter 3, 10) and female characters (Chapter 5, 8) will be focussed on as the major subjects of the everyday, as in other studies, but I will avoid the kind of ‘determinism’ or ‘reductionism’ that considers their representations to be direct reflections of a social ideology, whether it be patriarchy or consumerism. Rather, the complexity of the relationship between the modern subjectivity and society will be fully explored, using the concept of deviation that I draw from de Certeau’s theory. I think the basic method of doing this is to return to Ozu’s texts and discover their richness in the ‘actual’ expression of the everyday, as Tosaka advocated. This ‘return to the text’, attempted in Russell’s work, will demand a more sophisticated examination of Ozu’s films in order to identify minute yet meaningful effects, not only in relation to narrative, as in Klevan and Yoshida’s studies, but also at the level of pure visual/aural experience, that Hasumi pursued with his ‘thematic system’. The contextual study in this thesis is presented in order to aid this process of developing textual ambiguity (and our understanding of it) into a more concrete form, not just to ‘verify’ its applicability in the text.

Another important methodological issue is the temporal aspect of the everyday, which has not yet been thoroughly investigated in other studies. The historical imagination that Benjamin engaged with can be compared with the recognition of the past in the present in Ozu’s films, as Phillips has noted. However, in order to fully examine the contestation between the past and the present, a more detailed contextual investigation of modern Japanese history is required. Chapter 4 will clear the ground for this matter by introducing the space of *shitamachi*, which connotes the disappearing past in modern Tokyo. The discussion of the operation of temporality

will be greatly extended in the postwar part, along with the changes in Ozu's historical consciousness after the war. Chapters 6 and 7 will thus explore what this postwar period means in both Japanese history and cinema, the results of which will be contemplated in relation to concrete examples from Ozu's cinema in the following chapters. The history, in summary, will be confronted with the deviations of the actual subjects of the everyday, the complex morphology of which is what essentially differentiates my study from others that are about *either* Ozu, history *or* the everyday.

PART I

THE KAMATA YEARS (1923-1935)

CHAPTER 1

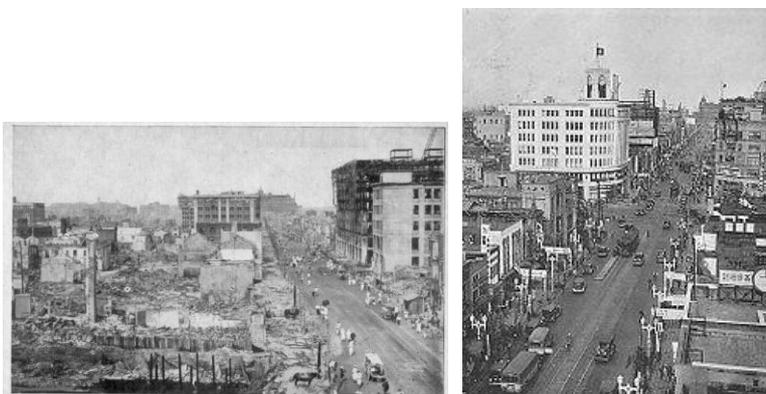
Modernisation, Modern Life, Modernism: How to Recognise the Modern in the 1920s and 30s' Japan?

Introduction

For Ozu, the cinema and the earthquake came together. It was in August 1923 when, having spent 10 years outside of Tokyo for his education, Ozu finally returned to his hometown to take up a job as an assistant cameraman in Shochiku's Kamata studio. Only a month later, the Kantō Great Earthquake occurred, devastating everything, not only buildings and houses but also the memory of old Edo that was already dying out. Tokyo's old *shitamachi* district would disappear, many people would leave, and the film studios (all except Shochiku) would find their new home in Kyoto. Meanwhile, from the heap of rubble, the energy to create a new world was slowly growing. This is the apocalyptic Tokyo that Tanizaki Jun'ichiro gazed at and exclaimed, 'Tokyo will be better for this!'.¹ The commercial centre of the city would soon move from Nihonbashi to Ginza, where several department stores, offering goods for everyday living rather than only expensive speciality or imported items, would lure Tokyo citizens to partake in the new commodity culture. This was the beginning of a new world called 'the modern', and Ozu's filmmaking incidentally

¹ Edward Seidensticker, *Low City, High City: Tokyo from Edo to the Earthquake* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 15.

(but meaningfully) corresponded with this important phase of transformation in the early twentieth century history of Japan.² (Fig 1.1)



(Fig 1.1) Ginza destroyed by the earthquake (left) and after reconstruction

Needless to say, the modern did not begin one day when the earthquake happened. Studies have shown that the modern of the 1920s, the period which saw the enthronement of the new emperor Shōwa as well as the earthquake, owed much to what the previous Taishō era (1912–1926) had been experiencing under such mottoes as ‘*bunka* (culture)’, the concept of which was itself a reaction to the previous Meiji period’s (1868–1912) national agenda dubbed ‘*bunmei* (civilisation)’. According to Minami Hiroshi, what distinguished *bunka* from *bunmei* was the former’s ‘individualism and consumerism’, which contrasted with the latter’s emphasis upon ‘national enrichment, security, and industrial production’.³ If *bunka* concentrated on such an individual, everyday life, the modern for artists and intellectuals meant a new spirit of the age expressed through various movements in literature, fine arts, architecture, photography, theatre, and cinema that could be summarised with the term *modanizumu*, a Japanese counterpart of Western modernism in the early twentieth century. The chronology of *modanizumu* also implied a continuity between *Taishō* and *Shōwa*, disproving its sudden appearance in

² By the term, ‘the modern’, I intend to mean a very general situation and process towards new social conditions including various kinds of phenomena that had been happening in Japan at least from the Meiji Restoration. In this sense, I expect it to be the closest translation of a Japanese word, *kindai*. Also, the modern in my context has a different meaning from its transliterated Japanese word *modan*, which Miriam Silverberg uses for her study of the 1920s’ Japanese mass culture (which I will discuss later in this chapter).

³ Minami Hiroshi (ed.), *Taishō Bunka 1905-1927* (Tokyo: Keisōshobō, 1987), p. 6. Jordan Sand also distinguished ‘Meiji civilisation’ (*bunmei*) from ‘Taishō culture’ (*bunka*) with a series of binary sets: ‘public Meiji/private Taishō, nationalist Meiji/cosmopolitan Taishō, self-sacrificing Meiji/self-cultivating Taishō, productionist Meiji/consumerist Taishō’. Jordan Sand, ‘The Cultured Life as Contested Space: Dwelling and Discourse in the 1920s’, in Elise K. Tipton, and John Clark (eds.), *Being Modern in Japan* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2000), p. 99.

history; although the earthquake in 1923 is ‘invariably cited as the metaphorical marker for the eruption of a modernist consciousness in Japan, such stirrings predated the earthquake by a decade or more’.⁴

In this chapter, I will develop the idea of the Japanese modern by recognising these different aspects or ‘layers’ of the phenomena that overlapped with each other through the indiscrete periods of the nation’s modern history. My suggestion is to categorise these ‘layers of the modern’ into three distinct groups, namely modernisation (*kindaika*), modern everyday life (*modan seikatsu*), and modernism (*modanizumu*), each of which can be correlated to the realm of politics, personal life, and high culture in the modern world. In this way we will be able to more comprehensively approach the Japanese modern, the inherent complexity of which can be attributable not only to confusing terminologies and concepts adopted in order to explain the phenomenon, but also to its uniqueness as a local case of modernity that had always existed in relation to the pre-modern. However, as I will discuss, my intention is less to distinguish and separate these spheres than to investigate how closely they interact with and permeate each other, and to examine the whole picture of modernity produced through this process. Seen from this thesis’ perspective, the aforementioned *seikatsu* or *bunka* may be the most relevant concept in discussing the Japanese modern, but the 1920s’ new way of everyday life cannot be fully understood without considering its political and cultural fabric as constructed from above or below. Ozu’s cinema, itself a form of artistic rendition of the modern everyday life, is not an exception from this framework and thus must be situated within the multifaceted relations of Japanese modernity.

⁴ William Jefferson Tyler, *Modanizumu: Modernist Fiction from Japan, 1913-1938* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2008), p. 21. Tyler finds the first examples of the modernist movements in Japan in Nagai Kafu’s symbolist poetry *Sangoshū/The Coral Collection* (1912), Osanai Kaoru’s New Theatre (*shingeki*) movement from 1909, and Frank Lloyd Wright’s Imperial Hotel constructed in Tokyo from 1917 to 1922 as well as various translations of modern French literature. There were also other efforts of more ‘indigenous modernism’ such as abstract paintings of Yorozu Tetsugorō’s *Self Portrait with Cloud* (1912) and Maruyama Kaita’s *Young Man Urinating* (1914) among others, as well as the films of *jun’eiga undō* (pure film movement) such as *Rojō no reikon/Souls on the Road* (Murata Minoru, Shochiku, 1921).

Conceptualising the Modern

I will firstly discuss the problems with some concepts and terms that have been used in academic studies regarding the Japanese modern. To tackle the question of ‘what is modernity?’ is not the primary concern of this chapter, but because of the extremely confusing ambiguity inherent in the concept, which has been intensified by the contradictory terminologies applied to it so far, I think it is worth briefly reviewing and summarising them here if only for the purpose of clarifying my own criteria of the modern later.

Minami Hiroshi, who wrote extensively on the matter of the Japanese modern from the perspective of the historical advancement of mass culture, suggests that the study of *modanizumu* can be divided into six subgroups according to its main subjects: chronology, living and customs (*seikatsu fūzoku*), art (*geijutsu*), ideology (*shisō*), foreign influence, and locality.⁵ From this explanation, it is clear that Minami, with the term ‘*modanizumu*’, intends a much broader meaning than a specific artistic movement or what Shimada Takeshi criticises as a narrow, journalistic tendency of ‘imprudently’ abusing the label of modernism.⁶ However, Minami’s six categories of *modanizumu* exclude a significant aspect of the modern, that is, as a political and economic modernisation. What he calls ‘*nihon modanizumu* (Japan’s modernism)’ is actually a chronologically bracketed concept from the ‘middle Taishō (early 1920s) to the early Shōwa 10s (around 1937)’; it was first influenced by the late Meiji period’s *shinbiha* (Aesthetic School) and Taishō era’s culturalism (*kyōyōshugi* or *bunkashugi*), reaching a peak in the early 30s with the mode of so called ‘*ero guro nansensu* (erotic, grotesque, nonsense)’, and starting to dwindle after the rise of fascism towards the middle of the 1930s.⁷ Thus Minami’s *modanizumu* emphasises the social and cultural changes during the 1920s and 30s, which are temporally segregated from the political and economic modernisation of the previous era. To resolve this deficit in argument, he introduces the further

⁵ Minami Hiroshi, ‘Nihon modanizumu kenkyū no hōkō [The Direction of Japanese *modanizumu* Studies]’ in Minami Hiroshi (ed.), *Nihon modanizumu no kenkyū: Shisō, seikatsu, bunka* [A Study of Japanese Modernism: Ideology, Living, Culture] (Tokyo: Burēnshuppan, 1982), p. vii.

⁶ Shimada Atsushi, ‘*Bungakuni arawareta modanizumu* [Modernism in Literature]’ in Minami, *Nihon modanizumu*, p. 60.

⁷ Minami, ‘Nihon modanizumu’, pp. viii-ix. Minami distinguishes the three chronological stages as *zenki* (early period) *modanizumu*, *honkaku* (orthodox) *modanizumu*, and *senkō* (underground) *modanizumu*, respectively.

concept of *kindaika*, which operates not as a narrow meaning of ‘modernisation’, but as a broader context, that includes various aspects of social change that Japan underwent in its history from the Meiji era through to the postwar years. In other words, Meiji’s *bunmei kaika* (civilisation and enlightenment) period corresponded to the first *kindaika* and postwar Americanisation to the third *kindaika*, between which *nihon modanizumu* was positioned as the second *kindaika* period.⁸ He also uses the term *kindaishugi*, which could be understood as the fundamental ideology presiding over the entire change towards the modern behind the historic flow of *kindaika*. Thus a historic period of ‘modernism (i.e. *nihon modanizumu*, as the second stage of *kindaika*)’ is included in the process of ‘modernisation (*kindaika*)’, which is stipulated by another dimension of ‘modernism (*kindaishugi*)’.

The convoluted conceptualisation of the modern continues in more recent studies. Miriam Silverberg’s recent analysis of the issue presents a good summary of previous efforts while emphasising her own view on the cultural dimension of the 1920s and 30s’ modernism in Japan. She agrees with John Frow’s method, which distinguishes three aspects of the Japanese modern: modernisation as ‘an economic process’, modernism as ‘cultural practice’ that corresponds to the matter of *seikatsu* (life), and modernity as ‘a philosophical category designating the temporality of the post-traditional world’, which corresponds to *kindai* in Japanese.⁹ Silverberg also adds a fourth category, *modan*, as her major interest, which describes ‘the new, urban practices’ (as witnessed in restaurants, cafes, parks, streets, theatres and cinemas etc.) and the liberated ‘mores’ that accompanied such material culture.¹⁰ This argument clears a new way for thought in the study of Japanese modern by properly emphasising the role of urban masses and their culture as the subject of modern practices, and scrutinising the historical era that corresponds to the ‘orthodox (*honkaku*) *modanizumu*’ period in Minami’s term.

However, putting aside the confusion inherent in these terms and translations (*kindai*’s meaning is particularly ambiguous, sometimes implying the temporality of modernity, sometimes being interchangeable with *modan*, and sometimes being connected to the issue of *seikatsu*), her argument could cause a misinterpretation

⁸ Ibid., p. viii.

⁹ Miriam Silverberg, *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense*, p. 13.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 13-14

implying that the realm of *seikatsu* (or ‘modernism’, in Frow’s term) can be divided into living (or ‘production’) and play (or ‘consumption’), the latter of which she separately concentrates on as *modan*. But as she acknowledges, both work (‘capitalist production’ and the resulting material foundation) and play (‘leisure-time consumption’ and the ‘mores’ that acknowledge it) constitute ‘the everyday’ together, and as such, *seikatsu* can be properly defined. It would be too artificial a division to dissociate the matter of ‘clothing, food, and living quarters’ from ‘urban pleasures’, even if the space and time for each practice cannot be the same.¹¹ In this way, Silverberg’s study concentrates on one aspect of Minami’s *modanizumu* (the ‘liberation by mores’, as she explains) for analysis, while the discussion of the other ‘rationalist, technocratic side’ of *modanizumu* is underdeveloped. Such a selective perspective, though accomplishing its own purpose, lacks the merit of the comprehensive approach that Minami undertook with his six subgroups of *modanizumu*, even though, as I have discussed above, it is still not complete.

Barbara Satō’s understanding of the Japanese modern, which puts more weight on ‘relations’ than ‘categories’, attempts to explain that missing link between *modanizumu* and political influences. She accepts the basic concept of Minami’s ‘*modanizumu*’ in a broad sense, but her analysis is simpler and clearer, combining the diverse everyday phenomena of modern society under the category of ‘*shakai* (social) *modanizumu*’ and articulating as distinct from the other modernisms that were ideological or artistic movements.¹² I also understand Satō’s description of social *modanizumu* as not being confined to mere consumer behaviour or Silverberg’s ‘*modan*’, but rather closer to a wide-level change in *seikatsu* or lifestyle in general, embodying both the productive and consumptive sides of the culture of the everyday. This expanded view of *modanizumu* as an indicator of modern everyday life – from production to consumption, but still distinguishable from political, ideological, and artistic aspects – can be equated with the *modan seikatsu* in

¹¹ Ibid., p. 15.

¹² Barbara Satō, ‘1920 nendai no nihon · toshi to josei [Japan · City of 1920s and Women]’ in Seikei daigaku bungakubu gakkai (ed.) *Meiji · Taishō · Shōwa no taishūbunka* [*Mass Culture of Meiji, Taishō, and Shōwa*], p. 154. Satō properly recognises the confusion caused by using the transliteration of the English word ‘modernism’, of which the original usage is usually confined to the specific artistic and literary movement in Europe and America in the early twentieth century. Thus she clarifies that her ‘social (*shakai*)’ *modanizumu*, distinguished from artistic or literary *modanizumu*, indicates *modanizumu* ‘as a social phenomena’, namely ‘the commodification of the everyday life’ in 1920s’ Japan. Ibid.

my model of the three layers of the modern. In regard to the other two categories, ‘modernisation’ is applicable not only to economic transformation as in Frow’s usage, but also more institutional changes, especially those made during the Meiji period. The concept of ‘modernism’ also extends beyond mere artistic movement to include purely intellectual discourses on the modern, and the media through which these discourses were being disseminated, be it textual or visual. I will now discuss each of these categories in the next section.

Three Layers of the Modern

1. Modernisation

First of all, the modern in Japan was an issue of modernisation (*kindaika* or *modanaizeishon*), of which the major concern was to build a ‘modern state’ through political, economical and other institutional reformations along with cultural and technological innovations, as summarised in the Meiji government’s catchphrase, ‘*bunmei kaika* (Civilisation and Enlightenment)’. The urgency of the change was surely triggered by Japan’s encounter with the power of the West beginning with Commodore Perry’s arrival in 1853 to enforce open trade with the US.¹³ Thus Japan’s modernisation process, importantly punctuated by the Meiji Restoration in 1868, originally emphasised the ‘role of the state in initiating changes and guiding the transformation of society’ and involved the ‘deliberate borrowing of models from the West in an effort to catch up’.¹⁴ In order to achieve this national goal within a compressed period of time, social power and systemic control – including policing, armed forces, and education – was centralised with the emperor and government in Tokyo. The historical moment when this mission of ‘chasing the West’ seemed to be

¹³ Historians, however, also recognise the importance of ‘internal problems’ that had already been building up inside the Tokugawa regime as represented by the 1830s’ Tempō crisis, ‘a decade of natural disasters, followed by famine, rural rebellion and urban uprisings’. In this sense, the modernisation in Japan after the Meiji was ‘shaped’ by the ‘Tokugawa conditions’, which had had a preceding history of more than 200 years. Elise K. Tipton, *Modern Japan: A Social and Political History* (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 1, 22.

¹⁴ S. N. Eisenstadt, *Japanese Civilization: A Comparative View* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 24.

accomplished occurred around Japan's successive victories in war with China (1894-1895) and Russia (1904-1905), which not only 'established Japan's international status' as one of the major imperialist powers in the world but also evoked a general mood that 'Meiji *bunmei*'s mission was over'.¹⁵ This termination of *bunmei* however cannot mean the completion of modernisation, which is an accumulating spatio-temporal process continuing well into Taishō and Shōwa periods. The concept of 'city planning', for example, began to arise during the 1920s, when 'Tokyo as a city was remade along modern lines' especially in the realm of 'everyday urban spaces'.¹⁶

While executing the top-down innovation movement, the Meiji state also gradually turned to the question of national identity and the concept of ideological reformation of the Japanese people in order to recreate modern subjectivity as 'Japanese'.¹⁷ What distinguished Japan's case from modern European nation-states was that the 'collective consciousness was constructed in primordial sacral-natural terms', representatively '*kokutai* (national polity)', which directly related all the Japanese subjects to the eternal imperial lineage as in a parent-child relationship. Thus such Confucian virtues as loyalty to the monarch (*chū*) and filial piety (*kō*) found a happy rendezvous point in the concept of *kokutai*, and would exert a great role in justifying the Japanese people's sacrifice in the process of modernisation, whether it meant economic development or colonial expansion.¹⁸ Such a concept of national identity was internalised and reinforced through modern education system. Compulsory primary education was first implemented in the early Meiji period in 1872, reaching almost 100 percent attendance rate for both girls and boys by the

¹⁵ Minami, *Taishō bunka*, p. 6.

¹⁶ Jinnai Hidenobu, *Tokyo: A Spatial Anthropology*, trans. by Kimiko Nishimura (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), p. 6. According to Jinnai, urban development in the previous Meiji era was a 'loose modernisation' when the major concern was limited to 'superimposing Western elements onto the legacy of Edo'. Western style buildings were being built, but they were mostly closer to an individual manifestation than a constituent in a bigger context. *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

¹⁷ The question of national identity arose from the mid-1880s onward, as seen in the example of Society for Political Education (Seikyōsha) formed in 1888 and its magazine called *The Japanese*. Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 111-112.

¹⁸ 'Emperor stands in the position of patriarch. ... [T]herefore, loyalty to the emperor is identical with filial piety to parents'. Ueno Chizuko, 'Modern Patriarchy and the Formation of the Japanese Nation State' in Donald Dennon, et al. (eds.), *Multicultural Japan: Palaeolithic to Postmodern* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 214.

1900s.¹⁹ The Imperial Rescript on Education (1890), which was intended as ‘the fundamental ethical code of the nation’, also reconfirmed the duty of Japanese people to the emperor and the nation as imperial subjects; it not only declared ‘Confucian values of loyalty, filial piety, moderation and benevolence for the sake of communal welfare’ but also emphasised such modern values as ‘upholding the Constitution and the law’ and ‘sacrifice ... for the nation-state’.²⁰

The Meiji government also established other ideological and legal frameworks that would shape the contours of modern everyday life of the Japanese people. The most important one was the modern family system called *ie*. Meaning ‘house’ in literal translation, the *ie* was originally an exclusively paternal inheritance system of the samurai class family, centring on the lineage between a father and an elder son. It was the Meiji era elite group who, ‘persuaded by the importance of the institutions of home to the bourgeois nations of the West’, adopted the traditional idea of *ie* and legislated it in the Meiji Civil Code (1898).²¹ According to the Code, the male household head (*kachō*) was given authoritative patriarchal rights over the rest of the family, including his spouse. He could decide the family’s domicile, exclusively control family assets including his wife’s property and approve or reject marriages for family members.²² The hierarchical family structure was also directly reflected in a system of family registration called *koseki*, where all the family members were identified in relation to the central head of the family register (*koshu*, often same with *kachō*).²³ A woman, upon marriage, was removed from her parent’s *koseki* and

¹⁹ Tipton, p. 63.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 65; Hiroshi Oda, *Basic Japanese Laws* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 17.

²¹ Jordan Sand, ‘At Home in the Meiji Period: Inventing Japanese Domesticity’, in Stephen Vlastos (ed.), *Mirror of Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), p. 192. The members of an *ie* included old ancestors, the recently dead, retired parents, the household head and his spouse, the successor (and his spouse, if married), other unmarried siblings, young children and even unborn future descendants without any temporal breakage. The most important duty of these individuals was to preserve the eternal ‘continuity’ of their *ie*. Joy Hendry, *Understanding Japanese Society* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 27.

²² The priority in selecting a spouse was given to ‘the interests of the family, rather than the will of the two individuals involved’, and the custom chosen to actualise this value was *omiai* (arranged marriage). Originally a tradition of both the aristocracy and samurai class in the feudal period, *omiai* became ‘extended into the merchant class during the Edo period’, and finally reached ‘the emerging urban elite and later the middle class’. Kyoko Yoshizumi, ‘Marriage and Family: Past and Present’ in Kumiko Fujimura-Fanselow and Atsuko Kameda (eds.), *Japanese Women: New Feminist Perspectives on the Past, Present, and Future* (New York: The Feminist Press, 1995), p. 188; ‘Arranged Marriages’, in Sandra Buckley (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Contemporary Japanese Culture* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 25.

²³ Yoshizumi, p. 187.

newly registered in her husband's one, where she was given no right to inherit. In fact, listed in the Civil Code as 'an incompetent', a married woman had 'no legal capacity at all'.²⁴

Under the *ie* system, labour was segregated according to gender; capitalistic wage labour required adult men to work in a separate place from home, leaving household management and children's education to their wives. Since the main goal of an *ie* was to preserve its continuity, the primary value of a woman was accordingly evaluated by her role as the 'procreator and socialiser of the family heir'.²⁵ In the mid 1890s after the Sino-Japanese War, the Japanese government began to emphasise this domestic task of women as their duty to the State, and institutionalised the ideology of *ryōsai kenbo* (good wife, wise mother) through its education system, first in public higher schools that became more available to girls since 1899, then in co-ed elementary schools and private mission schools for girls.²⁶ Originating from the samurai class's customs as the *ie* did, the *ryōsai kenbo* ideology became the 'official prewar ideal of womanhood', and would be repeatedly emphasised when the state was in need of woman's reproductive role in domesticity.²⁷ Women were also barred from political areas. In 1890, the Meeting and Political Organisation Law restricted all political activities of women, followed by the Police Security Regulations of 1900 that prohibited women and minors from not only joining political organisations but also holding or attending meetings where political speeches were given.²⁸

²⁴ Oda, p. 201.

²⁵ Yoriko Meguro and Kiyomi Morioka, 'The Changing Status and Role of Women in Japan' in Eugen Rupri (ed.) *The Changing Position of Women in Family and Society: A Cross-National Comparison* (Leiden: Brill, 1983), p. 208.

²⁶ Kathleen S. Uno, 'The Death of "Good Wife, Wise Mother"?' in Andrew Gordon (ed.), *Postwar Japan as History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p. 298.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 294. During the Pacific War, for example, under the governmental slogans such as 'Have More Babies! Prosper!', Japanese mothers were considered as an important national asset, 'who [would] raise the boys and girls of the empire'. Despite labour shortage, mobilisation of women was delayed until the last stage of the war, and even then, it was restricted to unmarried and widowed women, that is, 'those who could not legitimately reproduce'. Masami Ohinata, 'The Mystique of Motherhood: A Key to Understanding Social Change and Family Problems in Japan' in Fujimura-Fanselow and Kameda (eds.), p. 202; Joanna Liddle and Sachiko Nakajima, *Rising Suns, Rising Daughters* (London: Zed, 2000), pp. 118-119.

²⁸ Sachiko Kaneko, 'The Struggle for Legal Rights and Reforms: A Historical View' in Fujimura-Fanselow and Kameda (eds.), p. 4.

In these various kinds of institutional reforms for modernisation, two important tendencies can be found. Firstly, a significant part of the Japanese modern owed its ideological basis to traditional ideas and values that constituted a reconstruction (not a ‘natural continuation’) of Tokugawa ideologies.²⁹ As will be repeatedly emphasised throughout this thesis, ‘tradition within modernity’ or ‘modernity through tradition’ is a core concept to explain the fundamental contradiction of the Japanese modern that consisted in struggling to maintain the nation’s identity whilst obsessively pursuing Western ways. Thus the conflict between Westernised individuals and moral conservatism was a natural consequence, as will be discussed in the case of Ozu’s *shōshimin* films in Chapter 3. Secondly, modernisation was not a universal process, applicable to all people from any social background to the same degree. Class, especially, was a decisive factor. For instance, the *ryōsai kenbo* ideology could not be readily actualised among the lower class women, many of whom, unlike the middle- or upper-class counterparts, had to take the ‘productive’ role in fields, factories or bars to supplement low household income, as seen in some woman’s films (Chapter 5). Husbands and children in such families also had to share the burden of reproductive labours such as cooking, cleaning and child care to help housewives work outside domestic boundary.³⁰ Thus the modern state of Japan run two different models in defining women’s role; the good wife, wise mother ideal was ‘restricted to the middle [and upper] class, and used to position Japan as a “civilised” nation’, whereas the lower class women were considered more as a ‘public property’ that contributed to not only the support of family but also the development of national economy into imperial power.³¹

However, the state-governed modernisation process could not completely control the whole phenomena of the Japanese modern as it devised. There existed a tension between the inherently nationalistic reformations discussed above and more

²⁹ Eisenstadt, p. 33.

³⁰ Kathleen Uno, ‘One Day at a Time: Work and Domestic Activities of Urban Lower-Class Women in Early Twentieth-century Japan’, in Janet Hunter (ed.), *Japanese Women Working* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 37-44; Kathleen S. Uno, ‘Women and Changes in the Household Division of Labor’ in Gail Lee Bernstein (ed.), *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 22-35. Often these women from lower social status were bounded by the money that companies paid to their parents in advance of employment and/or subject to forced savings from their income, termed ‘held-back wages’, which could be forfeited for a variety of reasons or directly sent home without consent. Liddle and Nakajima, p. 61.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65. Regarding the female factory workers’ role in developing and maintaining Japan’s competitiveness in the world textile industry, see *ibid.*, pp. 59-61.

individualistic tendencies found in the everyday life of the Japanese people. In the 1920s, for example, a group of young females started to appear, who seemed liberated from the patriarchal restraint of the *ie* system and actively engaged themselves with commodity culture and sexual promiscuity. This ‘*modan gāru* (modern girl)’ phenomenon, which will be dealt with in Chapter 5 in more detail, was a part of a more general cultural tendency towards the emergence of the modern everyday life and popular consumerism in the 1920s, which I will discuss in the following section.

2. Modern Everyday Life (*modan seikatsu*)

What acted in contrast with (and at the same time complemented) the state-driven modernisation/*kindaika* process was the private world of *seikatsu* that was more involved with changes in the ordinary people’s daily life. As mentioned, the major transformation in this area occurred during the Taishō period – spurred by the earthquake in 1923 – when, under the catchword of *bunka*, urban consumption culture exploded. As discussed, if the previous Meiji period’s ‘*bunmei*’ was a matter of ‘state-centred ideology’, Taishō’s *bunka* was more about private practices, ‘fluctuated in the market, following the logic of fashion’.³² The interest in the ‘individual’, combined with the ‘achievement of natural science’ and its ‘rationalism’, greatly influenced Japanese people – especially urban middle classes – to desire a ‘better life’, not merely in terms of ‘rationalised forms of clothing, food, and housing’, but also the ‘enjoyment of leisure activities and entertainment’.³³ ‘Commuting to an American style building, watching a baseball game or driving a car on Sunday, dancing to Jazz music or going to a theatre at night – these became the models of the urban life of the age’.³⁴ (Fig 1.2) What supported this phenomenon was the explosion of mass media, such as newspapers and periodicals, book publishing, movies and records, in the form of ‘hit songs, bestsellers, weekly

³² Sand, ‘The Cultured Life as Contested Space’, p. 100.

³³ Minami, *Taishō bunka*, p. 7.

³⁴ Yoshimi Shunya, ‘Teikoku shuto tōkyō to modaniti no bunka seizi [Tokyo, the Capital of an Empire and the Politics of Modernity Culture]’ in Yoshimi Shunya et al., *Kakudai suru modaniti* [*Expanding Modernity*], transl. by Yeongugonggan Suyu+Nomo (Seoul, Somyungchulpan, 2007), p. 32.

magazines, and movie stars'.³⁵ Hollywood movies became popular and audiences relieved their desire by emulating what they saw in the movies, from fashion to dance. Thus the modern in the meaning of *seikatsu* was an active adoption of the mass cultural influence from the West, especially America, which, after World War I, replaced Europe in representing the dominant world power.³⁶



(Fig 1.2) Caf   (left), dance hall (centre) and box office at cinema (right)

It should, however, be noted that what was hidden under this fervour of ‘*bunka*’ and ‘*seikatsu*’ was an aspiration for a Western bourgeois lifestyle by the urban Japanese middle class, who could actually afford its cost. In the context of the 1920s’ society, the meaning of their ‘Culture’ was soon to be appropriated by capitalistic interests and transformed into a clich   of various domestic *bunka*-commodities ranging from ‘culture houses’ to ‘culture pots’, ‘culture knives’ and ‘culture diapers’.³⁷ For instance, ‘culture houses’, which started to be built in Tokyo suburbs after 1922, were promoted for their distinctive Western-style modifications such as use of chairs, fixed walls, and windows, instead of the *tatami* mats, narrow verandas (*engawa*), and sliding doors that had been typically adopted in Japanese-style dwellings.³⁸ (Fig 1.3) Such a Westernised dwelling functioned as a kind of ‘marker of bourgeois status’ only attainable by a limited group of people with ‘some

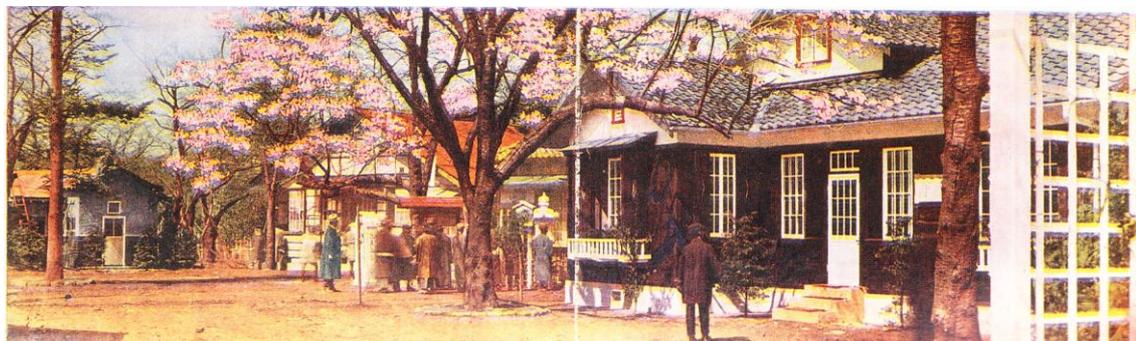
³⁵ Minami, *Taish   bunka*, p. 8.

³⁶ Japanese poet Yanagisawa Ken mentioned that in Hollywood movies, ‘there is not only the West on the surface but also the West from behind. As a result, ordinary people, while laughing, can understand the thing called “the West” very well. In Japanese cultural history, moving pictures [of the twentieth century] should be compared to the opening ports to the West [in the nineteenth century]’. Yanagisawa Ken, *Ch  ok  ron*, 33:9 (September 1918), pp. 69-70; quoted in Sat   Takeshi, ‘*Modanizumu to amerikaka [Modernism and Americanisation]*’ in Minami, *Nihon modanizumu*, p. 24.

³⁷ Sand, ‘The Cultured Life as Contested Space’, p. 100.

³⁸ Ibid. Kon Wajiro, who did a survey study in a suburban Tokyo neighbourhood, also noted the Western traits in the outward appearance of culture houses as ‘red roof tiles, glass windows, walls of narrow painted clapboards or cement mortar on the exterior, curtains and rattan furniture in a sunroom inside, and a pergola out front’. Jordan Sand, *House and Home in Modern Japan: Architecture, Domestic Space, and Bourgeois Culture, 1880-1930* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Centre, 2003), p. 263.

combination of money, higher education, and the kind of self-cultivation', all of which were not available for (and rarely sought by) the working classes.³⁹



(Fig 1.3) Culture village and culture house as exhibited in Peace Memorial Exposition (Heiwa kinen hakurankai) held in Ueno, Tokyo in 1922

But it is even more important to understand that the Westernisation of lifestyle modelled after the European bourgeois class was originally schemed and promoted by the Japanese government, which wanted to pre-emptively control the people's modern everyday life. The reformation at the level of *seikatsu* was thus an indispensable part of the national modernisation plan from the start. For instance, the 'Civilisation and Enlightenment' program in the Meiji era involved various governmental ordinances and encouragements intended to Westernise people's customs and manners, including their ways of dressing, grooming, and eating. The transforming process, naturally, was not synchronous and unidirectional, resulting in the typical coexistence of traditional and modern lifestyles in one space and time, as evidenced in many ethnographical studies as well as satiric caricatures. (Fig 1.4) Kon Wajiro's modernology (*kōgengaku*), a detailed observational study of the contemporary everyday culture, documents well this cultural heterogeneity or 'double life' of the Japanese people, sometimes even including a numeric ratio

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 12, 13.

between traditional and modern traits.⁴⁰ In some cases, as in the adoption of Western hairstyles and the abandonment of the custom of blackening female teeth, the emperor and empress themselves took the lead in changing in order to set a good example for the people.⁴¹



(Fig 1.4) Confusion of etiquette when the master's Western clothing and furniture are put in a Japanese style room



(Fig 1.5) Kon Wajiro (*left*) and his study of street fashion

The phenomenon of *bunka* and its related *bunka*-commodities in the 1920s were also rooted in the government's top-down campaigns to rationalise the lifestyles of the Japanese. The culture house, for instance, was first introduced by the architects Tanabe Junkichi and Ōkuma Yoshikuni as part of the Peace Memorial Exposition (Heiwa kinen hakurankai) held in Ueno, Tokyo in 1922, but they had already been involved in the government-sponsored Dwelling Reform Committee of the Everyday Life Reform League (Seikatsu kaizen dōmeikai) since 1920, which had suggested a very similar house model to the culture house in its own housing

⁴⁰ For example, his study in 1925 of the house styles in a Tokyo suburb shows there were mixture of 'Japanese style' (75%), 'culture (i.e. Western) style' (20%), and 'combined Western and Japanese style' (5%) houses in the neighbourhood. Sand, *House and Home in Modern Japan*, p. 259. Also another 1925 survey of street fashion in Ginza, Tokyo reveals 67% of men were wearing Western style suits while only 1% of women were so. Miriam Silverberg, 'Constructing the Japanese Ethnography of Modernity' in *The Journal of Asian Studies* 51:1 (February, 1992), p. 38. (Fig 1.5)

⁴¹ Tipton, *Modern Japan*, pp. 47-49.

improvement programme.⁴² This Everyday Life Reform League emerged from a government campaign called the Movement to Foster the Nation's Strength (Minryoku kanyō) by the Home Ministry, and was also sponsored by the Ministry of Education. As these titles suggest, the movement pursued a nationalistic end that could be achieved through re-organising the contours of everyday personal life; as a Home Ministry official declared, 'everyday life is the expression of the nation's thought, and national thought appears and takes the form of everyday life'.⁴³

In this sense, Harry Harootunian appropriately points out that the essence of the League's activity was to 'emphasise efficiency and economies yet encourage people to avoid excess and immersing themselves too deeply in the new commodity culture'.⁴⁴ But it should also be noted that, regardless of the ideological purpose, 'reform or improvement of everyday life was in itself an unimpeachable aim' and the movement was widely successful throughout the nation.⁴⁵ Its logic of controlled *seikatsu* became even more pertinent to the post-earthquake situation in 1923, when people, facing the disaster, wanted to 'make do with a frugal and simple way of life', though the tendency of abstinence did not last long in an uncompromising form.⁴⁶

3. *Modanizumu*

The third aspect of the Japanese modern is neither of the political, public realm of modernisation nor of the cultural, private area of *seikatsu*, but rather of the

⁴² Sand, *House and Home in Modern Japan*, pp. 187, 229-230. In fact, 'as slogans, everyday life reform and the culture life were interchangeable', even though the latter, appearing a few months later, 'soon gained wider currency than the state-promoted slogan'. Ibid., pp. 194-195.

⁴³ Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 183.

⁴⁴ Harry Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity: History, Culture and Community in Interwar Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 15.

⁴⁵ Sand, *House and Home in Modern Japan*, p. 188.

⁴⁶ Minami, *Taishō bunka*, p. 355. For example, after the earthquake, men's everyday clothing changed 'at once' into Western style suits, and women also started to choose more active hairstyle over Japanese one in everyday occasions. In the case of foods, more consideration was paid to the aspect of nutrition. However, due to the large scale physical destruction, housing was regarded as the most serious issue that required new kinds of approaches. The concept of 'urban planning' started to be adopted, and also at the private level, more rational use of space was pursued, which was actualised in the form of apartments and by adopting inner spaces such as living and dining rooms. Ibid., pp. 355-359.

ideologies or ideas behind them, which relentlessly clashed and reacted to produce artistic or intellectual forms. This category, which can be named as *modanizumu* (or *kindaishugi* in order to avoid confusion with ‘modernism’ as a specific artistic movement), not only indicates all the discourses about the ‘modern’ offered by Japanese intellectuals and writers through the media, but also includes various art and literature movements such as Hyōgenshugi (Expressionism), Miraishugi (Futurism) or Shinkankakuha (‘New Sensibility’ group) that together founded the development of (artistic) modernism in the 1920s.

Modanizumu – the modern as *shisō* (ideology) and *geijutsu* (art) – can be distinguished from the modern as *seikatsu* in that the former, as an institution and movement, had ‘a firmly constructed ideological structure and representative leaders’.⁴⁷ However, as seen in the case of the Everyday Life Reform League, what characterised the intellectuals and artists of this era was their strong interest in and argument for the Westernised *seikatsu*, and the recognition of the urban masses as the major subject of the phenomenon. Facing the enormous social changes produced by the development of capitalism and its ensuing urbanisation, Japanese intellectual leaders were naturally led to analyse this newly emerging social group and interpret its meaning in their works and writings. Thus in literature, ‘against the background of urban mass culture – mass production, mass marketing, mass consumption, and mass waste – there emerged in the late 1920s the large-scale phenomenon of “mass literature” (*taishū bungaku*)’, which included such genres as historical novels (Shirai Kyōji being a representative writer), detective novels (Edogawa Ranpo), custom (*tsūsoku*) novels, and humorous novels.⁴⁸ In fine art, there arose binary structures between *junsui bijutsu* (pure art), which was ‘supported by the state as a bourgeois/elite culture’ and *shōgyō bijutsu* (commercial art), which more actively responded to the consumer culture of urban masses by ‘reproducing visual images in the form of commodity packages and street signs’.⁴⁹ Similarly in literature, ‘*jun bungaku* (pure literature)’, which appealed to the concept of ‘art for art’s sake’,

⁴⁷ Satō, ‘1920 nendai no nihon’, p. 152.

⁴⁸ Suzuki Sadami, *The Concept of “Literature” in Japan*, transl. by Royall Tyler (Kyoto: International Research Centre for Japanese Studies, 2006), p. 209. *Yenpon* (one-yen books), a cheap, mass marketed vehicle for the boom of mass literature also became popular at this time.

⁴⁹ Ikeda Shinobu and Kim Hyesin, ‘Shokuminchi Chōsen to teikoku Nihon no josei hyōshō [Representation of Women in Colonial Korea and Imperial Japan]’ in Yoshimi et al., p. 260.

appeared to oppose the growing popularity of mass and proletarian literature, both of which together ‘brought about the collapse of the late Taishō literary establishment’.⁵⁰

However, as we consider the meaning of the *modanizumu* of the age, it should be noted there was not always an unequivocal line that separated ‘pure’ art from ‘mass’ or ‘proletarian’ forms of cultural expression. Instead, pure ‘artistic’ concern could exist in a constant, mutual relationship with ‘entertainment’ and ‘politics’, through which the three could engage in debate with each other, but also sometimes overlap with the others’ realms. The history of Japanese literature shows, after their activities were curtailed by the government in the early 1930s, many proletarian writers converted to the pure literature movement, a change that explains the close relationship between the two literary groups.⁵¹ Historic and detective novels also attempted to experiment with artistic quality through modernistic techniques. Writers such as Tanizaki Jun’ichirō and Kōda Rohan even denied the dualistic scheme could ever exist.⁵² In the case of fine arts, the development of commercial art and the growing popularity of pure art among the masses eventually made the themes and styles of both groups more and more similar.⁵³ Thus *modanizumu*, even in its narrowest sense as a new artistic tendency in the 1920s and 30s, proved to be a great crossroads where different elements of the modern – modernisation, mass culture phenomena, class conflicts, intellectual wrangling, and artistic experiments – coexisted and constantly engaged with each other.

Another confrontational element in *modanizumu* that became a major concern (or ‘burden’) for the Japanese artists and intellectuals was how to reconfigure their

⁵⁰ Proletarian literature was one of the two major axes (along with mass literature) in Japanese literature in the 1920s, which was sensitive to social problems and class structure. In this sense, proletarian literature might also be considered another manifestation of the tendency in the *modanizumu* period toward consciousness of the existence of the masses in a society. Katō Shuichi agrees that the ‘contribution of Marxism was that it drew writers outside the confines of the small world of authors, editors and critics ... [and they] began through Marxism to define for themselves the relationship between literature and society’. Katō Shuichi, *A History of Japanese Literature, Vol. 3: The Modern Years*, transl. by Don Sanderson (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1983), pp. 225-226, 235.

⁵¹ Examples of such proletarian writers who were ‘baptised by *modanizumu*’, were Murayama Tomoyoshi, Fujisawa Takeo, Ōya Sōichi, and Takami Jun. Shimada, ‘*Bungakuni arawareta modanizumu*’, p. 61.

⁵² Suzuki., *The Concept of “Literature” in Japan*, p. 211.

⁵³ Ikeda and Kim, ‘Shokuminchi Chōsen’, p. 260.

relationship with the past. As in the case of modernisation and modern *seikatsu*, *modanizumu* was subject to the same constant negotiations amongst varying temporal sensitivities that compounded new and retrospective tendencies. In architecture, for instance, there had been debates since the Meiji period over the maintenance of Japanese cultural identity against more and more prevailing Western notions officially promoted by the government.⁵⁴ In some of the earliest cases, the conflict resulted in a ‘pseudo-Western style’ – ‘superficially Western in appearance but constructed according to traditional Japanese methods’ – as exemplified in the First National Bank building designed by Kiskey Shimizu (1872).⁵⁵ Later the architect Itō Chūta championed a more organically synthesised hybrid style between Western and Japanese elements as seen in the Great Kantō Earthquake Memorial Hall (1927). (Fig 1.7) The tradition Itō incorporated here is, according to Jonathan



(Fig 1.6)



(Fig 1.7)

Reynolds, not ‘authentically traditional’ but rather a newly constructed one, a collection of ‘selective citations from Japan’s architectural past’.⁵⁶ Even the Bunriha (Secessionists), a group of Japan’s first modernist architects formed in 1920 who openly rejected the link with the ‘problematic past’ in recent Japanese architectural history, did not completely negate the necessity of tradition or history itself. The problem was, as Horiguchi Sutemi, one of the leaders of the group, expressed, that

⁵⁴ As a part of its modernisation plan, the Meiji government not only established the Imperial Engineering College (later to be developed into Tokyo Imperial University) but also became a ‘generous patron of Western building’, hiring the early graduates of the architecture program in the college. Jonathan M. Reynolds, ‘The Bunriha and the Problem of “Tradition” for Modernist Architecture in Japan, 1920-1928’ in Sharon A. Minichiello (ed.), *Japan’s Competing Modernities: Issues in Culture and Democracy, 1900-1930* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1998), p. 231.

⁵⁵ Hiroshi Watanabe, *The Architecture of Tōkyō: An Architectural History in 571 Individual Presentations* (Stuttgart: Edition Axes Mengels, 2001), p. 60. The building, now non-existent, consisted of two contrasting parts: Western style veranda and railings on the lower two stories, and on top of that a three-story tower in the shape of a Japanese castle. (Fig 1.6)

⁵⁶ Reynolds, ‘The Bunriha’, p. 234.

the tradition was like ‘moss and duckweed floating on stagnant water’ rather than a ‘more selective, coherent, and meaningful’ one.⁵⁷

On the more intellectual rather than artistic side of *modanizumu*, magazines, especially ones for women, provide a good example of sites where the discourses of the modern did not remain a problem only for intellectuals but grew to become a comprehensive issue relating to the state’s modernisation project and its relation to the middle class readers’ everyday life. As a medium, the magazine was a representative vehicle for progress towards a mass society through the ‘publishing revolution of mass printing and mass distribution’.⁵⁸ Readers were regarded as consumers, and the contents included more practical topics to serve their tastes. This transformation was symbolised by the metaphor of the ‘department store’; not only was the magazine itself a capitalistic commodity open to sales competition, but the articles contained within it also related to the marketing of various commodities that constituted the contemporary everyday life.⁵⁹ Thus it was a natural consequence that during and after World War I, which brought economic prosperity to Japan, there was a fashion for women’s magazines targeting young female readers who had the buying power necessary for the various consumer products advertised, as well as for the magazine itself.⁶⁰ Moreover, the fact that these women were the first massive group of ‘literate’ females in Japanese history should not be underestimated.⁶¹ For journalists, two conditions (economic affluence and literacy) meant that a new ‘vast market’, or as Ōya Sōichi expressed, an ‘expanding new colony’, was discovered.⁶²

⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 231-232.

⁵⁸ Satō Takumi, *Kingu no jidai [The age of King]* (Tokyo: Iwanamishoten, 2002), p. 26. Mass magazines were founded upon the idea of ‘more advertisements make cheap price, which leads to mass sales’. This strategy of mass consumption brought enormous success to an American magazine, *Lady’s Home Journal*, which became the model for Japanese popular magazines, including *Kingu* as well as various women’s magazines (*fujin zasshi*).

⁵⁹ As Ōya Sōichi has commented, even in the ‘literary’ articles of magazines, ‘all the latest fashionable items are displayed. New suits ..., new accessories, new cosmetics, and luxury automobiles, in addition to concerts, movies, theatres etc. – just everything that would make ladies happy is displayed there’. Ibid., p. 29.

⁶⁰ Among the women’s magazines founded in this era were *Fujin kōron (Ladies’ Review, 1916)*, *Shufu no tomo (Housewife’s Companion, 1917)*, and *Fujin kurabu (Ladies’ Club, 1920)*. And the price of the magazines was low enough – approximately 0.5-0.65% of an urban female workers’ salary – to persuade women readers to purchase a copy. Barbara Sato, *The New Japanese Woman*, pp. 80, 96.

⁶¹ In Japan, compulsory education first started in 1871 as a four-year course, and accepted female pupils from 1880. In 1906, the length of period was increased to six years. Thanks to this government ridden system, the rate of females receiving elementary education increased from 28% in 1887 to 97.6% in 1912. Ibid., p. 96.

⁶² Satō Takumi, p. 31.

By exploiting these well-educated consumers, Japanese women's magazines would establish an enormous popularity by the early 1920s.

It is not surprising, then, to discover a state's attempt to ideologically infiltrate and manage the private realm of *seikatsu* through the medium of magazines. The aforementioned Everyday Life Reform movement and the concept of *bunka seikatsu* were all first introduced as a media discourse in the form of magazine articles written by government officials, professionals, and educators.⁶³ Women's magazines, now facing fierce competition in the market, were particularly responsive in promoting the ideas of *seikatsu* by running special issues and features on exhibitions and other topics relating to the movement. What was especially intriguing in this cross-fertilisation of state initiatives, individual life, and intellectual discourses via magazines was the multiple roles that the female reader played, not only as receiver and consumer of ideas but also as critic and reproducer of them. Women's magazines, through readers' polls and competitions, induced their readers to actively participate in the formation of interpretations and opinions about the public reform movements. The result revealed non-negligible discrepancy between the ideologues or advocates of the movements and the housewives who administered actual everyday living; while the former's main interest was, as discussed, that of enlightenment, of 'increasing efficiency in the home' according to the model of the West, the latter's was 'dominated by humbler goals', e.g. how to 'save money and cope with inflation'.⁶⁴ Although the reform movements' tenet was specifically designed for, addressed to, and popularly accepted by the middle classes, who indeed desired the maintenance of social status as well as the improvement of everyday life, the elitist and bourgeois approach of Everyday Life Reform and Culture Life generated subtle dissimilarities in perspective to the actual practitioner of the reformation. Thus the magazines in this era not only provided a textual space for an

⁶³ For example, *Fujinkai* magazine, in its issue about the Reform League exhibition in January 1920, included two articles by museum director Tanahashi and his colleague in the Ministry of Education, and another article by Tago Ichimin, a Home Ministry bureaucrat and a member of the League. 'Culture Life (*bunka seikatsu*)' also became a popular term through the writings of economist Morimoto Kōkichi, who established Bunka seikatsu kenkyūkai [Culture Life Research Group] and published a journal *Bunka seikatsu kenkyū* [*Culture Life Studies*] from May 1920. Sand, *House and Home in Japan*, pp. 188, 194-195.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 189. Thus the readers' ideas about everyday life reform were related to 'reducing' or 'recycling' households such as making do with a smaller house, simplifying gift distributing customs, and remaking old shirts into slippers etc. *Ibid.*, p. 190.

exchange of public opinions but also consequently became a cultural node where the three spheres of the modern – national modernisation, individual modern life, and intellectual modernism – collided and were adjusted by each other.

Conclusion

I have so far discussed the Japanese modern in terms of its three different layers – modernisation, modern life, and modernism – that, while each had its own distinctive area, collectively constituted the modern phenomena in Japan at least until the mid-1930s. However, I certainly do not intend to argue here that this simplified formula can wholly explain the entangled reality of the modern. Above all, the three spheres are not isolated islands; rather their boundaries are blurry and overlap with each other. Although I assigned each area its own subject (e.g. the state for modernisation, the masses for modern life, and intellectuals and artists for modernism), it is natural that they comingle in reality as seen in the case of Everyday Life Reform League. Nor do I assume a certain hierarchical or chronological order among these three layers of the modern. Japan's modern period might symbolically start with the nation's declaration of modernisation, but eventually all three aspects coexisted in any one space and time.⁶⁵

I think this multivalent or polysemous aspect of the Japanese modern was clearly evident in the example of 1920s' women's magazines. The fact that female readers actively participated in the critique of everyday life reform indicates that they were successfully constructing their modern identities as major agents in the domain of *seikatsu*. I also accept that an agent group can be subdivided according to economic or ideological standpoints. Due to their varying financial circumstance the viewpoint of the female readers was not unified, just as much as the bureaucrats and

⁶⁵ I thus agree with Yoshimi Shunya's criticism of the 'antagonistic binary structure' in Minami's study of modernism, which discretely distinguished the 1920s' 'bright', 'urban' culture from the 1930s' 'dark', 'national' politics. Yoshimi, 'Teikoku shuto tōkyō', p. 17-18. And in the same sense, I would not overemphasise the historical compartmentalisation between the art in the Taishō and Shōwa periods as argued by such a Japanese artist as Sakada Kazuo, who regards *modanizumu* in Shōwa as 'what socially symbolised the end of the domination of the elites [in Taishō]'. Barbara Satō, '1920 nendai no nihon', p. 152.

intellectuals of the reform movements did not unanimously share the same ideology or voice.⁶⁶ The key issue here, therefore, is not merely confined to designating the agents of the modern, but extends to recognising their positions relevant to each other. In a study of the modern, after all, the matter of ‘entity’ or ‘subject’ should be secondary to that of ‘relation’. Or, in other words, it should be more about a ‘gaze’ – point of views exchanged among institutions and individuals – than their ‘identity’. In women’s magazines, such a web of influences were being constantly tested and contested. There the female readers, as the practitioners of *seikatsu*, reacted with other subjects of the Japanese modern (e.g. the state and intellectuals/artists as well as other readers) to make any meaningful interpretation of the modern everyday life they were living. The next chapter will present another example of the Japanese modern – but this time from the film industry’s point of view, through a case study of filmmaking in the Shochiku studio where Ozu worked. For these artists, the major issue was how to represent the contemporary everyday life of the middle class masses by deploying highly modern cinematic forms and technologies. The process however required a determined severance from the pre-modern formulae, which was very hard, if not impossible, to achieve.

⁶⁶ For most of the reformist elite, the primary aim of the reform movement was to ‘bring native manners in closer line with those of polite society in Europe’, but for some others, such as the members on the Dwelling Reform Committee of the Reform League, the movement should be about a ‘complete alteration of the material forms of everyday life, particularly the house’. Sand, *House and Home in Japan*, p. 193.

CHAPTER 2

Kamatachō: The Birth of Shochiku Modernism

Introduction

On a page of the *Tōkyō nichinichi shinbun* (*Tokyo Daily News*) published on the 26th of February, 1920, the following advertisement appeared:

... Here Shochiku Partnership establishes Shochiku Kinema Partnership, and commences shooting new motion picture films. The main purpose of this Kinema Partnership is to endeavour to improve the quality of Japan's motion pictures by producing artistic films that are currently actively advocated in the West and releasing them at home and abroad. It is also to contribute to international reconciliation among us and other nations by introducing the true state of our people's lives. ...¹

This small notice was the beginning of one of the most prestigious film studios in Japan, where Ozu would work throughout his career. It contains the essence of Shochiku's vision of filmmaking that can be summarised in two ways. Firstly, there was the issue of Westernisation (or internationalisation), which could be linked to the national agenda of modernisation that I have discussed in the previous chapter. As a latecomer in the industry, the company recognised that the primary issue of Japanese

¹ Tanaka Jun'ichirō, *Nihon eiga hattatsushi* [*The History of the Development of Japanese Cinema*] Vol. 1 (Tokyo: Chūkōbunko, 1986), p. 306.

cinema was to ‘improve’ its standard to that of ‘artistic’ films from the West. Secondly, there was the emphasis on the examination of ‘true ... life’ as a key method for achieving the goal of internationalisation. From the start, therefore, Shochiku clearly understood that the issue of Westernisation was closely connected to the contemporary everyday life of ordinary Japanese people and its ‘true’ (e.g. realistic) depiction.

Shochiku’s production policy is thus directly related to the main issue of this thesis both because Ozu worked for the company and because it functioned as a cultural agent that addressed modernity by dealing with modern everyday life through its artistic style of realism. This chapter will ask the question, ‘what was the everyday that Shochiku chose to depict and how was it rendered in film?’, and will investigate *kamatachō* (Kamata style, after the name of the company’s main studio) as the key element that delineated its unique form of realism. Kido Shiro, the head of Kamata studio, and Shimazu Yasujiro, one of the directors who worked closely with Kido, will also be discussed with regard to their contribution to the establishment and development of *kamatachō* around the time that Ozu started his filmmaking career. However, I will also pay attention to the workings of *kamatachō* within the larger context of the Japanese modern, which, as discussed in relation to the example of architecture, was essentially a compromise between Westernisation and an appeal to more indigenous traditions. Was *kamatachō* an exception to this principle? In order to answer this question, I will examine the history of Shochiku – including the pre-Kido as well Kido era – in order to see how the movement towards modernisation was not only created and supported but also challenged from within the company. In this way, I think the realism of everyday life that Shochiku aimed for under the banner of *kamatachō* can be understood as a more comprehensive concept, with its Western orientation constantly negotiated by Japanese reality.

The Birth of Shochiku: Osanai and Nomura

Shochiku started as a cooperative theatre business between the twin brothers Shirai Matsujirō and Ōtani Takejirō in 1902. Together they purchased and managed

several theatres in the Kansai region, and in 1910 advanced to Tokyo to continue their success. The early twentieth century, when Shochiku was growing, was a transitional moment for the Japanese theatre industry. As the whole nation transformed into a new modern state modelled after Western civilisation, Japanese theatre, represented by *kabuki* (which Shochiku also concentrated on) accordingly faced the same social pressure to reform old traditions. Shirai and Ōtani, in their twenties, were very conscious of this tendency and maintained a ‘progressive’ attitude to changing conventions in the theatre business.² Thus, they formed the Engeki kairyō kai (Association of Theatre Improvement) after opening their first theatre in Kyoto, which emphasised the performance art’s sociality as a mass edifying tool.³ Shochiku also made an effort to adopt *shinpa* (meaning ‘new school’) style dramas, which, ‘after the end of Sino-Japanese War (1895), had developed to the status where it rivalled *kabuki*’.⁴

The installation of a film branch in Shochiku in 1920 was thus an extension of its business strategy to actively respond to new entertainment trends. Japanese cinema in the first two decades or so up until Shochiku’s arrival had already been experiencing the coexistence of two contradictory tendencies. On the one hand, cinema was mainly an imported cultural property, a symbol of Western civilisation. After it was first introduced in 1896 with Edison’s Kinetoscope, the Japanese film industry, favouring stable profitability, chose to depend upon importing foreign films rather than investing in domestic production, and the ratio of imported films eventually rose to 70 percent of all films released in cinemas.⁵ Production was also

² At that time, Japanese theatre business was in a ‘feudal’ state. People involved were bound to each other in a ‘father and son’ relationship, and staging a play was dependent on the boss’ decision. Performers were regarded as saleable goods or ‘toys’ for the leisured classes. Ticketing was monopolised by the tea house of each theatre, whose owner thus exerted strong power over promotion and box office management. Yokomizo Tatsuhiko, *Shōchiku no uchimaku* [*Shochiku: An Inside Story*] (Tokyo: Kengensha, 1957), p. 15.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁴ Nagayama Takeomi (ed.), *Shochiku hyakunenshi, honshi* [*100 Years History of Shochiku: Main History*] (Tokyo: Shochiku kabushiki kaisha, 1996), p. 163. A revolt against ‘*kabuki*’s inability to present plays in contemporary settings’, *shinpa* dramas were often based on ‘political’ novels, the theme of which often dealt with ‘the idea of the individual making a success of his life in the new Japan in spite of the hurdles of low birth or misfortune’. The first *shinpa* production in 1887 was performed by political activists (*sōshi*), and the company was led by Sudō Sadanori, ‘an ex-policeman and a journalist on one of the first anti-government newspapers’. Anderson and Richie, *The Japanese Film*, p. 31; Brian Powell, *Japan’s Modern Theatre: A Century of Change and Continuity* (London: Japan Library, 2002), p. 13.

⁵ Tanaka, *Nihon eiga hattatsushi Vol. 1*, p. 247. ‘*Fūkiri*’, literally meaning ‘breaking a seal’, is a Japanese term for ‘film release’, which comes from a custom in the early years to ‘cut the seal’ of an imported film before first running it on screen. Odeonza, run by the trading firm Hiraoshōkai in

led by import traders such as Yoshizawa Shōten and Yokota Shōkai. The owner of the former, Kawaura Kenichi, visited America and returned to build a studio of his own, ‘copying the design of the Edison Bronx studios’.⁶ Yokota Einosuke, who ran Yokota Shōkai and would later go on to become the head of Nikkatsu studios, ‘supplied the equipment and raw film stock, all of which had to be imported’.⁷

However, the traces of old entertainment industry conventions persisted in early filmmaking practice. For instance, the early star system, which created the ‘first idol’ Onoe Matsunosuke in the 1910s, relied largely on the theatre industry (*kabuki* or *shinpa*) for its supply of new actors.⁸ Lower class players, who could not succeed in ‘legitimate’ *kabuki* theatres and thus worked in touring troupes or *shinpa* theatres, also often transferred to the film industry, landing a job as not only actors but also production staff. With this movement of personnel from one medium to another, performance and production styles followed accordingly. The *onnagata* (or *oyama*, an actor who impersonates a female role) tradition in *kabuki*, for instance, made the transition. Another indigenous element of Japanese cinema in this early period was the existence of the *benshi*, the explainer of narratives as well as narrator of intertitles during exhibition.⁹ At its highest peak, the *benshi*’s power superseded even the intention of the director or producer in that he could intervene and reconstruct the story of a film during exhibition. Critics such as Tanaka Jun’ichiro see the *benshi*’s narrative reconstruction role as ‘reactionary’, one which ‘hindered film producers’

Yokohama, was a renowned theatre for the *fūkiri* films, where movie fans gathered to watch new foreign films as soon as they arrived at the port city. *Ibid.*, p. 252.

⁶ Anderson and Richie, *The Japanese Film*, p. 27.

⁷ Standish, *A New History of Japanese Cinema*, p. 36.

⁸ Onoe himself was a former stage actor since he was six years old, who, after gaining popularity in theatrical plays, moved on to film performance. It was Makino Shōzō, the ‘first man to deserve the name of director in the Western sense of the word’, who gave him his first starring role in film. Anderson and Richie, pp. 31-32.

⁹ Drawn from various Japanese theatrical traditions such as *jōruri* in *bunraku* (puppet theatre), and *nagauta* in *kabuki*, the *benshi* had a unique existence that, along with live sound, represented an alternative mode of exhibition in contrast with the Western narrative system that was based around visual text. In *bunraku*, *jōruri* is narration recited on stage accompanied by both *shamisen* music and the manipulation of puppets. *Nagauta* is a school of *jōruri* adopted in *kabuki*, which developed in the early 18th century. John Wesley Harris, *The Traditional Theatre of Japan: Kyogen, Noh, Kabuki, and Puppetry* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2006), pp. 143-147; Yoshinobu Inoura and Toshio Kawatake, *The Traditional Theatre of Japan* (Warren, CT: Floating World Editions, 2006), pp. 156-157, 172-176; Keiko I. McDonald, *Japanese Classical Theatre in Films* (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, 1994), pp. 27-28.

progressive intention' and was 'fiercely opposed to the innovation of the form of Japanese cinema'.¹⁰

Overall, this was a transitional period in the modernisation of Japanese cinema and its industry, moving from sound to vision, from perceptive openness to narrative closure, from theatricality to cinematicity, and from *katsudō shasin* (moving pictures) to *eiga* (film). Most film historians agree that a meaningful turning point amongst these changes can be identified in the late 1910s (whether it was 1916, 1917 or during World War I).¹¹ The groups that actively advocated this shift were critics, intellectuals, reformers of the Pure Film Movement, and new production studios such as Tenkatsu and Shochiku, which aimed for a 'system of self-sufficient, realist narration' such as Western films were achieving, while simultaneously problematising older non-cinematic practices such as the *benshi*.¹² What Shochiku did first in order to achieve this goal ('producing artistic films' as declared in the aforementioned newspaper advertisement) was to observe and learn how the role models, America and European countries, were doing. Thus for several months in 1919, Shiroy Shintarō, the younger brother of Ōtani, was sent to the West to test the feasibility of film business. Shiroy stayed for a long time in Hollywood and was impressed by Universal City Studios, then the largest 'city made of studios' in the world, which became the model for Shochiku's Kamata studio.¹³ The next step was to find appropriate employees and Shochiku tried many new approaches to finding the right personnel both in and out of the industry. It abandoned the tradition of *onnagata* from the start, and gave birth to the first star actress in Japan, Kurishima Sumiko. It also established an actor's and actresses' school so that the studio could

¹⁰ Tanaka, *Nihon eiga hattatsushi Vol. 1*, pp. 224, 225. Donald Kirihara, criticising Noel Burch's theory of the *benshi* as creative intervener, argues that, as foreign films and their classical narration became more dominant, the *benshi*'s role was accordingly limited to a 'fundamentally explanatory function'. Donald Kirihara, *Patterns of Time: Mizoguchi and the 1930s* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), pp. 60-61.

¹¹ For Standish, it opened the second phase in the national cinema history, characterized by the 'emergence of an "intellectual" approach to filmmaking symbolized by the "Pure Film Movement" (*jun'eiga undō*)'. Standish, *A New History*, p. 34. Gerow also agrees that a 'paradigm shift' occurred between 1916 and 1924 that transformed '*katsudō* (moving pictures)' into '*eiga* (film)' and '*benshi*' to '*setsumesha* (explainer)' through the 'large scale effort to import American and Hollywood filmmaking techniques'. A. A. Gerow, "The *Benshi*'s New Face: Defining Cinema in *Taishō* Japan" in *Iconics*, 3 (1994), p. 70.

¹² Fujiki Hideaki, "Benshi as Stars: The Irony of Popularity and Respectability of Voice Performance in Japanese Cinema" in *Cinema Journal* 45:2 (2006), p. 80.

¹³ Shiroy argued that, by owning such a 'studio-city', Shochiku could also act as a real estate company. Ōtani, showing a map of Universal City to his employees, also said 'I'd like to manage a large-scale company like this, which can deal with real estate businesses too'. Nagayama, *Shochiku hyakunenshi*, p. 554; Tanaka, *Hattatsushi, Vol. 1*, p. 309.

supply performers on its own. Those technicians that could not be found in Japan were searched for in America, such as Henry Kotani, one of the earliest directors in Japanese film history, who greatly contributed to the transfer of Hollywood's director system as well as technological knowledge.¹⁴

However, the nature of Shochiku was contradictory. Having originally started in theatre management, which still occupied a major part of its business, the company inherited and represented long-held Japanese theatrical traditions that also infiltrated the early history of its filmmaking. The style of *shinpa* especially, as a theatrical form that emphasised excessive emotions, proved commercially viable in film, and competed with the tendency toward Westernisation within the studio. Shochiku thus experienced a tension between the desire for a new Western form of expression and the reality of cultural assimilation, both of which coexisted in the progress towards the modernism it had originally dreamed of.

Two of the most influential figures in Shochiku at this period, whose different origins and opposing artistic tendencies directly reflected the internal contradiction of the company, were Nomura Hōtei and Osanai Kaoru. Nomura, originally a stage artist from Kyoto and later the head of a theatre called Hongōza in Tokyo, joined Shochiku as the head of Kamata Studio and immediately started to direct films such as *Futari no yūkanbai/A Couple Selling Evening Papers* and *Hō no namida/Tears of Law* (both in 1921). By bringing in the influence of *shinpa*, he thus represented the commercialism of mass appeal, appropriately mixing 'fashionable (*haikara*) American style expressions' with '*shinpa* tragedy's contents'.¹⁵ His motto was, 'High is the ideal, low are the hands', the 'mild compromise' of which explained the essence of 'Nomura-ism'.¹⁶ This pragmatic line, which was effective in the box office, was of great importance within the early history of Shochiku, whose business, in contrast with the original ambition of developing an 'art' cinema, was actually

¹⁴ Kotani's attempt to adopt Hollywood system was such that he used scripts written in Roman alphabet so that 'nothing including the content of a film was known to actors', who were just supposed to follow the director's demands. Moreover, 'to get the American flavour', Kotani 'insisted on directing in English', which bewildered the other staff while shooting. Tanaka, *Hattatsushi, Vol. 1*, p. 312; Anderson and Richie, p. 42.

¹⁵ Tanaka, *Hattatsushi, Vol. 1*, p. 346. In an ironic twist to its meaning of 'new wave', *shinpa* gradually became an 'old school' as its styles became as rigid and conservative as *kabuki*, and experienced a drop in popularity after the first half of the 1910s. Powell suggests the ongoing transmigration to the 'new medium of film' could have been 'distracting *shinpa* actors from what had been their main task, the creation of an alternative theatrical art'. Powell, *Japan's Modern Theatre*, p. 45.

¹⁶ Tanaka, *Hattatsushi, Vol. 1*, pp. 346, 349.

being directed towards ‘popular-taste *kyūgeki* (old theatre, e.g. *kabuki*) or *shinpa*’ style moving pictures that could be produced ‘cheap and fast’.¹⁷ It is also an important point that Japanese audiences, regardless of the Americanism pursued by some Shochiku staff, were not so content with the experiments, and rather preferred (and felt comfortable with) the theatrical, *shinpa*-style movies, as well as the *benshi*’s existence.¹⁸

If Nomura Hōtei, leading the Kamata Studio, represented the *kabuki* or *shinpa* group in Shochiku along with directors such as Kawaguchi Yoshitarō and Kako Zanmu, Osanai Kaoru, the principal of Shochiku actor’s school, represented the opposite position. Contrary to Nomura’s career based on *shinpa*, Osanai came from the *shingeki* (‘New Drama’) movement, which emerged after the turn of the Century.¹⁹ In contrast with *shinpa*, which grew out of *kabuki* and maintained a mutually influential relationship with it, *shingeki* was a much more Westernised form of theatre, backed by college students, intellectuals, and writers, who were familiar with the grammar of Western drama. *Shingeki* was thus active in adopting ‘the paradigm of Western realist theatre’ and forms such as naturalism, which opposed theatrical ‘artifice’ and instead emphasised ‘the representation of the real’.²⁰ Coming from this modern background, Osanai was therefore against Shochiku’s growing tendency towards commercialism built on *shinpa*-flavoured theatricality as exemplified in the works of Nomura and other directors. He eventually left Kamata studio and, with his students from the Shochiku actor’s school, established an independent institute called Shochiku Kinema Kenkyūsho in November 1920. Amongst the staff that followed him were important future directors such as Murata Minoru (*Rojō no reikon/Souls on the Road* [1921], *Nichirin/The Sun* [1926]), Ushihara Kiyohiko (*Kare to jinsei/He and Life* [1929], *Shingun/The March* [1930]),

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 345.

¹⁸ It could be the matter of familiarity with (e.g. chance of exposure to) the American style in films that deterred Japanese audiences from accepting it without feeling uncomfortable. For instance, they had been so familiar with long still shots that, when facial close-up shots appeared in Shochiku’s first film, *Shima no onna/A Woman of Island* (Henri Kotani, 1920), the spectators burst into laughter, to the bewilderment of the performers present in the cinema. Ibid., p. 317.

¹⁹ He was one of the central figures of the *shingeki* movement as a director of Jiyū Gekijō (Freedom Theatre, 1909-1919) before joining Shochiku.

²⁰ M. Cody Poulton, “The Rhetoric of the Real” in David Jortner, Keiko McDonald, and Kevin J. Wetmore Jr. (eds.), *Modern Japanese Theatre and Performance* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006), p. 23. Poulton notes that this interest in the ‘imitation of reality’ was of a ‘specifically ideological form that originated in the West and was deeply implicated in the project of Japan’s modernisation’; ‘realism in the theatre signifies “the mark of the modern” and, ... the West provided the model of modernity’. Ibid., p. 19.

and Shimazu Yasujirō (*Tonari no yae chan/Our Neighbour Miss Yae* [1934], *Ani to sono imoto/A Brother and His Younger Sister* [1939]). Their efforts resulted in *Souls on the Road* (1921), which, featuring cross-cutting editing as well as Western thematic issues (the story was partly based on Gorki's *The Lower Depths*), demonstrated the direction that Osanai and his colleagues were inclined toward.

Osanai's experiment, however, did not last long. Due to financial limitations and internal controversy over the future direction, the institute was dissolved in August 1921. During this time, Kamata studio was occupied by ex-*kabuki* and ex-*shinpa* staff, whose productions constituted 'really a strange sights' to the young filmmakers who had already been baptised by Osanai's modern methods.²¹ Their idealism had to wait a few more years before blooming, when the coming of the Great Earthquake and the appearance of Kido Shiro, who, under the name of *kamatachō*, would deny theatrical influences and reaffirm Shochiku's original goal of Westernisation through the realistic depiction of the everyday life of Japanese people.

***Kamatachō* and the realism of the everyday**

Kido Shirō entered Shochiku in 1922 at the age of 28. His first job was in accounting but within a few months he transferred to the film branch as an executive. Having emerged from the most prestigious education courses in Japan – he graduated from Tokyo First High School and Tokyo Imperial University, where he studied English law – he was of an elite that would not usually be expected to work in the entertainment industry at that time.²² The opportunity to manage Kamata came after the studio had been destroyed by the Earthquake in 1923, when Kido was (at first temporarily) sent to supervise its reconstruction. During this time, he endeavoured above all to reinstate production activities, which, with the director Shimazu

²¹ Tanaka, *Hattatsushi*, Vol. 1, p. 340.

²² Kido revealed in an interview that although his dream was to become a journalist, he thought working in Shochiku was not irrelevant to journalism, as filmmaking was 'close to the life of the masses', from whom he could get 'instant responses to [his] activities'. Kido Shirō, Takizawa Osamu, and Ema Michio, *Kido shirō kikigaki [A Record of Kido's Dictation]*, interviewed in March 1973, (Kyoto: Kyoto bunka hakubutsukan, 1997), p. 1.

Yasujiro, resulted in such films as *Otōsan/Father* (1923) and *Nichiyōbi/Sunday* (1924), which I will discuss in the next section.

Kido's appearance at Shochiku implied another important swing of the pendulum towards the modern, Western, and cinematic way of filmmaking and away from the old, theatrical style. An elite university graduate with a good command of English, he was active in learning and adopting Western practices of filmmaking, especially emphasising the director system (instead of the star system) and scriptwriting.²³ It is thus a symbolic occurrence that Kido replaced Nomura Hōtei as the head of Kamata studio in July 1924.²⁴ In the turbulent mood of the post-Earthquake society, Nomura's *shinpa* tragedies did not reflect the urban masses' desire to watch 'bright films rather than dark ones'. This Kido well understood and developed into his concept of *kamatachō*.²⁵

What did *kamatachō* mean then? As a loose tendency in style, subject, and resulting atmosphere, it is hard to define it simply, but according to Kido's own words, it could be equated with Shochiku's original vision of depicting the everyday life of ordinary people in a realistic way.

We should make films that are directly linked to the life of the masses, not ones that attempt to transcend their understanding. Our job is to discover what the masses experience, what they subconsciously feel, and provide it [in film]. Such an attitude is connected to realism in description [on screen]. This is the foundation of *kamatachō*.²⁶

Other interpretations also agree that *kamatachō* was about realism in style, a methodology of how to show 'life as it is', and in terms of subject matter, it dealt with the things happening around us, everyday (*nichijō*). Yoshimura Kōzaburō, a

²³ An example that shows his inclination towards the West is his long visit to several Western countries (the USSR, Germany, Spain, and the US) from July 1928 to April 1929, which made him realise the importance of sound film technology. After his return, Shochiku would develop its own talkie system and later release Japan's first sound film *Madamu to nyōbō/Neighbour's Wife and Mine* (Gosho Heinosuke, 1931).

²⁴ Nomura became the head of Shochiku's Shimogamo studio in Kyoto, which specialised in producing *jidaigeki* (period drama) films. Kobayashi Kyūzo, *Nihon eiga o tsukutta otoko: Kido shirō den [The Man Who Created Japanese Cinema: Kido Shirō Biography]* (Tokyo: Shinjinbutsu ōrai sha, 1999), pp. 20-21.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

²⁶ Kido, Takizawa, and Ema, *Kido shirō kikigaki*, p. 3. This manifestation of 'life as experienced' echoes Tosaka Jun's argument for 'actuality' discussed in literature review.

director who worked in Shochiku, mentions ‘simple human relationships, frequent use of everyday conversation, and emphasis on lifestyle and custom’ as the key features of *kamatachō*.²⁷ Another Shochiku director Yamada Yōji also explains that what was important in *kamatachō* was ‘necessarily the detailed depiction of everyday life’; such trivial aspects as a house that was ‘located in a Tokyo suburb, with a small garden’, accommodating the ‘life of a salaryman’, were all decisive details of the everyday that constructed the realism of *kamatachō*.²⁸ The fleeting performance of an actor/actress, as well as tangible objects, would also be part of such everyday realism.²⁹

This tenet of being ‘*sarigenai*’ (nonchalant), contrasted with ‘*ōgesa*’ or ‘*kochō*’ (exaggeration), formed an important part of *kamatachō*’s realism. It did not apply only to film style, but rather became a manifestation of a more general attitude to filmmaking itself in the studio. In other words, such expressions as ‘*osharena* (stylish)’ and ‘*keikaina* (lighthearted)’, which Kido frequently emphasised when talking about *kamatachō*, helped build the light and modern atmosphere of the physical space of Kamata Studio, emanating from directors, scriptwriters, staff, (leading and supporting) actors as well as Kido himself. In the end, what was important for the Kamata community was to trivialise filmmaking, making it a ‘practice of the everyday’. ‘Art’ was thus regarded as an ‘unfashionable’ word; the dominant mood was ‘Don’t be so serious. Isn’t this just a movie, after all?’³⁰ This coolness or aloofness in attitude as well as style was well-suited to the urban modernity that Kamata was pursuing at the time. It was also supported by the fact that most of the adherents of *kamatachō*, from such leaders as Kido, Shimazu,

²⁷ Sakamoto Kazue, *Kazoku imēji no tanjō: Nohon eiga ni miru hōmudorama no keisei [The Birth of the Family Image: The Formation of Home Drama Found in Japanese Films]* (Tokyo: Shinyōsha, 1997), p. 119.

²⁸ Yamada Yōji, ‘Shochiku kamata satsueisho [Shochiku Kamata Studio]’ in Imamura Shōhei, et al. (eds.), *Musei eiga no kansei [Completion of Silent Cinema]: Kōza nihon eiga [A Lecture in Japanese Cinema] Vol. 2* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1986), p. 76.

²⁹ Yamada thus emphasises the role of ‘*shigusa* (仕草)’, or ‘subtle change in expression or the movement of body’ in the making of *kamatachō*; it should be ‘naturally performed’, in a calm way as if there was nothing happening. Yamada refers to Ozu’s maxim about the actor’s performance; ‘don’t try your best. Do it moderately’. Ibid.

³⁰ Yoshimura Kōzaburō, Ōba Hideo, and Yamada Yōji, ‘*Ōfunachō towa nanika [What Is Ōfunachō?]*’ in Imamura Shōhei, et al., *Musei eiga no kansei*, p. 83. For example, Yamada Yōji remembers an anecdote about Kurosawa Akira, who could be seen as a symbol of the opposite of what *kamatachō* stood for. When filming *Shūbun/Scandal* (1950) in Shochiku, Kurosawa, usually a Toho director, showed his enthusiastic attitude to making a film ‘without minding others, and in a serious manner to the state of bloodshot eyes’, which surprised Shochiku’s staff who were not familiar with such seriousness. Ibid.

Gosho, and Ozu to other staff and actors, all came from Tokyo, and were thus familiar with the light and buoyant tempo of big city life.³¹ This urban nature of the Kamata studio can also be connected to its symbolic image as the only major studio that decided to remain in Tokyo after the Kanto Earthquake.

However, this everyday realism in and out of the film was only one aspect of *kamatachō*'s identity; since the everyday is – as emphasised in this thesis – plural in reality, we should ask which 'life' and 'realism' Kido was talking about. According to him, life should be optimistic, and reality should be grasped from such a point of view.

Humans are not god, and cannot become divine until the end. ... This permanent defect is the essence of humanity. ... The mission of art is to contemplate this truth and deal with it in as warm and cheerful way as possible. There is a way of seeing the humanity with dark sentiments, as exemplified by religion, which searches for salvation, or by [political] revolution. Shochiku is the opposite, trying to look at life from a *warm, cheerful and hopeful* point of view. In conclusion, the fundamental purpose of film should be nothing but *relief*. It shall never disappoint audiences. This is the basis of what they call *kamatachō*.³² (Italics added)

In this statement, we can identify Kido's unique secular humanism, one that was supported by a 'warm, cheerful and hopeful' view of life. Here he also implies *kamatachō*'s non-ideological and non-political nature by distancing it from 'religion' and 'revolution', concepts that hinge on a pessimistic vision of humanity and hence 'disappoint' audiences. *Kamatachō*'s realism was thus ironically a 'political' one, refusing to confront those realities of everyday life that required a more critical perspective on humanity.

The ideological naivety of *kamatachō* has caused much controversy amongst critics. Though they did not question Shochiku's stylistic deftness in delicately depicting life 'as is', such achievement was not acknowledged beyond the level of 'formal realism'. In his analysis of the everydayness of Kamata films, the Japanese

³¹ Kamata was thus a linguistically specialised space where the 'Tokyo dialect was flying about', and such a personality as Ryū Chishū, a Kumamoto born actor suffering for his peculiar dialect, was an exception in the studio, which also made him prominent among others in exchange. Yamada, 'Shochiku kamata satsueisho', p. 71.

³² Kido Shiro, *Nihon eiga den: Eiga seisakusha no kiroku* [*The Life of Japanese Cinema: A Record of a Film Producer*] (Tokyo: Bungei shunzyū shinsha, 1956), pp. 39-40.

critic Sawamura Tsutomu asserted that Kamata's everyday was nothing more than 'subordination to the visual [i.e. obsession with the faithful representation of the visible]', lacking the ideology required for 'true cinematic realism'.³³ Chung Suwan, calling Kamata's realism 'hypocritical', has argued that the everyday of *kamatachō* (or 'Kido-ism' in her terminology) 'does not represent the truth but deludes viewers into believing that they are seeing a represented reality'.³⁴ This constructed realism was also related to the issue of class; the everyday that *kamatachō* presented on screen was not a generic one, but a specific kind applicable only to the urban middle classes. Thus Satō Tadao argued that *kamatachō* 'adopted the *shomin's* (lower middle class's) point of view, dealing with the things happening close to their social life'.³⁵ And again, it was not only the text but also the context of filmmaking that was 'middle class'; most of the filmmakers working in Kamata were of 'petit bourgeois origins'.³⁶ This does not mean that Kamata's films appealed only to urban middle class audiences. Rather, while remaining faithful to the middle class reality, they could create a 'fantasy of the real' that audiences from other classes could enjoy (or even criticise) together. I will discuss the relationship between the *kamatachō* style and the middle class more in the next chapter on the *shōshimin eiga* genre.

The everyday realism of *kamatachō* can be more clearly understood by comparing it with the style of *shinpa*, the antithesis of what Osanai and Kido had pursued. As mentioned, *shinpa* began as a reformation movement in response to *kabuki*, but gradually became conservative itself, becoming more like a 'purveyor of repetitious melodrama'.³⁷ By the time Kido appeared, it was criticised for going overboard, with narratives becoming 'too predictable' and depending too much on exaggerated emotions and performances, resulting in 'false reality' or 'pseudo realism' as the Japanese critic Honma Shigeo criticised.³⁸ Thus it was an important

³³ Sawamura Tsutomu, 'Nichijōsei sonchō eiga no kansei [A Completion of the Film of Respect for the Everyday]' in *Eiga hyōron* [Film Criticism], 18:1 (January, 1936), pp. 201-202.

³⁴ Chung Suwan, 'Sosimin yeonghwa yeongu: ilbon ui ijungjeok geundaihwa rul jungsim euro [A Study of *Shōshimin* Films: On the Double Modernisation of Japan]' (PhD dissertation, Dongguk University, 2000), pp. 59, 64.

³⁵ Satō Tadao, *Nihon eiga shi* [*The History of Japanese Cinema*] Vol. 1 (Tokyo: Iwanamishoten, 1995), p. 217.

³⁶ Shimizu Shunji, 'Eiga to puchiburu no seikatsu [Film and the Life of the Petit-Bourgeois]' in *Eiga hyōron* 11:3 (September, 1931), p. 53.

³⁷ Powell, *Japan's Modern Theatre*, p. 19.

³⁸ Quoted in Matsumoto Shinko, *Meiji engekiron shi* [*The History of Meiji Theatre Study*] (Tokyo: Engeki shuppan sha, 1980), pp. 511-512. Osanai found the reason for *shinpa's* exaggerated

matter for Kido to articulate *kamatachō*'s realism as distinct from *shinpa*'s emotional excessiveness. This naturally led to an emphasis on comic (or more exactly put, carefree and light) elements in Kamata films, which clearly contrasted with *shinpa*'s serious, tragic mood. Kido explained:

‘It is good to take a handkerchief to cinema to see a tragedy, but it is not that interesting to make all the films for those ‘ready-to-weep’ audiences. Entertainment must be a bright and healthy product, and we can learn something about life when we can discover and laugh about the irony or contradiction of society’.³⁹

‘The reason *jidaigeki*'s *chanbara* (sword fighting) is popular is because it is interesting to see the stimuli of the various movements coming out of such scenes. Tragedy is more theatrical than cinematic. I believe, to win over *jidaigeki*, [Kamata's *gendaiigeki* should concentrate on] comedy that has the similar ability [to *chanbara*] to attract audiences by evoking *interests in visuals*'.⁴⁰ (Italics added)

It is interesting to see that Kido, as with his predecessors in the Pure Film Movement, was well aware of the significance of separating cinematicity from theatricality; he believed that the former should be based on visual elements such as those found in comedy and sword fighting spectacles rather than the verbal elements of the latter.⁴¹ Thus comedy, with all its movements and visual rhythms, was an important genre vehicle with which to oppose *shinpa*'s theatrical influence, and became the emblem of *kamatachō*. Satō Tadao summarises the three most

performance style in the *shinpa* actors' ignorance of the basic principle of modern theatre, that is, to assume a stage surrounded by four walls and thus completely isolated from the audience's gaze. Being always conscious of the audience's existence, *shinpa* actors tended to show off, making their performance ‘ostentatious and hypocritical’. Ibid., p. 512.

³⁹ Tanaka, *Hattatsushi*, Vol. 1, p. 57.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 58.

⁴¹ In fact, *chanbara* came before *jidaigeki*. In the course of experimenting with more cinematic technique of movement, realistic swordfighting scenes were introduced to ‘replace the more abstract, formal, *kabuki*-style choreography seen in *kyūgeki* films’, and then ‘since swashbuckling needs a vehicle’, the genre of *jidaigeki* followed. McDonald, *Japanese Classical Theatre in Films*, p. 28. Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto also agrees that *jidaigeki*'s emergence had ‘little to do with a return to tradition and more to do with a rebellion against the old forms and conventions of *kabuki* and *kyūgeki*’. Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto, *Kurosawa: Film Studies and Japanese Cinema* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), p. 217. Kido, however, contradictorily argues later that at the time he was beginning his career in Kamata, ‘*Jidaigeki* was steadfastly theatrical. It thus progressed by words’. ‘*Gendaiigeki*’, on the other hand, depended on ‘cuts’. Kido, Takizawa, and Ema, p. 3.

conspicuous characteristics of *kamatachō* as ‘cheerfulness’, ‘freshness’ and ‘speed’, which are, after all, the typical stylistic features of a good comedy.⁴²

The disparity between *kamatachō* and *shinpa* could also be found in their different thematic perspectives. As mentioned, Kido’s humanism and secularism were based upon an optimistic attitude, which avoided from the old biases of a teleological and ethical view of humanity and society. He thus objected to *shinpa*’s emphasis on morals.

‘As for *shinpachō* (*shinpa* style), ... although touching on some truth, it did not deal with the essence of humanity. [*Shinpa*] takes the morality of the times for granted, and develops a character who is only governed by it, moving within that boundary. We are not interested in such a narrative. ... Until now, morality first existed, and humans were to be wrapped inside it. From now, morality will be criticised and its value judged through the gauge of essential humanity’.⁴³

Satō Tadao, mentioning the popular *shinpa* film *Kago no tori/A Bird in a Cage* (Matsumoto Eiichi, Teikoku Kinema, 1924), also points out that the morality in the film was based on an idea that romance is a ‘guilty thing’, even though it was a romance film. It was around the late Taishō and early Shōwa, simultaneously with the rise of *kamatachō*, when the theme of romance started to be dealt with in a ‘freer and easier’ attitude, as something which could be ‘cheerful and bright’.⁴⁴ *Kamatachō* was thus comparably free from socially imposed morals that often misled narrative into a predestined tragic end as was often seen in the *shinpa* style films. In other words, the characters in *kamatachō* films were supposed to be more multifaceted and variable in relation to ‘fate’, as human beings in real life usually are, and can be differentiated from *shinpa* characters, who are rather flat and predictable in their behaviour.

Taking all these *shinpa* elements into consideration, it becomes clear that what was really essential in *kamatachō*, as an oppositional form, was less the pathos

⁴² Satō, *Nihon eigashi*, Vol. 1, p. 217. Yoshimura Kōzaburō also defines *kamatachō* with similar three principles: ‘simple story’, ‘mixture of humour’, and ‘consideration of tempo’. Yoshimura, Ōba, and Yamada, p. 85.

⁴³ Kido, *Nihon eiga den*, p. 40.

⁴⁴ Satō Tadao, *Nihon eiga no kyōshō tachi [The Masters of Japanese Cinema]* (Tokyo: Gakuyōshobō, 1996), p. 102.

or sorrowful mood that has been regarded as a representative characteristic of Shochiku films, than a light tempo and cheerfulness (or composure) that, facing emotional crisis, effectively redirects and vents the tragic elements concealed underneath. Ozu was definitely a part of this tradition, especially in his early comedies, but he also grew more and more away from the influence of *kamatachō* to construct his unique world of the everyday. In that sense, and in contrast with the popular understanding of his work, Ozu cannot be accepted as the key exemplar of the original *kamatachō* as it was envisioned by Kido. That honour should be rather attributed to the director Shimazu Yasujirō, whom I will discuss in the next section.

Shimazu Yasujirō and *kamatachō*

Shimazu was born in 1897 in the Kanda district of Tokyo. He was deeply interested in film from his schooldays, when he wrote a script for a contest and won the second place. One of the first Shochiku employees who responded to the newspaper advertisement mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Shimazu began work under Osanai Kaoru. As mentioned, Osanai at this time established the Shochiku Cinema Institute, where Shimazu would continue writing scripts and participate in the making of *Souls on the Road*. After the disbandment of the Institute, Shimazu returned to Kamata and became one of the studio's most prolific directors, making 29 films in the period between 1922 and the Kanto Earthquake of the next year.

In this early period, most of Shimazu's films were regarded as '*shitamachimono* (story of *shitamachi*)' or '*rakugoshu* (a *rakugo* style genre) that dealt with the life of *shomin*. His directing style was already evaluated as a sensible, skilful, and most of all, '*shajitsuteki* (realistic)' rendition of '*nichijōsei* (the everyday)'.⁴⁵ Shimazu's tendency toward everyday realism was a perfect match with the new direction that Kido was considering for Shochiku after the earthquake. Shimazu was, so to speak, the first director who actualised what Kido wanted, i.e.

⁴⁵ The entry on Shimazu Yasujirō in Kinema jumpō sha (ed.), *Nihon eiga kantoku zenshū* (*Complete Collection of Japanese Film Directors*) (Tokyo: Kinema jumpō sha, 1976), p. 205.

not ‘meandering, unrefined play’ but ‘a work with a simple plot and subject matter based on familiar life, seizing the truth of humanity by realistically depicting daily practices (*nichijōsahanji*)’.⁴⁶ It was thus natural that Kido evaluated Shimazu highly; asked to designate his favourite director, he mentioned Shimazu’s name without hesitation.⁴⁷ In the confrontational structure within Shochiku between Osanai (and Kido)’s faction pursuing ‘artistic, experimental, cinematic, and American’ tendencies, and Nomura’s line that held on to the ‘conventional, popular, theatrical, and Japanese’ style of filmmaking, Shimazu was the hope of the former, who rose in rebellion against ‘Nomura-ism’.

Within his films, Shimazu’s realism manifested itself in a closer attention to character emotions, which were not directly articulated but implied through subtle changes in everyday behaviours. Yoshimura Kōzaburō presents an example:

If a housewife [at a dining table], without any hint, suddenly stands up and goes away into a kitchen, we can feel her anger and bad temper. But simply going alone is not enough. She should gather and pile up some dishes, and abruptly carry them into the kitchen, where she starts washing, and swearing. Shimazu said it cannot be ‘real’ without always adhering to such ‘life and manners’ (*seikatsufūzoku*).⁴⁸

Such attention was accompanied by an interest in the movements of camera and actors; in other words, ‘there is a reason for every movement’ in Shimazu’s films.⁴⁹ Ōba Hideo thus notices that Shimazu’s camera, more than other Japanese directors, freely pans and follows actors around; and for Yamada Yōji, such movement emerges from internal rhythm, a sense of ‘tempo’ that Shimazu created through ingeniously editing two shots of different directions and dimensions of movement.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Yamada, ‘Shochiku kamata satsueisho’, p. 70. Tanaka Jun’ichiro agrees that the director ‘brought in a so called “enjoyment of realism” by incorporating humour and pathos into ordinary everyday life’. Tanaka, *Hattatsushi*, Vol. 2, p. 56. Kido also acknowledged that Shimazu ‘greatly contributed to the establishment of the director system’, which Kido was pursuing as an alternative to the then prevailing ‘star system’. Kido, *Nihon eiga den*, p. 34.

⁴⁷ Yamada, ‘Shochiku kamata satsueisho’, p. 70.

⁴⁸ Yoshimura, Ōba and Yamada, p. 86.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

Most critics agree that Shimazu's realistic style began with the two post-earthquake films, *Father* and *Sunday*. *Father* is a story about a college student, who likes to hang out with *geishas*, spending his father's money. Later in the film, he is introduced to an innocent country girl by the father and decides to marry her. *Sunday* also deals with a love relationship in an urban setting. A young office worker, fancied by a neighbourhood girl, falls in love with another girl in his office. Though having made an appointment with the former for a date on a Sunday, he asks the latter to go out with him on the same day. A surprising telegraph from her then reveals that she is married and has children. Disappointed, he soon decides to go out with the neighbourhood girl, who has been waiting for him.⁵¹ Although neither of the films exists today, the summaries of the narratives indicate the basic tenets of the *kamatachō* are present in good form. Neither strays from the spatial and personal boundaries 'around (*mijikana*)' the protagonists, and the plots are constructed from an episodic structure, full of the small and comic occurrences of urban daily life.⁵² A light and carefree mood – as exemplified by the protagonists' whimsical attitude to affairs – suggests these are clever romantic comedies emancipated from the moral restraints of *shinpa* melodrama. There is nothing serious in these characters' lives but the continuation of the everyday as usual. It is not hard to imagine how positively the post-earthquake audiences found the 'lightness' of the films. Contemporary Japanese critics also acclaimed the achievement; *Father* was called a 'cheerful masterpiece' and a 'great success', and *Sunday* demonstrated 'still more refining of Shimazu's skills'.⁵³ Their main point concentrated on the films' 'taste of comedy', the 'bright and optimistic element that had been principally lacking in Japanese cinema'.⁵⁴

The making of *Father* and *Sunday*, however, shows that Shimazu's choice of genre and style should also be considered from a broader contextual perspective.

⁵¹ The scenario of *Sunday* was written in one day (by Yoshida Hyakusuke) and the film was shot in three days. Shindō Kaneto, 'Shinariaraita- ga umareta [Scenario Writer Was Born]' in Imamura Shōhei et al. (eds.), *Tōkai no jidai [The Age of Talkie]: Kōza nihon eiga (A Lecture in Japanese Cinema) Vol. 3* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1986), p. 111. The protagonists of both films were performed by the same actor Masakuni Hiroshi, who was called the 'Japanese [Harold] Lloyd'.

⁵² In *Father*, for example, baseball appears (the protagonist is a player at school), as does student-*geisha* relations, and car driving etc. In *Sunday*, the modern urban atmosphere is conveyed through the protagonist, whose preparation to go out – wearing a fashionable suit, trimming hair, and perfuming himself – is depicted in detail.

⁵³ Tanaka Saburō, 'Otōsan' in *Kinema Junpō* 147 (1 January, 1924), p. 20; Furukawa Roppa, 'Nichiyōbi' in *Kinema Junpō* 161 (1 June, 1924), p. 25.

⁵⁴ Tanaka Saburō, 'Otōsan', p. 20.

Labouring in the midst of a Kamata studio reconstructing itself after the earthquake, the production of the films suffered great limitation of resources – only two studio sets were allowed for each film. Since ‘*shinpa*’s tragic melodrama, with frequent scene changes, needed a substantial number of sets’, Shimazu instead turned to making the more simplistic ‘home drama’, which emphasised ‘an elaborate and realistic expression of life and manners’.⁵⁵ This anecdote does not mean that *kamatachō* was merely a fortuitous outcome; the concept, as discussed, should be understood as a phenomenon within a more general tendency towards modern, ‘cinematic’ filmmaking in the late 1910s and early 1920s, and as such, was a necessary development regardless of the earthquake. Nevertheless, it should also be noted that *kamatachō* was exposed to various conditions – such as studio environment, finances, and a range of production options – that constantly adjusted its practical shape. It could be argued that, if other conditions had been met, Shimazu might have continued to produce *shinpa* melodrama. Indeed, while experimenting with such films as *Father* and *Sunday*, Shimazu did not totally abandon making films closer in style to *shinpa* (possibly for commercial reasons). Such films as *Cha o tsukuru ie/Tea Making Family*, *Fukōsha/A Bad Son* and *Norowaretaru misao/Damned Chastity* (all released in 1924, the same year as *Sunday*) dealt with self-sacrificing parents and a love triangle relationship entangled with pecuniary matters, which are typical tragic elements of the *shinpa* style.⁵⁶

Thus even if *kamatachō* opened an important new phase for Shochiku, it was not the only option the company persisted with. The tradition of *shinpa*, as Oda Takashi (the scriptwriter of *Tea Making Family*) argues, was practically an inevitable element of Japanese cinema, and this applied just as well in Shochiku.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Yoshimura Kōzaburō, ‘Hyōden Shimazu Yasujirō [A Critical Biography of Shimazu Yasujirō]’ in Imamura et al. (eds.), *Tōkī no jidai*, p. 220. The situation resembles an early history of Japanese television, where the simple and economic ‘*hōmudorama* (home drama)’ format was favoured for various technological reasons.

⁵⁶ *Tea Making Family* is a story about a family in the countryside, which, because of the greed of his second son, is faced with a crisis. The father in this film, in contrast with the one in *Father*, cannot fulfil the son’s request for money, and sets fire to his tea roasting house in order to collect insurance. But he is identified as the arsonist, and in the end his daughter becomes a *geisha* in order to help her father and family. Kinema junpō sha henshūbu, ‘*Cha o tsukuru ie [Tea Making Family]*’ in *Kinema junpō*, 161 (1 June, 1924), p. 22.

⁵⁷ Oda says, ‘as for us [i.e. the writers of theatrical origin], the form of *shinpa* drama clung to our body, and just getting out of it required an extraordinary effort’. *Tea Making Family* was his first such struggle, but ‘it would be hard to say that there was no vestige of *shinpa* in the film’. Oda argues that traces of *shinpa* style composition can still be identified in more recent Japanese cinema and even in foreign films; ‘I think it’s the fate of cinema that, when a film is made with an easy attitude [to appeal to large audiences], it soon falls prey to the form of *shinpa* drama’. Quoted in Satō, *Nihon eigashi*, Vol.

In fact, *shinpa* prospered in a sense because, as Kido himself often emphasised, Shochiku publicly declared that its films were intended for female audiences, and the tearjerking melodrama about a troubled family life was one of the easiest ways to guarantee a gendered spectatorship. Nomura Hōtei, for example, regardless of his relegation to Kyoto in 1924 and death in 1934, remained the most commercially successful director in Shochiku in the 1920s with *Haha/Mother* (1923) and another *Haha* (1929, not a remake), the latter of which was ‘one of the biggest hits from Kamata Studio’.⁵⁸ With a common narrative of multiple mothers who sacrifice their lives for the sake of a single child, these ‘mother’ films could be regarded as *kateigeki* (home drama), which retained the tradition of the *kateishōsetsu* (home novel) as well as *shinpa*, and anticipated the popular genre of the *hahamono* (‘mother films’) or *chichimono* (‘father films’) in the postwar years.⁵⁹ Thus it can be summarised that, surrounding the hegemony of style and narrative in Shochiku’s films, there coexisted two competing lines, each of which consisted of genres that were connected by a chain of successive influences; one was the *shinpa* tragedy – *kateigeki* – *hahamono*, and the other was the *kamatachō* comedy – *shōshimin eiga* – *hōmudorama*, both in chronological order.⁶⁰

The division, however, should be accepted as a general tendency, which, in reality, existed within a more complex relationship. As we have seen in Shimazu’s case, both *shinpa* and *kamatachō* styles intermingled in a director’s career, and this was also the case, at least to a certain degree, with Ozu.⁶¹ In this regard, Shimazu’s representative film, *Our Neighbour Miss Yae* (1934), suggests an intriguing example of the point at which the growing influence of *kamatachō*’s everyday

1, p. 214-215.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 243.

⁵⁹ The prewar genre of *kateigeki*, which Shochiku excelled in, depicted ‘unstable family’ with ‘complex and often confrontational relationships’, and it was female characters who, under ‘unquestionable patriarchy’, were supposed to ‘endure fate and wait’ in order to maintain the family. Such a suffering female character developed into the devoted mother of the postwar *hahamono* films, where the mother was typically involved in a *shinpa*-flavoured melodramatic relationship with her child, full of ‘dramatic action, self-sacrifice, and [emotional] confession’. Sakamoto, *Kazoku imēji no tanjō*, pp. 102, 245-246. Satō, *Nihon eiga shi*, Vol. 1, p. 242.

⁶⁰ According to Sakamoto, the tradition of *shōshimin eiga* (prewar) – *hōmudorama* (postwar) can be grouped together by their common dramaturgy that ‘depicts life in a serene attitude’ and tends towards the ‘reality of everyday life’ rather than *shinpa* narrative’s ‘wild emotion’. Sakamoto, p. 173, 246-7.

⁶¹ The virtue of parental devotion and emotional intimacy was a major subject matter in Ozu’s films such as *Haha o kowazuya/A Mother Should Be Loved* (1934), *Hitori musuko/The Only Son* (1936), *Todake no kyōdai/Brothers and Sisters of Toda Family* (1941) and *Chichi ariki/There Was a Father* (1942), which later developed into such sophisticated postwar classics as *Banshun/Late Spring* (1949) and *Tōkyō monogatari/Tokyo Story* (1953).

realism meets the archaic remains of *shinpa*. Sasaki Yoriaki, referring to Kishi Matsuo's review at the time of the film's release, argues that the narrative of *Our Neighbour Miss Yae* can be divided in two by the appearance of the character Kyōko (Okada Yoshiko).⁶² In the first part of the film, the film concentrates on the realistic depiction of the everyday life of two suburban middle class homes (Yaeko's and Keitarō's), which reside in perfect peace. Nothing really happens in this world of the everyday except for trivialities – breaking a window while catching a baseball, going to the public bath, mending socks as well as eating and drinking – and as such it becomes the epitome of the *kamatachō* (or in Kishi's expression, 'sketch').⁶³ The sudden appearance of Kyōko, Yaeko's elder sister who returns home to divorce her husband, is an intrusion by foreign elements into this stable everyday life, and marks the ending of the 'sketch' and the beginning of the 'drama'. This latter part of the film, through the character of Kyōko, brings to the fore serious and fatal life-issues such as divorce, woman's labour, unrequited love and suicide.⁶⁴ Thus Kyōko's existence belongs to the '*shinpa* tragedy', as opposed to Yaeko and others' 'innocent' everyday world that gazes at the former with 'displeasure' and a sense of 'vague anxiety'.⁶⁵ As such *Our Neighbour Miss Yae* displays the 'intermingling of the *shinpa* and the everyday elements' within its narrative, the 'disharmony' of which, Sasaki argues, is a result of Shimazu's gradual progress from the former into the latter.⁶⁶

The film concludes in favour of the everyday of Yaeko. By exposing Kyōko's 'impure' behaviours – she actively seduces Keitarō – Shimazu succeeds in provoking an uncomfortable emotional reaction against her morality from viewers, which is re-affirmed by her abrupt disappearance from the narrative at the end.⁶⁷

⁶² Sasaki Yoriaki, 'Tonari no yae chan o meguru gekisekai no hensen [The Change of Dramatic World Surrounding *My Neighbour, Miss Yae*]' in Iwamoto Kenji (ed.), *Nihon eiga to modanizumu [Japanese Cinema and Modernism]: 1920-1930* (Tokyo: Libropōto, 1991), pp. 164-165.

⁶³ In order to visualise this suburban everydayness, Shimazu builds a sheltered space with two houses and an empty lot between them, from which the characters rarely escape before Kyōko arrives in the narrative. In terms of time, the film's earlier part sticks to the afternoon and evening, a sluggish or 'empty' part of a day when nothing significant seems to happen.

⁶⁴ Leaving her husband, Kyōko finds herself helpless to make her own living. She even thinks about working as a café waitress, which is instantly disapproved of by her mother. Divorce also makes her feel disgraceful, comparing herself with 'pure' Yaeko. Her effort to seek a new love from Keitarō is denied, and she leaves home again, leaving a suicidal note behind.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 167, 172. Yaeko, however, never directly clashes with Kyōko, which would instantly have made this film another '*shinpa* drama'. *Ibid.*, p. 172.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Kishi Matsuo evidences the contemporary audiences' dislike of Kyōko's character saying, 'what the spectators who watched this film commonly said was Okada Yoshiko [who played Kyōko] was ugly'.

However, it is also important to notice that there is an ideological ‘emptiness’ in the realism of the suburban middle class everyday life, a vacuum where Yaeko and others are deprived of the social concerns embedded in Kyōko’s turbulent life. If Kyōko’s world is (over)loaded with painful meanings, Yaeko’s and Keitarō’s suburban home is a sterilised space, where nothing should happen and nothing actually happens. The film thus reconfirms the apolitical or innocent nature of *kamatachō*’s everyday realism that ‘does not have a logical relation with the external world, and is ruled by the principle of pleasure/displeasure’.⁶⁸ Kyōko and her ‘female autonomy and individualism’ as a divorcee mean only a ‘threat’ to this stabilised social order.⁶⁹ By juxtaposing two different worlds based upon two different perspectives on style, genre, and (ultimately) filmmaking in general, *Our Neighbour Miss Yae* reveals the awkward tension that *kamatachō* bore when mixed with *shinpa*, revealing its limitations as a specific middle-class realism against *other* realisms that might disrupt the stability of the everyday.

Conclusion

Kamatachō, as advocated and practiced by Kido Shirō and Shochiku’s Kamata studio directors, was an intentional effort to adopt modern (i.e. Western) conventions and styles in filmmaking as well as in filmic texts. For them, what was ‘modern’ was understood as the realistic representation of modern everyday life as it was, and for that purpose, old theatrical styles such as *shinpa* were rejected. Thus everyday life, as one of the layers of the Japanese modern that I suggested in the previous chapter, was not only a social phenomenon but also an object of artistic *modanizumu* in film. The cinematic representation of the everyday was also supported by activities aimed at modernising the concrete filmmaking process, though the subject of this modernisation was a production company rather than the state. It should be noted that Shochiku was active in sending its envoys to Western countries (especially the US) whenever it needed a breakthrough in the

She is thus a ‘witch-like’ character, a typical female prototype in *shinpa* drama. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 165.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

⁶⁹ Mitsuyo Wada-Marciano, *Nippon Modern*, p. 117.

modernisation process. Overall, in the context of Japanese cinema history, *kamatachō* should be placed in line with other efforts and experiments that were ongoing during the 1910s and early 1920s in relation to the consolidation of modern cinematicity as seen in the case of the Pure Film Movement and the redefining of the *benshi*'s role.

However, I have discussed two points that should caution against interpreting *kamatachō* as a simple, monolithic phenomenon of the Japanese modern. First, its everyday realism should not be accepted as a completely objective reality, but rather as a very specific kind, emerging from post-earthquake Tokyo, produced by people of particular geographical, educational, and economic backgrounds, with the concerns of the urban middle-classes in mind (even though it eventually appealed to audiences of varied classes). The tension this particularity generated has abounded in critical and scholarly discourses, one example of which will be discussed in the next chapter with regard to Ozu's *shōshimin* (petit-bourgeois) films.

My second point is that the modernity of *kamatachō* was not absolute, but always existed in a complex relationship with retrospective tendencies such as *shinpa*. As discussed in relation to Shimazu's *Our Neighbour Miss Yae*, this coexistence did not necessarily result in hybridisation; rather, *shinpa* developed along its own path, retaining a critical relationship with *kamatachō*. Thus Shochiku was a contradiction; a company producing film *and* theatre, its ideal of modernisation and internationalism in constant negotiation with the reality of commercialism. In this regard, I come to a similar conclusion to what Aaron Gerow argues in his study of the Pure Film Movement. That is, that the transformations in Japanese cinema were 'not simply instances of "Americanisation" [or reactionary "Japanisation"] so much as a complex set of discursive enunciations and influences that cannot be reduced to an East/West binary'.⁷⁰ But I reach that point from the opposite direction to Gerow; if he emphasises the Pure Film Movement's role in modernising Japanese cinema, I attend to *shinpa*'s enduring influence on audiences as well as films even into the postwar years.

⁷⁰ Aaron Gerow, *Visions of Japanese Modernity: Articulations of Cinema, Nation, and Spectatorship, 1895-1925* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), p. 21.

CHAPTER 3

I Was Born Middle-Class, But...: Ozu's *Shōshimin* Films

Introduction

As discussed in the previous chapter, *kamatachō* designated less a genre than a filmmaking attitude that aimed at a more realistic depiction of a character's life, employing a light touch and a warm sense of humanity. This chapter will examine how such a style was applied to a specific genre, namely the *shōshimin eiga* (petit-bourgeois or middle-class film), that became a staple of Shochiku studio in the late 1920s and early 1930s. *Shōshimin eiga* is an appropriate starting point for discussing Ozu, who was regarded as a representative director of the genre in its heyday and would also repeatedly deal with similar urban white-collar families for his subject matter. Even though his interest varies widely in terms of the economic background of a protagonist's family, the middle-class life in his early *shōshimin* films still becomes the most typical prototype of Ozu's home drama. *Shōshimin eiga* also gave the director the first critical success of his career. The two films that will be analyzed in this chapter, *Tōkyō kōrasu/Tokyo Chorus* (1931) and *Otona no miru ehon: Umareta wa mita keredo/I Was Born But...* (1932), were especially highly praised as representative films of the genre, and thus can be regarded as an initiation of Ozu as an auteur, with his characteristic styles and themes firmly set in place.¹

¹ It was July 1930 when *Eiga hyōron* [*Film Criticism*] published an Ozu special issue, analyzing the director's recent films and the boom in the *shōshimin eiga* genre. (Fig 3.1) *Tokyo Chorus* was released



(Fig 3.1)

There have already been numerous discussions of these two films by critics as well as more general evaluation of the *shōshimin eiga* as a genre. There was little disagreement regarding the idea that Ozu had already achieved a certain artistic level with *Tokyo Chorus* and *I Was Born But...* in terms of his understanding cinematic forms and the ability to transform them into his own aesthetic style.² The point of debate, however, was the political attitude assumed in the films (and generally, in the *shōshimin eiga*), which caused much controversy amongst Japanese leftist film critics (which I will discuss later in this chapter). More recent academic studies have also concentrated on the *shōshimin eiga*'s ideological stance in order to criticise the modernisation process in Japan and suggest a consolidation of pre-modern values such as patriarchy. The main goal of this chapter, therefore, is to examine whether and how these issues are at work in Ozu's *shōshimin eiga* texts. While I agree that Ozu's *shōshimin* films are fundamentally a critique of 'Japanese' modernity, I would, however, like to ask how effectively they suggest a return to the 'traditional past', as the recent studies of the genre argue. This chapter will reconsider Ozu's *shōshimin eiga* from the broader perspective of the modern everyday, and, as such, the scope of its critique will extend to Japan's whole experience of modernisation that had originally constructed the idea of the tradition.

in the next year and was ranked at number three in *Kinema junpō*'s annual top ten list. And in 1932, *I Was Born But...* would finally become Ozu's first number one film in the list.

² *Tokyo Chorus*, for example, was evaluated as 'the first class of the first classes among Japanese films in terms of its skill'. Ōtsuka Kyōichi, 'Tōkyō no kōrasu [*Tokyo's Chorus*]' in *Eiga hyōron* [*Film Criticism*] 11:3 (September, 1931), p. 91.

The Rise and Fall of the Prewar Japanese Middle Class

Both *Tokyo Chorus* and *I Was Born, But...* are stories about a suburban middle-class nuclear family consisting of two parents and their young children. The main subject matter that leads the narrative of both films is the father's unemployment or fear of it. In *Tokyo Chorus*, the father, Okajima, is actually dismissed from the insurance company where he works and struggles to survive for most of the film. In *I Was Born But...*, the father, Yoshii, maintains his company position, but only at the expense of toadying to his boss. Both stories depict a typical plight for contemporary white-collar workers who were going through Japan's early 1930s' depression. The Japanese term *shōshimin* attached to these urban office workers can be translated into 'petit-bourgeois', which, as in European history, originally indicated 'shopkeepers, wholesalers, petty manufacturers, and their ill-paid employees' (called 'old middle class') but later in the twentieth century expanded to include 'educated salaried employees of corporations and government bureaus and their families'.³ The appearance of such a salaried 'new middle class' was interwoven with the rapid development of industrial capitalism. The national economy's growth during World War I (1914-1918) was great enough to provide young university graduates with an unprecedented opportunity to find office-based jobs in metropolitan centres, and the term '*sararīman*' (meaning salaried man) was firstly coined in the 1920s to identify this new group.⁴ It was the life of this *sararīman* and his family that became the main subject of *shōshimin eiga*.⁵

It is important to understand the emergence of the *shōshimin* class, and its constituent *sararīman*, as a part of Japan's modernisation process, having long been planned and encouraged by the modern state after the Meiji Restoration in 1868. The key means for this goal was higher education, through which the Japanese government, under the banner of 'civilisation and enlightenment', infused young people with a dream of secular success, as summarised in the phrase '*risshin shusse*

³ Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan*, p. 149.

⁴ In Tokyo, the number of the *sararīman* workers rose from 6 percent of the whole workforce in 1908 to 21 percent in 1920. *Ibid.*, p. 150.

⁵ Strictly speaking, the old middle class people such as tradesmen, handicraftsmen and the self-employed are not the object of *shōshimin* films. However, they instead can be dealt with in *shomingeki* (drama of lower middle class), a broader and vaguely defined genre that is typically set in lower-middle class regions such as Tokyo's *shitamachi*. Ozu also directed such a *shomingeki* or *shitamachi* drama as *Deki gokoro/Passing Fancy* (1933), which I will discuss in the next chapter.

shugi’ (careerism; literally meaning ‘ideology of standing and advancing in the world’). During the Meiji era (1868-1912), when the *sararīman* was not yet born, this dream was realistic as ‘the demand for trained people far outran their production by the universities’.⁶ However, as the number of college graduates increased their career prospects grew more limited. Jobs in government, which had been exclusively intended for the graduates, started to decrease, pushing them into the private sector from the mid 1910s onwards. And the situation got even worse in the 1920s, which started with a postwar recession, followed by the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923 and successive financial collapses in 1927 and 1929.⁷ The ‘intellectual unemployment’ became a ubiquitous phenomenon. The *sararīman* class, therefore, enjoyed a self-contradictory existence from its beginning, caught between expectation and frustration, perseverance often rewarded with dissatisfaction. (Fig 3.2)



(Fig 3.2) A *sararīman* seeking a job on the street; the sign reads ‘Give! Any kind of works, please sir!’

It is worth noting that the purpose of the higher education that the *sararīman* group received was also essentially contradictory. While many of the students were motivated by the dream of *risshin shusse* to climb the social ladder, for the state of Japan, it was essentially a ‘national initiative, installed almost like conscription’ to

⁶ Herbert Passin, *Society and Education in Japan* (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1965), p. 137.

⁷ In 1923, 82 percent of male university and professional school graduates could find jobs, but in 1928, the number plummeted to 54 percent. Margit Nagy, ‘Middle-Class Working Women During the Interwar Years’ in Gail Lee Bernstein (ed.), *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 204.

produce an educated labour force for building a modern nation.⁸ Thus the *sararīman* was a product of two opposite and competing tendencies in Japanese modernity – modern individualism and more traditional collectivism, the balance between which alternated throughout the nation’s modern history. However, as Carol Gluck explains, the ‘official’ ideology that emphasised ‘collective cooperation within the family and the community’ could not completely exclude the ‘alternative’ one that articulated individual success through the chain of ‘education, employment, and rising in the world’.⁹ The *sararīman* was thus expected to resolve this dilemma in his everyday life; on the one hand, they were not only producers but also consumers within a capitalist society where ‘modern individual consciousness’ was rewarded; but at the same time, in social relations, they still had to abide by the rule of ‘more solid values of feudal morality’ such as patriarchy.¹⁰ A *sararīman* and his family could exist as long as the tension between these two different requirements was resolved through his stable employment and income to support the family’s consumption, and in addition, the patriarchal order at home that justifies the existence of a housewife and the reproduction of the next generation. The innate contradiction, however, could not sustain when one side of the balance, the *sararīman*’s economic independence, was seriously threatened by unemployment in the depression era of the 1920s and early 1930s. The *shōshimin eiga* was the genre that specifically capitalised on this decline of the fundamentals of modernity in Japan.

Criticising *Shōshimin eiga* and Ozu

In 1932, when *I Was Born But...* was released, a Japanese critic Ikeda Hisao asserted that ‘almost 90 percent of contemporary commercial films’ dealt with

⁸ Robert, L. Cutts, *An Empire of Schools: Japan’s Universities and the Molding of a National Power Elite* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1997), p. 10.

⁹ Gluck, *Japan’s Modern Myths*, p. 206. In other words, while ‘moral conduct’ was being emphasised, ‘economic goals’ were legitimised also. *Ibid.*, p. 210.

¹⁰ Harry Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity*, p. 204-205.

shōshimin as a subject matter.¹¹ Ikeda, however, emphasised that not all of them could be categorised as authentic *shōshimin eiga*, which, by his own definition, should contain ‘*shōshimin*’s ideological viewpoint’ appearing in the form of three basic elements: ‘cheerfulness’, ‘humour’, and ‘pathos’.¹² Another critic, Shimizu Shunji, also distinguished the films that merely deployed petit-bourgeois life as ‘subject matter’ (*puchi buru mono* [petit-bourgeois stuffs] in his term) from real *shōshimin eiga* that took an ‘attitude’ towards *shōshimin* as a class.¹³ The appeal of the former, however, was more universal; Shimizu appropriately pointed out that even in the cinemas in rural regions, where the number of white-collar *shōshimin* people was expected to be low, the films dealing with *shōshimin* life were still more popular than other genres.¹⁴ Such superficial *shōshimin* ‘life’ films served as a form of cinematic voyeurism of non-*shōshimin* audiences, who wanted to ‘forget present life’ by consuming the ‘most progressive and chic’ image of the urban petit-bourgeois.¹⁵ From this point of view, it can be deduced that there was a subtle gap between the *shōshimin eiga* Japanese critics approved of and the one Shochiku studio was actually selling in the film market. As I discussed in the previous chapter, Kido Shiro, who was primarily concerned with the commercial potential of a film, thought Shochiku’s *kamatachō* films should have happy ending, presenting a ‘warm, cheerful, and hopeful’ vision to audiences. The thicker the pathos in a film is (i.e. the stronger *shōshimin* ideology becomes), the more it loses its appeal.¹⁶

The petit-bourgeois origin of Shochiku employees has drawn the attention of several critics and academics, from Ikeda in the 1930s to Wada-Marciano in the

¹¹ Ikeda Hisao, ‘Shōshimin eiga ron: Akarusa, yūmoa, pēsosu no kaikyūsei [A Comment on *Shōshimin* Film: The Class Consciousness of Cheerfulness, Humour, and Pathos]’ in *Eiga hyōron* 13:4 (April, 1932), p. 118.

¹² Ibid. Ikeda thought that *shōshimin*’s pathos originated from the unstable economic position of the class in a society caught between the ‘fear of proletarianisation’ and ‘aspiration for the bourgeoisie’. Ibid., pp. 119-120, 122.

¹³ Shimizu Shunji, ‘Eiga to puchiburu no seikatsu’, p. 53.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 53-54.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 54.

¹⁶ As a critic Ōtsuka Kyōichi indicated, such a masterpiece as *Tokyo Chorus* could be a ‘completely meaningless and boring film’ to ordinary audiences except a small group of real urban middle-class people who could ‘understand the sophisticated flavour of the film and sympathise with the state of mind of petit-bourgeois filmmakers [in Shochiku]’. Yoshimura Kōzaburō, himself later a renowned Shochiku director, was also very sceptical about the commercial appeal of *shōshimin eiga* to general audiences, who ‘loathed realistic depiction of hardships in life in film’ and did not ‘understand the comparably intellectual techniques of the genre’. Ōtsuka, ‘Tōkyō no kōrasu’, p. 92; Yoshimura Kōzaburō, ‘Shinkyō eiga ni tsuite [About State of Mind Film]’ in *Eiga hyōron*, 18:1 (January, 1936), p. 55.

2000s, who argue that the studio, comprised of middle-class employees, was faithful to class ideology, avoiding politically progressive *keiko eiga* (tendency films) and instead choosing ideologically ambiguous *shōshimin eiga* in order to evade the state's political control.¹⁷ However, I think Kido was also well aware of the irony that Shochiku's *shōshimin* films should not be too faithful to the middle class ideology in order to avoid a commercial failure. In fact, Kido seemed not that entirely favourable to the success of Ozu and the *shōshimin* films the director was making, which constituted the best example of the authentic *shōshimin eiga* that Japanese critics were discussing.¹⁸ It is thus important to remember the famous anecdote that once *I Was Born But...* was completed, Shochiku was reluctant to release it because the theme of the film seemed 'too bleak'. On the other hand, it is also worth remembering that Ozu's previous work *Shukujo to hige/The Lady and the Beard* (1931), a comedy that dealt with the *shōshimin* life merely as subject matter with little ideological concern, was a good commercial success.¹⁹

However, even a critically approved *shōshimin eiga* such as *Tokyo Chorus* or *I Was Born But...* could not evade the attack of contemporary Japanese critics. For the critics of the magazine *Eiga hyōron (Film Criticism)*, such as Ōtsuka Kyōichi, Ikeda Hisao, and Sekino Yoshio, the principal problem of the genre was the petit-bourgeois ideology itself that the *shōshimin eiga* was disseminating. While the films were open to socioeconomic issues that the *sararīman* group was facing and the pathos that ensued, they fundamentally suffered from an apolitical position that ignored socio-structural causes and attributed everything to individual cases. The *Shōshimin eiga* was thus criticised for 'never attempting to touch the essence of the situation but stopping at an extremely superficial phenomenon'.²⁰ In terms of the aforementioned Ikeda's three elements of *shōshimin eiga*, 'cheerfulness' is an unrealistic 'escape', 'humour' a 'light stimulant', and 'pathos' is close to 'nihilistic sentiment', leading

¹⁷ Ikeda, 'Shōshimin eiga ron', p. 119; Wada-Marciano, p. 22.

¹⁸ In his autobiographical writing, Kido recalls, '[Ozu] started to do so-called *shōshimin* films from around *Nikutaibi/Body Beautiful* (1928). ... When I returned from the US [in April 1929], he became better skilled at it. ... It had been the basic strategy of Shochiku to favourably deal with contemporary *shōshimin* people. However, Ozu did not think petit-bourgeois life a wholly cheerful one [as in other Shochiku films], if not necessarily a desperate one. ... For him, the *kamatachō* films until that time could have seemed cheap. I could sense from his [stubborn] attitude that he, finding too much easy compromise with society [in Shochiku's filmmaking], decided to overcome it with all his might'. Kido, *Nihon eiga den*, pp. 74-76.

¹⁹ Ōtsuka, 'Tōkyō no kōrasu', p. 92.

²⁰ Sekino Yoshio, 'Shinkyōbutsu no hasan', p. 22.

one into ‘lethargic, decadent resignation’.²¹ *Shōshimin* films, as a Shochiku product, may possess the virtue of *shajitsu*, a spirit of ‘formal’ realism in order to depict life as it is, but it could not deliver the ‘ideological’ realism that critics wanted. What they required was less ‘romantic, warm tears of sympathy’ than acute social consciousness, as in films such as *Nani ga kanojo o sō saseta ka/What Made Her Do It?* (Suzuki Shigeyoshi, Teikoku Kinema, 1930).²²

These contemporary criticisms have been revised by more recent academic discussions, which argue that *shōshimin* film was not apolitical and not without an ideology. What Chung Suwan and Mitsuyo Wada-Marciano find is the genre’s active role in reconstructing modern subjectivity through nationalistic ideas. *Shōshimin* films, on the one hand, ‘create a new modern subject, the middle class, and promote the idea that Japan has already reached a level of modernisation on par with the West’.²³ However, on the other hand, the development of ‘materialism in modernisation’ and the loss of ‘Japan’s traditional spirit’ became the cause of the economic hardship that the middle class characters had to suffer.²⁴ What the genre accordingly suggests to viewers as an alternative is to ‘enter a nationalist discourse, with which they paradoxically resist modernisation ... while evoking a lost “traditional” past’.²⁵ Such a ‘call’ to the traditional order was most conspicuously revealed through the character of the patriarch. In the *shōshimin eiga*, the ‘modern material culture that permeated the family weakened paternal authority’, and the repercussions of this were suggested in the end through the ‘longing for an elegiac old Japan and its social mores’.²⁶ The genre thus operates as a critique of modernity that advocates such a traditional value as patriarchy, and eventually restructures the subjectivity of Japanese people for the nationalistic concern.

²¹ Ikeda, ‘Shōshimin eiga ron’, pp. 121-123. Since *shōshimin eiga* concentrated more on the various sentimental responses of the *sararīman* and his family than active analysis of and resistance to their socioeconomic situation, Japanese critics tended to call the genre – in a negative nuance – *shinkyō eiga* (state of mind film). Chung, ‘Sosimin yeonghwa yeongu’, p. 55.

²² Sekino, ‘Shinkyōbutsu no hasan’, p. 22; Ōtsuka Kyōichi, ‘Ozu yasujirō ron [A Comment on Ozu Yasujiro]’ in *Eiga hyōron*, 8:4 (April, 1930), p. 45.

²³ Wada-Marciano, *Nippon Modern*, p. 50.

²⁴ Chung, ‘Sosimin yeonghwa yeongu’, p. 61.

²⁵ Wada-Marciano, *Nippon Modern*, p. 50.

²⁶ Chung Suwan, ‘Chichi, kokka, soshite kazoku [Father, Nation, and Family]’ in Iwamoto Kenji (ed.), *Kazoku no shōzō: hōmudorama to merodorama [A Portrait of a Family: Home Drama and Melodrama]* (Tokyo: Shinwasha, 2007), p. 248; Wada-Marciano, *Nippon Modern*, p. 51.

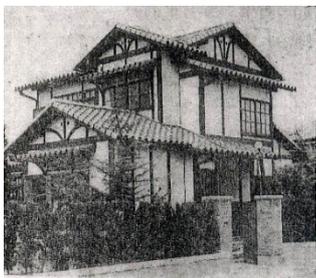
Ozu's *shōshimin* paternal characters do suffer seriously weakened authority, which is the essential element in the narrative of each of his aforementioned *shōshimin* films. I will now investigate the representation of the *sararīman* character and the everyday life of his middle-class family in *Tokyo Chorus* and *I Was Born But...* in relation to the cause of the crisis in patriarchal authority and whether and how that patriarchy is being revived in the two films as Chung and Wada-Marciano argue.

Failed Patriarchy in Modern Life

1. Materialistic culture

Among the two contradictory aspects of the modernity represented in *shōshimin eiga*, I will firstly discuss the commodity culture that became the assumed mode of middle-class life in 1920s and 1930s' Japanese society. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, the period in which the *sararīman* emerged as the middle class in Japan, namely the 1920s, overlapped with the peak of so-called Western influenced high culture, or *modanizumu* (modernism), that, unlike the more political and economic connotations of 'modernisation', designated a cultural aspect of modernity, ranging from art and literature to street fashion. As I also mentioned, such a cultural transformation was happening at the level of life (*seikatsu*) for common people who were more and more recognised as the consuming masses, especially in the urban space of post-earthquake in 1923. *Modan raifu* (modern life) and *bunka seikatsu* (cultured life) became the catchphrase of the new consumerism for the middle-class families whose buying activities centred on urban department stores, as epitomised by those in the Ginza district. And at the other end of this consumption lay suburban home, a domestic space where the actual 'cultured life' would be practiced. A significant element that spatially maximised this bifurcated system was the development of the railway system, which provided *sararīman* families in the

suburbs with a means of transportation to Tokyo's city centre.²⁷ (Fig 3.3) The figure that stood at the centre of all these life activities – city centre and suburb, production and consumption, commuting and entertainment – was the *sararīman*, upon whose salaried labour the life of his family was dependent.



(Fig 3.3) A suburban house sold by a private railway company, Hankyūdentetsu

Between these two spatial nodes of modern life, Ozu's emphasis in his *shōshimin* films lies more on the suburban space. What characterises this space in both *Tokyo Chorus* and *I Was Born But...* is a long road, which, punctuated by rows of electric poles, disappears into an endless horizon, obscuring its ultimate destination - the city centre. (Fig 3.4) The barren indifference visible in the lost



(Fig 3.4) A road to the suburb in *Tokyo Chorus* (left) and *I Was Born But...* (right)

horizon implies the failure of modernity to deliver on promises that the middle class families in both films have invested in. It is on this deserted road that the son in *Tokyo Chorus* encounters his father Okajima who, just dismissed from his job, is returning home with a scooter for the son in his hand. Disappointed that it is not the bicycle the father had promised that morning, the son bursts into a fit of tears against the backdrop of the ever-receding, quiet road, the end of which – the city – is left incomprehensible to viewers. (Fig 3.5) In *I Was Born But...* a similar road appears in

²⁷ It was actually private railway companies that not only constructed the new suburban lines but also developed 'culture houses' and shopping centres in the suburbs to attract middle class people out of the city. A railway transfer point such as Shinjuku accordingly became a commuters' hub, full of shopping and entertainment facilities such as department stores, cinemas, music and dance halls, cafes, bars and restaurants. Tipton, *Modern Japan*, p. 107.

the first scene. The protagonist family has moved into a suburb because of the father's belief in the benefit of living near his boss. However, as the first shot of a wheel stuck in the mud implies, it is only a futile hope that reconfirms the helpless destiny of the *sararīman* in a capitalist society. The sense of a loss – there is little but two parallel lines of electric poles on this road – strengthens the sense of pity for the life of this struggling family, whose households are seen ‘on the move’ in the back of a truck.²⁸ (Fig 3.6)



(Fig 3.5)



(Fig 3.6)

Compare this isolated vision of a suburb to the more concrete and confident linkage to the centre in *Banshun/Late Spring* (1949), where Ozu deliberately builds up a train ride sequence with a clear sense of direction and process from Kitakamakura station in Tokyo's suburbs towards Ginza, the centre of the modern. The more pleasant and upbeat mood, punctuated by rhythmical train sounds along with cheerful music, is totally absent from the prewar *shōshimin* films; even a commuting scene of the ubiquitous *sararīman* father character is avoided. This displacement from the centre is, however, compensated for by the endless passing of trains ‘inside’ the suburban space of *I Was Born But....* In fact the passing trains are featured so frequently and so close to everyday situations that, if the film had been a

²⁸ The motif of the wasted, endless road reappears in Ozu's *Tōkyō no yado/An Inn in Tokyo* (1935), where an unemployed factory worker Kihachi wanders around Tokyo's industrial area looking for a job with his sons. Thus regardless of the class (working or middle) or geography (factory region or suburb), the instable life of waged workers in Ozu at this period is commonly represented by the sense of being lost on empty roads.

sound film, the railway noises would have drowned out any other sounds including conversations. (Fig 3.7) With its intimidating speed and black body, along with (inaudible) sound, the train in *I Was Born But...* thus becomes a visual metaphor for the threatening impact of modern civilisation encroaching on the middle-class suburban life, and as such can support Chung and Wada-Marciano's argument that *shōshimin eiga*, by depicting the excessiveness of modern life, works as a critique of modernity.



(Fig 3.7)

However, this image of encroaching modernisation is incomplete, excluding an array of active consuming activities thriving in the city centre. Rather, Ozu's treatment of modernity is a moderated kind, distanced from an ideal image of the middle-class commodity culture as connoted in such words as *modan* or *bunka*. In his *shōshimin* films, for example, there are no detailed investigations of the urban street, as in Naruse Mikio's *Kagiri naki hodo/Street without End* (Shochiku, 1934), which Catherine Russell evaluates as constituting 'a remarkable study of life in Ginza'.²⁹ (Fig 3.8) Nor are there housewife characters who incline towards



(Fig 3.8) Ginza in Naruse's *Street without End*

excessive commodity consumption, as in Gosho Heinosuke's *Madamu to nyōbō/The Neighbour's Wife and Mine* (Shochiku, 1931) and *Jinsei no onimotsu/Burden of Life*

²⁹ Russell, *The Cinema of Naruse Mikio*, p. 74. In the film's opening sequence, Naruse employs an almost documentary-like mode to record a series of juxtaposed shots of store displays, various passers-by, signboards, and street vendors in Ginza. The urban modernity also continues in the following interior scene of a *kissaten* (coffee house) that is filled with the bustle of cooks, waitresses and customers.

(Shochiku, 1935), played in both cases by Tanaka Kinuyo.³⁰ In fact, there is no implication in *Tokyo Chorus* and *I Was Born But...* that the housewife can freely leave home to visit the city centre, let alone a department store.³¹ Rather, the consumption in both films is a very rational, prudent activity, limited by the *sararīman* father's income, as demonstrated in the aforementioned bicycle episode in *Tokyo Chorus* or the housewife's delayed purchase of a pack of beer until the next payday in *I Was Born But...*³² Even the *sararīman* fathers who commute to the centre are not exempt, for there is an almost complete omission of such leisure spaces as the restaurant, cafe, or bar in their everyday lives.³³ Phillips notices this substantial distance from consumerist life in Ozu's *shōshimin eiga*, and attributes it to 'the commonsensical repository of governmental values increasingly being urged upon ordinary Japanese citizens in the early years of the 1930s'.³⁴ I however think that, by the 1930s, the economic reality confronting the middle class was already harsh enough that rationalising consumption became a matter of necessity for survival rather than assent to a governmental agenda. This point importantly suggests that the critique of modernity Ozu addresses with his *shōshimin* films is less directed towards consumption culture than the whole modern capitalist system whose fundamental contradiction produces the social ills of depression and unemployment. Patriarchy and its assumed values, as a part of this general system of Japanese modernity, had to face the same crisis and criticism in the director's films.

³⁰ Chung argues that the values and lifestyle of Tanaka's character in the films – she either asks her husband for money to buy an expensive Western style dress (*The Neighbour's Wife and Mine*) or enjoys a free 'modan gāru (modern girl)' lifestyle, wearing Western suits, having a short cut hairstyle, and engaged in smoking (*Burden of Life*) – produce a crisis in the traditional order of the middle-class family, which the films suggest can be overcome by the return to the patriarchal domestic order. Chung, 'Sosimin yeonghwa yeongu', pp. 92-95.

³¹ In a city centre scene in *Tokyo Chorus*, the housewife is seen riding a tram, but the purpose of her going out is not for shopping but to look for a job for her husband's sake.

³² As Phillips points out, 'while Mrs. Yoshii [the housewife] may well importantly enjoy the benefits of new technologies ... she also appears to refute the more overt consumerist temptations'. Phillips, 'The Salaryman's Panic Time', p. 30.

³³ The space of eating and drinking out – mostly masculine in nature – frequently appears in the director's postwar *sararīman* films that I will discuss in Chapter 10.

³⁴ Phillips, 'The Salaryman's Panic Time', p. 30. As mentioned in Chapter 1, such top-down movements as Everyday Life Reform Movement 'emphasize[d] efficiency and economies yet encourage[d] people to avoid excess and immersing themselves too deeply in the new commodity culture'. Harry Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity*, p. 15.

2. Patriarchy in Crisis

The life of the *sararīman* is the quintessential existence within the *shōshimin eiga*. Not only his social being as a father, husband, and office worker becomes the centre of narrative, but also his relationships with other characters reflect the hierarchical system of a capitalist society. Yoshii in *I Was Born But...* thus has to curry favour of his boss at work; at home he changes into an authoritative patriarch. Yoshii even receives an ‘official’ approval of this interrelationship when he asks his boss to write his name on a new doorplate for his new house.³⁵ (Fig 3.9) His children similarly repeat the power structure on their own; at school, they are subject to the authority of a teacher as much as they are to their father at home, but in the playground with their friends they recreate what they learned in an amusing game of ‘order-and-submission’ – if the stronger raises his fingers, the weaker will lie on the ground. (Fig 3.10) In addition, another unequal relationship is assumed in the



(Fig 3.9) Yoshii receiving a doorplate for his new house from his boss (*left and centre*); Yoshii the patriarch at home (*right*)



(Fig 3.10)

domesticity between a husband and a wife. Based upon the principle of segregation of labour according to gender, the latter is supposed to stay at home to support the wage earning role of the former. All those involved in this hierarchical relationship, however, accept and internalise its legitimacy; the wives and children in *Tokyo*

³⁵ This interconnection between the father’s role in society and home can be compared to the ideal of *kazoku kokka* (family state), where the relation between emperor and his subjects is equated to that of father and son.

Chorus and *I Was Born But...* want a strong father figure who can protect their dignity as a middle-class family. But this desire cannot be maintained in Ozu's *shōshimin eiga*. Because of the contradictory subjectivity that the *sararīman* is destined to have – an authoritative father at home and feeble employee in his workplace, which Wada-Marciano calls 'the illusory division between public and private realms' – Ozu's films typically have a moment of 'revelation' when this tension between the two worlds is resolved through the revelation of the father's double identity to his family.³⁶ The fall of the patriarchal character is thus a given in this genre; the question is to what degree he can resume his authority, and the prospect is not entirely favourable with Ozu.

It is firstly important to emphasise that patriarchy was a part of the whole modern 'system' – consisting of home, office, and school among others – and cannot be considered separately from the general notion of modernisation in Japan. It was thus not 'traditional' even if it came from 'a tradition'. Just as in the field of education, patriarchy was a modern concept constructed by the Meiji government which had a pivotal role in legitimizing this change into a modern family system of *ie* by establishing such principal laws as the Meiji Civil Code (1898). As such, the Japanese family became 'suitable for the purpose of a modern nation-state', and the nation-state was reciprocally shaped to become 'suitable for the purpose of the family model'.³⁷ The ideology of *ryōsai kenbo* also originated from the samurai class's view on womanhood and became the 'cornerstone of women's education' from the 1900s.³⁸ Not only did each household but also the capitalist state of Japan operated upon these constructed traditions that justified the hierarchical authority and the segregation of gender roles. This means that if patriarchy was shown to be facing

³⁶ Wada-Marciano, *Nippon Modern*, p. 58.

³⁷ Ueno Chizuko, *Kindai kazoku no seiritsu to shūen* [The Rise and Fall of Modern Family] (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1994), p. 69. As the history surrounding the enactment of the Code shows, patriarchy was not originally an absolute condition but an alternative. During a preliminary national survey for the Civil Code, the Meiji government discovered that there existed an inheritance system among wealthy farmer and merchant families that descended through the lineage of mother or youngest child, which contrasted samurai class's convention of paternal lineage system. The controversy over the Civil Code continued for nearly twenty years, but the 'maternal system' was eventually dismissed as a 'shomin's barbaric custom'. Ibid., pp. 69-70.

³⁸ The segregation of labour based on gender was as much a new phenomenon in the twentieth century Japan as patriarchal family was. Women in Japan, except a small number who belonged to the samurai class, were traditionally a part of the productive labour force in the agricultural and domestic industrial economy. Uno, 'Women and Changes', pp. 35-38; Ueno Chizuko, 'Position of Japanese Women Reconsidered' in *Current Anthropology* 28:4 (August-October 1987), pp. S78-S79.

a crisis it indicated a failure of the whole modernisation process rather than a weakening of traditional Japanese values, a symptom that I think Ozu was well aware of.

The *sararīman* characters in Ozu are more complex in nature than simple ‘traditional’ images of the patriarch. Okajima in *Tokyo Chorus* is especially so. His domestic authority is founded upon his gentle, caring character, as shown in the scene of his daughter’s hospitalisation, where he reads a book and gives a piggyback to his son. (Fig 3.11) The moment Okajima becomes a strong patriarchal presence is



(Fig 3.11)

in the aforementioned scooter sequence, where he, trying to mollify the crying son, finally resorts to violence. This domestic disaster, however, only confirms his alienation from the rest of the family, visualised in the distance between the father and the others in the frame, which depicts Okajima as an ‘existence without wholeness, never fully understood, only to be gazed at, detached with awe’.³⁹ (Fig 3.12) The alienation of the father figure reappears in the second crisis of Okajima’s



(Fig 3.12)

paternal authority in the narrative, which becomes the film’s moment of ‘revelation’. It is a tram ride scene where Okajima’s wife, along with her children, happens to see, through the tram window, an unemployed Okajima carrying an ad banner on the street, inducing shock and shame in his wife, who cannot imagine her husband’s

³⁹ Woojeong Joo, ‘There Were Fathers: Representation of Father Figures in Ozu Yasujiro’s Films’ (unpublished MA dissertation, University of Warwick, 2007), p. 33.

doing such a menial work. This time, however, Okajima is not only physically distanced within a public space, but the unfamiliarity of this image is suggested through a point of view shot. The intrusion of the black window frame on the left makes this a cinematic experience for the family, which is affirmed in the next scene through the son's belief in his mother's excuse that it cannot be his father. (Fig 3.13)



(Fig 3.13)

Although Yoshii in *I Was Born But...*, an intimidating figure, is apparently much more faithful to the image of a patriarch than Okajima, he is still subject to the alienation and eventual revelation of his true subjectivity. The decisive moment comes in the 'home movie' sequence, when Yoshii's sons, watching an amateur film his boss made, find their father performing silly facial expressions and gestures in order to please the boss and his colleagues. It is interesting that the revelation in *Tokyo Chorus* is mediated by the modern vehicle of the tram, and the one in *I Was Born But...* comes in the form of the modern medium of film. There is both irony and insight in the fact that the fundamental contradiction of modernity – the father's double identity in private and public space – is revealed through one of the most modern technologies of the day, a 16mm camera. Consisting of three reels, the home movie explores and summarises what film can do as a document of modern everyday life. The surprise and enjoyment of an attraction (exotic animals in a zoo) in the first reel is followed by the revelation of an uncomfortable truth in the maze of modern life (the boss's flirting with geishas on the street being watched by his wife) in the next reel, and the third one combines these two main functions of cinema into the character of Yoshii who is depicted as both a funny clown and a sorrowful *sararīman*. (Fig 3.14)



(Fig 3.14) The boss's amateur film: Zebra in a zoo (*left*), flirting with geisha (*centre*), and Yoshii (*right*)

Cinema, however, is not the direct cause that weakens Yoshii's domestic authority (rather it can be attributed to the structural contradiction of the capitalist society that he is bound to), but a 'medium' that works to record and represent a slice of modern life. In effect, what is destroyed here is not merely the traditional values of patriarchy but the Japanese modernity that originally reinvented those values, a system through which work, school, and home are combined in the service of capitalist production and consumption. What Yoshii's children despair at is not merely the fact the father is not as great as they had believed, but a fearful realisation that such a pitiful *sararīman* will be their future again in this society. Thus the poignant challenge of the elder son after watching the movie is less the declaration that he is not afraid of his father anymore than the acute question, 'what would be the point of going to school, if I am only destined to be worse off than my bourgeois friend (the boss's son)?' It is not a coincidence that his gesture of resistance is the throwing away of books, a negation of the system that he is involved in.

Towards the New Possibility of the Everyday

At this point, it becomes clearer that Ozu's critical view goes beyond the matter of patriarchy and is more broadly concerned with the fundamental dilemma of Japan's modern experience. That is, the failed promise made by the nation to its citizens that they would become successful as a middle class in exchange for sacrifice in aid of modernisation. What he suggests as a solution to this problem, however, is not consistent throughout the two films that I have analysed here. With

their ending sequences, Ozu seems to present contradicting answers, producing a tension between collectivism and individualism, and nationalism and liberalism.

Tokyo Chorus ends with a conservative conclusion. It is difficult to avoid the suspicion that Ozu here resorts to collectivistic values. Okajima, still unemployed, organises a class reunion party to help his former PE class teacher Ōmura, who now struggles to run a small restaurant. The virtue of collective cooperation could not be more clearly articulated than in this last restaurant sequence. Not only Ōmura and his wife, but also Okajima's wife, who disapproved of her husband's involvement in menial work, joins in preparing dishes of curry and rice for the party. Then, changing to a clean kimono and carrying a Japanese style fan, Ōmura stands before his former students to give a welcome address in which he asks them to 'struggle hard' with an 'indomitable spirit' and 'self-reliance'. His proud and confident attitude – as seen in his firmly clinched right hand – reminds viewers of the collectivistic spirit in the PE class in the film's opening sequence.⁴⁰ After rounds of communal drinking and eating, the film ends with everyone singing a 'dormitory song' in chorus. (Fig 3.15)



(Fig 3.15)

This is actually not the first 'chorus' in the film; when Okajima's family returns home from the hospital where his sick daughter has been hospitalised, a delighted Okajima 'wakens' his house by opening every closed door and window and leads the rest of the family into sitting and singing together in a circle. (Fig 3.16) The first

⁴⁰ In fact, Yoshii almost regards the restaurant business as an extension of his enlightening role as a teacher, only practiced outside of the school, with food instead of physical exercise. In and out of the restaurant space business mission statements are displayed on the wall, which include such phrases as 'one-dish-full-stomach principle' and 'a sound mind dwells in a sound body'.



(Fig 3.16)

domestic crisis is thus resolved through the ideal of the unified family under ‘*ie*’ and Okajima’s leadership. And the more fundamental crisis of the film – Okajima’s unemployment – is similarly resolved in the restaurant sequence in which Okajima is informed of a new job by Ōmura. Thus the film strongly signals the conclusion that even the social ills of modern capitalism can be overcome by appealing to a patriarchal figure who would take care of the situation.⁴¹

As the lyrics of the dormitory song imply, the dominant sentiment in the restaurant is nostalgia for the past, which strengthens the retrospective nature of the ending again.⁴² However, the object of their recollection – the school days of the film’s opening sequence – has a very different mood to the final restaurant sequence. Here, the PE class Ōmura leads is totalitarian in nature. The teacher not only disciplines the body of the students with his commands, but also appropriately deploys his punitive power; by simply opening a mark book to give a penalty, he instantly returns his students to an ordered state. (Fig 3.17) But his efforts to keep the



(Fig 3.17)

⁴¹ In addition, the narrative that going somewhere outside – Okajima’s new workplace is remotely situated from Tokyo – might resolve a problem implies the impending Japan’s history of expansionism in China, which would later more strongly suggested in Ozu’s such wartime films as *Toda ke no kyōdai/Brothers and Sisters of Toda Family* (1941). See Joan Mellen, *The Waves at Genji’s Door* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976), p. 155; Standish, *A New History of Japanese Cinema*, p. 127.

⁴² The lyrics reads, ‘Three years of spring passes so fast/ Parting now, when can we see your youthful face again’.

students in order are constantly foiled by their clever and timely actions which deviate from his order. If Ōmura adjusts a student's hat, it will soon be returned to the original position. If he opens the mark book, the students will peek from behind to see who's being checked. (Fig 3.18) And the most rebellious student in the class is



(Fig 3.18)

young Okajima, who does not conform to the dress code Ōmura enforces. Okajima is eventually ordered to stand apart while his friends march by on Ōmura's command, but at the end of the sequence he is found sitting comfortably by a stall bar (ignoring Ōmura's order), striking a match to smoke, and watching trees shaken by the wind, which produces a typically loosened moment within Ozu's transition shots.⁴³ (Fig 3.19)



(Fig 3.19)

Two important points make this delightful opening sequence a different experience from the restaurant sequence. Firstly, the conventions of the comedy genre are being used as a basic methodology. The students' minute, quick movements to either evade Ōmura's surveillance or mock him generate a pleasant

⁴³ It might be useful to mention here Ozu's own educational experiences. Donald Richie comments, 'as a boy Ozu was an indifferent student'. Compared to his elder brothers, he did not study well. What he liked was 'modern literature, ... cinema, ... and having a good time'. Richie, *Ozu*, pp. 194, 197. He managed to graduate high school, but failed to pass college entrance examination. So he became a substitute teacher in a remote mountainous town for one year before coming back to Tokyo to start working in Shochiku. The brief teaching experience was a chance for him to actualise his liberal views on education. According to one of his pupils at that time, Ozu 'never forced lessons on us. He just said, "If you don't learn this, it's your loss"'. Unnamed interviewee, *Ikite wa mita keredo! I Lived But...* (Inoue Kazuo, Shochiku, Japan, 1983).

rhythm and lead to great humour. Satō Tadao importantly argues that, although *Tokyo Chorus* is both a ‘drama of social criticism dealing with the theme of unemployment’ and a ‘humanist drama of a family life’, it should be above all regarded as an ‘extremely light and clever comedy’.⁴⁴ And the gags Ozu deploys in the film are ‘not a bizarre and extraordinary kind’ but the kind that ‘comes from the occurrences of everyday life, with a touch of exaggeration or formalisation’.⁴⁵ Secondly, the virtue of collectivism is denied or satirised in this sequence. Compared to the restaurant sequence, Ōmura’s attitude here is closer to the general notion of the patriarch as strict ruler, which is cleverly ridiculed by the students.⁴⁶ Okajima in particular is reluctant to follow the order of the class, as visualised in his conspicuous outfit and posture amongst the students. Such an individualistic and anti-establishment character explains his sole resistance to his boss’s decision to fire a colleague in a later office scene. But, as in the PE class sequence, the conflict here is still expressed in the form of a rhythmic gag – Okajima and the boss touch or push each other’s bodies with a fan and then a hand, the aggressiveness of this exchange growing as the debate becomes more heated. (Fig 3.21) Thus the two points I



(Fig 3.20) Saitō Tatsuo in *Tokyo Chorus* as a PE teacher (left) and in *I Was Born But...* as a father (right)



(Fig 3.21)

⁴⁴ Satō Tadao, *Kanpon Ozu yasujirō no geijutsu [The Art of Ozu Yasujiro, the Complete Edition]* (Tokyo: Asahi shinbun sha, 2000), p. 255.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 256.

⁴⁶ Ōmura’s patriarchal character in the PE class is repeated in the father Yoshii in *I Was Born But...*, both of which are performed by the same actor Saitō Tatsuo. Saitō’s figure is tall enough to look authoritative but too slim to be genuinely powerful. (Fig 3.20)

am discussing are actually one interrelated aspect. In Ozu, humour is not merely a means of confrontation; humour *is* physical confrontation. In the sense that Ozu's comedy always finds a moment to distort an everyday order of modern life, it is not only satirical but also sincerely critical.

Ozu typically uses these tactics to loosen the confinement of the everyday order, which I would like to categorise as a device of 'deviation'. It not only means comic gesture, movement and attitude but also includes an attempt to step outside of the usual rhythm of everyday life and search for a different space, time and sensibility. This is, however, different from an evasion of reality; rather, deviation means the rediscovery of reality through the transposition of our point of view. And as such, Ozu reveals his substantial distance from any collectivistic or nationalistic tendency. A good example of this diverted space and time can be found in the vacant lot scene in *I Was Born But...*, where Yoshii's two sons skip school and spend a free day in the weeded field. The scene is actually split into two parts, the first one showing the children having an early lunch on the lot and the later one in which they forge a grade for a calligraphy class they missed that day. What is importantly inserted between these two is an example of a normal day at school and office, the strictness and boredom of which is ingeniously connected by Ozu's tracking camera work.⁴⁷ (Fig 3.22) The juxtaposition of the vacant lot and the school/office in editing articulates the contrast in temporality and spatiality between them, which epitomises the Ozu-ish moment of the deviated everyday. Hasumi Shigehiko pays attention to the 'reversal' of the spatial relation expressed in the vacant lot scene, where a lunch that is supposed to be eaten inside is taken outside.⁴⁸ I think the meaning of deviation is even broader in this scene where a sense of freedom, as depicted by the children's arbitrary usage of time and a relaxed atmosphere of the sunny day, provides a sharp contrast to the collectivistic as well as capitalistic order of the modern everyday life as administered in school and workplace.

⁴⁷ Critics have noticed Ozu's clever cinematic techniques in not only the transition between the school and the office using a tracking camera movement but also the 'witty ... filmic self-referentiality' of the camera in the office space. There the camera stops tracking and goes back to a worker, who did not yawn as other colleagues did while the camera first passed, and stays there until he finally yields to the sign of boredom. Phillips, 'The Salaryman's Panic Time', p. 29; Standish, *A New History*, p. 47; Jonathan Rosenbaum, *Essential Cinema: On the Necessity of Film Canons* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), pp. 148-149.

⁴⁸ Hasumi, *Kantoku Ozu Yasujiro*, p. 40.



(Fig 3.22) A day in the life at a vacant lot (*above*) and at school/workplace (*below*)

In terms of spatiality, I find in Ozu's deviations an intermediate quality that is distinct from that of public or private space. If the *sararīman* father's predicament lies in the 'modern capitalist strategy of creating an imagined separation between the public and private spheres', which accordingly requires his doubled identity between subordination at work and domination at home, a tiny step aside can change the order of public or private daily life into an ambiguous space and time, thus introducing a new understanding of the everyday for viewers.⁴⁹ The vacant lot detached from the boys' home and school is an intermediate space, not 'mapped' as a 'place' in de Certeau's concept. The long, empty road that links the city centre and the suburban town is a similar example. I also see such a spatial ambiguity in the boss's dark screening room. Film spectatorship constituted an everyday 'diversion' that in itself occurred in both public and private space, and in this scene it plays a decisive role in revealing the essence of the modern patriarch as a doubled subjectivity. Such a critical function of intermediate space can be also found in the public park scene in *Tokyo Chorus*. Again we see the relaxed mood and slow rhythm of the aforementioned vacant lot scene. The park space, though a few steps away from a busy main street, is a congregating point for unemployed males and thus private in essence. A background scene where some bored adults are seesawing right beside a group of swinging children in the park is another Ozu-ish gag point, the unlikely image of which soon turns into a critical vision of 'Tokyo, the city of unemployment', as a preceding intertitle declares. (Fig 3.23) The tension with

⁴⁹ Wada-Marciano, *Nippon Modern*, p. 58.

society, however, does not exist on the street in the form of resistance, but still resides in the intermediate space as humour and deviation.



(Fig 3.23) Notice the ‘unemployed and bored’ adults playing with children in the background

Seen from this point of view, the restaurant in the last sequence in *Tokyo Chorus* is also less a usual eating out space than an intermediate space specially prepared for Okajima’s reunion party.⁵⁰ The fraternal and joyful atmosphere of the communal meal is linked to the relaxed rhythm of a day in the vacant lot or the park mentioned above, thus implying that this is a kind of shelter for the *sararīman* friends from the harsh realities of the outside world. But, as mentioned, Ozu here falls into sentimentalism by resorting to a collective remembrance of the past instead of maintaining his acute sense of humour and subversion. The final conclusion – Okajima’s getting a job – in the midst of the reunion party suggests that as long as we remain in the solace of collective nostalgia things will be somehow resolved in the right direction. As the Japanese critic Okamoto Susumu argued, this ‘fortuitous... [and] imperfect redemption’ indicates ‘Ozu’s self-deception’.⁵¹ *I Was Born But...*, however, leads us to a different conclusion. Its bewilderingly ambiguous ending, which does not seem to conclude with anything but a return to the everyday, is a more truthful, Ozu-ish conclusion than the albeit moving denouement of *Tokyo Chorus*. Moreover, supposing that *Tokyo Chorus* is a prequel to *I Was Born But...*, with the first film’s anticipation of moving being connected to the second’s initial moving scene, it then becomes clear that the future awaiting Okajima’s family would simply be a repetition of middle class everyday life as Yoshii’s live. The matter, as always in Ozu, thus comes back to the everyday that befalls each of us and that even a resort to collectivism cannot fully resolve.

⁵⁰ The restaurant is located on a desolate street and there is no anonymous customer seen inside throughout the film. Compare this ‘privacy’ with the public nature of the bustling coffee house in Naruse’s *Street without End* I mentioned before.

⁵¹ Okamoto Susumu, ‘Ozu yasujirō sakuhin saikentō [A Review of Ozu Yasujiro’s Works]’ in *Kinema junpō*, 443 (1 August, 1932), p. 42.

The final morning sequence of *I Was Born But...* is a ‘residual’ new start of another day after the brawl between Yoshii and his two sons in the previous sequence. There are two contradictory elements coexisting here. Firstly, everyday order should be returned to normal as if nothing had happened. Yoshii will bow to his boss, pupils will bow to their teacher, and the ‘order-and-submission’ game will continue among children. Yoshii’s sons even deny that their father is the greatest in order to properly situate him within this modern system. But the returned everyday is not completely the same as it was yesterday. Most of all, the children will not easily forget the image of their father that they witnessed in the boss’s film. And their question, ‘Will we be the same *sararīman*?’, is not answered yet. With this fundamental doubt of the middle class in mind, the boys engage in a hunger strike in the morning, and on their way to school with Yoshii, walk ‘in front of’ the father for the first time, not ‘behind’ or ‘beside’ him as before.⁵² (Fig 3.24) This coexistence of



(Fig 3.24) Compare with Fig 3.7

acceptance and denial of capitalist and patriarchal order induces a decisive moment when the children, coaxed by both parents, break their hunger strike and grab a rice ball for the breakfast. Apparently a sign of the children’s temporary retreat from challenging Yoshii, the quiet breakfast in the garden, however, still retains their unresolved dissatisfaction with the father and the *sararīman*’s fate he represents. Within the relaxed context of eating outside in the bright sunlight and gentle breeze,

⁵² Fushimi Akira’s original script of *I Was Born But...* has a completely different ending from Ozu’s film. Lacking the boys’ hunger strike, it rather follows the elder son’s day out on a field where he happens to meet a group of marching soldiers and does an errand for one of them. Meanwhile, his parents at home worry about the boy, thinking he ran away from home because of the previous night’s conflict. But as the day closes, the son comes home and everything goes back to normal. Satō Tadao suggest that this ‘lyrical’ ending works to ‘appease the tension’ from the previous night, while Ozu’s version tries to pursue the serious drama to the end. Satō, *Kanpon ozu yasujirō no geijutsu*, pp. 279-280.

this is the same critical moment of deviation in an intermediate space as is found in the lunch in the vacant lot or the leisure time spent in the park.⁵³ (Fig 3.25) Here the



(Fig 3.25)

children have not yet been completely defeated and fallen into middle-class nihilism; as Mrs. Yoshii, who prepared the rice ball, comments, they are just eating to survive to be ‘greater than their father’. Their everyday life will thus continue in an ever-deferred future tense, as an ever-repeated fluctuation between doubt and acceptance of their middle-classness, with an ever-failing effort of deviation.

Conclusion

Although known as the most representative *shōshimin eiga* of a representative director, *Tokyo Chorus* and *I Was Born But...* differ from other films of the genre in their restrained depiction of the urban consumption culture. What instead fills the screen is a sorrowful picture of middle-class everyday life in the early 1930s’ depression era Japan, as visualised through isolated suburban images. Thus the key issue that governs the two films is the threat of unemployment, the cause of which can hardly be attributed to domestic problems but should rather be found in the innate contradiction of modernisation in Japan, which constructed Western capitalism upon indigenous morals. As I have explained with the concept of deviation, Ozu presents a critical view of the failure of this modern system. In this sense, *Tokyo Chorus* and *I Was Born But...* can be regarded as two of the most

⁵³ The mise-en-scene of the father and sons’ three-shot also faithfully reproduces the two-shots of Okajima and Yamada at the park in *Tokyo Chorus*. (See Fig 3.23) Ozu, whenever he wants to revive the contemplative mood associated with deviation, will often resort to the similar two- or three-shot of the characters, which I will point out in the following chapters when necessary.

socially conscious films the director ever made. I thus disagree with his contemporary Japanese critics who criticised the films for being apolitical and pessimistic. Far from adopting the proactive strategy of tendency films, Ozu manages to remain critical by balancing humour and pathos in the various ‘deviations’ that he depicts. As such, the films are genuinely middle-class in nature, faithful to their label of *shōshimin eiga*.

I also conclude that Ozu accordingly maintains enough distance from the retrogressive ideologies of collectivism and nationalism. Patriarchy’s status as a functional domestic system is not entirely denied in the end, but nor is the father’s authority accepted unequivocally. Rather, there still remains an active challenge against the old establishment through the characters of young Okajima in *Tokyo Chorus* and the children in *I Was Born But...*. The only substantial counterproof of this in the two films might be the final restaurant sequence in *Tokyo Chorus*, wherein the social ill of depression and unemployment seems to be rectified through collectivism and patriarchy as represented by the gathering of the teacher Ōmura and Okajima’s friends as well as family. The chorus they sing movingly conveys a nostalgic sentiment, and becomes a prototype of Ozu’s many reunion scenes that feature frequently in his postwar films. Ultimately, however, Ozu is not proposing that the past offers a concrete resolution of the present. Just as the old postwar *sararīman* fathers are helpless before the changing times, traditional values such as patriarchy will not liberate Okajima’s and Yoshii’s from the reality of a feeble *sararīman* family living in the modern capitalist system. Thus, in Ozu, the problem of the middle class will remain entangled in their everyday life, just like the wire puzzle that the school children play with. But with a little wisdom, not force, as Yoshii’s elder son demonstrates, the chain can be disentangled, if only momentarily.⁵⁴ What Ozu mainly conveys in his *shōshimin eiga* is such a moment of insight, a deviating point of view, which can allow us to find a solution within the everyday. (Fig 3.26)

⁵⁴ In Japanese, the puzzle is called ‘*chie no wa*’ meaning ‘ring of wisdom’.



(Fig 3.26)

CHAPTER 4

Journey to/from the Lost Everyday

Introduction

Ozu's mid-1930s – after the critical success of *Tokyo Chorus* and *I Was Born But...*, and before his first talkie film, *Hitori musuko/The Only Son* (1936) – can be described as following two different paths. One deals with female oriented melodrama, such as *Tōkyō no onna/Woman of Tokyo* (1933), which will be discussed in the next chapter. The other is a series of films dealing with the lives of lower class people, which is called the ‘Kihachi series’ after the name of the reappearing male protagonist, who was consistently performed by the same actor, Sakamoto Takeshi. Ozu made four Kihachi films in this period – *Deki gokoro/Passing Fancy* (1933), *Ukigusa monogatari/A Story of Floating Weeds* (1934), *Hakoiri musume/An Innocent Maid* (1935), and *Tōkyō no yado/An Inn in Tokyo* (1935) – which makes this a substantial series comparable to the *sararīman* films of the late 1920s and early 30s.¹ However, the Kihachi series, lacking the *shōshimin eiga*'s sophisticated social commentary, has been mostly neglected by critics and scholars up until now. The Japanese critic Iwasaki Akira remembers when he first saw *Passing Fancy* and *A Story of Floating Weeds*; ‘Many of us were deeply disappointed to find that Ozu had

¹ *An Innocent Maid* does not exist today. Also, *A Story of Floating Weeds* would be remade into *Ukigusa /Floating Weeds* (Daiei, 1959) by Ozu himself.

abandoned serious social themes'.² Ozu himself did not regard it as serious work even though the series indicated a very new approach in his career.

Kihachi's uniqueness lies in its oldness and lowness. The background setting has moved from the *shōshimin* films' newly developed suburbs to *shitamachi* (literally, town in low land), Tokyo's lower-middle class district which had existed as a commercial and residential centre since the Tokugawa period (1603-1868). The characters that appear are accordingly working class or old middle class people (e.g. small shop owners) whose everyday life presents a striking difference to that of the white-collar middle class family discussed in the previous chapter. The first goal of this chapter is to identify and analyse such class-based differences from spatial, temporal and cultural points of view. I will thus attend to the characteristics of *shitamachi* as an urban community that operates on the various signifiers of Edo (Tokyo's old name) traditions. This, however, also leads to another important question about the contextual implication of Ozu's translocation into the old world in a time of deepening war with China and a growing tendency towards national unity. It is difficult to say whether Ozu was consciously engaging with this zeitgeist when he produced the nostalgic vision of *shitamachi* in the Kihachi series – four times in three years – but I will start by mentioning one of his remarks regarding *Passing Fancy* that he 'lost interest in Japan's damp life and wanted to broaden [his] world into the modern' with the film.³ Thus, despite the surface impression, Kihachi's retrospective world might not indicate sympathy with the politically reactionary move towards Japaneseness, but rather constituted the continuation of his commentary on modern society. In order to examine this assumption, I will discuss the industrial circumstances surrounding the production of the series, which constantly put Ozu close to the reality of both commercialism and technological advancement rather than pursuing any archaic aesthetic and thematic principle of his own. I will then reaffirm this point through textual analysis by showing how the class-specific everyday rebuts the interpretation of the Kihachi films as nostalgic fantasy and demonstrates a strong critique of modern life.

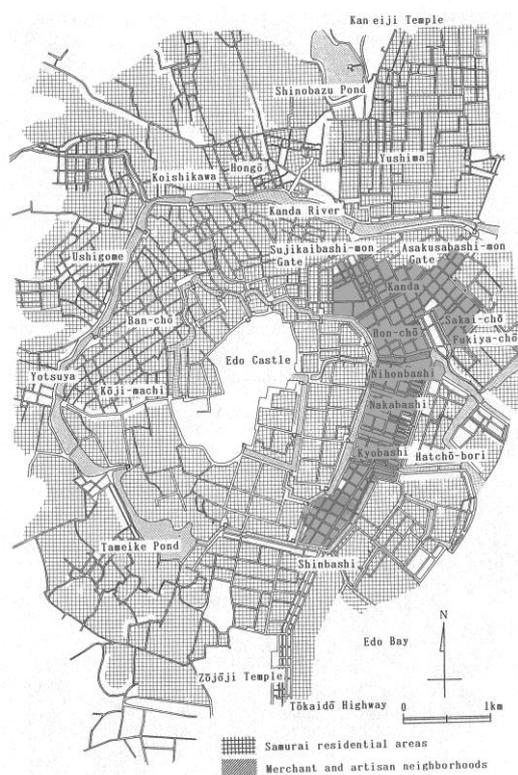
² Quoted in Richie, *Ozu*, p. 5. But on the other hand, the series was well received by *Kinema junpō*; on the magazine's annual top ten list, both *Passing Fancy* and *A Story of Floating Weeds* occupied the number one spot in the years 1933 and 1934 successively.

³ Satō Tadao, *Kanpon ozu yasujirō no geijutsu*, p. 298.

Shitamachi and the Kihachi Films

1. *Shitamachi* in History

Shitamachi was a district in Edo, ‘inhabited by the non-samurai merchant and artisan families’ who made their living as ‘tailor or a restaurant-owner, a carpenter or the owner of a small workshop employing one or two workers’.⁴ As the composition of the population implies, the region functioned as the supplier of goods for ‘feudal nobilities and ... the lesser ranks of samurai class’, whose residences gathered in the opposite side of the city called *yamanote*.⁵ However, as Seidensticker properly



(Fig 4.1) Edo circa 1670 (*shitamachi* in grey area)

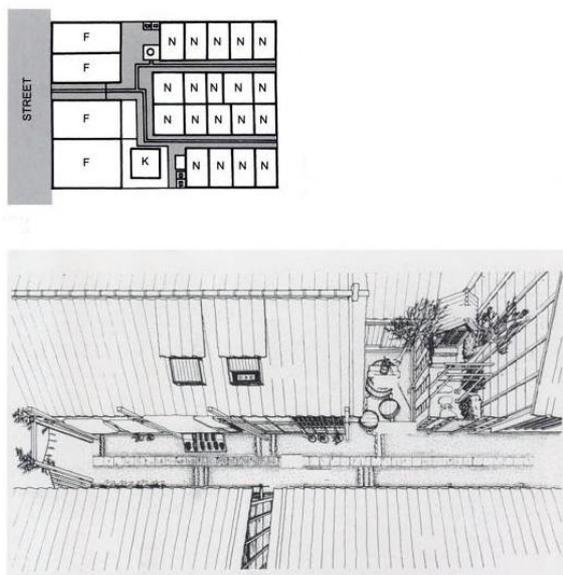
explains, *shitamachi* was less a ‘geographic entity’ than an ‘idea’, where spatial ‘borders’ were hard to demarcate.⁶ It could be better characterised by its unique atmosphere or ‘vitality’ that originated from the commercial nature of the region’s economy and was practised in everyday life by the *shitamachi* people, or *chōnin*. The

⁴ Ron P. Dore, *City Life in Japan* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 1999), p. 11.

⁵ Ibid. If *yamanote* was expanded in a half-circle shape to the higher region in the west of *shōgun*’s Edo castle, *shitamachi* was an eastern part of it, surrounded by the Sumida River and Edo Bay, and including such areas as Nihonbashi, Kyōbashi, Kanda and Shitaya. (Fig 4.1) Edward Seidensticker, *Low City, High City*, p. 8-9.

⁶ Ibid., p. 8.

number of *chōnin* was estimated to be a half million, out of the more than a million strong population of Edo, which made it ‘probably the largest city in the world’ in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.⁷ *Shitamachi*’s *chōnin*, mostly shop employees, servants, or artisans, were accommodated in *nagaya* – shabby row houses in the back alley, consisting of a ‘nine feet by twelve feet’ two-room residences – and suffered from ‘mud, dust, darkness, foul odours, insects, and epidemics’ as well as frequent fire.⁸ (Fig 4.2)



(Fig 4.2) *Nagaya* (N) in the back alley as seen from above

These physical conditions of *shitamachi* – its compact size, crowdedness, and exclusiveness – largely determined the culture of the *chōnin*’s everyday life. Philippe Pons points out that the collective residential form of *nagaya* resulted in an intimate neighbourhood community and its strong solidarity.⁹ Virtues such as *ninjō* (an emotion containing ‘solidarity, sympathy, generosity, and respect towards others’) or *giri* (a sense of duty) were encouraged in order to govern the huge web of human relationships in the community. *Shitamachi* was also characterised by the ambivalent border – both spatial and temporal – between private and public realm, which permeated each other. The street was not merely a transition point between two spaces but a place of living, where various people carried out their private lives and

⁷ Ibid., p. 13.

⁸ Ibid., p. 14. The collective nature of *nagaya* could function as a ‘strong means of social unification’ for the nation to control the residents, who had to accept such a low quality of life as ‘fate’, and did so with ‘resignation’ and ‘patience’. Philippe Pons, *Edo kara tōkyō he: Chōnin bunka to shōmin bunka* [From Edo to Tokyo: The Culture of Chōnin and Shōmin], trans. by Kamiya Mikio (Tokyo: Chikumashobō, 1992), p. 118-119.

⁹ Ibid., p. 115.

intermingled. Since domestic space overlapped with public space, working time and leisure time were also not clearly separated. Shop owners could be freely diverted to private matters or engaged in chats, leaving their shops unattended. Indeed, the temporal rhythm of *shitamachi* was far from the ‘coercive’ or ‘moneymaking’ time divided and delineated by the clock as in the outside world; it was rather sensed through ‘various human activities, sounds, and smells’ that metaphorically indicated the passage of time.¹⁰

Shitamachi could be also characterised by the unique personality of its *chōnin* residents, as symbolised by the name *edokko* (the child of Edo), a citizen who was born and raised in *shitamachi*.¹¹ The typical *edokko* was thought to be ‘hot-tempered, but warm-hearted, uninhibited in his enjoyment of sensual pleasures, extravagant and with no thought for the morrow’.¹² He also had a challenging and competitive spirit, known as ‘*hari*’, which was fostered by his antagonistic relationship with the ruling samurai class. This resistant attitude encouraged *edokko* to pursue ‘softer’ values in contrast to the samurai’s *bushido* (warrior’s code of conduct), blooming into the aesthetic ideal of ‘*iki*’, the very concept that influenced *edokko*’s cultural sensitivity.¹³ Thus *chōnin*’s way of life with *iki* was essentially hedonistic and was in antagonistic relations to the neo-Confucian ethics of the ruling samurai class, who ‘tried to restrain [*chōnin*’s] pursuit of pleasure’.¹⁴ *Chōnin*’s such characteristics – ‘derision of the ruling class’ and ‘tolerance for pleasure’ – were expressed in diverse artistic and cultural practices including *kabuki*, *ukiyo-e* (woodblock prints), various kinds of music and popular literature.¹⁵ (Fig 4.3 and 4.4)

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 124. For example, the sounds of morning included the newspaper and milk delivery man and various peddlers (such as *nattō* seller) who arrived at different but regular times. In the evening a *tofu* seller visited, accompanied by a peculiarly sorrowful horn sound. At night the bell from a nearby temple was followed by a watchman beating wooden clappers to remind people to put out the fire before sleeping. Ibid.

¹¹ ‘[*Edokko*] receives his first bath in the water of the city’s aqueduct; he grows up in sight of the gargoyles on the roof of Edo castle.’ This ‘sense of nativeness’ distinguished *edokko* not only from the samurai residents in *yamanote* but also other ‘*chōnin* outsiders’ who came from other provinces to work in *shitamachi*’s shops. Nishiyama Matsunosuke, *Edo Culture: Daily Life and Diversions in Urban Japan, 1600-1868* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), p. 41-43.

¹² Dore, *City Life in Japan*, p. 12. There is a saying, ‘*edokko* does not keep money for tomorrow’. Pons, *Edo kara tōkyō he*, p. 130.

¹³ Too ambiguous to be explained in words, *iki* could, however, be summarised as a refined manner and a highly sophisticated taste and regard for beauty. In *chōnin*’s real life, the quality of *iki* was mainly demanded in the relationship with courtesans and *geishas* in the pleasure quarters such as Yoshiwara. For more about *iki*, see Nishiyama, *Edo Culture*, p. 54.

¹⁴ Satō, *Eiga no naka no tōkyō*, p. 78.

¹⁵ Pons, *Edo kara tōkyō he*, p. 132.

Amongst them, comic verbal performances such as *rakugo* and *manzai*, which targeted commoner audiences, particularly revealed the spirit of satire and banter. Escaping small, humid, and filthy *nagaya* and going to a nearby *yose* (variety hall) to enjoy these performances was one of the most popular entertainments for *shitamachi* people.



(Fig 4.3) A page of *kibyoshi* (picture book)



(Fig 4.4) Theatre district in Edo

2. *Shitamachi* in the Kihachi films

In the Kihachi series, Ozu adopted many of these *shitamachi* elements to construct a very different milieu from the college, urban office, or middle class suburban home that had largely filled his previous works. Such a change is evident from the very first scene of the first Kihachi film, *Passing Fancy*. A tracking shot, which Ozu at this period often used, skims through the audience – including Kihachi, his son, and his close friend Jirō – listening to a *naniwa-bushi* (story recitation and singing) performance in a *yose*. It is a typical hot and humid summer in Tokyo, which can be inferred from the audience's light attire of *yukata* and their incessant waving of Japanese style fans. This, along with the physical closeness of the small crowd in the theatre, creates a loosened and intimate atmosphere for the scene. (Fig

4.5) The vibe of connectedness inside the *yose* is shown through two gag elements. One is an empty wallet being thrown around by the audience members, who open it, are disappointed, and throw it away to be picked up by the next, and the other is the sudden invisible appearance of fleas, which, transferring here and there, make itchy people stand up one by one. The theatre space as a metaphor for communal everyday life is expanded to the whole narrative of the next Kihachi film, *A Story of Floating Weeds*, which deals with an itinerant troupe led by none other than Kihachi.



(Fig 4.5) *Naniwa-bushi* performance in *Passing Fancy*

The collective nature of life in *shitamachi* is also well represented by Kihachi's everyday space and time. The most conspicuous characteristic of Kihachi's life is that it mostly takes place outside of the domestic. Kihachi's residence is a typical *nagaya*, consisting of two rooms and a kitchen, and facing towards a narrow back alley. But many of the important developments in the narrative occur not in the *nagaya* but in and around the small neighbourhood restaurant run by Iida Chōko, one of the best known of Ozu's supporting performers in the prewar period, whose character Otsune (Otome in *Passing Fancy*), appears in all the Kihachi films.¹⁶ Since Kihachi is always without his wife, Iida plays a maternal role for his son(s) as well as for Kihachi himself, who daily drops by at the restaurant to have meals and get Iida's help in domestic matters such as sewing. (Fig 4.6) Thus in Kihachi films,



(Fig 4.6) Otome's restaurant in *Passing Fancy*

¹⁶ Otsune (or Otome) runs the restaurant in all the Kihachi films except in the nonexistent *An Innocent Maid*, where she is a hairdresser.

as in the *shitamachi* community, the boundary between the inside and the outside is blurred, and domestic everyday life is extended into public space, where it is shared by other people. In *Passing Fancy*, Kihachi even brushes his teeth and washes his face in the alley in front of Otome's restaurant, but this is not merely Kihachi's aberrant behaviour, for the alley is constantly occupied by neighbours and kids who treat it as an everyday space where private time overlaps with public time, as I mentioned earlier in regard to the *shitamachi*'s temporal rhythm.¹⁷



(Fig 4.7) In front of Otome's restaurant: Kihachi washing his face (*left*) and Otome spending time with neighbours (*centre and right*)

From this point of view, Kihachi's world can be contrasted with the ideal of the petit-bourgeois family as discussed in the previous chapter. It should be remembered that there is no such sense of community in the suburbs of *Tokyo Chorus* or *I Was Born But...* Although both *shōshimin* films do depict the notion of neighbourhood through the playing of children in the field, there is a lack of substantial interaction amongst the adults. The vast desertedness of the road and the threatening passage of trains that I mentioned as being characteristic of the suburban space can be interpreted as contributing to this destruction of communal atmosphere.¹⁸ What *shōshimin* films have in reverse is a stable nuclear family structure that is sheltered within the domestic boundary. (The white fence that demarcates Yoshii's house in *I Was Born But...* and protects his children from being bullied by neighbourhood kids is indicative in this sense.) (Fig 4.8) Since Kihachi does not belong to the bourgeois ideal, he is accordingly free from the congenital anxiety of the middle class that is represented by the *risshin shusse* ideology discussed earlier. Kihachi as a character is in fact an antithesis of the middle class patriarch; illiterate, spontaneous, and more

¹⁷ For example, Otome in *Passing Fancy*, while running her restaurant, freely walks out into the alley to join in a conversation with the people outside. (Fig 4.7)

¹⁸ In this regard, Ozu's postwar films *Sōshun/Early Spring* (1956) and *Ohayo/Good Morning* (1959), which deal with middle class family life but retain the neighbourhood community element in the narrative, should be differentiated from the wealthy family drama of *Higanbana/Equinox Flower* (1958) and *Sanma no aji/An Autumn Afternoon* (1962), which completely elide the concept of regional communality.

interested in drinking and women than money, his personality is closer to the image of the pleasure-seeking Edo *chōnin* than the gloomy *sararīman* father.¹⁹ The irony that the son in *Passing Fancy* is more knowledgeable and mature than the father – the child even scolds Kihachi for being irresponsible in domestic matters – proves that the middle class patriarchal ideology depicted in the *shōshimin eiga* is not operative in the Kihachi series.



(Fig 4.8) A fence to defend Yoshii's family in *I Was Born But...*

The Past in the Present in the Kihachi Films

1. The Retrogressive Cultural Tendencies in the Early 1930s

To what degree, then, may Kihachi's world be related to the modern everyday life of the *shōshimin eiga*? Does its *shitamachi* element simply work to avoid the reality of contemporary society and escape into an archaic realm? Japanese critics at that time were in general agreement that the world Ozu dealt with in the Kihachi series was 'old-fashioned (*kofū*)', which was significantly different to what he had achieved with *I Was Born But...*²⁰ Bordwell, whose concern is primarily with formalism, points out that Ozu's experiment with 'centuries-old' 'Japanese iconography' in *A Story of Floating Weeds* (such as the village street, the landscape,

¹⁹ The unique character of Kihachi is so impressive that Bordwell evaluates him as 'one of the richest characters in all of Ozu's work'. Bordwell, *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*, p. 249.

²⁰ Kitakawa Fuyuhiko, who wrote in *Kinema junpō* in a laudatory voice, only worried that 'Ozu was slightly indulging in old-fashioned sentiments' and wished the director would 'restore the vision of *I Was Born But...*'. While the tone of *Eiga hyōron* was – as it had been towards the *shōshimin eiga* – much more critical. Ōtsuka Kyōichi regarded the change in Kihachi series as Ozu's failed gesture of 'compromise' with commercialism to recover continuing failure in box office, which, as I will discuss, was not untrue. Kitakawa Fuyuhiko, 'Ukigusa monogatari [A Story of Floating Weeds]' in *Kinema junpō*, 526 (11 Dec, 1934), p. 84; Ōtsuka Kyōichi, 'Ukigusa monogatari [A Story of Floating Weeds]' in *Eiga hyōron*, 18:1 (January, 1935), p. 222.

the forlorn café the decaying theatre – he calls these iconic elements ‘material’) can ‘tone down overt formal devices’ and cannot ‘become completely obedient to Ozu’s aesthetic system’.²¹ To summarise these critical viewpoints, the Kihachi series becomes Ozu’s unsuccessful attempt to resort to oldness (or ‘Japaneseness’), risking his already highly developed formal system, in order to attract more commercial popularity.

The complex circumstances surrounding the series’ production support this view. It is true that Ozu, himself an *edokko* from the town of Fukagawa in the *shitamachi* region, based the character of Kihachi upon his own memory of his hometown.²² Ozu was also well aware of the importance of translocation from a modern city to a pre-modern town in the series when he said, ‘what determines a film’s style is ... background rather than actor’.²³ But as Japanese critics suspected, there is a good possibility that the *shitamachi* elements were added due to commercial considerations, as Ozu’s films had been successively failing in the box-office. Moreover, he had put himself in an awkward situation at Shochiku by refusing to make talkies, which was the primary agenda of the whole Japanese film industry as well as the studio at the time that the Kihachi series was being produced. One of Shochiku’s spokesmen even complained, regarding the topping of *Kinema junpō*’s annual best films list in 1933 by *I Was Born But...*, that it would have been better if the honour had gone to Kinugasa Teinosuke’s *Chushingura*, Shochiku’s ambitious first talkie version of the classic story, which became a big hit in the winter season of 1932-1933.²⁴ In this unfavourable situation, many of Ozu’s

²¹ Bordwell, *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*, p. 257, 258.

²² ‘I grew up in Fukagawa, and at that time there was this nice guy of carefree style often stopping by my house, who roughly became the model of Kihachi. Ikeda (The scriptwriter) has also lived in Okachimachi, and seen such a guy himself there, so we created the character together’. Ozu yasujirō, ‘Jisaku o kataru [Talking about His Works]’ in *Kinema junpō sha* (ed.), *Ozu yasujirō: hito to geijutsu* [*Ozu Yasujiro: A Man and His Art*], *Kinema junpō zōkan* [*Kinema Junpo Special Issue*], 358 (Feb, 1964), p. 95. Fukagawa was an area of ‘lumber dealers, boatmen, shipping agents, and fishmongers’, and also famous for its bustling ‘unlicensed pleasure district’ with uniquely stylised *geishas*. Leslie Pincus, *Authenticating Culture in Imperial Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), pp. 124-125.

²³ Tanaka Masasumi, *Ozu yasujirō zenhatsugen* [*Complete Speeches of Ozu Yasujiro*] : 1933-1945 (Tokyo: Tairyusha, 1987), p. 47.

²⁴ Chiba Nobuo, *Ozu Yasujiro to nijisseiki* [*Ozu Yasujiro and the Twentieth Century*] (Tokyo: Kokusyo Kankokai, 2003), p. 101. Of course, as Hazumi Tsuneo asserted in defence, Ozu could not be wholly blamed for his commercial failure because Shochiku ‘lack[ed] a publicity plan that [could] appeal Ozu or Naruse’s films to the intellectual audiences’. Hazumi Tsuneo et al., ‘Zadankai: 1933 nen no shōchiku eiga o okuru [Roundtable Talk: Reviewing Shochiku’s Films in 1933]’ in *Kamata*, 12:12 (December 1933), p. 111.

interviews at the time reveal that the director was quite sensitive to the box office results, and recognised that he had to ‘compromise’ to a certain degree to meet the studio’s expectations.²⁵ Ozu specified that what he meant by the ‘compromise’ was to supply elements such as ‘fraternal love, maternal love, or paternal love’, which were ‘easy to understand and commercially promising’.²⁶ In this sense, ‘*A Story of Floating Weeds* was a compromise’, and *Passing Fancy*, intended to ‘earn money for the company’ before embarking on his real plan, was not an exception.²⁷

The retrogressive tendency to appeal to a lost memory was indeed in vogue in the mid 1930s. Ten years or so after the earthquake in 1923, *shitamachi* – largely destroyed because of its weak reclaimed ground and its dense cluster of residences which were vulnerable to fire – had rapidly lost its nature as a concrete geographical entity. Large numbers left *shitamachi* and joined a westward or southward movement into the suburbs where relocation was concentrated. However, the earthquake was really only the final blow in a gradual shift that had already started when Edo transformed into Tokyo after the Meiji Restoration. Many writers, including Nagai Kafū (1879-1959), Hasegawa Shigure (1879-1941), and Kubota Mantarō (1889-1963), had previously lamented the disappearance of the culture as well as physical landscape of the region and evoked nostalgic feelings towards Edo’s past in their works.²⁸

²⁵ In an interview in 1935, Ozu said, ‘Once a subject matter is determined, there follow elements that cannot help but be included in the film for a selling point, even if I don’t want to insert them. ... So [I decided], if a film is for profit, I want to make sure that [Shochiku] makes money with it. And while doing that, I can sometimes make something I truly want to. I think this is the best way for both the company and me’. Ozu Yasujiro et al., ‘Ozu yasujirō zadankai [A Roundtable Talk with Ozu]’ in *Kinema junpō* (1 April, 1935), quoted in Tanaka, *Zenhatsugen*, p. 48.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Hazumi Tsuneo and Ozu Yasujiro, ‘Kare no shinkyō [The State of Ozu’s Mind]’, *Eiga to Engeki [Film and Theatre]* (July, 1934), quoted in Tanaka, *Zenhatsugen*, p. 31. After finishing *Hijōsen no onna/Dragnet Girl* in early 1933, Ozu was preparing *Daigaku yoi toko/College Is a Nice Place* as his next film, which would be about a disillusioned college student’s life, presented with a pessimistic mood. (‘I wrote about how meaningless this place called college is’. Ibid.) The script was actually finished by early June, but after Ozu’s meeting with Kido Shiro, it was decided to postpone the project and instead produce *Passing Fancy*. Ozu would later find an opportunity to finish *College Is a Nice Place* in 1936. Tanaka Masasumi, *Ozu yasujirō shūyū [Round-tripping Ozu Yasujiro]* (Tokyo: Bungei shunjū, 2003), p. 121.

²⁸ Kafū, whose writings are ‘essentially nostalgic and elegiac’, lamented that Tokyo had killed Edo, but also remembered ‘how Edo yet survived at this and that date later than ones already assigned to the slaying’. Seidensticker, *Low City, High City*, p. 11. *Sumidagawa/The River Sumida* (1909) and *Bokutō kitan/A Strange Tale from East of the River* (1937) epitomise his longing for the disappearing past. Here, perhaps, we find Bordwell’s ‘materials in Ozu’ – ‘the river, the little houses on the embankment, the bridges, the groves of trees visible in the temple grounds across the river’ – evoke

The temporal recollection of Edo also had its parallel phenomenon in a kind of spatial nostalgia for the hometown, both of which provided perspectives of the Tokyo of the here and now. Just as in the Edo period, the modernisation of Japan required the spatial relocation of labour forces from the provinces to Tokyo, a process that was expedited following the Kanto Great Earthquake, as more hands were needed for the reconstruction work. The homesick urban migrants found solace in the pseudo-hometown spaces of Tokyo – notably Asakusa. To conceptualise such spaces, The Japanese sociologist Yoshimi Shun'ya uses the term '*kakyo kūkan* (hometown space)', which contrasts with the modern and cosmopolitan '*mirai kūkan* (future space)' an example of which would be Ginza.²⁹ Recognising this hometown space as a constructed fantasy, Wada-Marciano analyses various popular cultures that 'worked to integrate and manage the vast number of recent migrants to Tokyo'.³⁰ For example, Gosho Heinosuke's *Izu no odoriko/Izu Dancer* (1933), released in the same year as Ozu's *Passing Fancy*, 'invents a country space appealing to the nostalgia of city dwellers'.³¹ From this perspective, the protagonist's journey to Izu becomes a 'journey for pleasure' allowing the film's middle-class audiences to consume a 'perfect nostalgic space ... with [Gosho's] well-chosen scenery'.³²

If urban audiences were not fully satisfied with film images, they could go out and dance to a retro-style tune in order to connect with the past. The year 1933 saw the explosion of the craze of *Tōkyō ondo*, an adapted traditional style song for *bon odori*, which had been a collective dance performed at the *obon* festival in summer and one of 'the most beloved popular entertainments in the provinces'.³³ Bringing the memory of *Obon* spent in the hometown to the city of Tokyo, the song of *Tōkyō*

together 'atmosphere' that is no less important than story or character. Donald Keene, *Dawn to the West: Japanese Literature of the Modern Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), pp. 421-423, 433-434.

²⁹ Yoshimi Shunya, *Toshi no dramaturugi (Dramaturgy of City)* (Tokyo: Kawadeshobōshinsha, 2008), pp. 337-340.

³⁰ Wada-Marciano, *Nippon Modern*, p. 25.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 29. Wada-Marciano suggests that the reason of *Izu Dancer's* appeal to the middle class audiences was related to the development of the tourism industry in Japan, which resulted in the 'leveling of leisure travel from upper-class recreation to middle-class consumption'. Her following conclusion thus can be interpreted as an answer to Bordwell's question about Ozu's excessive use of 'materials' in the Kihachi series; 'While the shots of mountains, rivers, and country roads in *Izu Dancer* may be considered excessive and inefficient within the narrative practice of classical Hollywood cinema, they supported the economics of popular culture familiar to the 1930s Japanese audience'. *Ibid.*, p. 31-32.

³³ Tanaka, *Ozu yasujirō shūyū*, p. 129.

ondo and its accompanying street dance became ‘an answer to the shade or anxiety of modernity’ that was oppressing the atmosphere of the mid-1930s.³⁴ However, as in *Izu Dancer*’s case, *Tōkyō ondo*’s appeal to a nostalgic sentiment existed within the concrete, realistic context of the present-day society; in 1932, the territory of the city greatly expanded by absorbing new suburban areas where many new migrants had settled, and there arose a need to ‘create a new identity for New Tokyo’, under which the new and old citizens could be assimilated together.³⁵ *Tōkyō ondo*, with its hypnotically collective nature, was an effective vehicle for reuniting and revitalising Tokyo as a single community with a differentiated geographical character and historical continuity.³⁶

2. Kihachi as a Critique of the Modern

These historical proofs are consistent with this thesis’ point that the past never exists separately but only in relation to the present. If this is true, however, questions about the former should be addressed to the latter, especially in regard to the subject and the perspective with which the past is gazed upon. In this sense, I would argue that Ozu’s standpoint in the Kihachi series is different from that of Gosho in *Izu Dancer* or any agent involved in the *Tōkyō ondo* craze, and its nostalgic vision actually constituted a varied continuation of the critique of modernity that he had been pursuing with the *shōshimin eiga*.³⁷ Despite the series’ nostalgic nature, there is further evidence that Ozu intended the Kihachi films to be a ‘modern’ project, but with a new *shitamachi* touch. He said, ‘[With *Passing Fancy*], I tried to develop the *shomin* (commoners) films I had been dealing with so far to begin a new stage. I was fed up, so to speak, with Japan’s damp (*jimejimeshita*) life and wanted to broaden my world in a modern way. ... [It was like] an effort to make an *ukiyo-e on a*

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 129, 131.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 130.

³⁶ In that sense, it would not be surprising if there had been a political intention regarding the promotion of the song and dance. Tanaka Masasumi, quoting Takada Tamotsu’s writing in *Kaizō* in November 1933, reveals that Ministry of Education and Ministry of Home Affairs as well as the military were actively involved in promoting the song with an ‘intentional plan’. Tanaka also introduces nationalistic parts of the lyrics that are not sung anymore today, which included such lines as, ‘King and subjects, an eternal promise’. Ibid., p. 130-131.

³⁷ After all, he did not introduce the *Tōkyō Ondo* in *Passing Fancy*, an interesting contrast to his quick adoption of yoyo culture in *Dragnet Girl* in response to the boom in the Western import in 1933.

copperplate' (italics added).³⁸ Satō Tadao finds the concrete examples of American influence in the Kihachi films in the buddy relationship between Kihachi and Jirō in *Passing Fancy* ('vagabond worker style men, exchanging smart jokes, developing a gallant friendship') and in the plot of *A Story of Floating Weeds*, which he argues is almost an 'adaptation' of *The Barker* (George Fitzmaurice, First National Pictures, 1928).³⁹ In the case of *An Inn in Tokyo*, the distance between the film and reality is so small that Bordwell compared it to postwar Italian neo-realism cinema.⁴⁰ It is also not true that Ozu, pursuing the perfection of the silent form, was not interested in the modern technology of the talkie. Far from being a director who 'did not know how a talkie should be made', he was actively studying current talkie films, such as *Stranger's Return* (King Vidor, MGM, 1933), which he very highly praised, and was aware of the merits and power of the sound technique.⁴¹

How is the issue of the modern being addressed amidst the images of the past in the Kihachi films? I think the key to the answer lies in the vagrant nature of Kihachi's character who, while existing in the *shitamachi*-like close and closed community, does not essentially belong there. Moving into the nostalgic space (and time), he still carries with him the stain of reality, which generates a subtle tension with the community and eventually forces him to leave it. Such a narrative form is not so strongly established in the first film of the series, *Passing Fancy*, where Kihachi resides in his neighbourhood from the start, although he, out of *giri* (duty) to pay back money, briefly leaves and comes back to the town in the ending sequence. In *A Story of Floating Weeds*, the element of vagrancy shapes the whole narrative as it starts and ends with the sequences of Kihachi's visiting and leaving the remote provincial village in which it is set, where he not only stages a show with his troupe but also spends time with his son, who is not aware that Kihachi is his father. The separation between a *shitamachi*-like community and the outside world is most vivid

³⁸ Quoted in Satō Tadao, *Kanpon ozu yasujirō no geijutsu*, p. 298. In the same sense, the scriptwriter Ikeda Tadao compared himself and Ozu to 'the playwright of Edo who attempted to imitate the elegant style of American films'. Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 299, 308-312. The father-son relationship in Kihachi was also strongly influenced by Hollywood films, such as *Kid* (Charles Chaplin, Charles Chaplin Productions, 1921) or *Champ* (King Vidor, MGM, 1931). Ibid., p. 303; Hazumi and Ozu, 'Kare no shinkyō', p. 31.

⁴⁰ Bordwell, *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*, p. 262.

⁴¹ Richie, p. 224; Kishi Matsuo and Ozu Yasujiro, 'Ozu yasujirō no tōkī ron [Ozu's Discussion of Talkie]' in *Kinema junpō* (1 April, 1934), reprinted in Tanaka, *Zenhatsugen*, pp. 29-30.

in *An Inn in Tokyo*, the narrative of which is divided in two by a meeting between Kihachi and the local woman Otsune, who helps to integrate him into her neighbourhood. Before that, during the first half of the film, he was an unemployed worker with two sons, wandering around a bleak industrial region in *shitamachi* looking for a job, and in the end he has to leave Otsune's neighbourhood again, this time alone and guilty because he has stolen money to help a woman he is fond of. Thus in both *A Story of Floating Weeds* and *An Inn in Tokyo*, *shitamachi* neighbourhood is presented as a temporary solace for Kihachi, who, however, must return to the real world, leaving his family behind.⁴²

The difference between the inside and outside of the community space and time is presented visually in *An Inn in Tokyo*. The early sequences contain images of long empty roads lined with electric poles, or barren fields of grass and sand dotted with tanks and cable spools, with factory buildings seen in the background. These are the working-class variants of the empty suburban space discussed in the previous chapter, which points towards the urban centre – the middle class's space of production – over the horizon. (Fig 4.9) Kihachi's domestic everyday life,



(Fig 4.9) Compare with Fig. 3.4

nonexistent at this stage despite his stay in an inn every night, instantly revives after he meets Otsune and finds a job through her. A morning sequence of his *nagaya* and vicinities (back alley and Otsune's restaurant), as seen in *Passing Fancy*, reappears, and Otsune, as always, takes the maternal role for Kihachi's family by serving meals. The intimate closeness of *shitamachi*, visually represented by a shot of the narrow

⁴² This repeating formula of visiting and leaving resembles the basic narrative structure of the *Otoko wa tsurai yo/It's Tough Being a Man* series, wherein the protagonist *Tora-san* returns to his hometown, Shibamata, and leaves to travel again in the end. The appeal of the series is generally attributed to nostalgia for lost hometowns, but Richard Torrance argues that it is rather more complex, and includes a form of commentary on contemporary society using various parodies of popular culture and representations of class identity in the postwar period. Richard Torrance, 'Otoko wa tsurai yo: Nostalgia or Parodic Realism?' in Dennis Washburn and Carole Cavanaugh (eds.) *Word and Image in Japanese Cinema* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 226-249.

nagaya alley, generates a stark contrast to the indifferent vastness of the roads and fields, which are connected to the giant industrial icons behind. (Fig 4.10)



(Fig 4.10) Compare with Fig. 4.6 and 4.9

In a similar sense, the deviations from everyday space and time that I identified in the *shōshimin eiga* reappear in the Kihachi films. The park scene in *Tokyo Chorus* for instance, where unemployed Okajima and his former colleague detach themselves from a busy main street and share sympathy, is echoed in an empty field scene in *An Inn in Tokyo*, where unemployed Kihachi happens to meet Otaka (Okada Yoshiko) and, while watching their children play together, console each other in a similar two-shot. (Fig 4.11) Also, the outdoor lunch scene in *I Was Born But...*,



(Fig 4.11) Kihachi and Otaka on a field (Compare with Fig. 3.23)

which presents a departure from the logic of modern everyday time, is repeated in another outdoor eating scene in *An Inn in Tokyo*, but this time inflected with more direct criticism of industrial society. Here Kihachi, tired of looking for a job, sits on a grass field with his elder son Zenkō and pretends to drink *sake* with his bare hands. This imagined pleasure symbolises a daily life this family is robbed of by unemployment, the same catastrophic reality as their middle-class counterpart experiences. (Fig 4.12) However, if the modern social system of schooling and work, which presents a noticeable contrast to the outdoor lunch scene of *I Was Born But...*, is juxtaposed through editing, the commensurate contradiction between work and the everyday in the drinking scene in *An Inn in Tokyo* is conveyed through a direct visual conflict between the ‘drinking’ Kihachi with Zenkō in the foreground and the vague, silent factory buildings and smoking chimneys in the background, the distance

between which eloquently embodies Ozu's critical view of the modern society. (Fig 4.12) Kihachi can fulfil his ardent wish to drink after he enters and settles in Otsune's *shitamachi* community, where the everyday operates in a different spatiality and tempo from the industrial capitalism looming in the background of the outside world.⁴³



(Fig 4.12) Kihachi pretends to drink *sake* (Compare with Fig. 3.22)



(Fig 4.13) The restaurant scene in *Bicycle Thieves*

Poverty is a decisive force in many parts of the series' narrative. Although a spendthrift in the mode of the mercantile class *chōnin*, Kihachi is essentially a poor working-class character.⁴⁴ In the ending sequence of *Passing Fancy*, as mentioned earlier, Kihachi goes to work in Hokkaido in order to earn money to pay back the hospital bill of his son. Kihachi's itinerant troupe in *A Story of Floating Weeds* goes broke and disbands, and in *An Inn in Tokyo*, Kihachi steals money to help Otaka pay the hospital bill for her daughter, which eventually makes him leave his neighbourhood alone. In the ending scene of the film, (possibly) on his way to surrender himself to the police, Kihachi even shows a very rare resistant gesture in

⁴³ If *An Inn in Tokyo* resembles neo-realist films, this field drinking scene could be compared to the restaurant scene in *Ladri di biciclette/Bicycle Thieves* (dir. Vittorio De Sica, 1948), where the father Antonio and his son Bruno have a brief rest from their hopeless quest for a lost bicycle. (Fig 4.13) As Kihachi's drinking coexists with the industrial icons behind, causing a visual tension, Antonio and Bruno's humble pleasure is constantly interrupted by social concerns such as class difference (a rich family at the next table) and economic insecurity (Antonio's obsessive worrying about his income). But if the meal in the restaurant is an unexpected (but intentional) addition to the day of search – a special treat suggested after Antonio slaps Bruno – Kihachi's drinking is much more embedded in his normal daily activity and thus is closely connected to the whole space and time of Otsune's *shitamachi* neighbourhood, which he will soon enter.

⁴⁴ Throughout the series, Kihachi is presented as either a factory worker – he works in a beer factory in *Passing Fancy*, and is looking for lathing work in *An Inn in Tokyo* – or a *geinin* [performing entertainer] in *A Story of Floating Weeds*, which is a similarly lower-class occupation.

Ozu; slinging his jacket over a shoulder and thrusting a hand into a pocket, he is seen walking towards gas tanks as if he were determined to face up to the giant symbol of industrial society. (Fig 4.14) These narratives commonly indicate that the main crisis that compels Kihachi to leave to journey again originates from *within* the *shitamachi* neighbourhood where he has been staying, always in relation to a pecuniary matter. This importantly confirms that the apparently retrospective time-space is not free from the contradictions of modern, capitalistic society, which Kihachi, as a destitute worker, is destined to be a part of. After all, Ozu is not telling us a story of Edo period *shitamachi* but a contemporary society that only resembles *shitamachi* on surface.



(Fig 4.14)

However, as is well known, Ozu's cinema never directly dealt with the matter of contemporaneity in the way that *keiko eiga* (tendency film) or proletarian films attempted to. The way Ozu approached reality rather consisted in the pursuit of the *ninjō* sentiment until it reached the utmost state of sorrow and despair, which would remain as an unresolved question for viewers. I thus agree with the Japanese critic Kitakawa's argument in his review of *Passing Fancy* that the film was 'a song of despair despite the cheerfulness on the surface'.⁴⁵ And I would add that the reverse argument – that the despair ensues only if the apparent cheerfulness works – is also true. Thus Kihachi's journey into the *shitamachi* time-space, that close community where he can maintain his everyday life (with cheerfulness), is a necessary step in order for the Kihachi films to succeed as modern allegory, a whole-scale deviation to the past to reflect on the present. Perhaps this is why *A Story of Floating Weeds*, full of nostalgic icons and thus most faithful to the notion of the past

⁴⁵ 'At first sight, the scalpel dissecting reality might look blunt ... but [there is] a delving enquiry of the reality of the working class, a true depiction of it. Such is Ozu's production method as a realist'. Kitakawa Fuyuhiko, 'Deki kokoro [Passing Fancy]' in *Kinema junpō*, 184 (1 Oct, 1933), p. 97. Quoting Kitakawa, another critic Yūda Jun'ichirō also agreed that *Passing Fancy* was 'not *shumi* (refined taste), *kanshō* (sentimentality), or *teikai* (contemplativeness)' that had accompanied Ozu's works. Hazumi et al., 'Zadankai', p. 111.

amongst the films of the series, is ironically more realistic and critical than *An Inn in Tokyo*, even though the latter contains the most explicit contrast between the *shitamachi* neighbourhood and the industrial wasteland.

In this sense, the ending of *A Story of Floating Weeds* is the best moment of all the Kihachi films. Broke, losing his troupe, and most of all, rejected by his son after his identity is revealed, he returns to the exact point at which he began, the train station at which he arrived at the beginning of the film. There he reunites with his partner Otake (Yagumo Rieko), with whom he has had trouble over the secrecy of the son's existence. Together they decide to start a new troupe, but as Kihachi confesses, 'it's not certain whether it will succeed or not'. Compared with the ending of *Tokyo Chorus*, Ozu does not readily allow an easy hope here. Rather, the sorrow from two previous partings – from the troupe and from his son, both of which end up in helpless tears – still lingers in the atmosphere of the ending sequence.⁴⁶ As if to



(Fig 4.15) Compare with Fig. 3.16

dull this pain, both vagabonds are engaged in the everyday activity of eating and drinking again in the following scene inside the train bound for Kamisuwa, where Kihachi and Otake's fortunes will likely be no better. As in the aforementioned field drinking scene in *An Inn in Tokyo*, there flows a certain sentiment of rapport between these penniless couple, whose silent motions of pouring *sake* with each other epitomises Ozu's ephemerality separated from any specific temporal duration. A shot of a boy sleeping on a chair follows, which Ozu vaguely presents as a point of view shot from Kihachi's position, suggesting that his staring eyes reveal that he is missing his son. (Fig 4.16) At this point Kihachi's drinking, which is contrasted with the factory buildings behind in the field scene in *An Inn in Tokyo*, now touches on the memory of the past, the time he spent with his son in the nostalgic provincial

⁴⁶ In the last farewell drink scene, the troupe start singing together and clapping – just as Okajima's family does in *Tokyo Chorus* – to relieve the depressed mood, but unlike the middle class Okajimas who end up with hopeful smiles and an encouraging mood, the chorus in *A Story of Floating Weeds* only leads to the pitiful crying of the boy performer Tomiboh and his father. (Fig 4.15)

town, playing chess and fishing. The pain of parting lingers on with the realisation that such a world does not have its place in reality but only in the distanced, nostalgic look.⁴⁷ Such permeation of the memory of the past into the everyday moment of the present will be an important recurring theme in Ozu's later films. During the war time, he will reintroduce another ending train scene in *Chichi ariki/There Was a Father* (1942) with as painful a memory of the past as depicted in *A Story of Floating Weeds*, and will refine it even further in Noriko's train ride scene in *Tōkyō monogatari/Tokyo Story* (1953), which I will discuss in Chapter 9.



(Fig 4.16)

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the Kihachi series films from a perspective that places emphasis on their continuity with Ozu's critique of the modern. Despite the various apparent characteristics – nostalgic icons, communal time-space, and Kihachi as a *chōnin* character – the story of Kihachi is modern allegory presenting a tenacious enquiry into lower-class everyday life without appealing to class consciousness. I have suggested that Ozu's primary method for doing this is to articulate Kihachi's vagrancy in the narrative. Moving in between the *shitamachi* neighbourhood and outside world, Kihachi reveals that the former, despite its apparent differences, is not free from the latter's influence, which is represented either through explicit images (such as the factory buildings in *An Inn in Tokyo*) or the destitute lives that Kihachi and others lead. So the *shitamachi* past exists in the

⁴⁷ It took Ozu five years to arrive at this virtuosity from the train sequence in *Wakaki hi/Days of Youth* (1929), where the only concern of the protagonist college students is failing grades and unfulfilled love.

present, and the latter reciprocally permeates the former. The resulting effect is, as was often criticised, sentimental, resorting to sympathetic emotions, but it does not necessarily mean that Ozu distorts or avoids reality by doing this. Some critics have been rather active in accepting the relationship between Ozu and realism. Isolde Standish, quoting Satō Tadao, acknowledges a ‘sense of resistance’ in Ozu, which associates his 1930s’ works with the contemporary ‘social realist’ films.⁴⁸ Iwasaki Akira, whose disappointment with the Kihachi films for abandoning social criticism I mentioned in Introduction, also actually concludes in the same article that the series, in retrospect, was ‘Ozu’s first rate form of resistance’.⁴⁹ Even though there is still more that needs to be explained in order to include the Kihachi series in the category of ‘resistance’ or ‘social realism’, I would at least agree that Ozu’s realism is at work here in sharing a basic interest in the outcome of modernity in relation to the everyday life of *shomin* people. Perhaps this might be better described as ‘*ninjō* (humane) realism’.

Surely, there is no way of denying the existence of nostalgic elements in the Kihachi films, and I illustrated this through discussions of the cultural history of *shitamachi*. But I have also raised the question of ‘why *shitamachi* at this particular time’, and suggested the complex production environment Ozu was faced with as a possible answer, which places Ozu as a ‘contemporary director’ who could not be entirely free from the concerns of commercialism. This conclusion, I think, is not only consistent with the contemporary nature of the texts of the Kihachi series but also presents a better explanation than a viewpoint that presents Kihachi’s retrospective characteristics as a ‘symptom’ of historically retrogressive tendencies in the 1930s. Research that pays attention to the formation of nationalistic subjectivity, especially within middle class audiences, has its own merits, but requires more concrete evidence of the class specific effect, when it is ambiguous as to which kind of audiences such films as those of the Kihachi series were addressing their ideology.

⁴⁸ Isolde Standish, *A New History of Japanese Cinema*, pp. 42-43, 62.

⁴⁹ Iwasaki Akira, ‘Ozu yasujirō to nihon eiga [Ozu Yasujiro and Japanese Cinema]’ in Kinema junpō sha (ed.), *Ozu yasujirō: hito to geijutsu*, p. 62. Richie, who introduces Iwasaki’s ‘disappointment’, misses this latter part of the quote.

CHAPTER 5

Dealing with a Phantasm:

Reconstructing the Modern of the *Modan Gāru*

Introduction

In the preceding two chapters on the *shōshimin eiga* and the Kihachi series (or the *shitamachi* films), which represent the two main genres of Ozu's films in the first half of the 1930s, the discussion of female characters was minimal. Compared to the role that male characters – the *sararīman* and Kihachi – play, the existence of their female counterparts in the narratives remains relatively insignificant. They are usually depicted as being inactive, responsive, and supportive if not subordinate. The housewife in the *shōshimin eiga* is a good example; her world is confined to domesticity and her voice is limited in order to restrict the revelation of her subjectivity according to the ideal of *ryōsai kenbo* (good wife, wise mother). There are some exceptional scenes, as when Okajima's wife in *Tokyo Chorus* reproves her unemployed husband for doing menial work or when Yoshii's wife in *I Was Born But...* acts as a go-between after the conflict between her husband and children, but even these cases ultimately reaffirm the status of the middle class housewife in the *shōshimin eiga* as a character secondary to her male counterpart, with her primary role defined as a 'sympathiser' or 'observer' of the suffering patriarch.¹ The restaurant owner Otsune (or Otome), who consistently appears in the Kihachi series,

¹ Such a husband-wife relationship is visually presented in point of view shots from the wife's viewpoint, through which she observes and 'discovers' the true identity of her husband as a powerless patriarch. (Fig 5.1)

conforms, for the most part, to this tendency, her behaviour and apparent emotion mainly responding to that of Kihachi. After all, she performs a pseudo-maternal existence for Kihachi's family, substituting for the housewife's role in the *shōshimin eiga*. This generally poor representation of female characters in Ozu's two major prewar genres provides a stark contrast to his postwar works, which are usually represented by the so-called 'Noriko trilogy', named after the notable female character played by Hara Setsuko in such works as *Late Spring* and *Tokyo Story*. Iida Chōko's role as Otsune (or Otome) may also be compared with her similar but much more central role as Otane in *Nagaya shinshiroku/Record of a Tenement Gentleman* (1947) in the immediate postwar period.



(Fig 5.1) The wife's sympathetic look at her husband in *I Was Born But...* (above) and *Tokyo Chorus* (below)

Was there, then, another kind of female character in Ozu's prewar cinema who was located in between these two tendencies? A possible answer to this question is the *modan gāru* (modern girl), who, while appearing as a more central character than the middle class housewife or *shitamachi* shop owner in several films, was also placed in a different context to the postwar female characters with regard to the domestic everyday lives they led. The goal of this chapter is to search for the meaning of this varied relationship between the *modan gāru* and the domestic everyday, from which she is both separated and drawn into. The key instruments that control this complex system of *within/without* are male-centred ideologies such as patriarchy, which, while basically recognising the *modan gāru* as a threat, attempt to either discipline her into the logic of domesticity or, if that is not possible, remove

her existence from the everyday entirely. I have already discussed the case of the latter in Chapter 2 with regard to the character of Kyōko in Shimazu's *Our Neighbour Miss Yae*, from whose narrative she suddenly disappears in the end. This chapter will deal more extensively with the issue by examining the case of the former (i.e. taming the *modan gāru*), and in addition, by re-contextualising it from a narrative level to a broader genre convention of the *shinpa* melodrama that largely constituted Shochiku's so-called *josei eiga* (woman's films). If the dominating ideology of *shinpa* melodrama was so male-centric as to focus on rehabilitating the spoiled *modan gāru*, how did this reforming stance work on the formation of subjectivity for the female audiences who were the main target of *josei eiga*? To answer this question, I will assume that there is a more positive function of the domestic everyday, wherein female *modan gāru* characters and more conservative types can together build a strong critique of male-centric ideologies, and will examine this point through textual analysis of various female-oriented melodramas as well as Ozu's *Woman of Tokyo* (1933).

Interpreting the *Modan Gāru*

Who was the *modan gāru*? Although the Japanese female subject has been the theme of many academic studies as well as journalistic writings, her identity is – as the word '*modan*' is – extremely ambiguous. The problem is aggravated by the nature of her existence as a visual, instantaneous image without a substantial socioeconomic basis.² To put it in the narrowest terms, the *modan gāru* designated a group of young Japanese females characterised by new fashion styles and an interest in commodity culture, appearing initially on the streets of urban centres after the Kanto Great Earthquake.³ (Fig 5.2) As the fact that the term was derived from the

² As Barbara Sato explains, the *modan gāru* was thus a 'voiceless existence surrounded by ambivalence – the ambivalence of class and occupation, ambivalence presented and represented through the media'. Barbara Sato, *The New Japanese Woman*, p. 48.

³ The typical look of the *modan gāru* was a 'vapid young woman clad in a brightly coloured one-piece dress reaching only to the knees or a little below, favouring high-heeled shoes and sheer stockings that showed off her legs. A wide-brimmed floppy hat or cloche made of a soft material partially concealed her short hair, or *danpatsu*, which had been bobbed in the style of Hollywood idols Clara Bow, Pola

English phrase ‘modern girl’ indicates, the phenomenon of *modan gāru* and the social discourse surrounding it originated from and coincided with the emergence of her Western counterpart in the 1920s. The term was first used in 1923 by the essayist Kitazawa Chōgo (also known as Kitazawa Shūichi), who, having lived in London for a few years, intended to introduce the English ‘modern girl’ to Japan.⁴ Recent studies, in contrast, emphasise ‘multidirectional citation’ in the global dynamics of the modern girl phenomenon, articulating the ‘mutual, though asymmetrical, influences and circuits of exchange’.⁵ Nevertheless, it is still undeniable that the major influence on the young Japanese women, whether purely Western or not, was visual in nature, conveyed especially through Hollywood films. The *modan gāru* modelled her identity on the personae of movie stars such as Colleen Moore, Clara Bow, and Louise Brooks, and the image of the flapper was reincarnated by such Japanese actresses as Tatsuta Shizue, Natsukawa Shizue, and Irie Takako.⁶



(Fig 5.2) *Modan gāru* on the street in Tokyo

Negri, Mary Pickford, and Gloria Swanson. In the Swanson tradition, she often pencilled in a thin line over her shaved eyebrows. Over her shoulder she casually slung a pouch bag’. Ibid., p. 51.

⁴ Kitazawa’s first article mentioning the name ‘*modan gāru*’ was ‘*Modan gāru no hyōgen – Nihon no imōto ni okuru tegami* [The Emergence of the Modern Girl – A Letter to My Sister in Japan]’ published in *Josei Kaizō* [*Woman’s Reform*] in April 1923. The next year, he wrote another article ‘*Modan gāru*’ in the August 1924 issue of *Josei* (*Woman*), and from then on, the number of the writings on *modan gāru* exploded on the pages of women’s magazines. Ibid., pp. 57-58.

⁵ The Modern Girl Around the World Research Group, ‘The Modern Girl as Heuristic Device: Collaboration, Connective Comparison, Multidirectional Citation’ in *The Modern Girl Around the World* Research Group (ed.), *The Modern Girl around the World: Consumption, Modernity, and Globalization* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), p. 4.

⁶ Fujiki Hideaki, *Zōshokusuru perusona: Eiga sutadamu no seiritsu to nihon kindai* [*Proliferating Persona: The Formation of Film Stardom and Japan’s Modernity*], (Nagoya: The University of Nagoya Press, 2007), p. 295.

The controversies over who the *modan gāru* was directly reflect the complex standpoints of the discourses that attempted to interpret the phenomenon. A popular and widespread perspective was that of the male-centred media, which was not only engaged in constructing the scandalous image of the *modan gāru*, but also provided the patriarchal critique of it at the same time. The *modan gāru* was thus ‘a phantasm rather than ... a social reality’, which aroused ‘social confusion or a sense of crisis’, contributing to the ‘strengthen[ing] of the dominance of patriarchy within society’.⁷ In this sense, the undercurrent of male-centrism in the *modan gāru* discourses did not simply remain a media phenomenon, found in magazines and movies, but rather became a serious political matter. Fujiki argues that the *modan gāru*’s economically independent and morally subversive image consequentially ‘activate[d] [a form of] reactionary, exclusive, and conciliatory power’; by ‘inciting anxiety in Monbushō (the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture) or other powerful institutions’, the *modan gāru* ‘provided an excuse for them to control the new forms of femininity and women’s activities’.⁸ When this nationalistic concern was applied to cinematic texts, it was often expressed in the form of a ‘drama that either excludes *moga* from the social or familial community, or subsumes her into it’ in order to reform her into a part of ‘the homogenised Japanese’.⁹

The responses of Japanese intellectuals were multifaceted. Some suggested that the outward aspect of the *modan gāru* (e.g. consumption and promiscuity) could not be simply deprecated as a fashion craze or a construct of the patriarchal order, but was itself a productive and liberating element. Out of the ‘image of the insipid, superficial young vamp’, such writers as Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke, Chiba Kameo, and Nii Itaru ‘envisioned an assertive, individualistic woman of the future – a product of consumerism, who demonstrated a previously unknown degree of

⁷ Sato, *The New Japanese Woman*, p. 49; Fujiki, *Zōshokusuru perusona*, p. 294-295.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 303. An important reason why the Japanese government was concerned about the *modan gāru* and wanted to intervene was the tendency of Americanisation inherent in the phenomenon that might eventually be detrimental to the national identity of Japanese people. The state understood the fad was specifically caused by the ‘flapper girl’ images of Hollywood actresses. Equating the *modan gāru* problem with the “dichotomy between America and Japan”, governmental agencies turned to ‘the reactionary sensibility of protecting or justifying the nation against foreign countries’. The Ministry of Railways and the Ministry of Interior, for example, deployed media to “sensationally report the campaign of eradicating *moga* and *mobo* (acronyms of modern girl and modern boy)”. Tokyo’s Metropolitan Police Department also campaigned for a “*mobo* and *moga* cleanup action”. *Ibid.*, pp. 302-304.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 304.

agency'.¹⁰ However, other liberal critiques and the older generation of female intellectuals were sceptical of the *modan gāru*'s obsession with fashion and commodity culture, regarding it as a 'bourgeois ploy to distract modern women from the more pressing issues of politics and class'.¹¹ The female poet Yosano Akiko saw the phenomenon as irrelevant to women's liberation, and pointed the finger at 'certain new types among the *men*, who like[d] what [was] decadent and want[ed] young women to look like that'.¹² For the journalist Ōya Sōichi, the 'externally observable' characteristics, such as Westernised appearance, straightforward personality, and unrestrained behaviour, did not bestow the *modan gāru* with 'hundred percent' authenticity that could be found in other radical groups of women (for example, *Atarashii onna* [New Women] of the previous generation), who 'resolutely demolishe[d] conventions that control[led] women's morality, male-female relationship, and lifestyle'.¹³ These critics thus recognised a gap between serious, politically conscious young women and the superficial, materialistic *modan gāru*, who was subordinate to prevailing masculine desires.¹⁴

Recent studies tend to approach the issue from a broader perspective and situate the *modan gāru* within the diverse spectrum of women's existence in modern Japanese society. Miriam Silverberg is a strong optimist, acknowledging the Westernised and sexually liberal behaviour of the *modan gāru* as the sign of a new, autonomous femininity, as exemplified by the character of Naomi, the female protagonist of Tanizaki Jun'ichirō's novel *Chijin no ai/A Fool's Love* (1924).¹⁵ As

¹⁰ Sato, *The New Japanese Woman*, p. 61. Kikuchi Kan also regarded these new women as 'representatives of a new sexual awakening' and 'declared that their appearance announced the beginning of modernity'. Harry Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity*, p. 23.

¹¹ Sato, *The New Japanese Woman*, p. 56.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Ōya Sōichi, *Modan sō to modan sō* (Tokyo: Daihōkakushobō, 1930), p. 16. *Atarashii onna* indicates a group of young female intellectuals/writers/activists in the early twentieth century, such as Hiratsuka Raichō (1886-1971), Itō Noe (1895-1923), and Yosano Akiko (1878-1942), who were active in the magazine called *Seitō/Bluestockings* and became the advocates of liberated femininity, preceding the *modan gāru* of the Showa era. Sato, *The New Japanese Woman*, pp. 14, 19-20; Michiko Suzuki, *Becoming Modern Woman: Love and Female Identity in Prewar Japanese Literature and Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), pp. 10-12.

¹⁴ Thus Fujiki suggests that it could be possible to distinguish the latter type as '*moga*', with a 'contemptuous nuance', from the more general concept of '*modan gāru*', which the liberal or feminist intellectuals preferred and idealised. Fujiki, *Zōshokusuru perusona*, p. 296, 298-299.

¹⁵ Once a café waitress, Naomi is rescued by the male protagonist (and narrator) Jōji, who 'becomes obsessed by the body and costuming of his child bride'. 'As Naomi's body and desires mature, he is overwhelmed by her sexuality and both confused and enticed by her constantly shifting persona, which challenges fixed notions of gender and culture'. Miriam Silverberg, *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense*, p. 55.

such, the *modan gāru*, freed from ‘ties of filiation, affect, or obligation to lover, father, mother, husband, or children’, rejected the patriarchal state ideology that was documented in the Meiji Civil Code and being taught in the schools.¹⁶ But this ethical, cultural transgression cannot be said to be complete without considering the existence of the ‘working woman (*shokugyō fujin*)’, who was ‘a single or married Japanese woman wage-earner ... forced into paid employment by financial need following the end of the economic boom of the World War I years’.¹⁷ This working woman was not merely a ‘passive consumer of middle-class culture’ as the image of *modan gāru* suggested, but rather a ‘producer’ who strived for economic self-sufficiency.¹⁸ Silverberg, in conclusion, regards these two groups as two different aspects (consumption and production) of the same experience for modern Japanese women, who she characterises as ‘militant’, fighting against the social, economic, and cultural status quo. By being ‘placed alongside the history of working, militant Japanese women’, the ‘free-floating and depoliticised’ *modan gāru* is finally able to be ‘rescued’.¹⁹

Although Silverberg’s analysis overcomes the limited view of the *modan gāru* as phantasm by grounding her existence in the soil of working women’s experiences, her attribution of militancy might be too optimistic a view in assuming a certain ideal model of femininity while ignoring the reality that Japanese females were facing at the time. Above all, the *modan gāru* was a phenomenon confined to a small number of females, residing and working in urban areas.²⁰ In this regard, Yoshimi Shunya’s analysis provides a more realistic view. He argues that most of the young working females, whose image overlapped with that of the *modan gāru* (such as ‘office clerks, shop girls, and telephone operators’), were of urban lower-middle class origin, having civil service workers or small business owners for parents, and

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 57.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 66-67. According to the ‘Survey regarding Working Women’ released by the Tokyo Social Affairs Bureau in 1924, the category of the ‘working woman’ included not only office-based white-collar employees (teachers, typists, clerks, shopkeepers, nurses, and telephone operators) but also workers of more working class nature (bus conductors, café waitresses, and other employees in the service industry). Ibid., p. 66.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 57-58.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 69.

²⁰ As the street fashion survey in 1925 by Kon Wajirō (introduced in Chapter 1) shows, even on the street of Ginza – the most likely place in the nation to encounter a *modan gāru* – only 1 percent of women were clad in the *modan gāru*’s style. More than 10 years later, a survey done by a women’s magazine *Shufu no tomo* in 1937 showed 13 percent of those surveyed in Tokyo wore Western style dress. Sato, *The New Japanese Woman*, p. 182.

considering their job as an interim career until they got married.²¹ These limited opportunities arose not only from economic considerations (the *modan gāru* as a cheap labour resource) but also from the ‘cultural politics of sexuality’ that deployed the *modan gāru*’s erotic attractiveness in order to sell products and services.²² Thus modern femininity – as with other aspects of a capitalistic society – was fundamentally subordinate to the desire of capital and patriarchy, which constructed a ‘colonial gaze’ towards the *modan gāru*, who in return projected and internalised that gaze into a self-image of themselves as commodity.²³

Militant or *moga*, optimist or realist, none of the diverse aforementioned discourses present the definitive image of the *modan gāru*, the ambiguity of which corresponds to the nature of the Japanese modern as discussed in Chapter 1. Both Silverberg’s and Yoshimi’s analyses confirm the mutual interactions among the three spheres of the modern – state, the masses, and artists/intellectuals – surrounding the issue of the *modan gāru*. Yoshimi’s concept of the ‘gaze’ is effective in explaining the interrelationship among these agents, but tends to underestimate the active participation of the female masses in the formation of their new identity, as evidenced in the woman’s magazines discussed in Chapter 1.²⁴ Silverberg and Sato’s position pays attention to this subjectivity, and, as seen in the positive interpretation of the working woman’s experiences, emphasises the ‘materiality of everyday existence’, which is an important step towards an understanding of the real *modan gāru*.²⁵

²¹ Yoshimi Shunya, ‘Teito to modan gāru [Imperial Capital and Modern Girl]’ in Barbara Satō (ed.), *Nichijō seikatsu no tanjō: Senkanki nihon no bunka henyō [The Birth of Everyday Life: Acculturation of Japan in the Interwar Period]* (Tokyo: Kashiwashobō, 2007), p. 246-247; Yoshimi Shun’ya, ‘Teikoku Shuto tōkyō’, p. 51. Barbara Sato points out the same point that ‘most young women entering the workforce never considered the possibility of sacrificing marriage for career’. Sato, *The New Japanese Woman*, p. 137.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 44. For example, female bus conductors, who started to appear in Tokyo around 1920, were employed not merely because their labour was necessary and cheap but because they could also provide ‘some other kind of services’, i.e. ‘visual, auditory, and tactile enjoyment to satisfy (male) passengers’. Such an employment strategy was similarly applied in the cases of usherettes and petrol station workers. *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 49. Accordingly, Yoshimi asserts that Naomi in *A Fool’s Love* is a ‘product of the gaze of the patriarchal power that combined with the logic of the capital’, even though it looks as if her sexuality were ‘superior to the Japanese masculinity’ symbolised by the protagonist Jōji. In other words, she is ‘superior’ only as a ‘commodity’. *Ibid.*

²⁴ Fujiki also notes that there existed various ‘voices of women themselves’ (such as café waitresses, schoolgirls, and housewives) displayed on the pages of woman’s magazines, showing their subjective agency. Fujiki, *Zōshokusuru perusona*, p. 295.

²⁵ Silverberg, *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense*, p. 58.

The inclusion of the housewife, based on a study of woman's magazines, as the third category of modern Japanese females after the *modan gāru* and the working woman broadens the boundary of the everyday into domesticity and thus completes the whole modern experience of Japanese women. The housewife, socially confined in the household and economically excluded from wage labour, was the most vulnerable group of women, and most subject to the patriarchal ideologies of the society as represented by the phrase *ryōsai kenbo*. Sato thus acknowledges the limitations of the housewife compared to the relative freedom of the *modan gāru* and the working woman. Many intellectuals of the time criticised the sociopolitical conservatism that pervaded articles in the woman's magazines that housewives read, the policy of which, after all, was mainly decided by male editors who were also subject to state-driven ideologies.²⁶ On the other hand, as seen in the example of the Everyday Life Reform Movement mentioned in Chapter 1, state-initiated programmes propagated in the woman's magazines resulted in modernisation at a domestic level, by 'urging rationalization (*gōrika*)' of household affairs. Confessional articles (*kokuhaku kiji* – readers' contributions about various quotidian concerns) also contributed to constructing the housewife's modern identity by offering a thoroughfare of communication amongst anonymous readers. Sato thus concludes that the woman's magazines accomplished at least the 'partial redefinition of femininity' by 'reinforcing and propelling women away from timeworn practices', while Silverberg is even more positive, affirming that the magazines were 'challenging the patriarchal family-state ideology by offering a space for men and women (married or unmarried) in which they could reveal their desires'.²⁷

The essential characteristics of the discourses of the *modan gāru* can thus be summarised as multiplicity and relativity. The phantasm of the *modan gāru* on the street finds its grounding in the reality of the working woman at work and the housewife at home, suggesting a new, broader picture of the '*modan gāru*', a figure that actually lived through the everyday experience. This trinity of modern Japanese women, however, did not exist in isolation. What made them truly 'modern' was their interrelation with other agents – mutual actions, discourses, and 'gazes' that

²⁶ What mostly filled the pages of the magazines was '*katei kiji* (family articles)' that aimed to 'acquaint housewives with tips about home and family', such as 'bringing up children, information related to illnesses, cooking, sewing, knitting, flower arranging and other artistic pursuits, and proper etiquette'. Sato, *The New Japanese Woman*, p. 97.

²⁷ Sato, *The New Japanese Woman*, p. 89; Silverberg, *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense*, pp. 148-149.

constantly interpreted, evaluated, and affected each other. As mentioned already, the *modan gāru* phenomenon started as a result of such an influence as the gaze – Japanese young women discovering their persona on the silver screen from outside the country and adapting themselves to it – and the same principle continued to be applied on the street, in newspapers, and in magazines, where a complex spectrum of gender ideologies was being communicated, emulated, and practiced among intellectuals as well as among the *modan gārus* themselves. This multifaceted existence of the *modan gāru* and her relative position in opposition to other agents thus importantly establishes the basic methodology for the analysis of *shinpa* melodrama that I will discuss in the next section.

The *Modan Gāru* in the Woman's Film and *Shinpa* Melodrama

The *Josei eiga* (woman's film) is as much an ambiguous concept as the *modan gāru*. By definition, the term indicates films that target (or are conscious of) female spectators, appealing to their sentiments and interests through a particular type of narrative and female protagonist, and, at the same time, constructing feminine subjectivity by dealing with gender-specific issues. Studies on the issue so far, however, have not clarified the identity of Japanese female spectatorship in the same concrete way Yoshimi did for the *modan gāru*; there existed the phenomenon of female audiences, but, not much has been elaborated on regarding who they really were. Their ideological response to the cinematic apparatus is accordingly unconfirmed, although it has been argued that the woman's film contributed to the viewer's construction of modern femininity.

That being said, Wada-Marciano's study on the subject has added an important historical perspective, defining the woman's film as a 'genre' based not only on 'audience composition' but also on 'the genre's place within the Japanese film industry in the 1920s and 1930s'.²⁸ Capitalising on the emerging young urban female populations who secured buying power from their salaried employment after World

²⁸ Wada-Marciano, *Nippon Modern*, p. 77.

War I, Shochiku strategically concentrated on the woman's film, which 'served both to configure a female identity as consuming subject and to provide material for her consumption'.²⁹ As discussed in Chapter 2, the change inevitably entailed the acceptance of Hollywood's modernised production style while eschewing the old, theatrical *shinpa* traditions. One of the most significant examples of this was the abolition of *onnagata* and the birth of the actress, whom the female spectators could identify themselves with. The main thrust of Wada-Marciano's argument, however, is to emphasise 'a Japanese vernacular experience' in the woman's film genre that 'negotiated the audience's expectations, becoming at once modern and distinctly Japanese', by merging Hollywood influence with 'a sense of authenticity drawn from the audience's everyday life'.³⁰ The contestation between the modern and non-modern appearing in the genre was thus often contradictory. For example, while the *modan gāru* images represented the 'spectacle of Japanese women embracing Western style and values', they were also 'contained within alternately patriarchal and national discourses'.³¹ Just as the journalistic view on the *modan gāru* was bifurcated, in the woman's film there was a 'subtle play within the strict terms of the dichotomy's separation' between 'transfigurative new women' as 'bourgeois consumer[s]' and the 'desire for control over the threat that the figure represents'.³²

This view has limitations in that the dichotomy assumes two fixed images of the *modan gāru* as imagined by the patriarchal perspective discussed earlier. Such transformation from one form of femininity to another does not fully explain the relative multiplicity of the *modan gāru* figure I suggested, excluding the subjectivity and 'mutual gazes' of the working woman and the housewife who coexisted with the *modan gāru*. Nevertheless, it is also true that the 'dichotomy [and transformation] between the modern girl and so-called traditional Japanese woman' effectively explains basic narrative formulas prevalent in the woman's films.³³ Wada-Marciano finds the case of a traditional type of female character traversing the boundary of *ryōsai kenbo* (and becoming a kind of *modan gāru*) in the two young wife characters of *The Neighbour's Wife and Mine* (1931) and *Burden of Life* (1935) – both,

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., pp 82-83.

³¹ Ibid., p. 84.

³² Ibid., p. 107.

³³ Ibid., p. 88.

interestingly, performed by Tanaka Kinuyo.³⁴ (Fig 5.3) But what is more pervasive and often emphasized in the genre is transformation in the opposite direction (i.e. from *modan gāru* to *ryōsai kenbo*), which is usually expressed through patriarchal reformation or the punishment of a *modan gāru* character in the narrative. The typical formula, which I call ‘failed *moga*’ narrative, contrasts a *modan gāru* with a more traditional female character, the latter’s domesticity and chastity always prevailing over the former’s extravagance and licentiousness in the end. As Wada-Marciano points out, it reveals a patriarchal symptom of ‘appropriation, trivialisation, and subsequent control of such potentially subversive female subjectivities’, making them remain as a mere ‘commodified figure’, a fabricated image that eventually serves to ‘refigure and re-establish Japanese national identity’.³⁵



(Fig 5.3) *Ryōsai kenbo* into *modan gāru*: Tanaka Kinuyo in *The Neighbour's Wife and Mine* before (above) and after (below) changing her hairstyle

There are many examples of the ‘failed *moga*’ narrative in prewar Japanese cinema. Among the woman’s films produced by Shochiku in the 1920s and 1930s, Wada-Marciano mentions *Fue no shiratama/Undying Pearl* (Shimizu Hiroshi, 1929), *Nasanu naka/Not Blood Relations* (Naruse Mikio, 1932) and *Seidon/Sunny Cloud* (Nomura Hōtei, 1933), where the dichotomy between the *modan gāru* and the

³⁴ In *The Neighbour's Wife and Mine*, the wife’s domestic image suddenly changes in the end when she appears outside her home, walking with her family, with her hairstyle being changed to a modern one. In *Burden of Life*, the wife Itsuko, ‘first developed as a good wife and wise mother’, turns into a ‘dark counterpart to the respectable figures by henpecking her husband and leaving her baby at home when going out to have fun’. Ibid., p. 108.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 87.

traditional girl concludes with the former's exclusion.³⁶ In Chapter 2, I have also discussed Shimazu's *Our Neighbour Miss Yae* in terms of its dealing with the divorcee character Kyōko (Okada Yoshiko), who returns home to disturb the everyday order as represented by her younger sister Yaeko (Aizome Yumeko), but eventually disappears from the narrative. Here Kyōko, a mature lady wearing a *kimono*, ironically takes the role of a *modan gāru*, while Yaeko, being a schoolgirl, takes a domestic *ryōsai kenbo* role. Their tension reaches its climax in a night out sequence – the only segment in the film set outside of Yaeko's suburban neighbourhood – where Kyōko's loose behaviour (smoking, drinking, spending money, and, on the taxi back home, leaning on Keitarō whom Yaeko fancies) bewilder her innocent sister. (Fig 5.4) As Sasaki Yoriaki points out, if Yaeko directly confronted Kyōko's threat, then the film would lead into the emotional, melodramatic world of the *shinpa*. What Shimazu chooses instead is to 'cut off the *shinpa*'s world by erasing [Kyōko's existence] by force'.³⁷ Such is the way Kyōko is defined as an 'old witch' who brings 'unpleasantness and obscure anxiety' not only to Yaeko and Keitarō in the narrative but also to audiences.³⁸



(Fig 5.4) The night out sequence in *Our Neighbour Miss Yae*

As I discussed in Chapter 2, Shochiku's films were not free from the influence of *shinpa* for commercial purposes, and it is undeniable that the *shinpa* tradition greatly contributed to the woman's film genre. In fact, 'Shochiku's pervasive use of this dichotomy [between *modan gāru* and traditional girl]' was in line with the typical *shinpa*'s melodramatic formulae, rather than an effort to distinguish the woman's film from *shinpa* as Wada-Marciano argues.³⁹ As explained in Chapter 2, many *shinpa* films were paired with their theatrical versions, which were often also

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 88-89.

³⁷ Sasaki, 'Tonari no yae chan', p. 173.

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 165, 173.

³⁹ Wada-Marciano, *Nippon Modern*, p. 88. Sasaki has also clarified that in *Our Neighbour Miss Yae*, contrasting Okada (the not-innocent, '*shinpa*-tragic' world) with Yaeko (the innocent 'world of the everyday') is the 'common method of the *shinpa* melodrama [genre]'. Sasaki, p. 168.

adaptations of original popular novels including *kateishōsetsu* (home fiction), often being serialised in *kateishinbun* (home newspapers). The *kateishōsetsu* was intended to be read by a patriarch to his illiterate wife and daughters, confirming the morally patriarchal nature of the early modern media for females.⁴⁰ Some of the most popular novelists and novels (mostly from Meiji era) that were repeatedly adapted into *shinpa* theatre and film productions from the 1910s until the 1950s are listed in table 5.1 below. All of these works are characterized by the story of woman's suffering

Author	Title	Publication Year	First Theatre Adaptation	First Film Adaptation (Total Number of remakes)
Izumi Kyōka	<i>Giketsu kyōketsu/ Blood of Honour (Theatre and film version: Taki no Shiraito/ The Water Magician)</i>	1894	1896	1912 (6)
Ozaki Kōyō	<i>Konjiki yasha/ The Golden Demon</i>	1897-1902	1897	1911 (19)
Tokutomi Roka	<i>Hototogisu/ The Cuckoo</i>	1898-1899	1901	1909 (22)
Kikuchi Yūhō	<i>Ono ga tsumi/ My Sin</i>	1899-1900	1900	1908 (25)
Kikuchi Yūhō	<i>Chikyōdai/ Foster Sisters</i>	1903	unknown	1909 (16)
Ōkura Tōrō	<i>Biwaka/ Lute Song</i>	1905	1905	1910 (15)
Izumi Kyōka	<i>Onna keizu/ A Woman's Pedigree</i>	1907	1908	unknown (at least 6)
Yanagawa Shun'yō	<i>Nasanu naka/ Not Blood Relations</i>	1912-1913	1913	1916 (8)

(Table 5.1) Original novels often adapted to *shinpa* melodrama⁴¹

that results in a fateful tragedy; there is a sacrifice for the success of her lover (*Blood of Honour*), unrequited love produced by difference in social status (*A Woman's Pedigree*), woes of marriage due to illness and conflicts with a mother-in-law (*The Cuckoo*, *Lute Song*), and divorce and the separation from (and eventually death of) a child (*My Sin*). (Fig 5.5) The confrontation between two women is also prominent; it could be between a wife and a former fiancé (*My Sin*), a birthmother and an

⁴⁰ For this purpose, *kateishōsetsu*'s style was plain to understand and its contents were closely related to practical home life. It often dealt with the 'tragedy of a pitiful high class woman', which 'satisfied vanity or sympathy of female readers' and 'vindicated the good manners and morals [of society]'. Sakamoto Kazue, *Kazoku imēji no tanjō*, p. 105.

⁴¹ Keiko I. McDonald, *From Book to Screen: Modern Japanese Literature in Film* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2000), pp. 4-16.

adoptive mother (*Not Blood Relations*), or two stepsisters (*Foster Sisters*). Okada Yoshiko appeared in film versions of the last two properties, and as in *Our Neighbour Miss Yae*, she took the role of a *modan gāru*, a famous actress returning from America to reclaim her abandoned daughter in *Not Blood Relations* (Naruse Mikio, Shochiku, 1932), and, in *Foster Sisters*, a poor country girl who, pretending to be her stepsister, attempts to seize the wealth and status of the stepsister's family (Nomura Hōtei, Shochiku, 1932). Following the principle we are now familiar with, she is destined to fail; in the former, she gives up the child, and in the latter, dies after being stabbed by her former boyfriend who is angered by her betrayal.



(Fig 5.5) Stills from early *shinpa* melodrama films (left: *Not Blood Relations*; centre: *My Sin*; right: *The Cuckoo*)⁴²

Ozu's *modan gāru* films also follow a similar 'failed *moga*' narrative formula. In *Hogaraka ni ayume/Walk Cheerfully* (1930), the *modan gāru* character Chieko (Date Satoko) competes with the traditional type of a girl, Yasue (Kawasaki Hiroko), to win the love of her gangster boyfriend Kenji, who falls in love with Yasue and deserts Chieko. Although both girls are 'working women' in the same office, Chieko's after-work '*modan*' life marks her with a stereotypically negative image of a debauchee, who is well dressed in the Western style, enjoys golf and billiards, and hangs out with men in bars, not to mention smoking and drinking. (Fig 5.6) Such



(Fig 5.6) Date Satoko as Chieko in *Walk Cheerfully*

⁴² Joanne Bernardi, *Writing in Light: the Silent Scenario and the Japanese Pure Film Movement* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2001), pp. 40-41.

prodigality is in contrast with Yasue's moral chastity as well as domesticity – Yasue is often seen at home with her family while Chieko's family is never suggested – justifying Chieko's defeat and expulsion from the love triangle relationship. Clinging to Kenji, she desperately begs him to change his mind, only to be denied and violently thrown onto the floor. (Fig 5.7) A similar pattern of the 'failed *moga*' narrative is repeated in *The Lady and the Beard* (1931), in which Date Satoko and Kawasaki Hiroko perform the same love rivalry between a *modan gāru* and an ordinary girl character over the male protagonist Okajima.



(Fig 5.7) Kenji pushes Chieko away

Without a doubt, there is a strict patriarchal perspective governing the formulaic narrative structure of the *modan gāru* films. For example, *The Lady and the Beard* suggests that the way the *modan gāru* can win Okajima's love is by repenting of her reckless life and accepting a woman's domestic roles such as helping him to change clothes or sewing. When she witnesses her rival Hiroko excelling at these everyday chores, the *modan gāru* finally admits defeat and leaves Okajima with a promise that she will reform. This acceptance of 'failure' is possible through the *modan gāru*'s gaze at Hiroko as a model of *ryōsai kenbo*, which is presented through Date Satoko's point of view shot, followed by a three-shot where the inclusion of a sleeping Okajima in front of a sewing Hiroko reaffirms the proper gender relationship according to the patriarchal order. (Fig 5.8) The *modan gāru*'s



(Fig 5.8) A *modan gāru* observes a *ryōsai kenbo*

'intra-gender' gaze is also complemented in an earlier scene by the 'inter-gender' gaze of Okajima, who curiously (but disapprovingly) surveys the *modan gāru*'s

figure, from her shoes to hairstyle, when she is first brought into his apartment. (Fig 5.9) Thus the prevailing ideology of the film entails both the denial of the *modan gāru* and the endorsement of the *ryōsai kenbo* from a masculine perspective, reflecting the view of contemporary society.⁴³



(Fig 5.9) Okajima surveys the *modan gāru*

At a more explicit level, patriarchal control is expressed in the form of direct punishment exerted on a *modan gāru*'s body by a male character, as evidenced by Kenji's pushing Chieko away in *Walk Cheerfully*. An even more violent example appears in Ozu's *Woman of Tokyo*, where the female protagonist Chikako (Okada Yoshiko) is severely slapped by her younger brother Ryōichi, who is shocked to learn the fact that his sister works at a bar at night and is also (probably) involved in communist action. (Fig 5.10) According to Wada-Marciano, this patriarchal



(Fig 5.10) Chikako being slapped by her younger brother Ryōichi

punishment on screen must have evoked complicated reactions from contemporary spectators, who were familiar with the scandalous personal history of the actress Okada Yoshiko.⁴⁴ The dissonance between a woman of 'sexual autonomy' in reality

⁴³ *The Lady and the Beard* was one of the most commercially popular Ozu films in the prewar era, especially compared to his *shōshimin* films. Ozu himself admitted that *The Lady and the Beard* and *Ojōsan/Young Miss* (1930) were the ones among his films that could be most easily received by audiences. Ozu Yasujiro et al., 'Ozu yasujirō zadankai', p. 49.

⁴⁴ Before she appeared in *Woman of Tokyo* in 1933, Okada had been already involved in several extramarital love affairs, had an illegitimate son, and had also been barred from the film industry for five years because she walked out during the filming of *Tsubaki Hime/Camille* (Murata Minoru, Nikkatsu, 1927) with the leading actor, Takeuchi Ryōichi. Her star image as a *modan gāru* is fixed by these off-screen scandals in addition to her physical appearance, which was exotically Western as well as sexual. Wada-Marciano, *Nippon Modern*, p. 95.

and her ‘unglamorous’ on-screen images made the audience ‘read other meanings into her performances’, as if Okada suffered a ‘castigation of her modern girl persona’.⁴⁵ While enjoying ‘masochistic attraction to the foreign body [of Okada]’, the viewers could eventually feel safe with the ‘sadistic response toward the chastised modern girl figure’.⁴⁶

However, as mentioned earlier, the dichotomy and transformation between the *modan gāru* and her traditional counterpart pervading the woman’s film and the *shinpa* melodrama does not adequately explain the multiplicity of modern Japanese femininity. I thus argue that the genre’s text should be re-examined from a different perspective, one that asks an essential question of the ‘woman’ for whom the woman’s films were made. I think there can be two possible answers regarding how these modern women actually saw and read the woman’s film genre. They could have been passive audiences faithfully responding to the cinematic apparatus, internalising patriarchy as the dominant ideology. However, the woman’s films could also have engaged female spectators from within a more strongly subjective position, constructing their own meaning that deviated from a patriarchal point of view. It would be hard to imagine that weeping female audiences, who were sympathetic enough to identify with the suffering heroine, all failed to catch the ethical and ideological potential of subversion in the genre. In this ‘predominantly female’, gender-exclusive experience of the text, which ‘men tended to mock ... [as] “boring *shinpa* drama ... and tearjerkers”’, it would not be unreasonable to expect that a certain kind of solidarity or ‘sisterhood’ was being collectively borne out of the female audiences.⁴⁷ In the next section, I will discuss the possibility of finding clues to such a close feminine relationship in the texts of the woman’s film, which will include the subjective gaze *amongst* women as a key element.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 97, 98.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 99.

⁴⁷ McDonald, *From Book to Screen*, p. 14.

The *Modan Gāru* and Their Domestic Everyday

Most female characters discussed in the previous section have typically one-dimensional character. Chikako (Okada Yoshiko) in Ozu's *Woman of Tokyo*, however, displays more complex identity beyond the simple dichotomy between a delinquent *modan gāru* and a conventional *ryōsai kenbo*. In the morning, as seen in the opening sequence of the film, she appears to be a caring sister living with her younger brother Ryōichi, for whom she not only manages household affairs (cooking and washing laundry) but also provides tuition fees. During the day she works in an office as a typist, possibly using English.⁴⁸ She then metamorphoses into a bar hostess (*jokyū*), and possibly a prostitute, before returning home very late at night.⁴⁹ Chikako's triple life as a chaste and dutiful *ryōsai kenbo*, highly educated and professional working woman, and sensual and seductive street girl reflects the multiple identities that contemporary modern Japanese women were comprised of. (Fig 5.11) Chikako, taking charge of the household and her brother's education, is



(Fig 5.11) Chikako's changing identity in three kinds of spaces. Notice the change in her clothes and hairstyle.

also confident of her working life, day and night, and thus in subjective control of her morality. When her secret night work is revealed to Ryōichi, Chikako does not seem to be troubled by it or repent of her way of life; it is rather Ryōichi who agonises over the truth, which leads to his sudden suicide on the very night he is informed of it. Most of the contemporary reviews were unfavourable to the film because of the unlikely behaviour in Ryōichi as well as Chikako's complex lifestyle,

⁴⁸ Chikako is known to other characters that she is helping a university professor for a translation work at night. There also appears a shot of a foreign language book that Chikako is reading, confirming her literacy and intelligence.

⁴⁹ As Wada-Marciano points out, Chikako is also very likely involved in communist action during her night work. Such an interpretation is supported by a scene that appears only in the scenario but not in the film; while Chikako is working at the bar, she meets an unidentified man and secretly hands him a note. Wada-Mariano, *Nippon Modern*, pp. 91-94; Noda Kōgo and Ikeda Tadao, 'Tōkyō no onna [Woman of Tokyo]' in Inoue Kazuo (ed.), *Ozu yasujirō zenshū [Complete Screenplays of Ozu Yasujiro]* (Tokyo: Shiinshokan, 2003), p. 410.

both of which critics believed were too ‘extreme’ and ‘subjective’ to reflect the universal, objective reality of ‘*shōshimin*’s ordinary life’.⁵⁰ Chikako nevertheless is an important prewar character, whose multiple identity is representative of the different aspects of reality that Japanese women experienced. Her existence as a bar hostess represents one possibility of such reality, which, even though subordinate to masculine gaze, is depicted as the life Chikako actively chooses. This self-confidence contrasts with the penitent attitude of other *modan gāru* characters (such as Date Satoko in *The Lady and the Beard*) before patriarchal authority in the ‘failed *moga*’ narrative.

In order to articulate the female subjectivity and its relationship with masculinity, Ozu pays elaborate attention to domestic everyday objects in *Woman of Tokyo*. The beginning sequence of the film is full of such ordinary objects around Chikako’s apartment, which strengthens the sense of stable domesticity upon which her life is founded. The film starts with a tracking shot of a kitchen followed by a shot of a dining table covered with dishes from breakfast. (Fig 5.12) Ryōichi then



(Fig 5.12) Everyday objects in Chikako’s apartment

asks Chikako for a new pair of socks, which are hung outside of the window, as seen in a close-up shot. The joy of simple, contented family life is evident in this winter morning sequence, a feeling that is re-affirmed by the quick rotating movement of a ventilator beside the hanging socks and Chikako’s following point of view shot of a smoking chimney with a bare tree. (Fig 5.13) The shots of socks and chimneys are the very example upon which Noël Burch developed his idea of the ‘pillow-shot’, an intervening visual element composed of inanimate objects, which generates the

⁵⁰ Unami Mototada, ‘Shudai to enshutsu o megutte [Concerning Theme and Direction]’ in *Eiga hyōron*, 14:3 (March, 1933), pp. 103-104; Shōji Tōru, ‘Ozu yasujirō he no ichi ketsuron [A Conclusion about Ozu Yasujiro]’ in *Kinema junpō*, 463 (1 March, 1933), p. 64. In the film – considerably shorter (47 min.) than a normal feature length film – neither the reason why such a highly educated woman as Chikako has to work at the bar in addition to the day work nor how Ryōichi – a college student – can be so naïve and impulsive as to be ignorant of his sister’s work and easily commit suicide are explained enough.

‘decentring effect’ that guides viewers ‘outside the diegesis’.⁵¹ While I agree with his argument that this stylistic device of Ozu’s had ‘reached full development in *Woman of Tokyo*’, I do however want to emphasise that the essential issue that is focussed upon here is Ozu’s *objective* in addressing these objects at the beginning, rather than the *method* he deploys to articulate it.⁵² Faced with the daringly frontal composition of the first shot of bottles, a kettle, a gas stove, and a rice cooker, we should examine the implication of the everydayness that these inanimate objects emanate, which I argue is closely related to Chikako’s identity rooted in domestic everyday life *within* the diegesis. The subject of this household is not Ryōichi but Chikako, who is in control of this everyday space and time.



(Fig 5.13) Hanging socks and Chikako looking outside of the window

This interpretation is supported by another domestic object – mirrors – that Chikako uses. They appear four times in the film: firstly, in the opening morning sequence when she is preparing to go to work; secondly, while Chikako is working in the bar; thirdly, when she returns home from the bar; and lastly, when she checks the bruise on her cheek after being slapped by Ryōichi. These mirror shots serve multilayered functions. In the first three cases, the mirror connects not only two distinct places (the apartment and her workplaces) but also Chikako’s two different lives (as a housekeeper and a working woman), merging them into one identity, that of a *modan gāru* (in the broad sense of the modern Japanese female). (Fig 5.14) After Chikako leaves the frame in the morning sequence, Ozu also holds the shot for

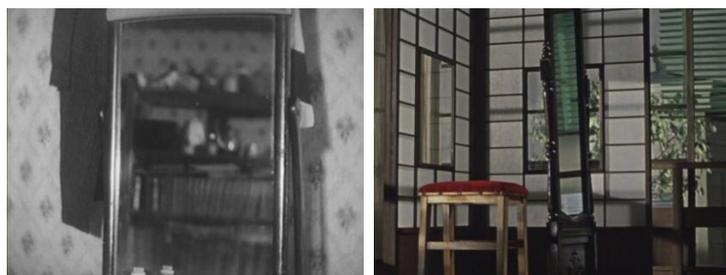
⁵¹ Noel Burch, *To the Distant Observer: Form and Meaning in Japanese Cinema* (London: Scolar Press, 1979), p. 161. Burch interpreted the pillow shot as a ‘culturally and complexly determined sign of dissent from the world-view implicit in the Western mode’ that is ‘profoundly anthropocentric’. Thus in the pillow shot, there is a ‘prolonged or “unmotivated” absence of human beings from the screen ..., [which] functions as a departure from the [Western] code’. Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., p. 160. Ozu had already been using such intermediate shots before *Woman of Tokyo*; even his first surviving film *Days of Youth* (1929) includes shots with a similar effect i.e. chimneys and windmills in repetition. However, no other previous film (at least among the surviving ones) begins with an emphatic shot of domestic objects as *Woman of Tokyo* does. Even his previous *shōshimin* films are not that interested in the space of the kitchen and its objects, which explains the secondary role of housewife characters in the genre as mentioned earlier.

a while to lead the viewer's attention to the existence of the mirror. This delayed moment articulates the identity of the woman who has looked into the mirror daily. The object of the mirror is similarly deployed in Ozu's postwar films such as *Late Spring* and *Sanma no aji/An Autumn Afternoon* (1962) to indicate the existence of the soon to be married female protagonist. (Fig 5.15) Thus, looking at the mirror is a significant introspective act for Ozu's female characters, one that affirms her ego. This kind of look should be distinguished from the 'intra-gender' or 'inter-gender' gazes that justify and internalise the patriarchal order, as discussed in the previous section.



(Fig 5.14) The first mirror scene in the morning at home (*above*), and the second and the third scene during and after her night work (*below*)



(Fig 5.15) The mirror stays in the shot after Chikako leaves the frame (*left*) and the similar mirror shot in *An Autumn Afternoon*

Such a ritual of self-realisation adds a tragic tone to the fourth mirror-watching scene, where Chikako examines the bruise on her cheek after being slapped by her brother. (Fig 5.16) On the surface, Ryōichi's act of slapping her is the patriarchal punishment for the menacing *modan gāru* in the 'failed *moga*' narrative. The dominant mood of the sequence is also typically melodramatic in the *shinpa* style;

Chikako, in full tears and with a begging gesture, explains her sacrifice and appeals for studying hard to succeed (i.e. the *risshin shusse* ideology) to Ryōichi, who, nevertheless, coldly deserts her and leaves home. However, the following mirror-watching scene, where Chikako observes the trace of the violence on her cheek, allows viewers as well as Chikako herself a chance to contemplate on the meaning of the domestic violence. Her tired profiled posture and her examination of the bruise lead into her long stare at herself reflected on the mirror, which implies the woman's self-examination and self-realisation. At the moment, the mirror in the scene becomes a medium for gender, elucidating the oppressive structure of patriarchal order, both in and outside of the domesticity, and offering a new perspective on femininity that transcends the generic terms of *shinpa* melodrama.



(Fig 5.16) Chikako examines the bruise on her cheek (Refer to Fig. 5.10 and compare with Fig. 5.14)

Naruse, another expert in dealing with the domestic everyday object, also deploys the mirror as a signifier of gender relationships. In his film *Yogoto no yume/Every Night Dreams* (Shochiku, 1933), the female protagonist Omitsu (Kurishima Sumiko) leads a similar life to Chikako, working at a bar as a *jokyū* to make a living with her son. The patriarchal role in this case is taken up by Omitsu's unemployed husband (Saitō Tatsuo), who is against her disreputable job but cannot offer an alternative source of income. As Wada-Marciano argued (and Russell has concurred), Omitsu's act of looking in the mirror while preparing for her work functions as a 'visual connection' ('conduit' in Russell's expression) between her apartment and the bar, thus blurring 'the distinction between public and private spaces, creating a threat to domestic stability'.⁵³ Her husband signals his disapproval of this act of channelling Omitsu's eroticised sexuality into the private space through his 'inter-gender' gaze when she stands before her mirror, preparing to go to work.

⁵³ Wada-Marciano, *Nippon Modern*, p. 42; Catherine Russell, *The Cinema of Naruse Mikio*, p. 65. As in *Woman of Tokyo*, there also appears a shot of Omitsu's looking into a mirror *at work*, showing her changed appearance, and Naruse sequences it immediately after the mirror-watching shot *at home*, thus more explicitly suggesting the link between domesticity and the woman's workplace.

(Fig 5.17) However, it should also be noted that Omitsu's mirror works not only as a connector between the two distinct spaces and identities but also as an identifier of her female subjectivity, free from any external gaze upon her. In the film, there are moments when she looks in the mirror in order to reaffirm her attractiveness as a young woman or to examine the traces of her life of struggle on her face, rather than simply for putting on make-up before going to work.⁵⁴ (Fig 5.18) Thus Omitsu's mirror, as Chikako's, retains the function of introspection (and interrogation) of self-identity.



(Fig 5.17) Omitsu's husband looks at Omitsu preparing to go out. (Notice the zooming in effect of the husband's shots to express his troubled emotion.) (Compare with Fig. 5.9)



(Fig 5.18) Omitsu often watches her mirror for self-examination

This facility for introspection is a standard that can fundamentally distinguish the female characters of Ozu and Naruse from their male counterparts, who do not look in the mirror and thus lack the idea of subjectivity.⁵⁵ The man's gaze is instead



(Fig 5.19) Omitsu's husband, on the run after stealing money, avoids looking at his appearance in the mirror

⁵⁴ For example, when a neighbour suggests remarriage to Omitsu she looks at the mirror and briefly checks her appearance with a smile.

⁵⁵ Omitsu's husband even fears facing himself reflected in a mirror as demonstrated in the scene where he steals money for the injured son's hospital bill and returns home. (Fig 5.19)

directed towards women at distance, which in return makes the former isolated from the latter. In *Every Night Dreams*, Naruse's mise-en-scène tenaciously segregates Omitsu and her husband into either side of the frame as well as separating them into background and foreground, with his camera alternating its shallow focus from one to the other. (Fig 5.20) Ozu also separates Ryōichi's surrounding space from Chikako and his girlfriend Harue, using another domestic object: a stove with a kettle. When Harue visits him to inform him of her suspicion of Chikako's night work, Ozu deliberately places each character at either side of the stove that sits in the middle of the frame. (Fig 5.21) The conflict between the couple is escalating in this scene – Ryōichi is half-confused and half-angered by Harue's story – as manifest in their incessant movement to and from the background. But neither of them eventually crosses the dividing line drawn by the stove. The aforementioned Ryōichi's slapping of Chikako occurs when she violates this principle of gender segregation and approaches her brother over the stove line to appease his anger. (Fig 5.22)



(Fig 5.20) The distance between Omitsu and her husband



(Fig 5.21) Ryō and Harue are always on the opposite side of the stove



(Fig 5.22) Chikako violates the stove line and gets punished

In contrast to this ‘inter-gender’ segregation, the relationship between Chikako and Harue suggests a new possibility for female solidarity that deviates from the tradition of love rivalry in the *shinpa* melodrama. Before the ending sequence, where Ryōichi commits suicide because of the shock of learning his sister’s secret, *Woman of Tokyo* seems to repeat the formulaic narrative of ‘*modan gāru vs. ryōsai kenbo*’. Harue is a typical *ryōsai kenbo* figure, without a job other than housekeeping for her older brother. She does not look in the mirror as Chikako does, and instead directs her gaze towards the masculinity of Ryōichi whom she can depend upon.⁵⁶ Thus



(Fig 5.23) Harue misses Ryōichi while looking through a movie program, the back cover of which shows a masculine image.

Harue does not understand Chikako’s way of life in the outside world that destabilises her relationship with Ryōichi, and blames the couple’s discord on the sister’s misbehaviour saying, ‘I feel sorry for Ryōichi [because you work at a bar]’, to Chikako’s face. In this sense, Harue’s emotion is not that different from the fear, disdain or hostility that other *ryōsai kenbo* characters (such as the role of Kawasaki Hiroko in *Walk Cheerfully*) feel towards *modan gāru* characters. The two women’s relationship, however, dramatically changes in the ending sequence after Ryōichi’s death. On the surface, the brother’s death can be interpreted as a patriarchal punishment on Chikako’s autonomy, concluding the film as an edifying ‘failed *moga*’ narrative. However, Chikako’s attitude facing the situation is closer to lamentation over (if not criticism of) the unnecessary death, rather than regret for her sin. With tears in her eyes and on her cheeks, she utters, ‘You died for nothing’ and calls Ryōichi a ‘coward (*yowamushi*)’. Then Harue, sitting next to Chikako and herself full of tears, slowly turns her eyes and watches Chikako’s profile, which shines with the pure beauty of deepest sorrow. The stove, which separated them from

⁵⁶ The next day after she and Ryōichi have the conflict over Chikako’s night work, Harue flips through the programme of the movie she saw with him (possibly missing Ryōichi), and her gaze (via Ozu’s camera) stays for a while on the masculine image of a sports-man on the back cover. (Fig 5.23)

Ryōichi, is now placed to the side of the frame in order to group the two women together in one space.⁵⁷ (Fig 5.24, 5.25)



(Fig 5.24) Harue watches Chikako's profile



(Fig 5.25) The stove at the side conjoins the two women in one space



(Fig 5.26) Ryōichi puts the kettle on the stove (*left*); the kettle boils hard while Ryōichi sheds tears in anger (*centre*); the steaming has subsided as Ryōichi's anger turns to contemplation (*right*)

The unnerved and undetermined male protagonist actually constitutes another common pattern of *shinpa* melodrama, which can also be found in Naruse's films, as Catherine Russell has suggested.⁵⁸ I agree with her important argument that these female characters depict an 'unusual attitude of resistance to ... oppressive social ills', and their troubles are 'not [theirs] alone, [but] might be in some way

⁵⁷ Some critics interpreted the stove purely from a formal aspect, regarding its incongruity between shots (steaming in one shot and then not steaming in the continuing shot) and its role to create 'patterns', 'motifs', and 'parallels' by repeatedly appearing throughout the film. Richie, *Ozu*, pp. 112-113; Bordwell, *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*, pp. 242-243. I however pay attention to its metaphorical function to represent Ryōichi's troubled mind. He is the one who actually puts the kettle on the stove, and the steaming intensifies/subsides as his anger explodes/calms down. His close relation to the stove and kettle well supports my argument that the object establishes an imaginary boundary that segregates him from female characters. (Fig 5.26)

⁵⁸ In Naruse's *Street Without End* as well as *Every Night Dreams*, weak husband characters who desert their familial responsibility have to face the female protagonists' radical reaction. Omitsu in the latter film, confronted with her husband's suicide, bites off and throws away his will, and yells, 'You coward! (*yowamushi*)', and 'You loser! (*ikujinashi*)'. Sugiko in the former coldly refuses the entreaties of her husband on his sickbed to return home and instead asks him for a divorce.

symptomatic of [their] station in life'.⁵⁹ By elevating the otherwise male-centric sentimentality of the *shinpa* melodrama into a social critique, the genre could work as the true *woman's* film. In this regard, Ozu's female characters might look less confrontational than Naruse's, whose excessive emotion is emphasised by the director's flamboyant formal style. But as seen in Chikako and Harue's case as well as Chikako's mirror-watching, Ozu's strength lies in articulating self-realisation and mutual understanding among female characters through a slow gaze, which builds up a sense of feminine subjectivity and solidarity outside of patriarchal control. In the Introduction of this chapter, I have discussed the similar 'profiled point of view shot' that Ozu deployed in his *shōshimin* films, where a wife looks at her 'failed husband' to sympathise with his sorrow. (Fig 5.1, compare with Fig 5.24) In *Woman of Tokyo*, such an 'inter-gender' gaze is replaced by an 'intra-gender' gaze from Harue to Chikako, generating the sentiment of sympathy instead of envy, jealousy or hostility dominant in other female relationships in the *woman's* film genre. The three variations of the modern Japanese women – the *modan gāru*, working woman, and housewife – discover here a way to acknowledge each other's reality and construct the trinity of modern femininity without depending upon the mediation of masculine existence and the male gaze.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the complex relationship between the everyday and the *modan gāru*. As a unique and scandalous image construct, the latter keeps a certain distance from the former, which instead assumes the existence of the *ryōsai kenbo* as the other model of femininity. This strict division and conflict between the *modan gāru* and the *ryōsai kenbo* (and the modern and the traditional) reflects the masculine perspective that makes moral decisions on feminine matters according to patriarchal ideology. In order to avoid this simple dichotomy and patriarchal mediation, I have suggested a more multifaceted identity for the *modan*

⁵⁹ Russell, *The Cinema of Naruse Mikio*, pp. 73, 76. They may not be 'moga', but their 'behaviour and attitude are very modern'. Ibid., p. 73.

gāru, whose ‘modern’ experiences did not shun the realm of the domestic everyday. Discussing various discourses of the *modan gāru* in the first section, I have concluded that such a multiplicity presents a more useful conceptual tool for analysing the social phenomenon of modern Japanese femininity, which not only included the *moga* on the street but also the working woman at work and the housewife at home as its constituents. The second and third sections have applied this basic view to the filmic texts, identifying either the typical ‘failed *moga*’ narrative or a more complex perspective on gender transcending the dichotomy of *moga* vs. *ryōsai kenbo*. I think the examples of the latter, made by directors such as Ozu and Naruse, have presented a new way of looking at the genre of the woman’s film, which, even with the stylistic features of *shinpa* melodrama, can serve the vernacular interest of the female audiences without resorting to the ideological determination of patriarchy.

As discussed, the role of the everyday, as expressed through the visual emphasis of various domestic objects and spaces, is obviously important for the articulation of feminine subjectivity. Chikako and Omitsu, whom I have discussed, all construct their identity through such objects as kitchenware and mirror. However, the more interesting aspect of my discussion lies in the function of the diverse gazes that exists between genders, within a gender, or towards the self. The ‘inter-gender’ gaze usually connotes ideological violence deployed by the males upon femininity in order to stipulate and restrict morality (and modernity). The ‘intra-gender’ gaze is more open to possibility. If subordinate to the patriarchal logic, it could end up articulating the conflict between the *modan gāru* and the *ryōsai kenbo*. But it could also lead to mutual understanding among women, as seen in the case of Chikako and Harue in *Woman of Tokyo*, and could help build a true feminine solidarity that might exert its influence on the characters on screen, as well as on female audiences in the form of genre experience. The discovery of the Other through the gaze between two women is also supplemented by the discovery of the self through the gaze of self-examination. Thus what Harue actually sees through the image of weeping Chikako is that of her forgotten self, as if she looked through a mirror. (Fig 5.24) Such broadening of the self into a more general level of understanding, and uniting with the object of gaze, is a unique characteristic of female intra-gender gaze. Males, who

do not look in the mirror, seriously lack this ability, which I think explains the anxiety and frustration they typically suffer in the *shinpa* melodrama genre.

Throughout the chapter, I have attempted to actively interpret the role of the domestic everyday in constructing and supporting feminine subjectivity. However, it is also true that such domesticity conforms well to the ideal of comfortable middle class family life, as depicted in the *shōshimin* films. Almost all *moga* discussed in this chapter are also working women, though with variances in where they work. Does such economic and sexual autonomy outside transfer into their domestic everyday life or does it have to be compromised? As Wada-Marciano points out while discussing Omitsu in *Every Night Dreams*, even though ‘female figures are allowed to assert their own needs and desires’ at their workplace, making them ‘relatively modern’, such freedom and independence is contingent upon being placed within the public space. Once moved to a private space, their desire is bound by its own value system, which creates conflict with external work space.⁶⁰ Concurring with her criticism, I conclude that there is only a very fine line that can distinguish subjective modern femininity in the domestic everyday from submission to the fantasy of the bourgeois family life. The distinction between them was greatly influenced by the nature and extent of patriarchy operating in the family, and some examples of the ‘failed patriarch’ – such as Chikako vs. her brother – can be interpreted as a critique of the bourgeois family system. The role of the *shinpa* style in criticising such weak patriarchs should also not be underestimated.

Ozu’s conception of femininity experienced great change in the war and postwar period, and can be distinguished from the mid-1930s films discussed in this chapter. I have emphasised that contemporary Japanese critics were commonly critical of *Woman of Tokyo* for its being distanced from Ozu’s staple rendition of middle class everyday life. In this regard, Ozu’s prewar female characters were not entirely free from the masculine gazes inherent on screen, failing to identify themselves without appealing (if partly) to the image of an extraordinary *moga*. However, as Ozu moves into the postwar years, female characters start to be anchored more and more firmly to their everyday space and time – be it domestic or outside. Neither the *moga* nor the *ryōsai kenbo* discussed in this chapter can dream

⁶⁰ Wada-Marciano, *Nippon Modern*, p. 40.

of the trivial conversation among female friends in *Shukujo wa nani o wasuretaka/What Did the Lady Forget?* (1937) or the frequent outings of Noriko in *Late Spring*. As will be discussed in the postwar part, the implication of such a change in femininity is not only confined to gender issues, but rather defines the essence of the postwar as a historical entity. The everyday, as a more private time and space, will function as the antithesis of what war meant to Japanese people, and this new femininity occupied the centre of such an argument. This chapter can be regarded as an introduction to how such a development was possible by redefining and reconstructing the ‘modern’ of modern Japanese femininity, which had everything to do with ‘gazes’ and ‘relationality’.

PART II

THE OFUNA YEARS (1936-1963)

CHAPTER 6

War and the Postwar in Modern Japanese History

Introduction

In the preceding chapters, I discussed Ozu's prewar films from the perspective of modern everyday life in Japan. I have suggested the basic prototypes of Ozu's cinema by summarising them into three distinct chapters, each dealing with the different subjects of the modern everyday – middle class *sararīman*, lower-middle class *shomin*, and the *modan gāru* – which also correspond to the three major genres – the *shōshimin* films, the *shitamachi* films, and the woman's films – that Ozu was working on during this period. I have argued that Ozu was a modern filmmaker, not merely because he was formally inventive, but in the sense that he never detached himself from contemporary matters, as expressed on screen in the form of the representation of everyday life. This was evidenced in the consistent attitude of contemporary Japanese critics, whose main concern was how faithful Ozu was to this 'seikatsu (life)' in his films rather than how virtuoso he was in terms of cinematic form, which was unanimously accepted as a given and thus beyond the need for further discussion.

In this section of the thesis – The Ofuna Years – I will continue to examine the issue of modernity and the everyday in Ozu's films. However, since the historical era that will be covered here includes the war in the late 1930s and the first half of the 40s, the question needs a little amendment, so that it focuses more on the 'change'

that the war had caused in Ozu's conception of the modern everyday. Can the postwar be distinguished from the prewar in Ozu? If so, in what way? In order to answer this major question in the following chapters, it is first necessary to examine the nature of the war and the postwar in the Japanese context, which will be the main goal of this chapter.

The war (*sensō*) and the postwar (*senjō*) are as ambiguous a concept as modernity is, but they certainly defined more than half of the nation's twentieth century history. In the first section, I will summarise the representative characteristics of the two historical concepts as well as periods, and examine their relationship with modernity, especially with regard to the controversy of continuity/discontinuity of modernisation in the process of the prewar – war – the postwar. The Overcoming Modernity symposium and its influence on postwar intellectual society was a major example of the effort to make sense of modernity in terms of Japan's own history. The second section will analyse the changing nature of everyday life in postwar society, which was greatly influenced by political democracy and economic development. However, the change was also balanced by an unchanging continuity with a perspective on the past. Ozu had already been delving into this retrospective sentiment in his prewar works (as exemplified by the Kihachi films), but it now evolved into a more pervasive social symptom thanks to the additional layer of contextuality of the war. I will discuss the issue of the memory (or amnesia) of the prewar and war as the operating mechanism of this collective psychology of the past, which, along with the sense of the changing present, dominated the postwar everyday life of Japanese people.

War, Postwar and Modernity

1. Continuity/discontinuity between Wartime and the Postwar

Sensō and *senjō*, though apparently clear historical events, are in fact complex concepts that have provoked lasting controversy over definition and nature. It is not

even that clear when the war had begun and finally ended. The Second Sino-Japanese War started in 1937, which then was expanded to the Pacific War in 1941, but if calculated from the point of when Japan invaded Manchuria, the war began in 1931, prompting its labelling as the ‘fifteen-year war’. In this sense, it could be argued that there was a very short actual ‘prewar’ period for Ozu, who debuted as a director in 1927, and that his filmmaking was not able to completely avoid the shadow of war throughout the 1930s. For instance, the original end sequence of *I Was Born But...* included an episode of a marching troop that the elder son encounters while he is running away from home. In *Mata au hi made/Until the Day We Meet Again* (1932), the male protagonist is drafted and is going off to the war, as its original title, *Shōfu to heitai/A Prostitute and a Soldier*, suggests.¹ A few years later in 1936, another reference to war appears in *Daigaku yoitoko/College Is a Nice Place* in the scene of the college students’ military drill, which opens and closes the film.

The war’s end and the beginning of the postwar are also difficult to define. Most Japanese people believe that it happened on the 15th of August, 1945, when the emperor Hirohito’s announcement of surrender was broadcast, but the following Allied (practically, US) Occupation was finally ended by the Treaty of San Francisco in 1951.² Then there has been a controversy over how long this period of ‘the postwar’ lasted. There was once an official attempt to end it in 1956, when the Japanese government, in its White Paper on the Economy, declared that ‘already, the postwar is over (*mohaya sengo de wa nai*)’.³ Nevertheless, *sengo* continued as the defining concept throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, obsessively dominating the psyche of Japanese people as well as intellectuals, manifested in the repeated questions of ‘what is the postwar?’ and ‘is it still continuing?’. As Harry

¹ The original title was changed by the censorship authorities in the midst of a growing militaristic atmosphere after the Manchurian incident. Japanese critics’ interpretations of the film were split between support of a militarist ideology and anti-militarism. Firumu āto sha (ed.), *Ozu yasujirō o yomu: Furuki mono no utsukushii fukken* [*Reading Ozu Yasujiro: Beautiful Restoration of the Old*] (Tokyo: Firumu āto sha, 1994), p. 121.

² Okinawa presents an extreme case, where the postwar had not really begun until the US Occupation ended in 1972 and the territory was returned to Japan.

³ The declaration actually corresponded with the start of the high growth era, and the phrase ‘resonated in popular imagination, and ... became a widely circulated buzzword that defined the upbeat spirit of the era’. Andrew Gordon, ‘Democracy and High Growth’ in William Theodore de Bary, Carol Gluck, and Arthur E. Tiedemann (compiled), *Sources of Japanese Tradition, second edition, vol. 2* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), p. 1090.

Harootunian confesses, ‘it seems that the Japanese, like those of us with a professional interest in the country, have lived a permanent postwar that shows no sign of ending’.⁴ Perhaps, as Carol Gluck points out, this ‘long postwar’ has lasted even to the point of anachronism because the Japanese clung to the ‘contentment with the status quo’, supporting the institution that allowed them prosperity throughout the period.⁵

Not only had *senjo* been obsessively long, but it was also heterogeneous, composed of several junctures that divided the era into sections of distinguishable political and economic agendas; the instability of the Occupation era was not the same as the recuperation of the 1950s, which was also different from the optimism of the high growth period of the 1960s and after. Gluck categorises these different aspects of the Japanese postwar experience into five different postwars, each with varying attitudes of relating the postwar to the prewar and wartime past.⁶ First was the ‘mythohistoric postwar’, a *senjo* that emphasises the ‘absolute discontinuity’ from the past, the view that ‘history began anew, quite precisely on August 15, 1945’.⁷ It was an intentional effort to quickly convert Japan from war and militarism to peace and democracy, spurred on by the reign of the Occupation. The second was the ‘postwar as the inversion of the prewar’ (or as an ‘anti-past’), which recognises the wartime past but only as a negative experience, contrasting with the good present. In this version of *senjo*, Japanese people purged themselves as mere victims, blaming militarists for every sin committed in the war, and eventually erased all memory of the past. The amnesiac effect of the ‘inverted postwar’, combined with the ‘new

⁴ Harry Harootunian, ‘The Execution of Tosaka Jun and Other Tales: Historical Amnesia, Memory and the Question of Japan’s “Postwar”’ in Sheila Miyoshi Jager and Rana Mitter (eds.), *Ruptured Histories: War, Memory, and the Post-Cold War in Asia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 150. It may be argued that the postwar in Japan could have ended in the 1990s, when the enthronement of a new emperor coupled with an extended economic downturn finally raised doubts about the continuation of the postwar, and intellectuals began increasingly to contemplate the ‘post-postwar (*posuto senjo*)’.

⁵ Carol Gluck, ‘The Past in the Present’ in Andrew Gordon (ed.), *Postwar Japan as History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p. 93. In the same context, Kang Sangjung expresses the stagnant nature of the Japanese postwar as the ‘postwar as talisman’, where ‘things are fine the way they are’. Kang Sangjung, ‘The Discovery of the “Orient” and “Orientalism”’ in Richard F. Calichman, *Contemporary Japanese Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), p. 84.

⁶ Carol Gluck, ‘The “End” of the Postwar: Japan at the Turn of the Millennium’ in *Public Culture*, 10:1 (1997), pp. 4-9.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

Japan' slogan of the 'mythohistorical postwar', reinforces historical discontinuity between the prewar and the postwar.

The third was the 'cold-war postwar, or Japan in the American imperium', which justified the establishment of the first and second postwar in terms of international relations. The fourth was the 'progressive postwar', supported by intellectuals and the Left, who aimed for social and political reformation at every level. And the final 'postwar' was the 'middle-class postwar, or the postwar of private life', which was founded upon the motto of 'sameness, middleness, [and] homogeneity'.⁸ This advent of private life was partly due to the postwar experiences of the Japanese, who, 'liberated from the imperial state to *seikatsu*', faced the 'disjunction between what was called public sacrifice and private life'.⁹ However, as Gluck properly notes, this notion of 'middle-class-ness' was another myth or ideological vehicle that covered social differences and facilitated the grouping of Japanese people into a homogenous mass wherein they were labelled only as '*sararīman*' and 'education mamas' with the compensation of stable prosperity.¹⁰ In this sense, the middle class postwar cannot be separated from the other postwars, which together constructed the basic shape of postwar society as a collective product of historical amnesia, American influence, and economic affluence.

Based upon the changing political and economic conditions of postwar society, Gluck's five postwars all support historical discontinuity from the past. Especially in the first two cases, the postwar perceived the prewar either as non-existence ('mythohistorical postwar') or as negation and oblivion ('inverted postwar'). However, complete discontinuity cannot exist in history; rather, 'mythic insistence on disconnection kept bringing the past relentlessly to mind', which hovered behind like 'ghosts at the historical feast' as in Gluck's description.¹¹ Thus the continuity/discontinuity debate tends to capture both sides of a reality that constituted a larger, complex social system called the postwar. In the economy, for

⁸ Ibid., p. 8.

⁹ Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Gluck, 'The "End" of the Postwar', p. 4; Kang, 'The Discovery of the "Orient" and "Orientalism"', p. 85.

example, ‘the continuity arguments always emphasise *institutions*, while the discontinuity arguments focus on economic *structures*’ (italics added).¹²

In the Japanese film industry, many continued to work throughout the war, while, at the same time, suffering restrictions imposed by the military government. As Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto mentions with regard to Kurosawa Akira’s career during the war years, many filmmakers ‘did not actively resist militarism’ even if they did not purposefully collaborate with the government.¹³ Moreover, in the case of Kurosawa, some of the narrative motifs in his wartime films reappear in the postwar ones, confirming the continuity that ‘problematizes any facile differentiation of so-called postwar humanism and the wartime militarism’ of the director.¹⁴ As for Ozu, despite being conscripted twice in 1937 and 1943, thus suspending his filmmaking activities in Japan for several years, he was still able to make two significant films during the war period, *Toda ke no kyōdai/Brothers and Sisters of the Toda Family* (1941) and *There Was a Father* (1942), both of which displayed a more solemn style than before as well as achieving unprecedented commercial success.¹⁵ Later in the postwar era, Ozu began to be recognised as a representative of the Japanese cinema establishment, the image of which not only contributed to the continued appeal of his films to the mass audience, but also damaged his critical reputation as well. As much as he was praised as a great master, there also appeared ‘brave factions who were offended by his retrospective, early Showa-ish atmosphere’.¹⁶ Ozu was outspokenly defensive against this accusation, saying ‘What is permanently accepted is always new. ... [Ever-changing] fashion is nothing but an [ephemeral] phenomenon’.¹⁷ These remarks candidly admit to a continuity between his prewar and wartime works

¹² Bai Gao, ‘The Postwar Japanese Economy’ in William M. Tsutsui (ed.), *A Companion to Japanese History* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), p. 302. For example, the discontinuity arguments pay attention to democratic reforms and industrial restructuring in the postwar economy, which resulted in a great change from its prewar shape, while the continuity theories articulate the ongoing role of Japanese government as a driving force in economic development as it had been before and during the war.

¹³ Yoshimoto, *Kurosawa*, p. 87.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

¹⁵ *Brothers and Sisters of the Toda Family*, along with Mizoguchi’s *Genroku Chūshingura/The 47 Ronin* (Shochiku, 1941-1942), becomes the main resource used by Darrel William Davis to advance his argument for ‘monumentalism’, a rigorous style of slow tempo, which historically corresponded to the concern of militarism. D. Williams Davis, ‘Back to Japan: Militarism and Monumentalism in Prewar Japanese Cinema’ in *Wide Angle*, 11:3 (July, 1989), pp. 16-25.

¹⁶ Tanaka Masasumi (ed.), *Sengo goroku*, p 91.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

and the postwar era. They also serve as criticism of postwar society that was transforming at a dizzying pace, where opportunism was prevailing in the form of political ‘re-conversion’ to democracy (hence the notion of the ‘inverted postwar’). In a sense, Ozu’s postwar can therefore be better understood as being engaged in a long struggle to justify the continuation of what he had been doing in the past, which was well expressed in his famous metaphor of the ‘*tofu* maker’ who could make ‘only *tofu* but nothing else’. I will return to this issue in the following chapters.

2. Rethinking Japan’s Modernity in the Postwar Period

The continuation between war and the postwar is related to a major historical issue of Japanese modernisation, the meaning of which was re-examined and redefined in a new context during the war. The epitome of such attempts was the symposium on Overcoming Modernity (*Kindai no chōkoku*) held in 1942, which was serialised in the literary magazine, *Bungakukai (Literary Society)* and then also published as a book in 1943.¹⁸ Prominent Japanese intellectuals from various fields participated in the symposium and discussed the issue of modernity, which had been the primary agenda of the nation since its adoption from the West during the Meiji era. The discussion had not reached any meaningful, concrete conclusion in the end, which, as Sun Ge argues, could be due to the oppositional position between the two major groups of participants, namely, literary critics (such as Kobayashi Hideo and Kamei Katsuichirō) and historians/philosophers of the Kyoto School (such as Nishitani Keiji and Suzuki Shigetaka).¹⁹ The symposium nonetheless occupies a significant position in the intellectual history of Japan as it was the first organised effort by intellectuals to raise serious doubts about the modernisation process after Meiji. It can thus be understood as self-examination by Japanese intellectuals who

¹⁸ Lee Kyunghun et al. (eds. and trans.), *Taepyungyang junjaeng ui sasang [The Thought behind the Pacific War]* (Seoul: Imaejin, 2007), p. 11. The English translation of the symposium can be found in Richard F. Calichman (ed. and trans.), *Overcoming Modernity: Cultural Identity in Wartime Japan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

¹⁹ In terms of the methods of approaching the modernity issue, literary critics articulated personal, everyday experiences, paying attention to ‘Japanese sense of the physical, sensuous world’, while the historians/philosophers were more analytical and theoretical. Sun Ge, ‘In Search of the Modern: Tracing Japanese Thought on “Overcoming Modernity”’, transl. by Peter Button in Thomas Lamarre and Kang Nae-hui (eds.), *Impacts of Modernities* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2004), pp. 56-59.

were ‘certainly at a loss [at the time of the Pacific War], for [their] Japanese blood that had previously been the true driving force behind [their] intellectual activity was now in conflict with [their] Europeanised intellects’.²⁰ Explained in the model of the three spheres of the modern that I discussed in Chapter 1, this self-doubt marked a disruption of the modernity system by the challenge of one class of subject (intellectuals) towards the others (the state and the masses) as well as the self, the crisis of which continued in the postwar period.

The situation surrounding the Overcoming Modernity symposium shows that the wartime experience of the Japanese was a complex one, accompanying a full-scale reconsideration of the modernity that had long obsessed the nation. Thus, in the postwar years, even though the immediate feeling tended towards censure of the intellectuals’ move during the wartime, which had in effect bolstered fascist ideology and justified the war, ‘gradually ... this censure provoked an interest in returning to the rationale behind the symposium’.²¹ Takeuchi Yoshimi, for example, was a representative figure who, in the postwar period, attempted to recuperate the legacy of the symposium as a critical discourse on modernity. His basic view on the Overcoming Modernity symposium was that its meaning and implications had ‘layers of complexity’ that blurred the boundary between a ‘war of aggression’ and a ‘war of resistance’, and led wartime intellectuals into confusion and eventually ideological conversion to support for the war.²² Harootunian seems to understand this ‘complexity’ as being ‘empty of substance’, and thus criticises Takeuchi for underestimating the ideological ‘utility’ of the symposium for producing ‘complicity with fascism’.²³ However, as Sun and Calichman both argue, Takeuchi’s contribution lay less in his clarification of the relation between the symposium and the war than suggesting a new critical field in which Japanese modernity, as a general historical problem, could be constantly re-examined as the issue of the present. Thus with his discussion of the symposium, Takeuchi ‘reminds us that history can never be reduced to a thing of the past, since the present takes its shape

²⁰ Kawakami Tetsutarō, ‘Concluding Remarks to “Overcoming Modernity”’ in Calichman, *Overcoming Modernity*, p. 149.

²¹ Sun Ge, ‘In Search of the Modern’, p. 62.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 63.

²³ Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity*, pp. 43-44.

entirely on the basis of this past'.²⁴ By resuscitating the wartime experience in the present of the postwar, Takeuchi's work exemplified the historical continuity between the two periods that were mostly regarded as being segregated and unrelated. Modernity, being an unresolved legacy from the war, became another haunting 'ghost' of the postwar, but within a very different context from what it had been in the prewar years.

Ozu's postwar began with the same historical consciousness. His interviews and writings in the immediate postwar era after he returned from the front in 1946 reveal that the notion of 'Japan' or 'Japanese Cinema' had become a major concern of his in the midst of the triumphant advancement of American culture. Ozu's most significant wartime experience as a filmmaker was his encounter with recent Hollywood films in the late 1930s and early 40s while he was stationed in Singapore, the impression of which he often mentioned with admiration after the war. Donald Richie was right when he pointed out that the direct influence of those foreign films on Ozu was minor, at least in terms of his style, but he missed the implication of the anecdote within the wider picture, that is, that the experience of Hollywood cinema during the war was set against the notion of Western modernity that endorsed it as well as the nation that produced it.²⁵ Ozu in the immediate postwar period thus tended to perceive the matter of Japanese cinema in terms of a dichotomy with Hollywood cinema, weighing the possibility of the former through the gauge of the latter. In his first article published in the postwar period, aptly titled 'Kongo no nihon eiga [Japanese Cinema, From Now On]', Ozu analysed the tendencies of the Hollywood films he saw in Singapore and anticipated that postwar Japanese cinema would adopt them.²⁶ But he was also well aware that the two national cinemas could

²⁴ Calichman, *Overcoming Modernity*, p. 30.

²⁵ Richie argued that 'so far as influences on his style went, the foreign films had no more impact than his army experience, the war itself, and the war's democratic aftermath'. Donald Richie, *Ozu* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), p. 232.

²⁶ He mentioned three tendencies; firstly, realism based upon original novels such as John Ford's *Grapes of Wrath* (1940) and *Tobacco Road* (1941); secondly, films based upon the star system, which Hollywood had long excelled at; and thirdly, Technicolor films. Ozu understood that the second and third tendencies represented popular genre films, which 'back[ed] up' the more adventurous attempts of the realist films in terms of business. He thought such a balance exemplified the 'healthiness' of Hollywood studios. Ozu Yasujirō, 'Kongo no nihon eiga [Japanese Cinema, From Now On]' in *Bunkajiron* [*Current View on Culture*], 10 (11 January, 1946), reprinted in Nishiguchi Tōru (ed.), *Ozu yasujirō: Eien no eiga* [*Ozu Yasujiro: The Cinema of Eternity*] (Tokyo: Kawade shobō shinsha, 2003), pp. 104-105; Ozu yasujirō and Iida Kokomi, 'Ozu kantoku wa kataru [Director Ozu Speaks]' in *Kinema junpō*, (April, 1947), reprinted in Tanaka (ed.), *Sengo goroku*, p. 24.

not be the same, the realisation of which was not only expressed in the form of criticism of production practices in Japan but also as self-reflection on what he could do as a ‘Japanese’ director.²⁷ These differences (or restrictions) led him to the conclusion that Japanese cinema, in order to survive the competition in the market, had to ‘discover a unique taste’ of its own with, for example, displays of Japanese customs and manners, or traditional backgrounds such as Kyoto and Nara.²⁸

Such a shift in interest was reflected in his postwar films. It is improbable to think that Ozu hoped for worldwide marketability propelled by images of old Japanese cities such as Kamakura, Kyoto, and Nara in his three consecutive postwar films – *Late Spring* (1949), *Munekata kyōdai/Munekata Sisters* (Shintocho, 1950), and *Early Summer* (1951). However, the contrast between traditional spaces and war-torn Tokyo under reconstruction is very prominent, and I will discuss this further in Chapter 8 as ‘excursion films’. Here, I would like to mention Ozu’s first two postwar films – *Record of a Tenement Gentleman* (1947) and *Kaze no naka no mendori/A Hen in the Wind* (1948), where the matter of experiencing the postwar from a Japanese perspective is revealed in a more overt way (through the images of a destroyed Tokyo) than in the post-*Late Spring* films, where the issue tends to be complicated by a change of setting.

In the last scene of *Record of a Tenement Gentleman*, war orphans appear idling in Ueno Park – possibly an everyday sight at the time – around the statue of Saigō Takamori, who was a *samurai* and Japanese political leader in the early Meiji period. (Fig 6.1) The film deals with the growing personal relationship between a



(Fig 6.1) Saigō statue and war orphans around

²⁷ He compared the Japanese film industry to the mode of ‘handicraft’, in contrast to the authentically ‘industrial’ Hollywood, which was systemically provided with new technologies and talented human resources. Shiga Naoya et al., ‘Eiga to bungaku [Cinema and Literature]’ in *Eiga shunjū [Film Years]*, 6 (15 April, 1947), reprinted in Tanaka (ed.), *Sengo goroku*, pp. 27-28.

²⁸ Tanaka (ed.), *Sengo goroku*, pp. 24, 27.

woman and a lost child whom she temporarily takes care of. But the theme of sympathetic humanity is widened into a grander question of the future of Japan for the next generation in the last shot of the statue watching over the sky. Saigō, often called the ‘last *samurai*’, contributed to the fall of the Tokugawa regime and the establishment of the Meiji administration, but later led a rebellion against the government’s reformation plan to abolish the *samurai* class. For him and his fellow *samurai*, ‘the process of Westernisation was too rapid and indiscriminate’, resulting only in a ‘corruption of the Japanese spirit’.²⁹ But what is remarkable about Saigō is less his life than his posthumous heroic image, to which *Record of a Tenement Gentleman* also appeals. This ‘distorting process of legend-making’, beginning only a few years after he died a traitor during the revolt, was administered by the Japanese government as well as the Japanese people, who were all in need of a symbolic national saviour regardless of one’s political orientation.³⁰ Given this multifaceted nature of his image, it is hard to reach a simple conclusion about what exactly Ozu intended with the shot of Saigō’s statue. But it is certain that the director was expanding his usual rendition of the everyday into the question of national identity, which was in great crisis after defeat in the war and thus again in need of a unifying symbol such as Saigō.³¹

The last scene of Ozu’s next film, *A Hen in the Wind*, is a variation of that of *Record of a Tenement Gentleman*, but this time with a more hopeful vision for the future. Here a group of children, immersing themselves in watching (very possibly) a

²⁹ Ivan Morris, *The Nobility of Failure: Tragic Heroes in the History of Japan* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975), p. 251.

³⁰ Saigō was admired by ‘both extremes of the political spectrum, as well as the moderates in between’. Strong nationalists or ‘Japanists’ emphasised ‘his traditional samurai ethos and his intransigent attitude towards Korea’, while ‘liberals, democrats, and socialists’ paid attention to his ‘bold confrontation with the conservative Establishment’. In the postwar, SCAP (Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers, i.e. Douglas MacArthur and also his office that governed Japan as the Occupation force) regarded him as a ‘symbol of Japanese nationalism [and] militarism’, and actually attempted to demolish the statue in Ueno Park in vain. But on the other hand, his image was successfully adapted to the new era by his advocates, who now represented him as ‘Japan’s first great democrat’, fighting against ‘authoritarian or imperialist proclivities’. Morris, pp. 218, 221, 223-224, 273.

³¹ For Edward Fowler, who understands this film as Ozu’s ‘stinging critique of democracy and individualism, so vigorously championed by SCAP’, the statue represents ‘the nobler ways of an earlier time’ that is in great contrast with the postwar present. Joan Mellen takes a similar position, saying ‘It is the most politically meaningful image in the entire Ozu canon, inspired as it is by his horror of the new Japan to which his young men had to return from the war’. Edward Fowler, ‘Piss and Run : Or How Ozu Does a Number on SCAP’ in Dennis Washburn and Carole Cavanaugh (eds.), *Word and Image in Japanese Cinema* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 282; Joan Mellen, *The Waves at Genji’s Door*, p. 217

kamishibai (picture story show) on a street, do not look as dispirited as the orphans in *Record of a Tenement Gentleman*. (Fig 6.2) With this everyday situation Ozu makes a self-reflexive concluding remark about his role for Japan's next generation by juxtaposing his filmmaking (expressed as *kamishibai*) with the image of the statue of Saigō in the previous film. *A Hen in the Wind* also displays a more explicit consciousness of national identity by frankly confronting the contemporary social issue of America. The most explicit example of this appears in a publishing office scene, where the male protagonist (Shūichi [Sano Shūji]), a veteran who has just returned from the war to find his wife (Tokiko [Tanaka Kinuyo]) engaged in prostitution in order to pay for their sick child, talks about his frustration while having a drink with his former colleague. While Shūichi confesses, 'I understand she had no choice. But I cannot easily calm myself down. Something bothers me. I feel restless. ... I feel like shouting', a recently opened cabaret is seen through a window in the background with many couples dancing to a swinging jazz tune. (Fig 6.3) Shūichi thinks this music sounds 'sad (*kanashii*)', but his colleague (Ryū Chishu) disagrees and advises that Shūichi 'forget [the wife's deed] quickly' and 'try to think of [the music] as merry'.



(Fig 6.2) Children watching a picture story show in the background



(Fig 6.3) Shūichi and his colleague converse while dancing couples are seen behind

As I have discussed in Chapter 4, Ozu had already begun to develop the stylistic device of juxtaposing background and foreground, which contrasted with each other on both visual and a metaphorical level. In *An Inn in Tokyo*, the

juxtaposition is set between Kihachi, who is pretending to drink in the foreground, and the factory buildings in the background, the contrast of which articulates Ozu's critical view of industrial capitalism in modern society. (Fig 4.13) A very similar *mise-en-scène* reappears in *The Only Son* (1936), where the male protagonist and his mother talk about the son's shattered dream of worldly success, while Tokyo's incinerator building – the terminus of industrial production – is seen in the background, emitting smoke from its chimneys. (Fig 6.4) The cabaret in the background in *A Hen in the Wind* has the same juxtaposing function as the factory buildings, but if the latter's implication is directed towards a more general and less historical object of modern industrial civilisation (the issue of which is not confined to Japan alone), the former's case is more concretely founded upon Japan's history of war and Westernisation, which constituted the essence of the postwar society (but was mostly being denied as Takeuchi argued). The everyday activities of dancing, music, drinking, and talking flow through the scene allowing it to accumulate another layer of historicity within Ozu's conception of the everyday, which was not yet fully developed in his prewar films. In other words, Ozu's critique of modernity continues in his postwar film work as it had been in the prewar, but the object of the critical examination, modernity, now presents a more complex historical dimension within it.



(Fig 6.4) The contrast between the foreground and background – in *The Only Son*

The Everyday and Memory of the Past

1. Emergence of the Postwar Everyday

My discussion so far has elucidated the new conditions and challenges that Ozu faced at the start of the postwar period, which were closely related to the Japanese' experience of the war against the US. However, I would like to emphasise that this does not indicate that Ozu (and his rendition of the everyday) finally retreated from modernism into traditionalism. As I have argued, Ozu's quintessence lies in his analysis of an ever-changing contemporary Japanese society, and tradition or Japaneseness only served as a mirror upon which to reflect this contemporaneity, rather than as the ultimate purpose *per se*. Such an argument is not without controversy, for Ozu's cinema was situated in a marginal position in between the two contrasting worlds of modernity and tradition, as the Kihachi series proves, and whether he took sides with either of them remains an ambiguous and often contradictory question. For instance, Edward Fowler on the one hand argues that Ozu in the immediate postwar presented 'a profoundly conservative worldview' by ignoring Japan's desperate search for a 'new social order', but also mentions that 'this is not to say that Ozu favoured a wholesale return to prewar or wartime life and ideology. ... There is no evidence that he was enthusiastic about the military regime or about Japan's imperialist mission'.³² However, his final conclusion, though still maintaining neutrality, puts more weight on the director's reactive political stance saying, 'Ozu distanced himself as much or more from SCAP's agenda as he did from the militarists', at a time when distancing of any sort was not that much easier than during the wartime years'.³³

How therefore can we negotiate this tension between Ozu and the postwar? Had he really decided to reject change and adhere solely to the past? My answer, bearing in mind Ozu's ambiguity and marginality, was that he maintained his position rather than jumping into the chaos, but still recognised *and* approved of the changes induced by the postwar. This paradox of 'the change within the unchanged' can be compared with the Japanese philosopher Nishitani Keiji's argument in the

³² Fowler, 'Piss and Run', p. 285-286.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 286.

Overcoming Modernity symposium that ‘change’ and ‘changelessness’ are not separable but rather work in a dialectical way. Even the works of the greatest thinkers and artists, which are thought to be ‘eternal’ or transcendental are ‘a product of history’, which they had to struggle with in the context of their own era. Thus Nishitani concludes, ‘[H]istory necessarily changes while remaining permanence itself. ... [T]he mutable always emerges from out of the immutable’.³⁴

In Ozu’s postwar films, ‘changelessness’ is appreciated but always accepts ‘change’ in the end, as Nishitani’s idea of ‘change within permanence’ suggests. There are two ways Ozu realises this thematic point in his films. One is from the viewpoint of ‘changelessness’, namely, older generations (parents, or more specifically, fathers) who observe ‘change’ and lament their powerlessness to oppose it. As Mellen points out, there is a sense of reluctant acceptance of ‘the decimation of traditional culture’ and submission to the new society, which demanded more than ever that the Japanese people have ‘strength of will’.³⁵ On the other hand, I think there is also another way to grasp change, from ‘change’s own point of view’, that is, from the viewpoint of the younger generation and especially female characters, rather than as they are seen by an older generation and its patriarchal perspective. They are not as conscious as their parents are of what is being lost, and hence less overwhelmed by the demands of change. More precisely, what they seek is to live within the present everyday as it is, which should be differentiated from the notion of always chasing after change. In Nishitani’s words, this corresponds to a ‘struggle ... with the present day’, from which something eternal, unchanging, or traditional could also emerge.³⁶ With such an active attitude towards the present, I find a new possibility of negotiating the tension between changelessness and change, between tradition and modernity, which becomes an even more concrete and prominent matter in Ozu’s postwar cinema.

These two different ways of viewing change constituted the basic narrative structure of many of Ozu’s films in this period. For example, in the case of *A Hen in*

³⁴ Calichman (ed. and transl.), *Overcoming Modernity*, p. 183.

³⁵ Mellen, *The Waves at Genji’s Door*, p. 216, 218. It is also worth noting that the actor Ryū Chishū repeatedly takes the role of such a father (or Ozu’s ‘surrogate’ in Mellen’s term) in Ozu’s postwar films. *Ibid.*, p. 217. I will discuss the history of the actor’s characterisation in Shochiku films more in the next chapter.

³⁶ Calichman (ed. and transl.), *Overcoming Modernity*, p. 183.

the Wind, the narrative can be separated in two by the point at which Shūichi returns home from the war. In terms of dramatisation, the first half serves the latter part, presenting the crisis of the child's illness and Tokiko's prostitution, which will develop into the climax of the second part with Shūichi's anger. The latter part is also filled with the theme of the 'reluctant acceptance' of change, as represented by the aforementioned scene of Shūichi's conversation with his colleague and his final forgiveness of his wife. In this sense, the viewpoint of the second part is male-oriented, dominated by such grand discourses as war, Japan, and America. In comparison with this, the first part's mood, though it has its ups and downs, seems more ordinary and feminine. It is basically about Tokiko's everyday *seikatsu* struggling to survive day by day with her child, while waiting for her husband to return from the war. There are worries about inflation, the selling of goods for her upkeep, visitations from a friend, a day out on a riverbank, and, most of all, everyday walks both outside and at home, the movement of which shows Tokiko's varying emotions such as liveliness, serenity, and desperateness, according to the situation. (Fig 6.5) Thus, unlike Shūichi, who is too burdened by the past to adapt to social change, Tokiko just lives within the present as it is given (or more exactly put, has no other choice but to do so). This particular attitude provides Tokiko with a degree of moral superiority over Shūichi. If the husband is obsessed with the guilt and shame of prostitution, it is a matter of life or death for the wife. If the past haunts the former, the latter lives with it.



(Fig 6.5) Tokiko's perambulation at home (*left*), when she is taking her child to a doctor's office (*centre*) and when she is returning home from a picnic (*right*)

The restoration of the everyday and the rise of the woman as its principal subject was a distinctive postwar phenomenon, not only in Ozu's films but also Japanese society in general. Kano Masanao explains that the 'defeat in the war and the resulting loss of national authority' became an opportunity for the transition into the everyday, which was an expression of Japanese determination 'never to become a

prisoner of nationalism'.³⁷ This tendency towards the everyday also reflected the different realities that Japanese men and women were facing in the postwar situation; while the life of the former was 'damaged hard by defeat', for the latter there remained 'the achievement that during the war they had defended the everyday in the absence of men'.³⁸ Thus Japanese women quickly rebounded after the war to demand their political rights that had long been delayed since the prewar years. Guided by SCAP's policy, the first few years of the Occupation era saw successive pro-female legal reformations that included the approval of suffrage (1945), the protection of equal rights with men under the new Constitution (1946), and the abolition of the *ie* and the multigenerational *koseki* (Family Registry) system in the revised Civil Code (1947), which 'eliminated the mandate to continue family lines and primogeniture rules for succession and inheritance'.³⁹ Most of all, marriage, which had been normally practiced in the form of *omiai*, now became more of a personal matter for fulfilling one's pursuit of happiness. Article 24 of the Constitution specifically designated that 'marriage shall be based only on the mutual consent of both sexes', which implied the abolition of the requirement of a family head's consent for all marriages in his *ie*.⁴⁰ Kristin Thompson argues that Ozu's *Late Spring* very timely corresponded to these legal reformations in the late 1940s, by presenting 'almost a schematic layout of the new democratic values' in relation to daughter's marriage and the disappearance of *ie*.⁴¹

In retrospect, these legal reformations did not instantly result in the full-scale equalisation of gender relationship. In reality, 'remnants of the earlier patterns [were] present both in the consciousness of the Japanese people and in legal provisions', and

³⁷ Kano Masanao, *Nihon no kindai shisō* [Modern Japanese Thought], trans. by Choi Hyeju (Seoul: Hanwul Academy, 2003), pp. 184, 187.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ William W. Kelly, 'Finding a Place in Metropolitan Japan: Ideologies, Institutions, and Everyday Life' in Gordon (ed.), p. 208. The new Civil Code also included other provisions that were devised to enhance women's 'individual legal rights based on her free will'. A wife, by separating her own finances, could now protect her assets from her husband's misuse to gain profits out of them. After divorce, she could seek custody of her child. If her husband died, she could also be granted one-third of the total inheritance, which would be increased to a half by a later amendment. The new *koseki* system was based upon nuclear household, and women were given the right to establish her own Family Registry or to be listed as the head of household. In addition, the Labour Standards Act in 1947 protected equal pay for equal work regardless of sex. Yoshizumi, p. 189; Carl F. Goodman, *The Rule of Law in Japan: A Comparative Analysis* (London: Kluwer Law International, 2003), p. 94-95.

⁴⁰ Kaneko, pp. 10-12; Oda, p. 8.

⁴¹ Thompson, pp. 320-321.

‘gender-based discrimination operated across all levels of society throughout the postwar period’.⁴² *Omiai* ‘continued to be the norm until the 1960s, when the increasingly popular “love marriages (*ren’ai kekkon*)” began to outnumber arranged marriages’.⁴³ The segregation of labour according to gender also continued to exist. The influence of *ryōsai kenbo* ideology, the ‘official prewar ideal of womanhood’, did not ‘immediately evaporate in the postwar era’, and remained as a ‘transmuted vision of women that often emphasised their difference from men as homebound wives and mothers ... at least until the late 1980s’.⁴⁴ However, on the other hand, Japanese housewives started to interpret their domestic role more actively and progressively, securing their position as a subject of consumer culture in the way they had aspired in the prewar era. There is some controversy regarding whether and how this ‘domestic dominance’ – ‘in exchange for an inferior position in the public sphere’ – could guarantee the female equal status to the male in the family, but at least it is true that postwar Japanese women were now able to exert their ‘right of decision making in family finances’ to a considerable degree.⁴⁵

The resurgence of consumer culture is the epitome of the aforementioned ‘middle class postwar’ amongst Gluck’s five conceptions of *sengo*. As far as the ‘middle class’ was concerned, with regard to the context of postwar Japan, it should be noted that the word ‘class’ often ironically means ‘classless’, and therefore implied the homogenisation of the entire Japanese population. It is a well known fact that the majority of Japanese people in the postwar period (at least before the 1990s) tended to think of themselves as being in the ‘middle’.⁴⁶ This ‘classless’ consciousness implied not only that quality of life was perceived to be roughly equal throughout the population but also that the substance of their everyday life was

⁴² Yoshizumi, p. 183; Sandra Buckley, ‘Altered States: The Body Politics of “Being-Woman”’, in Gordon (ed.), p. 347.

⁴³ Hilaria Gössmann, et al., ‘Gender’ in Josef Kreiner, et al., (eds.), *Modern Japanese Society* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), p. 206.

⁴⁴ Uno, ‘The Death of “Good Wife, Wise Mother”?’ p. 294, 295.

⁴⁵ Bernard Eccleston, *State and Society in Post-War Japan* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), pp. 187-188; Ueno Chizuko, ‘Onna no sengo bunkashi: shōgai to shōhi no bunri o koete [A Postwar Cultural History of Women: Beyond the Separation between Life and Consumption] in Komori Yōichi et al. (eds.), *Towareru rekishi to shutai (History and Subject Inquired)* (Tokyo: Iwanamishoten, 2003), p. 251.

⁴⁶ ‘75 percent of the population’ claimed to be ‘middle class’ in the beginning of the 1950s, and this number rose to ‘90 percent’ in the late 1970s. Gordon, ‘Democracy and High Growth’, p. 1084. In another newspaper survey, even ‘presidents of major companies ... identified themselves as middle class’. Eccleston, *State and Society in Post-War Japan*, p. 175.

standardised. Hence most Japanese would usually integrate themselves into the ‘*sararīman* [and] fulltime housewife system’, working in the same company throughout their lives (*shūshinkoyōsei* or lifetime employment) and rearing a small number of children (usually two) in a *mochiie* (an owned house paid for by life-long loan).⁴⁷ Once out of the impoverishment of the immediate postwar years, Japanese consumers, faithfully responding to advertisements targeted at the masses, started to expand their collections of household goods at rapid speed after the mid-1950s.⁴⁸ In a sense, this transformation in domestic everyday life signalled the achievement of the prewar dream of the new urban middle classes, who aspired to Americanism and the consumerist’s heaven. What would the now grown-up children of *I Was Born But...* (1932) feel in this ‘bright new life of the modern era’, if they were reminded of their father’s sorrowful wish of more than a quarter century ago, ‘don’t be a pitiful *sararīman* like me’?

The changes in domestic everyday life, ranging from electrification to feminisation, also suggest the general social tendency towards political conservatism (‘reprivatisation’ in Lefebvre’s term) and the protection of the status quo. Ueno Chizuko calls this type of postwar Japanese society ‘*shiminshakai* (私民社会, private society) not *shiminshakai* (市民社会, civil society)’, which operates through the ‘naturalism of desire’ where ‘the pursuit of private desire is shamelessly affirmed without being restricted by any other kind of values’.⁴⁹ Kano Masanao, quoting Hidaka Rokurō and Fujida Shōjō, similarly differentiates between the ‘restoration of the everyday’ in the immediate postwar period and the ‘indulgence in the everyday’ after the 1960s.⁵⁰ Ueno argues that the tendency toward privatisation was underlined by postwar conservative politics. The ‘income-doubling plan’, promoted by the Ikeda

⁴⁷ Ueno, ‘Onna no sengo bunkashi’, pp. 249-252.

⁴⁸ Among the much sought-after new electric appliances, at the top were ‘three sacred regalia of modern life: television, washing machine, and refrigerator’, which would be replaced by ‘three C’s: car, cooler (air conditioner), and colour television’ in the mid-1960s. Gordon, ‘Democracy and High Growth’, p. 1084.

⁴⁹ Ueno, ‘Onna no sengo bunkashi’, p. 247. She argues that it was the first time in Japanese history after the Meiji Reformation that ‘private goals took priority over public goals’. Ibid.

⁵⁰ According to Hidaka, in the concept of ‘*ko* (個, individual)’, which was advocated in the early postwar, both ‘*shi* (私, private)’ and ‘*kō* (公, public)’ coexisted in unification. He argues that this concept should be distinguished from the ‘private life prioritism that was linked to political indifference’ and prevalent in the post-high economic growth era after the 1960s. Fujida calls this privatisation tendency ‘totalitarianism towards comfort’ or ‘private comfort-ism’. Quoted in Kano, *Nihon no kindai shisō*, pp. 187-189.

regime that took control of the nation in the midst of the Anpo crisis in 1960, was a ‘policy with the intention of inducing the Japanese people to turn from political problems to the ideology of private life’.⁵¹ In fact, during the very time of the 1960 crisis, Maruyama Masao, a prominent Japanese intellectual, specifically criticised the tendency of the postwar Japanese people to ‘enjoy private life in the sphere of consumption’, and worried that ‘the political indifference of the privatised group ... [was] very convenient for the governing elites who wish[ed] to “contain” activist groups’.⁵²

However, the relationship between the everyday and politics was not simply reactive, but also proactive and creative. In this regard, Maruyama’s point of view was directly opposed by the Japanese poet and critic Yoshimoto Takaaki, who characterised it as the ‘typical logic of progressive enlightenment thought or false democracy’, which neglected a ‘consciousness ... that ... value[d] private self-interest over the interests of social sectors’.⁵³ According to Yoshimoto, true postwar democracy should be bourgeois democracy with a ‘privatised consciousness’ that ‘neither idolises the organisation nor exalts state authority’.⁵⁴ In this sense, the privatisation of the masses did not necessarily mean political conservatism. Yoshimoto wanted, rather, to present his concerns about the bureaucratic tendency growing in all sectors of the postwar Japanese society, whether it was conservatives or communists, officials or activists, which he thought was threatening every individual’s fundamental rights to the everyday.

Takabatake Michitoshi similarly understood the essential agenda of the postwar Japanese intellectual, as defined by the question of how to make sense of the ‘common people’, who were ambiguously posited between ‘blind devotion’ to the ‘occupational group’ and ‘anti-authority sentiment’ that pushed them to ‘defend everyday life’.⁵⁵ Even intellectuals themselves, Takabatake argued, were targets of the argument against authoritarianism. In this way, the tension between collectivism

⁵¹ Ueno, ‘Onna no sengo bunkashi’, pp. 247-248. Gordon agrees, ‘[T]he ruling elites ... moved to capture a growing political centre by co-opting programs of citizen’s movements or left wing parties with initiatives such as the “income-doubling plan”’. Gordon, ‘Democracy and High Growth’, p. 1083.

⁵² Maruyama Masao, ‘8/15 and 5/19’, quoted in Gordon, ‘Democracy and High Growth’, p. 1096.

⁵³ Yoshimoto Takaaki, ‘Gisei no shūen (End of Sacrifice)’, quoted in Gordon, ‘Democracy and High Growth’, p. 1098.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Takabatake Michitoshi, ‘Nichijō no shisō to wa nanika’, p. 30.

and individualism could not be resolved through the analysis and criticism of the intellectuals, but only through each individual's 'persistent commitment to the everyday' itself.⁵⁶

Ozu's everyday was never explicitly political. His camera never turned its eyes on the people who go out on the street to make their voices heard. To what degree his camera appeared isolated and outdated in the face of the turbulent early 1960s' political environment will be discussed in Chapter 10 in relation to his final years of filmmaking. That being said, I would also like to point out that his particularly detailed observation of everyday life, that seeming contentment with the life of status quo 'inside' the small spaces of home, neighbourhood, workplace, local bars, etc., directly reflected the paradigmatic ideological shift of postwar Japan from sacrifice for the public good to the comfort of the private. The vitality of individuals living in the present represented a value system deficient in the grander logics of war, nation, tradition, and duty that had historically governed the workings of social groups in Japan. As mentioned in relation to the example of Tokiko vs. Shūichi in *A Hen in the Wind*, such confrontation of the individual against wider society was revealed through contrasted gender experience in Ozu's films, wherein female characters not only became the subject of the everyday but also, building upon that foundation, raised doubts about the ideologies of male-dominant society. I will return to discuss this issue in more depth in Chapter 8.

2. Memory of the Wartime Past

What is left then for those on the other side of Ozu's postwar everyday, namely, the older generation, especially older males, who tended to 'accept' change while remaining in changelessness? If such experiences as economic recovery, the flood of consumer culture, and the increased interest in private life discussed so far were all phenomena of the present progressive tense, what is still missing here is the sense of history that occupied such an important part of Ozu's postwar films. Just as Takeuchi attempted to revive the problem of Japanese modernity within the context of the postwar, Ozu re-examined his critique of modernity, which he had been

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 27.

dealing with in *shōshimin* films and the Kihachi series, in the form of memory that resurrected the unchanging past as an unresolved issue in the ever-changing present. Even though the postwar moved on regardless of the prewar and the war, it was unable to completely wipe out traces of the past that lingered on in the form of memory or a haunting ‘ghost’ as Carol Gluck has it.

But identifying the concrete object and objective of the memory remains a complicated task. For instance, Harootunian specifically notices a series of recent retrospective tendencies amongst conservative critics (or ‘revisionist historians’) in Japan, who argue that postwar Japan – in all its individualism as well as prosperity – was ‘long and interminable’ because ‘Americanism ... destroyed memory and encouraged social forgetfulness’ and thus ‘obliterated Japan’s prewar “traditional” past in order to establish a “postwar without an end”’.⁵⁷ This loss of true identity has caused the ‘self-loathing of Japanese people’, who are in need of ‘redemption from this awful, unending fate’.⁵⁸ What is suggested as a remedy is a ‘truer memory of cultural identity’, which Harootunian calls a ‘trick of memory’, that attempts to ‘revise recent history in order to provide the nation with ... the ruse of history’.⁵⁹ As a historian of modernity, Harootunian objects to this idea of returning Japan to the memory of the forgotten past (as the Overcoming Modernity symposium aimed for), which was ‘fuelled by nostalgia for a loss that never existed’.⁶⁰ He thus concludes that ‘history is not memory, the conservation of the archive’; history instead should be ‘the history of the present’, and thus ‘necessarily politicised’.⁶¹

In contrast, Yoshikuni Igarashi greatly diverges from Harootunian’s view of history in terms of his active acknowledgement of the role of memory in not only suturing (i.e. forgetting) but also exuding (i.e. remembering) the painful truth buried under Japan’s postwar history. Declaring that ‘memory does not exist outside of the boundaries of history’, Igarashi defines his work as an attempt that ‘problematizes the concept of history by claiming memory as an integral part of historical

⁵⁷ Harry Harootunian, ‘Japan’s Long Postwar: The Trick of Memory and the Ruse of History’ in Tomiko Yoda and Harry Harootunian (eds.), *Japan after Japan: Social and Cultural Life From the Recessionary 1990s to the Present* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), p. 99.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 103. Harootunian interprets this intellectual tendency in the 1990s as rooted in ‘an environment beset by a deep recession that aimed to reconstitute a national subjectivity anew’. *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

production'.⁶² Igarashi thus pays attention to the tendency of the Japanese postwar to obliterate the wartime past in the course of the nation's effort to justify the new relationship with the US after the war. He explains the unbalanced political and military relationship between the two countries with the term, 'foundational narrative', a melodramatic form where 'through the bomb, the United States, gendered as male, rescued and converted Japan, [which was] figured as a desperate woman'.⁶³ Only through this narrative of 'rescue and conversion', could the contradiction in post-1945 history between the two nations – 'once adversaries' transformed into 'close allies' – be resolved in order to seamlessly form the 'historical continuity from the war to the postwar period'.⁶⁴ Under this system, a faithful reconstruction of memory cannot be easily achieved within the realm of politics – 'asserting Japan's political sovereignty in international politics' would mean the annulment of the 'foundational narrative' and hence the complete denial of the postwar system – and instead, the working of memory has been channelled through cultural media.⁶⁵

It is interesting that both Harootunian and Igarashi depend on the medium of film to support their arguments. Harootunian, the advocate of the 'history of the present', discovers its cinematic possibility in Imamura Shōhei's documentary *Nipponsengoshi: Madamu onboro no seikatsu/History of Postwar Japan as Told by a Barmaid* (Nihon eiga shinsha, 1971). The film consists of parallel editing and exchange between footage of important political events (including demonstrations) in postwar Japan and personal interviews with a bar madam, Onboro, whose 'experiential' life, 'governed simply by the problem of getting on as best she can, given her circumstances', is 'entirely different from the postwar history of ... the revisionist historians'.⁶⁶ Almost shockingly ignorant and indifferent to the contemporary political circumstances that she watches in the footage, Onboro incarnates the present that is devoid of memory. As such, her life is free from the

⁶² Igarashi, Yoshikuni, *Bodies of Memory: Narratives of War in Postwar Japanese Culture, 1945-1970* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 5

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁶⁵ 'Culture, or tradition, was a convenient medium through which to project continuity with Japan's past in order to mask the historical disjuncture of Japan's movement from a former enemy to ally of the United States'. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

⁶⁶ Harootunian, 'Japan's Long Postwar', pp. 116-117.

double structure of postwar Japan – accepting the US-driven postwar framework while repressing the dormant resentment of it – which had driven the Japanese’ minds into schizophrenic division.⁶⁷ In the end, her postwar ends with her marrying an American sailor and happily leaving Japan for the US, a decision that Harootunian suggests would allow her a ‘liberation from social constraints’.⁶⁸

On the contrary, the films that Igarashi analyses – the extremely popular melodrama trilogy *Kimi no na wa/What Is Your Name?* (Ōba Hideo, Shochiku, 1953-1954) and the original instalment of the very popular monster film series *Gojira/Godzilla* (Honda Ishirō, Toho, 1954) – are heavily imbued with the memory of the past that comes alive to haunt the Japanese in the post-Occupation age. In the case of *What Is Your Name?*, the female protagonist, Machiko, is disturbed by the fear of confronting the death of her parents during the US air raid on Tokyo. According to the ‘fundamental narrative’ of the postwar, this miserable loss has to be repressed for the sake of the new era. But the memory lingers through the existence of Haruki, a man she happened to meet on the Sukiya Bridge on the day her parents died. The film, after various narrative twists, finally ends with their marriage, meaning ‘[Machiko’s] loss ... is tamed and normalized’, while the existence of the US, the original inflictor of the loss, is ultimately removed.⁶⁹ *Godzilla*, although suggestive in its graphic re-enactment of the attack on Tokyo and its destruction, also excises the US from the narrative; ‘memories of loss, inseparably tied with images of the US, ... remain unnamed, even as they fill the screen’.⁷⁰ (Fig 6.6) While invoking



(Fig 6.6)

the memory of war not only in the form of the ruined cityscape and injured bodies but also through the figure of *Gojira* itself, which represents the reawakening ‘souls

⁶⁷ Ibid., pp. 108-110.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 119.

⁶⁹ Igarashi, *Bodies of Memory*, p. 112.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 115.

of the war dead', the film is eventually faithful to the 'foundational narrative', remaining reticent about the other half side of the monster's embodiment, which is the US.⁷¹

The difference between Harootunian's and Igarashi's point of view represents the two temporal aspects – the present everyday and the past memory – that became the main subject of Ozu's postwar films as I will discuss in the following chapters. I, however, want to point out that, due to the multivalent position that Japan occupies in twentieth century history, the memory she retains (and invokes) cannot be defined in a simplistic way. I thus believe that the memory in the Japanese context functions in at least three different dimensions: 1) a nostalgia for prewar tradition and wartime militarism, as revisionists have imagined and Harootunian has criticised; 2) a victim consciousness as represented by the figure of Machiko or *Gojira*, which Igarashi has articulated; and 3) a guilt as victimiser, which has not yet been fully articulated in Japanese narratives. These triple faces of victor, victim and victimiser work together, each interfering with (and interrupted by) the other. Some of Ozu's postwar works, with their close interest in traditional images, may look supportive of the first type of memory among the three, but I will show in the following chapters that it is rather the second one – the victim consciousness – that is mostly in operation in Ozu's films. Moreover, as mentioned, there exists another temporal dimension of the present everyday, which, with the memory of the past, makes Ozu's cinema a much more complex presentation of history than Igarashi or Harootunian conceptualises.

Conclusion

Ozu's films always display the contradiction of temporality. While there is a place for the present, they also present the memory of the past. This chapter has clarified that this contradictory tendency has a historical background as his works became engaged with Japan's postwar period, which itself was a contradictory history demanding both progress and amnesia. While the postwar celebrated great

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 116.

technological and economic advancement and privatisation of everyday life, each individual had to come to terms with another side of ‘de-politicisation’, i.e. the memory of war that had to be repressed on behalf of the newly established US-Japan relationship. This suggests an important point that the contradiction of the present and the past is, as discussed in the prewar section, eventually the matter of Japan’s modernisation history, which cannot be understood without considering the nation’s relationship with the West. I thus discussed Takeuchi’s problematic with Japanese modernity in the context of the postwar, which is connected to the wartime intellectuals’ effort to re-examine it, or even farther back, when the modernisation first became the primary issue of the Meiji restoration. In this sense, the continuity in Japanese history is inevitable, albeit there many changes took place after the war.

Thus Japan’s postwar – at least by the early 1960s when Ozu died – was essentially a history of self-doubt and self-examination, demanding a new identity of the Japanese. Placing Ozu within this framework is not only proper but also effective for analysing his films. I thus discussed two of his immediate postwar films in relation to their self-reflexive nature to problematise Japan’s modern history, as exemplified by the Saigō’s statue in *Record of a Tenement Gentleman* and the male protagonist Shūichi in *A Hen in the Wind*. The confusion (or even anger) of the latter after being repatriated to his devastated homeland contrasts with the vision of Americanisation shown in the film in Ozu’s adroit way. This tension of modernity, however, turned into a more subtle working of memory in his post-*Late Spring* films after 1949. Ozu, after all, never made the memory of the past directly explode in a melodramatic form of *What Is Your Name?* or as the destructive monster *Gojira* does. He rather makes it permeate into the everyday, in conversations, movements and gazes, thus providing it a contemporary dimension. I discussed the tension that the two different temporalities generate with the example of the female character Tokiko as opposed to her husband Shūichi in *A Hen in the Wind*, and will return to this major issue of Ozu’s postwar in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 7

Ōfunachō and Its Vicissitudes

Introduction

In chapter 2, I discussed *kamatachō*, the distinctive style of Shochiku products, which was characterised by humanism with a ‘warm, cheerful and hopeful view of life’. I also suggested that *kamatachō* attempted to realistically depict urban daily life as it was, a significant aesthetic departure from previous tendencies in Japanese cinema. I concluded that the *kamatachō* existed in a multivalent form, allowing for contradictions between modern, artistic experiments and texts with a more conservative approach that arose mostly from the influence of *shinpa*. The same doubled structure was retained during Shochiku’s postwar years, though with some notable variations in specific genres and their comparative popularity. The goal of this chapter will be to investigate changes of this balance between aestheticism and commercialism, which together constituted *ōfunachō* (the substitute for *kamatachō* after the studio moved from Kamata to Ofuna). It will be a historical enquiry that seeks to trace the destiny of the realism of the everyday, which was the original motto of the young Shochiku filmmakers inclined towards modernism.

In order to examine this question, this chapter will begin by discussing the circumstances of the Japanese film industry during the war, that is, its relationship with the then prevailing nationalism and militarism. This will also lead to a discussion in the second section about the immediate postwar period, which forced the industry to undergo a sudden transformation in the opposite direction. The final

section will deal with another challenge to Shochiku's production line after the late 1950s, when young filmmakers and critics raised serious doubts about the validity of the 'everyday realism' of the *ōfunachō* in the face of turbulent political and cultural change throughout the nation. The discussion of these successive challenges to (and responses from) Shochiku and *ōfunachō* will properly situate them within the complex relationship between change and the unchanged (or historical discontinuity and continuity), which will provide a comparative perspective that will help us to fully understand Ozu's postwar cinema.

Coping with Totalitarianism – Ofuna's War Years

For both Ozu and Shochiku, 1936 was a year of significant transition. In February, Ozu left his hometown of Fukagawa and moved to Takanawa, a symbolic progression from a *shitamachi* village on the east side of the Sumida River to a high-class residential area on the west side. As Bordwell points out, it is an 'exaggeration' to draw a direct connection between this move and the director's 'shift to an interest in the moneyed classes', but it still 'symbolically' implies a tendency that would become more and more prominent in Ozu's films from then on.¹ On the other hand, about a month before Ozu's move, another significant relocation that marked the end of one period and the beginning of a new one took place; Shochiku's Kamata studio transferred to Ofuna, a process that required ten days work and ended with the whole workforce forming a grand parade down to the new studio.² (Fig 7.1) This was the fruition of one and a half year's effort by Kido, who was convinced that the future of Shochiku depended upon the successful switch to sound film.³ Meanwhile, the theatres owned by Shochiku completed the installation of sound systems for

¹ Bordwell argues, 'Ozu had made films about wealthy families before [this year], and he would make films about less well-off families afterward'. Bordwell, *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*, p. 275. But it is still true that the films about bourgeois families were made more frequently in Ozu's later years than in the prewar period, which signifies an important change in his approach to the everyday.

² Nagayama Takeomi (ed.), *Shochiku hyakunen shi, honshi*, p. 599.

³ In 1934 he launched a plan to produce every Shochiku film with sound. To this end, the company needed more extensive facilities suitable for the production of talkies – sound productions in Kamata studio were often hampered by the noises coming from nearby factories and passing trains – and found a new lot in Ofuna, a suburban city further away from Tokyo to the South.

exhibiting talkie films, and from April 1935, there were no *benshi* left in Shochiku's cinemas.⁴ Also in 1934, Nomura Hōtei suddenly died. This was a symbolic incident that, as Tanaka Jun'Ichirō argues, 'cut off the vestige of theatrical tradition that had been flown under Shochiku's films and provided new stages of activity for an emerging group of artists'.⁵ The company also continued to expand its power in the industry by taking control of Nikkatsu as well as independent studios such as Kyokutō and Zenshō, in order to compete with a new rival within the industry, Toho.⁶ Overall, then, in the history of Shochiku, the period of the mid-1930s marked the end of one era and the beginning of another, not only in terms of technological transformation, but also in terms of a wholesale change in physical space, working staff, and production policy.



(Fig 7.1) The parade to Ofuna studio

This period, however, also corresponded to the advancement of nationalism in Japan, with the beginning of a full-scale war between the nation and China in 1937. Ofuna, along with the other studios, could not help but be influenced by this. The Japanese government's intention to maintain control over the film industry had already begun by the mid-1930s, and culminated in the establishment of the Film Law (*eigahō*) in 1939 that stipulated rules such as: pre-production censorship; a licence system for film business; and the registration of actors, directors and cinematographers.⁷ In the next year, these rules were followed by the limitation of the number of films that could be produced (48 per year per each major studio). And this effort to control the industry eventually reached its climax in 1941 with the

⁴ Tanaka, *Nihon eiga hattatsushi Vol. II*, p. 300.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ High, *The Imperial Screen*, p. 153.

⁷ Tanaka Jun'Ichirō, *Nihon eiga hattatsushi Vol.III: Sengo eiga no kaihō* [*The History of Development of Japanese Cinema, vol. 3: The Liberation of Postwar Cinema*] (Tokyo: Chūōkōronsha, 1976), pp. 14-15. High notes that film industry representatives did not see the law as a serious impediment to their business at the time. Since there had already been 'the arbitrary or capricious decisions of officials scattered throughout the government structure', they figured that the new legislation would institute 'clearly defined guidelines' that might afford them 'security and freedom'. In the end, 'the details of the Film Law, even after its enactment, did not add up to a system of total vertical control'. High, pp. 73-74, 151.

enforced merger of ten film studios into three (Shochiku, Toho, and the newly established Daiei).⁸ (Fig 7.2) Shochiku was more affected than other studios in terms of ideological surveillance and regulation. In July 1938 and again in August 1940, the authorities in charge of film censorship at the Ministry of Home Affairs decided upon a list of guidelines for filmmaking, which could be summarised as the ‘exaltation of Japanese spirit’ while excluding the ‘infiltration of individualistic tendencies influenced by Western films’.⁹ This was a clear obstacle for Shochiku, whose *ōfunachō* had been openly advocating a more Western style in line with modern trends. For instance, the themes, content and imagery that the Ministry of Home Affairs specifically prohibited – ‘female smoking’, ‘drinking in cafés’, ‘frivolous language and action’ and ‘*shōshimin eiga* [that] depicts only the happiness of individual’ – were on the list of Shochiku’s specialties in terms of the studio’s subject matter, style, genre, and targeted audiences.¹⁰



(Fig 7.2) The meeting between the executives of the film studios (*left*: Kido is seen on the far left) and the members of the Information Bureau (*right*) in August 1941

The Ministry’s view, however, confirms the nature of the *ōfunachō* film as an advocate of individualism and urban everyday life that opposed the totalitarianism and industrial production activities that the government was encouraging.¹¹ The essence of the crisis – the confrontation between Shochiku’s identity and the state’s ideology – can be more properly understood when the situation of the other studios is taken into account. In the late 1930s, when the government-controlled system started

⁸ Such a severe measure was conducted by the Information Bureau (Jōhōkyoku), whose apparent reason for restricting the film industry was the limited supply of negative film; as addressed by a division manager in the department, ‘Since raw film for filmmaking is munitions, a mere one foot cannot be transferred for civilian use’. Tanaka, *Hattatsushi III*, p. 21.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 41. For the state, the control of the everyday life depicted in film was an important matter, as can be seen in this quote from Kita Sōichirō, the chief of Daily Life Leadership Office: ‘[W]holesome everyday speech is corrupted by twisted or eccentric forms of expression. ... [W]omen talk as if they were men. ... Aberrations in dress, both at home and in the workplace, are incorporated indiscriminately into today’s films, and this is then copied willy-nilly by the general public’. Quoted in High, *The Imperial Screen*, p. 169.

¹¹ The Ministry suggested that, instead of *shōshimin eiga*, Shochiku produce ‘films dealing with rural life’ that could visualise the labour of farmers. Tanaka, *Hattatsushi III*, p. 41.

to operate in full-gear, Shochiku enjoyed a short period of success with a series of melodramatic films that were ‘removed as far as possible from the political arena’.¹² Represented by such popular films as *Kon'yaku sanba garasu/The Trio's Engagement* (Shimazu Yasujirō, 1937), *Aijen katsura/The Love-Troth Tree* (Nomura Hiromasa, 1938), *Shin josei mondō/New Woman's Dialogue* (Sasaki Yasushi, 1939), *Junjō nijūso/Naïve Duet* (Sasaki Yasushi, 1939), and *Danryū/Warm Current* (Yoshimura Kōzaburō, 1939), this late 1930s ‘Shochiku boom’ benefitted from the fact that ‘other studio’s films that were reflecting wartime circumstances’ more or less excluded female audiences.¹³ (Fig 7.3)



(Fig 7.3) *The Love-Troth Tree* (left; Uehara Ken and Tanaka Kinuyo) and *Warm Current* (Takamine Mieko and Saburi Shin)

In contrast, while Shochiku was releasing a series of melodramas, Nikkatsu produced such war movie classics as *Gonin no sekkōhei/Five Scouts* (1938) and *Tsuchi to heitai/Mud and Soldiers* (1939) both directed by Tasaka Tomotaka. Toho was also very quick to ‘cooperate with the military and government in [its] production policy’ and release ‘films with a sense of the current situation’ such as *Shanghai rikusentai/The Naval Brigade at Shanghai* (Kumagai Hisatora, 1939) and *Moyuru ōzora/The Flaming Sky* (Abe Yutaka, 1940).¹⁴ As the war in China developed into the Pacific War and the governmental control became accordingly stricter, Shochiku’s ongoing ‘feminine’ and ‘entertainment-centred’ policy became

¹² High, *The Imperial Screen*, p. 164. The revenue of the studio in 1939 marked 19,875,000 Yen, a 50 percent increase from the last fiscal year. Tanaka, *Hattatsushi III*, p. 40.

¹³ Among these, *The Love-Troth Tree* was Shochiku’s most representative melodrama in this period. Standish presents this film as an example of the studio’s rendition of the ‘modern woman’, a ‘move away from the “pathetic” *shinpa*-derived melodramas chronicling women’s suffering towards an alternative conception of womanhood’. Nomura Hiromasa wanted to escape the vulgar melodramatic touch that he had excelled with so far, and make a ‘romance drama of high quality’. Standish, *A New History of Japanese Cinema*, p. 53. Masumoto Kinen, *Shōchiku eiga no eikō to hōkai – ōfuna no jidai [The Glory and Collapse of Shochiku Cinema: Ofuna’s Age]* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1988), pp. 107-108.

¹⁴ Tanaka, *Hattatsushi III*, p. 45. It took three years for Toho to complete *The Flaming Sky*, a spectacular movie about air combat, which included the direct involvement and help of the army, using 947 aircrafts and 15 cameras to record 328 hours of air combat scenes. Masumoto, *Shōchiku eiga no eikō to hōkai*, p. 130.

more awkward and ‘irritating (*jirettai*)’ to the authorities, and was criticised as ‘cartilage cinema, almost lacking social sensibility’.¹⁵ Tsumura Hideo, who criticised *ōfunachō*’s effeminacy, was the representative film critic who argued for active state control over the film industry. What he demanded of Japanese cinema was ‘spirit’ or ‘the will of the man who lives by ideal or faith’, and thus most entertainment films that lacked this will power became the target of his criticism.¹⁶

Ozu occupied a very peculiar position in this turbulent war period. He was one of the few major Japanese directors who actually experienced the front as a soldier and returned alive, during which time he completely missed the aforementioned late 1930s’ Shochiku boom. (Fig 7.4) How the war experience influenced Ozu is an



(Fig 7.4) Ozu before departing for the China front in September 1937

interesting issue, which requires more extensive research beyond the confines of this thesis. High, mentioning the difference between Ozu and Mizoguchi, argues that the former had a very realistic concept of war and wanted to transfer it onto the screen.¹⁷ The plan was never actualised, but given that his idea of war emphasised ‘the radical discontinuity separating the psychology of the civilian from that of the soldier’, his war film could have been quite different from other films with humanist approach such as *Five Scouts* and *Nishizumi senshachōden/Legend of Tank Commander Nishizumi* (Yoshimura Kōzaburo, Shochiku, 1940).¹⁸ However, even if this more realistic vision of war is admitted, whether Ozu had the requisite ‘uncharacteristic

¹⁵ Masumoto, *Shōchiku eiga no eikō to hōkai*, p. 122, and Tsumura Hideo, quoted in Tanaka, *Hattatsushi III*, p. 40.

¹⁶ Tsumura also participated in the Overcoming Modernity symposium, where he defined Americanism as ‘our greatest enemy’, and argued for the ‘war of culture’ against it. Hase Masato, ‘Nihon eiga to zentai shugi: Tsumura Hideo no eiga hihyō o megutte [Japanese Cinema and Totalitarianism: In Relation to Tsumura Hideo’s Film Criticism]’ in Iwamoto Kenji (ed.), *Nihon eiga to Nashonarizumu [Japanese Cinema and Nationalism]* (Tokyo: Shinwasha, 2004), pp. 278-279; Calichman (ed. and trans.), *Overcoming Modernity*, pp. 118-127.

¹⁷ High, *The Imperial Screen*, pp. 181-183, 186-188.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 211. Ozu was aware of ‘a distinct mental change’ at the front, the process that begins with ‘the first time you come under fire’. It is a change into an ‘affirmative mentality’, under which ‘there is no limit to our behaviour’. He said, ‘It makes you figure that war’s the business of destroying buildings. You get the feeling it’s perfectly all right to blast a house to pieces’. Quoted in *ibid.* pp. 209, 211; Tanaka Masasumi (ed.), *Ozu yasujirō zenhatsugen*, pp. 118-119.

nationalism in deciding to “affirm” the aims of the war’, as High argues, still remains questionable.¹⁹ At least, his wartime films offered ambiguity and indirectness regarding the war and nationalistic ideology, while maintaining focus on the everyday life of individuals.

For example, *Ochazuke no aji/The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice*, his first (unfinished) project after returning from China in 1939, is less an ‘ideal piece of home-front morale boosting’ as Bordwell suggests than an authentic home drama about the restoration of a husband-wife relationship *by means of* the husband’s going to war.²⁰ As the completed script reveals, *The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice* is essentially bourgeois in setting, characters, and narrative. I thus agree with Tanaka Masasumi, who regards this script as a part of Ozu’s ‘*yamanote teitaku mono* (films of *yamanote* [i.e. bourgeois] mansion)’ along with *What Did the Lady Forget?*, which Ozu directed two years before going to war, and his next film *Brothers and Sisters of the Toda Family*.²¹ I would also add that it is not merely the ‘bourgeoisie’ but rather bourgeois ‘ladies’ that these films focus upon. Compared to their prewar counterparts dealt with in Chapter 5, these affluent female characters conveyed a different spectrum of everyday life that has significant implications for Ozu’s postwar films in general, as I will discuss in the next chapter.

I also wish to question the prevailing viewpoint in Ozu studies that sees the presentation of bourgeois life in these wartime films as an object of criticism from a nationalistic standpoint. Clearly, there is an element of ‘morale boosting’ in the face of the Japanese bourgeoisie who were not active in supporting the current war. For example, in the script of *The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice*, a wife (Ayako) of bourgeois origin ignores her husband (Mokichi), who is from the countryside, but finally corrects her behaviour after discovering that he is being conscripted. The edifying current of the film culminates in the moment that the husband slaps the wife, ‘criticis[ing] her selfishness’, which Bordwell interprets as a ‘reminder of her patriotic duty’.²² However, not only is there no actual slapping scene in the script –

¹⁹ High, *The Imperial Screen*, p. 183.

²⁰ Bordwell, *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*, p. 280.

²¹ Tanaka Masasumi, ‘*Ochazuke no aji kaidai* [Introduction to *The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice*]’ in *Kinema junpō rinji zōkan: Ozu to kataru* [*Kinema Junpo Special Issue: Talking with Ozu*], 1136 (7 July, 1994), p. 48.

²² Bordwell, *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*, pp. 280, 281. This also resembles the ‘failed *moga*’ narrative I suggested in Chapter 5.

the incident is only told by Ayako to her friends afterwards – but also its implication is far from moral reproach of her bourgeois lifestyle.²³ In fact, what changes Ayako’s attitude towards Mokichi is the husband’s ‘boldness’ or ‘easygoingness’ in the face of his conscription.²⁴ The simple dish of *ochazuke*, which Mokichi shares with Ayako before leaving, is a metaphor for such a character as his, being ‘intimate, more primitive, and easy without reserve or pretence’.²⁵ I think that equanimity and plainness correspond to the essence of Ozu’s everyday, which remains more or less resistant to the maelstrom of war.²⁶

Overall, during the 1940s until the end of the war, ‘most Shochiku movies suffered confusion and dullness’ which succeeded in making the company look like a ‘straggler behind the times’.²⁷ Some critics identify the cause of the company’s crisis in Kido’s ‘anti-authoritarian’ liberalism, which could not make itself compatible with state ideology, and Kido indeed had to resign in 1943, taking responsibility for the recent decline in box-office returns. But ultimately the essence of the problem was the inflexibility of *ōfunachō* in the face of the changing demands of a Japanese society that was losing patience with Shochiku’s ‘easygoingness like a bath with tepid water’.²⁸ And more broadly speaking, it was beyond a matter of certain specific genres or styles, but rather more to do with the filmmaking practice in Ofuna studio itself. As Masumoto points out, the nature of filmmaking in Shochiku – ‘easygoing and enjoyed by everyone’ – did not permit space for the ‘manliness of the “state” or

²³ Mokichi’s attitude towards Ayako is consistently gentle throughout the script. The slapping happens within the context of the couple’s mutual understanding and compromise on the day when the husband receives the draft notice. In Ayako’s own words: ‘I could see his eyes were also full of tears. So I said, “No, please don’t cry. You’re a man. Going to war is...”, but then he said, “Fool! Can’t you understand my feeling?” and suddenly gave me a slap’. Ikeda Tadao and Ozu Yasujirō, *Ochazuke no aji* [*The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice*], reprinted in *Kinema junpō rinji zōkan*, p. 63.

²⁴ Ayako, hearing about the draft notice on her trip, hurriedly returns home to find her husband sleeping easily, even snoring, as if nothing had happened. She is ‘overwhelmed’ by the sight. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

²⁶ It is well known that the censorship board rejected the script because *ochazuke* was too humble a dish for a man going to war. But, according to Tanaka Masasumi, the real reason for the rejection was the ‘ladies of leisured class, whose conduct was too realistically depicted to fit the morals of the times’. This fact contributes to my argument that the script was more concerned with the lives of the bourgeois women, and failed as a ‘morale booster’ for the militarists. Tanaka Masasumi, *Ochazuke no aji kaidai*, p. 48.

²⁷ Tanaka, *Hattatsushi III*, p. 42. Masumoto, *Shōchiku eiga no eikō to hōkai*, p. 134.

²⁸ Ōba Hideo, ‘*Ōfunachō no senchū sengo* [The Wartime And the Postwar of *Ōfunachō*]’ in Imamura Shōhei et al. (eds.), *Kōza nihon eiga 4 – Sensō to nihon eiga* [*Lectures in Japanese Cinema, vol. 4: War and Japanese Cinema*] (Tokyo: Iwanamishoten, 1986), p. 190. Ōba Hideo, the director of *What Is Your Name?* trilogy, also uses the metaphorical expression that, ‘the age of rice or barley instead of confectionary or cake, [that is,] the age of the substantial and virile instead of the witty and refined had come’, and affirms that ‘the light of *ōfunachō* had gone out’. *Ibid.*

the enormity of the “government””.²⁹ That discrepancy or distance between the studio and politics was both a strength and a weakness for Shochiku, a state which would persist even after the war ended. As we will see, it is thus very interesting to see how the fate of *ōfunachō* repeated a similar pattern of short boom and gradual downfall in parallel with changes in postwar society.

The Return of *ōfunachō*

The postwar for Shochiku, as for other companies, arrived with the US Occupation. This foreign occupancy, the first in Japanese history, largely meant the democratisation (in the American sense) of Japanese society as well as the film industry. Led by staff members who were young New Dealers, early Occupation policies reflected their ‘inherent optimism’. They expected that the Japanese ‘general public’, once liberated from their ‘military rulers’, could be ‘re-educated according to the new democratic values’.³⁰ And film was one of the most important communication vehicles for promoting this new political concept to the Japanese. The regulation of the film industry was undertaken by the Civil Information and Education Section (CIE) of the Occupation government, which, led by David Conde, controlled the media through both encouragement and censorship. Thus, as early as 22 September 1945, addressing a gathering of representatives from the film industry, it presented three core principles for filmmaking under the Occupation – ‘abolishing nationalistic militarism’, ‘promoting individualistic tendencies and activities’, and ‘guaranteeing that Japan will not be a threat to world peace and safety’ – followed by ten recommended subjects such as the ‘resettlement of Japanese soldiers into civilian life’ and ‘developing political consciousness and responsibility amongst the people’.³¹ Later in November of the same year, Conde also notified the industry of

²⁹ Masumoto, *Shōchiku eiga no eikō to hōkai*, p. 138.

³⁰ Kyoko Hirano, *Mr. Smith Goes to Tokyo: Under the American Occupation, 1945-1952* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992), p. 4. This ‘earlier’ policy, however, would be soon modified by newly arising political conservatism in the Cold War era, which thought the previous efforts too ‘liberal ... nourishing leftism and communism’. Ibid., pp. 3-4.

³¹ Satō Tadao, *Nihon eigashi [History of Japanese Cinema] 2: 1941-1959* (Tokyo: Iwanamishoten, 1995), p. 163, and Hirano, *Mr. Smith Goes to Tokyo*, p. 38.

thirteen prohibited subjects, including feudalistic themes such as ‘vengeance’ and ‘suicide’.³²

This social experiment expedited the release of the film companies from the militaristic suppression they had suffered throughout the war years. However, the abrupt social transformation from wartime nationalism to Western democracy also caused confusion and frustration amongst Japanese filmmakers, who, until just a few months previously, had been making films laden with the opposite political messages. And the Occupation government was no less enthusiastic or assertive about its vision for Japanese film. While most filmmakers wanted to produce ‘escapist entertainment movies, musicals, or comedies’, Conde did not approve of such a tendency, arguing that ‘this was completely avoiding the mission given to film to democratise Japan’.³³ As a result, just as in the war years, there were conflicts between the government and the filmmaker over the contents of scripts and the depictions in completed films.³⁴ The Occupation government accepted this uncooperativeness as a form of ‘quiet sabotage against the purpose of the Occupation’, while for Japanese filmmakers, it was simply a new form of the same authoritarianism, with ‘GHQ’s censorship replacing that of Naimushō (the Ministry of the Internal Affairs)’.³⁵

For Ofuna, this excessiveness of politics resulted in undesirable conditions for the revival of *ōfunachō*, which, according to Kido, should be more about ‘entertainment’ than ‘social commentary’. As a producer, Kido had always prioritised the response of the majority audience rather than that of intellectuals and critics, and believed that ‘the masses will never follow if a film is estranged from objective understanding’.³⁶ His emphasis on the director system as well as a ‘cheerful and enjoyable’ style eventually helped to secure the commercial viability of Shochiku’s

³² Satō, *Nihon eigashi* 2, p. 166.

³³ Tanaka, *Hattatsushi III*, p. 215, and David Conde, ‘Nihon eiga no senryōshi [The Occupation History of Japanese Cinema]’ in *Sekai*, (August, 1965), quoted in Satō, *Nihon eigashi* 2, p. 167.

³⁴ For example, Conde, a non-professional in filmmaking, not only suggested the basic idea of *Minshū no teki/The Enemy of People* (Imai Tadashi, Toho, 1946), which dealt with the vices of militarists and capitalists during war, but also demanded revisions on over twenty points in the script. Imai, completing the film without the due revisions, had a hard time persuading Conde to approve it for release. Satō, *Nihon eigashi* 2, pp. 176-177.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

³⁶ Kido Shirō, *Nihon eiga den*, p. 222. In the late 1930s, for instance, Kido was much more supportive in producing the ‘low-brow’ melodrama *The Love-Troth Tree* than Yoshimura’s highly sophisticated romance drama *Warm Current*. *Ibid.*, pp. 172-174; Yokomizo Tatsuhiko, *Shōchiku no uchimaku*, pp. 70-71.

products, but on the other hand, he was against the artistic ambitions of individual directors, whose ideals were in constant negotiation with the principles of *ōfunachō*. Tanaka Jun'Ichirō suggests that Kido even believed that 'Shochiku's filmmakers, who had long grown up by the *ōfunachō*'s home drama [tradition], were not sensitive enough to [deal with] social realities and the sense of the times'.³⁷ Kido's tendency to give precedence to public reception over individual statement was later demonstrated in the case of Kobayashi Masaki's *Kabe atsuki heya/The Thick Walled Room* (made in 1953, released in 1956), which, dealing with the subject of war criminals, was 'put on the shelf (*okura*)' by Kido himself.³⁸ His reasoning repeated the same point; it is not desirable that a director, however 'young, sensitive, and talented', 'insists on his dogmatic subjectivity that cannot be understood by the masses'.³⁹ It may thus be inferred that by the 1950s, Kido's idea of *ōfunachō* had become a firm (if not dogmatic) belief.

Nonetheless, as may also be seen in the late 1930s, Shochiku was at its strongest when the two contrasting elements of art and popularity coexisted in harmony, and at its weakest when the contrast turned into confrontation. Another short 'Shochiku boom' occurred in the early 1950s due to this form of precarious coexistence. First, there was a boost in box-office returns aided by the success of popular melodramas. The signs of recuperation began to appear at the beginning of the 1950s, when Shochiku regained its position as top film company according to distribution revenue, which it had lost to Toho and Daiei during the late 1940s.⁴⁰ The peak of Shochiku's popularity was in 1953 and 1954, when the *What Is Your Name?* trilogy was an unprecedented hit – even bigger than *The Love-Troth Tree* trilogy, the previous record-holder in Japanese cinema – and made official the return of *ōfunachō*. (Fig 7.5)

³⁷ Tanaka, *Hattatsushi III*, p. 304. Yoshimura Kōzaburō, whose plan to direct *Itsuwareru seisō/Clothes of Deception* (1951) was not supported by Ofuna, finally left the studio with his then scriptwriter Shindō Kaneto, and established an independent production company, Kindai Eiga Kyōkai. *Ibid.*, p. 308.

³⁸ According to Richie, this film was 'one of the very few Japanese films to raise the question of responsibility for the war', and thus 'not the sort of film one expected from Shochiku'. Donald Richie, *A Hundred Years of Japanese Film* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2005), p. 163.

³⁹ Kido, *Nihon eiga den*, p. 222.

⁴⁰ In 1950, Shochiku was second in domestic film revenue after Daiei, but regained the top spot in 1951, which it held until the fiscal year of 1955-1956, when it started to lose ground to Toei. (Appendix 1)



(Fig 7.5) *What Is Your Name?* (Sada Keiji and Kishi Keiko)

The principal genre of *ōfunachō* – female oriented melodrama – thus remained; only the audiences’ taste had turned to another cycle, implying the changes in a Japanese society that was recovering from the difficulties of the immediate postwar and moving toward a new stage.⁴¹ In this sense (and in a different sense from that which Kido had figured), *ōfunachō* had a very ‘social’ dramaturgy. Ōba Hideo, having been the target of criticism after the success of his *What Is Your Name?*, honestly acknowledged that the so-called ‘*ōfunachō* melodrama’ was more a popular than an artistic work. If the latter belonged to the realm of ‘realism’, then what melodrama dealt with was fantasy, the ‘dreamy part of film’.⁴² The issue then was the ‘extent of separation’ (of the fantasy from the reality in a film), and ‘in that subtlety there existed *ōfunachō*’.⁴³ It should also be noted that Shochiku was not the exclusive beneficiary of the popularity of melodrama, which was a more prevalent phenomenon in Japanese cinema from the late 1940s. It was actually Daiei that revived the boom in the form of the *hahamono* (mother film), a genre that was connected to the tradition of *shinpa* tragedy, with a typically strong mother-and-child relationship and a melodramatic narrative about destiny, self-sacrifice, endurance, chance encounters, and emotional exaltation.⁴⁴ In the end, the postwar *ōfunachō* melodrama as well as Daiei’s *hahamono* was within the influence of the *shinpa* tradition that I have discussed in Chapter 2.

Where should we then place Ozu’s postwar films within this context? Surely, his works were not melodramatic in the way that *What Is Your Name?* was, even if

⁴¹ For instance, the tradition of so-called ‘*gōruden wīku* (golden week)’ – long holidays from the end of April to early May – began in 1951 with the promotion of the Japanese film industry. Surprised by the increase in revenue during this new postwar holiday season, the studios started to schedule the release of blockbuster films during this period, as was the case with the final part of *What Is Your Name?*. Nagayama, *Hyakunenshi*, p. 634.

⁴² Ōba, ‘*Ōfunachō no senchū sengo*’, p. 196.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Represented by the team of Nakadai Fujio (producer), Koishi Eiichi (director) and Mimasu Aiko (actress), Daiei’s *hahamono* films, though not as phenomenally successful as Shochiku’s melodramas, gained decent receptions during their heyday in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

some of them included the elements of *hahamono*. Given that he had been so deeply engaged with the tradition of *shōshimin eiga*, it is possible to regard him as being closer to the second line of Shochiku's genre tradition, which originated from *kamatachō* comedy, was transformed into *shōshimin eiga* and later developed into postwar *hōmudorama*. Sakamoto Kazue, in her study of the Japanese family drama, argues that both *shōshimin eiga* and *hōmudorama* – as alternatives to the 'shinpa, *hahamono*, melodrama line' – typically dealt with 'patterned family life in repetition' (i.e. the everyday), and adopted a 'quiet' approach without depending too much on storyline, and emphasising 'reality' and 'empathy' rather than 'strong emotion'.⁴⁵ However, the *hōmudorama* was different from the *shōshimin eiga* in that the family in the former was more independent, and more clearly separated from external society and its venues (such as the workplace) than the latter. If the *shōshimin eiga*, as the name suggests, articulated the desire and frustration of the new middle classes who were economically struggling in the early Showa era, the family in the *hōmudorama* was characterised more by the 'ordinary life that anybody can experience', even though its actual economic status was that of the urban white-collar class, just like the family in the *shōshimin eiga*.⁴⁶ The *hōmudorama*'s narrative and thematic weight also shifted from the hardships and emotions that a *sararīman* patriarch experienced to the (often confrontational) 'relationship' between parents and children, especially regarding the child's marriage and resulting separation from their parents. The genre can thus be said to be a true dramatic incarnation of the postwar ethos of political democracy and economic equality, leaning towards more individualistic concerns.

Sakamoto also importantly argues that there is evidence of the genre transition from the prewar *hahamono* and *shōshimin eiga* to the postwar *hōmudorama* is evidenced in Ozu's films of the period.⁴⁷ I agree with her that there was a growing tendency towards 'safe and self-contained' family life in Ozu's late postwar films, especially after *Higanbana/Equinox Flower* (1958), which, with its narrative focused on the conflict within a *sararīman* family over a daughter's marriage, set the tone for Ozu's other 'home-dramatic' films in the following years, such as *Akibiyori/Late Autumn* (1960) and *Sanma no aji/An Autumn Afternoon* (1962). I however would like

⁴⁵ Sakamoto Kazue, *Kazoku imēji no tanjō*, p. 173, 179, 247.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 247.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 251.

to clarify two points with regard to this issue in Ozu's postwar work. Firstly, whether his change of genre was a purely postwar phenomenon is controversial, given that Ozu had already made a style of family drama distinct from the *shōshimin eiga* in the late 1930s and early 40s with the aforementioned bourgeois dramas such as *What Did the Lady Forget?*, which can be regarded as an early precursor of the 1950s' *hōmudorama*.⁴⁸ Secondly, 'postwar Ozu' is not a simple entity that can be defined by any specific genre term, whether it is the *hōmudorama* or melodrama, but rather a mixture of different elements, the balance of which actually changes from film to film even though it may appear to be the same. Thirdly, although it is true that *Equinox Flower* and *Late Autumn* are 'home-dramatic', I would hesitate to call them *hōmudorama*, the nuance of which tends to designate a drama with a quite narrow scope of interest, as seen in the genre's examples on television. Moreover, pre-1958 Ozu's postwar films are even less 'home-dramatic'; for example, it is very inappropriate to define *Tokyo Story* (1953) as a *hōmudorama*, although it certainly deals with the matter of familial everyday life.⁴⁹

Ozu, in the end, led a very exceptional existence at Ofuna, whose name conventionally represented *ōfunachō* but actually did not quite match the supposed criteria. It is a well known anecdote that Kido himself often referred to Ozu as an exception within the studio, a director who did not conform to his vision of *ōfunachō*, but was too large a figure in Japanese cinema for him to intervene. Dubbed a *meishō* (master), Ozu was regarded and evaluated as an auteur in the postwar period, and as such found himself in an antagonistic position towards Kido's commercialism. (Fig 7.6) But as I mentioned earlier, Shochiku reached its 1950s zenith because the artistic works outside of Kido's standard supplemented the company's commercial success. This dramatic rendezvous of art and mass appeal was actualised in Shochiku's cinemas in the fall of 1953, when *What Is Your Name?* and *Tokyo Story* were released in September and November respectively. Moreover, Ozu in this period was commercially successful as well. As seen in the Appendix 2, all three films that he released in 1951-1953 ranked within the top five grossing

⁴⁸ Sakamoto herself acknowledges that the change in Ozu is seen 'from the late 1930s to the 1940s', predating the real formation of the *hōmudorama* genre in the 1950s. *Ibid.*, p. 258.

⁴⁹ Sakamoto supports this point with an analysis of the posters for Ozu's films, which, before the tendency of *hōmudorama* became more evident, had concentrated on his 'artistic nature', marketing each work as a 'masterpiece of a famous director'. But after 1958, the catchphrases on posters tended to emphasise more typical genre conventions of *hōmudorama*. *Ibid.*, p. 252.

Shochiku films. In this sense, the dichotomy between art and popularity suggested by Kido's attitude did not exist in reality, at least in relation to a few masters, namely, Ozu and Kinoshita. In fact, as evidenced in the Appendix, these auteurs' films would provide for Shochiku after 1957, when the company's genre vehicles ceased to work in box-offices along due to the rise of a new generation. I will examine these hard times for Shochiku in the next section.



(Fig 7.6) The posters for *Tokyo Story* and *Equinox Flower*, both of which call Ozu a *meishō*

The Lion Is Dead – The Downfall of *Ōfunachō*

‘There is no vitality here that reminds us of the modern “dream factory”. The wind that crosses the quiet sky teases the tree branches, and stillness dominates the studio buildings. ... [It is] the same stillness that surrounds the works of Ozu’.⁵⁰ So begins the reportage of Noguchi Yūichirō and Satō Tadao after they visited Ofuna studio in 1959. The writers interpreted the awkward silence surrounding the studio buildings as ‘lethargy’, which reflected the ‘appearance of Shochiku driven into a corner’.⁵¹ This article, however, enraged the young Ōshima Nagisa, who had been

⁵⁰ Noguchi Yūichirō and Satō Tadao, ‘Nemureru shishi – Shōchiku ōfuna [Sleeping Lion: Shochiku’s Ofuna Studio]’ in *Eiga Hyōron* [Film Review], 16:6 (June, 1959), p. 60.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

working in Ofuna as an assistant director, not because it criticised the studio but because the criticism was not harsh enough. Agreeing with the basic viewpoint of the article, Ōshima rebuked, ‘you’re talking about a sleeping lion when you should be talking about a dead lion’.⁵² It was more than five years since this ambitious young man, who ‘had never even dreamt of becoming a film director’, entered the studio in 1954, a time Ōshima remembered as the ‘turning point of Japanese cinema’.⁵³ This year saw Shochiku’s peak with the release of the final part of *What Is Your Name?* and Kinoshita’s *Nijyūshi no hitomi/Twenty-four Eyes*, two important (but different) renditions of postwar Japanese history.⁵⁴ What then happened during the next five years to make Ōshima so frustrated as to criticise his workplace for being ‘dead’?

Regarding Noguchi and Satō’s article as ‘superficial’, Ōshima tried to understand why the simple suggestions they were making to improve the situation – strengthening management, perfecting mass-production structure, and re-examining the Ofuna style – had not been resolved so far, and found the reason in the continuing reign of the old generation (and their filmmaking style) within the studio. Pointing out that Ofuna’s interest only remained in the ‘distorted feeling of human relationship’, which left an ‘impression of seclusion’ on audiences, Ōshima argued that the ‘establishment of new content and method in film [would] come only with the appearance of a new class of directors, whose inner consciousness [was] not yet completely dominated by the old Ofuna framework’.⁵⁵ It was thus an open and bold demand for the relinquishment of power to the postwar generation directors, whose consciousness could resonate with that of the majority of contemporary young audiences filling the cinemas.

Ōshima’s fretfulness, even to the point of criticising Noguchi and Satō’s otherwise appropriate analysis of the crisis, is understandable if the seriousness of the

⁵² Ōshima Nagisa, ‘A Review of “Sleeping Lion: Shochiku Ofuna”’ in Ōshima Nagisa, *Cinema, Censorship and the State: The Writings of Nagisa Oshima, 1956-1978*, ed. by Annette Michelson, transl. by Dawn Lawson (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), p. 36.

⁵³ Ōshima Nagisa, ‘Nihon eiga no magari-kado [The Turning Point of Japanese Cinema]’ in Ōshima Nagisa, *Ōshima nagisa chōsakushū daiichikan – Wagaokori, wagakanashimi [The Writings of Ōshima Nagisa, vol. 1: My Anger, My Sorrow]* (Tokyo: Gendai shichō shinsha, 2008), p. 138. Even though Ōshima, graduating Kyoto University, was trying hard to find a job, he was persuaded by a friend of his to apply together for Shochiku’s entrance exam.

⁵⁴ Ōshima understood that these two films represented the ‘pinnacle of the road that Japanese cinema had walked so far’, where Shochiku cinema and the ‘trend of Japanese style anti-war films that had started with *Mata au hi made/Until We Meet Again* (Imai Tadashi, Toho, 1950)’ converged together. *Ibid.*, p. 130-131.

⁵⁵ Ōshima, ‘A Review of “Sleeping Lion”’, pp. 37, 38, 40.

situation is taken into account. By 1959, Shochiku, long regarded as the most prestigious film studio in the country, was collapsing, and the fall seemed all the more dramatic because it was so sudden and rapid. Its distribution revenue having rapidly increased until 1955, Shochiku started to show signs of fatigue. In 1956, it lost its status as top grossing company to Toei and in the next year, fell again to the third spot after Toei and Daiei. By 1958, only three years later, Shochiku had to suffer the dishonour of being the fifth out of the six major film producing companies in Japan, besting only Shintohe. It was certain that the executives were also embarrassed as proved by the fact that the head of the company was replaced almost every year after 1958. As a result of this confusion, important company policies, including double feature exhibition (*nihondate*), drifted away. It was the time when, apart from a few exceptions, such as the films of Kinoshita and Ozu, Shochiku films found it difficult to attract the attention of audiences and critics. The company's product suddenly became representative of the old forms that were to be avoided.

Critics generally agreed that there were several factors that contributed to this disastrous outcome. Seen from the outside, Shochiku, 'drunk by the success of *What Is Your Name?*', did not properly respond to the rapidly changing business environment such as double feature screening.⁵⁶ The lack of active or aggressive business policy, or desire to lead the industry, was directly reflected in conservative approaches at the pre-production stage, an example of which was the somewhat passive attitude to casting. Shochiku's executives, who 'knew too much about film or were too confident that they knew about film', excessively interfered in production, and as a result, young producers lost enthusiasm and tried to avoid responsibility by adhering to already proven genre formats, that is, 'unrealistic melodrama and dispirited *shōshimin eiga*.⁵⁷

However, as Ōshima pointed out, the most essential cause of Shochiku's crisis was that *ōfunachō*, the stylistic tenet forming the basis of the abovementioned genres, became unfashionable in the postwar climate, especially to young audiences

⁵⁶ Toei, taking the initiative to implement the double feature exhibition system, had instantly risen to become the top grossing company in the country. Toei's strategy can be summarised as 'mass-productionism'. The films made for double feature were medium-length 'gorakuhan (entertainment edition)' movies, targeted at teenagers. Tanaka Jun'ichirō, *Nihon eiga hattatsushi Vol. IV: Shijō saikō no eiga jidai* [*The History of Development of Japanese Cinema, Vol. 4: The Best Years of Japanese Cinema in History*] (Tokyo: Chūōkōronsha, 1976), pp. 138-139.

⁵⁷ Noguchi and Satō, 'Nemureru shishi' p. 69.

who had grown up receiving education in democracy and individualism after the war. The warm humanistic perspective that Kido had always emphasised suddenly seemed to have lost touch with an audience that now wanted more straightforwardly realistic depictions of postwar society. Naïve ‘human relationships’ thus had to make way for the examination of poignant ‘social relationships’.⁵⁸ This did not mean that *ōfunachō*’s humanism had always lacked such a critical attitude. Noguchi and Satō paid attention to Ofuna’s prewar *shōshimin eiga* films such as Ozu’s *I Was Born But* or Gosho’s *Burden of Life*, where ‘warm sympathy’ coexisted with ‘a touch of criticism’. In the postwar, in such films as *Anjōke no butōkai/The Ball at the Anjo House* (Yoshimura Kōzaburō, 1947), *Honjitsu Kyūshin/The Doctor’s Day Off* (Shibuya Minoru, 1952) and *Nihon no higeki/A Japanese Tragedy* (Kinoshita Keisuke, 1953), this critical stance continued with a ‘more modern sensitivity’, sometimes accompanying a ‘tone of severe accusation’.⁵⁹ Even these works of social criticism, however, seldom avoided a ‘closed’ impression at the ending, lacking a vision of resolution. What Shochiku films encouraged was ‘endurance’ and ‘submission’, or, ironically put, ‘the resistance [of the weak] through non-resistance’.⁶⁰ This also meant that the *kamatachō/ōfunachō*, once a symbol of Shochiku’s Western modernity with its unique attachment to everyday realism, degenerated into the defender of the ‘closed, retrogressive emotion of the Japanese’, losing ‘modernity and rationalism with critical spirit’.⁶¹ This is why Ōshima argued for more ‘vivid desires and actions of people who grapple with the status quo’.⁶²

This is actually not a completely new kind of criticism of Shochiku’s films; as discussed in Chapter 3, left wing critics in the early 1930s were not satisfied with the company’s *shōshimin eiga*, which they saw as having failed to articulate the class-consciousness of the new middle class by suggesting compromise with reality rather than resistance. Postwar Shochiku became more vulnerable to this criticism as the new genre of the *hōmudorama* and the everyday life it depicted regressed farther into ‘a family life ... separated from other social circumstances’ than the prewar *shōshimin eiga* ever had.⁶³ Certainly, the genre’s perspective had been narrowed from

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 66.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 67.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ōshima, ‘A Review of “Sleeping Lion”’, pp. 38.

⁶³ Sakamoto, *Kazoku imēji no tanjō*, p. 123.

large scale social problems such as the economic instability of the urban middle class to intra-familial matters. But this could be seen as the natural result of social changes from the early 1930s' economic depression to the late 1950s, when Japan, declaring that 'the postwar is over', inaugurated the optimistic era of high economic growth throughout the 1960s. And, as I discussed in the previous chapter, privatised everyday life was one of the most prominent characteristics of postwar Japan, where people based their identities on a conscious movement away from the collectivistic tendency of the prewar. Given these circumstances, it would not be appropriate to overemphasise the chasm between the 'home' of the *hōmudorama* and external society. What was problematic in the *hōmudorama* was less a lack of social concerns than the way that the *ōfunachō* drew conclusions from the narrative of individual concerns. Shochiku's typically humanistic vision managed to obscure the points that might lead to meaningful social insight, the films ending happily without resolving (or revealing) anything. Such self-deceiving complacency became worse as similar subjects and styles were ever-repeated in variations until audiences finally grew weary.

Ozu was not entirely free from this criticism. For the new generation, of which Ōshima was emblematic, he was in fact a symbolic figure who represented the old, incapacitated state of Shochiku and *ōfunachō*. I agree that his post-1958 films – those with the stronger home-dramatic tendency – were particularly prone to signs of diffidence and fatigue, as evinced by his repeated resort to lighter toned comedies.⁶⁴ But, as mentioned in the chapter on *shōshimin eiga*, it is not fair to criticise Ozu for adopting an ambiguous and inconclusive approach with regard to social themes, for such was his way of dealing with the matter, rather than avoiding it. As discussed in the prewar section, the everyday in Ozu's films is not a social void as found in Shimazu's *Our Neighbour Miss Yae*, but rather deals with various social issues related to different agents. For example, the subject matter of marriage – the most strongly 'home-dramatic' element in Ozu's postwar works – was not confined merely to the familial conflict between father and daughter, but rather reflected a reality of postwar Japanese society in terms of the issues of inter-generational relations. And

⁶⁴ This change can be partly attributed to the failure of *Tōkyō boshoku/Tokyo Twilight* in 1957, in which Ozu, against his scriptwriting partner Noda Kōgo's wishes, experimented with darker images as well as an unusually serious narrative for him. In result, from the following year's *Equinox Flower*, Ozu 'could not help being returned to Noda's pace'. Tanaka Masasumi, *Ozu yasujirō shūyū*, pp. 390-392.

from a wider perspective, the marriage issue articulated the disappearance of the prewar generation, who still retained the memory of war. In *Equinox Flower* and *Late Autumn* – the closest to the *hōmudorama*'s lighter format amongst Ozu's post-1958 works – such historical connotations were weakened, but in *An Autumn Afternoon*, Ozu's last film, they are revived again, as if Ozu was attempting to revisit the themes of *Tokyo Story*.

Another good example of Ozu's stance toward postwar society is *Ohayo/Good Morning* (1959). Well-known as the postwar sequel to *I Was Born But...*, the film demonstrated the difference between the genres of *hōmudorama* and *shōshimin eiga* quite overtly; while the children in *I Was Born But...* are frustrated by the impossibility of 'becoming bourgeois', their postwar counterparts in *Good Morning* are frustrated by the possibility of 'staying behind social homogenisation' (i.e. not having a television set). If *I Was Born But...*'s ending suggests that the dilemma will never be completely resolved, *Good Morning* easily achieves a happy ending by providing the family with a television set (but not without the parents' pecuniary burden). Ozu could thus be criticised for trivialising a serious class issue by presenting the lightest, most materialistic form of middle class everyday life in *Good Morning*, but as discussed in the previous chapter, such was the way that postwar Japanese society in the late 1950s was being restructured.

Lastly, I would like to mention the two issues suggested in the paragraph above – those of the 'young generation' and 'television' – both of which late Ozu and Shochiku struggled to resolve within their own terms. The late 1950s in Japan, as in other parts of the Western world, marked the rise of a new youth culture, which Nikkatsu actively adopted and provided for with its *taiyōzoku eiga* (Sun-tribe movies), which, with their mix of sex and violence, became instant hits.⁶⁵ Shochiku, however, could not properly respond to Nikkatsu even though it introduced its own version of the youth film under the banner of the *Shōchiku nūberu bāgu* (Shochiku Nouvelle Vague) in 1960. Actively planned and promoted by the company, which was struggling to recover from recent failures, the Shochiku Nouvelle Vague was

⁶⁵ Nikkatsu, which had had to sell off their production section during the wartime, was a newcomer in the postwar, and hence did not have as wide and strong an array of star actors/actresses as other studios. It thus concentrated on developing new subjects characterised by realism and 'fresh social sensibility'. Its comedy was not about 'nonsensical laugh' and melodrama did not compel 'sweet tears'. Tanaka, *Hattatsushi IV*, pp. 191-192.

more of a business vehicle than a youth movement. Nevertheless, the participating directors – Ōshima Nagisa, Yoshida Yoshishige, and Shinoda Masahiro – were young and radical enough to show their dissatisfaction with the tradition of *ōfunachō*. In Yoshida's words, their works aimed at 'destroying the established morals, custom, and order, ... pursuing new human relationships, and *breaking through the wall of the everydayness*' (italics added).⁶⁶ Thus, the Shochiku Nouvelle Vague maintained an oppositional tension with the *ōfunachō* from the very beginning, a tension which would not be resolved in the end.⁶⁷

Shochiku's conservatism towards the youth culture could also be found in other established directors' attitudes. For example, the following quote from Kinoshita Keisuke represents the discomfort that the mainstream Shochiku staff felt towards the newcomers.

'Watching what [the nouvelle vague directors] have made, I become intolerable. ... I thought they were concerned about how to make audiences unpleasant. They cannot express their intention without resorting to the depiction of sex and violence, which only means their directing skill is immature. *Film is entertainment, after all, and necessitates beauty.* That is what I believe' (italics added).⁶⁸

That sentiment is also what Kido and Shochiku had followed as a principle of the *kamatachō/ōfunachō*. In Ozu's case, he tried neither to directly depict a spoilt *taiyōzoku* character nor to indirectly offer a clear moral perspective on the phenomenon in his film. This, however, does not mean that he was indifferent to or ignorant of the new postwar generation in general. In fact, the opposite was the case, with more young actors and actresses given important roles in his films from the late 1950s, which I will discuss more in Chapter 10.

The appearance of television was also an important challenge to Shochiku and Ozu. There were other factors that contributed to the sudden falling off of the

⁶⁶ Tanaka, *Hattatsushi IV*, p. 324.

⁶⁷ Ōtani Hiroshi, who became the head of Shochiku after Kido, regarded the Shochiku Nouvelle Vague as a 'goose that would lay the golden eggs'. But once Ōshima's *Nihon no yoru to kiri/Night and Fog in Japan* (1960) failed to be as popular as expected, Shochiku quickly suspended the film from screening, resulting in Ōshima's leaving the company and the end of the Shochiku Nouvelle Vague.

⁶⁸ Quoted in Tanaka, *Hattatsushi IV*, p. 325.

company's audiences, such as increased opportunity for outdoor leisure activities, but television was especially detrimental to the *ōfunachō* films, which now had to compete with the new medium for an audience group with similar tastes.⁶⁹ While other studios were exploiting the 'masculine line' that was prospering in the film market (represented by Nikkatsu's Ishihara Yūjirō and Toho's Mifune Toshirō), Shochiku had to watch their traditionally female and familial fan base rapidly crumble.⁷⁰ Shochiku's vulnerability to television was also attributable to their specialisation in the genre of *hōmudorama*, which, with its domestic setting and everyday narrative, was more easily adaptable to the small (but close) television set than other genres with large scale backgrounds and actions.

The earliest examples of the television *hōmudorama* demonstrate how extensively it adapted the basic principles of *ōfunachō* into its format. According to the playwright Onoda Isamu, who wrote early television dramas such as *Otōsan no kisetsu/Father's Season* (NHK, October, 1958 – March, 1961), the form and appeal of the *hōmudorama* had four key elements: it was enjoyed by all the family; featured good natured characters; had a narrative comprised of trivial events; and featured a large number of characters.⁷¹ The genre was expected to be 'bright, cheerful, refreshing and harmless' as well as 'simple and easily understandable'.⁷² It should also express 'complete trust in and affection towards human beings', paying attention to the 'happiness of ordinary common people (*shomin*)'.⁷³ The narrative neither exceeded intimate everyday experiences relating to viewers themselves nor depicted overly 'dramatic' events such as 'conflict, confrontation, tension, and ruin'.⁷⁴ Almost a rewriting of Kido's basic tenets of filmmaking, these rules show how much television *hōmudorama*, along with the additional factor of physical proximity to viewers, could become a serious threat to *ōfunachō* films.

⁶⁹ In Japan, television broadcasting began in February 1953. The first station was NHK, followed by Nihon Television in August of the same year. The diffusion of television sets, however, started to rise in 1955, rising to over 10 percent in 1958, and 50 percent in 1961, reaching a summit in 1964. This exactly matches the period of Shochiku's declining popularity. Hiramoto Atsushi, *Nihon no terebi sangyō [Television Industry in Japan]* (Kyoto: Minerubashobo, 1994), pp. 20, 30-31.

⁷⁰ Tanaka, *Hattatsushi IV*, p. 317.

⁷¹ Onoda Isamu, 'Hōmudorama no rūru [The Rule of Home Drama]' in *Hōsō bunka [Broadcasting Culture]* (June, 1960), quoted in Muramatsu Yasuko, *Terebi dorama no joseigaku [Women's Studies of Television Drama]* (Tokyo: Sōtakusha, 1979), p. 55.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 57.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

Ozu did not live long enough to witness the full bloom of the television *hōmudorama* in the 1960s and 70s. He also affirmed that he was ‘not that interested in television drama’, saying that film and television were ‘apparently similar but actually different’.⁷⁵ It is a meaningful irony, then, that the very last project he completed in his life was a script for a television drama, *Seishun hōkago/Class Dismissed* (NHK, tx. 21.3.1963).⁷⁶ Co-written with the novelist Satomi Ton, whose work Ozu admired and had based his *Equinox Flower* and *Late Autumn* upon, *Class Dismissed* retained the similar ‘home-dramatic’ elements of those two films, confirming the close relationship between the film and television forms of the *hōmudorama*. Considering the mass appeal of *Equinox Flower* and *Late Autumn* (each was the top grossing Shochiku film in the year they were released), this also suggested that the potential appeal of the *ōfunachō* for mass audiences was still valid, both in the form of Ozu’s cinema and television drama. However, in the case of film, the potential would never be transformed into a substantial success. After Ozu died in 1963, Shochiku continued to struggle in the market, with the possible exception of *Otoko wa tsurai yo/It’s Tough Being a Man* series (Yamada Yōji, 1969-1996), which, in many ways, adopted the format of the *ōfunachō* family drama. And the depression was now not only confined to Shochiku but rather an industry-wide phenomenon: ‘The majority audience, debauched by television, vanished forever’ from the cinema.⁷⁷ Kido would finally return to the main stage of the film industry in 1971 as the president of Shochiku, but there was little left for him to do in order to revive the company’s heyday. He died in 1977.

Conclusion

In his book on the theory of scriptwriting, Kido argues that there are three kinds of films, each of which articulates art, entertainment and social concern.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Tanaka Masasumi (ed.), *Sengo goroku*, p. 411.

⁷⁶ *Class Dismissed* was also later remade into a film, *Danshun/Warm Spring* (Nakamura Noboru, Shochiku, 1965). Tanaka Masasumi, ‘TV shinario *Seishun hōkago* kaidai [Introduction to TV scenario *Class Dismissed*]’ in *Kinema junpō rinji zōkan*, p. 114.

⁷⁷ Richie, *A Hundred Years of Japanese Film*, p. 208.

⁷⁸ Kido Shiro, *Waga eiga ron [My Film Theory]* (Tokyo: Shōchiku, 1978), p. 59.

These are not separable in reality, as Kido himself acknowledges, and Shochiku made films focused on each of the three fields, with some that ideally combined more than one aspect. That being said, I think that what Kido prioritised among the three was entertainment, as demonstrated by his argument that any kind of film should first of all consider the ‘greatest common measure’ (i.e. the maximum audience), and be easy to understand by appealing to their ‘emotion’ not ‘reason’.⁷⁹ This reaffirms the major point of this chapter, that *kamatachō/ōfunachō* (or ‘Kido-ism’) was the defining principle for popular genre movies, whether they were melodrama, comedy, or *hōmudorama*. In summary, *kamatachō/ōfunachō* meant: the everyday in subject matter, realism in form, and humanism in theme.

Shochiku’s dilemma (and sometimes strength) was that Kido and his Kido-ism strongly dominated every aspect of its filmmaking activities for several decades. This reign inevitably provoked conflicts inside and outside of the company; in other words, the history of Shochiku was continuous in terms of the antagonism between Kido-ism and other tendencies. In the beginning, Kido’s *kamatachō* was established as a form of resistance to *shinpa*’s ‘un-everyday’ and un-realistic subject matter and form. During the war, *ōfunachō* had to manage the uncomfortable relationship with the militarists, who wanted cinema to be about more than warm humanity and everyday life. And in the postwar years, it faced another challenge from a younger generation that wanted it to break down its faith in the everyday, realism and humanism. However, in retrospect, the way Shochiku responded to these ongoing conflicts differed over time. *Kamatachō*’s challenge to *shinpa* resulted in the adoption of Western methodology in order to invent Shochiku’s unique realism, which presented the everyday of Japanese people. More importantly, this conflict did not lead to the abolishment of *shinpa*, which was so integrated into *kamatachō* that it became a contradictory but indispensable element. If this prewar history is compared with the case of the Nouvelle Vague in 1960, it is clear how unresponsive and unproductive the notion of *ōfunachō* had become; not only was it conceived of from a purely commercial perspective, rather than a form that could articulate social change, but the process was also mutually antagonistic, ultimately ending in disaster. By this time, *ōfunachō* had lost its vitality as a filmmaking principle, which should

⁷⁹ Ibid., pp. 60-63.

have been innovative, flexible and self-reflexive. To what degree Kido alone was responsible for this is still a controversial question.

Ozu, as mentioned, was a unique and exceptional element within this larger picture. Given the definition of *ōfunachō* that I have presented – the everyday, realism and humanism – it would not be hard to assert that he was representative of it. But if we consider the other label that was always attached to him – that he was ‘artistic’ – then we can see that he was certainly not the director who most matched Kido-ism’s ideal of ‘entertainment’. However, this fact (or more exactly, legend) leads to an interesting question regarding his postwar years, when many of his films (even the sublime *Tokyo Story*) sold well in cinemas. Surely, this must mean that the popularity owed more to the value of Ozu’s name and image as a master of art than to the versatility of his films as genre vehicles. But I also want to think about the possibility that his films – especially the later ‘home-dramatic’ ones – were regarded as enjoyable genre movies by general audiences. After all, Ozu was never free from the matter of commerciality. In an interview after he became an honourable member of the ‘Japan Art Academy’, he said, ‘This does not mean that I am going to make only “art film” from now on. ... I am an employee of Shochiku. ... [so] I have to think about the company’s position. That’s what film is like’.⁸⁰ In this sense, Ozu’s later films – though hated by the young directors – were the best possible compromise the stubborn ‘*tofu* maker’ could make with Kido’s *ōfunachō*, a rare circumstance in film history where auteurism coexisted with genre production.

⁸⁰ Tanaka Masasumi (ed.), *Sengo goroku*, p. 402.

CHAPTER 8

Rethinking Noriko: The Everyday and Gender Relationship in Ozu's Excursion Films

Introduction

In the prewar section of this thesis, I suggested a more comprehensive perspective on the issue of modern femininity in Ozu's films that took into account the figures of the working woman and the housewife within a broader notion of the *modan gāru*. I argued that female subjectivity was formed through the process of intra-gender interaction, most notably the mutual gazes of understanding among women. Because men were excluded from this system of gazes, I argued that it supported the segregation of gender in Ozu, which also applied to the matter of the everyday. I proved this point by showing how female characters fortified their realm by relating their subjectivity to domestic spaces and objects. However, the difficulty is that Ozu's prewar films only allowed a limited space for femininity. His specialty was not *modan gāru* films but *shōshimin* films, *shitamachi* films and college comedies, where the role of female characters remained supplemental to their male counterparts. In some cases, such as in the *hahamono*, *Haha o kowazuya/A Mother Should Be Loved* (1934), even if a female character took the central role, her characterisation tended to fall prey to the conventions of *shinpa* tragedy, which distanced her identity from the definition of modern femininity that I suggested.

Based upon these previous conclusions, this chapter will ask whether, and in what way, this tendency changes in Ozu's postwar works. The focus remains on the relationship between female subjectivity and the everyday, and the ensuing gender differences between male and female characters. However, the shift in historical context requires that we consider a few additional factors. Firstly, Ozu's postwar exists in a relationship with the previous wartime. I have discussed this point in Chapter 6 with regard to the concept of historical continuity in Japan, and it should be considered in Ozu's case too. This should not be confined to a matter of contextualising his postwar works in relation to his wartime ones, but should be more broadly related to the changing perspective on modernity of the Japanese people during the war and after defeat, and their perception of their own tradition as its counter-concept. Secondly, regarding Ozu's postwar female characters, there have already been some extended studies, especially in relation to the character of Noriko, who consistently appears in the most famous Ozu classics, such as *Late Spring* and *Tokyo Story*. Roughly speaking, academic interest has mainly moved from aesthetic and formal approaches to one that recognises 'the specific socio-historical problems' of the period in which these films were made.¹ A major subject of discussion that demonstrates this shift of interest is Noriko's marriage, around which the modernity (or feudality) of female subjectivity has been contested.

Given these factors, I will include a discussion of 'tradition' and 'marriage' at the beginning and ending of this chapter. Even though they are 'non-everyday' in nature, their close relationship to wartime and postwar history, and the consistent academic confusion over the interpretation of their true meaning, are both significant in understanding the everyday in Ozu's cinema. Also, the majority of the films I will deal with in this chapter were made in the period of 1949 to 1951, corresponding to the era of the US occupation after the war. I believe that this unprecedented historical circumstance of foreign occupation in Japan will offer a productive contextual background to advance discussion of the issue of tradition and modernity, and its effect on femininity in Ozu's films of this period.

¹ Eric Cazdyn, *The Flash of Capital*, p. 227.

The Problem of Tradition

Late Spring, the third film Ozu made after the war, is generally regarded as the true beginning of postwar Ozu cinema. Unlike its two predecessors (*Record of a Tenement Gentleman* and *A Hen in the Wind*), which are more explicitly concerned with the struggle to get by in occupation Tokyo, *Late Spring* focuses on the quiet and stable suburban life of a middle class family, and the question of a daughter's marriage – the quintessential Ozu setup as it is mostly known today. Tanaka Masasumi, affirming that the film 'established the postwar line of Ozu cinema', argues that the success of *Late Spring* 'not only reconfirmed the trust in Ozu as a master of Japanese cinema but also stabilised his position at Ofuna studio'.² When the film was being produced in 1949, Ofuna was headed by Takamura Kiyoshi, who maintained a somewhat unfavourable relationship with Ozu. There was even a rumour that the discontented director would resign from the studio after the failure to cast Takamine Hideko for his aborted film *Tsuki wa noborinu/The Moon Has Risen*. *Late Spring* was both a critical success (top film in *Kinema junpō's* annual list) and a popular success (seventh among Shochiku's releases in 1949), which discharged this unstable situation and revitalised Ozu's status as the representative Shochiku director, who could compete with new postwar generation directors such as Kinoshita, Yoshimura, and Toho's Kurosawa.³

One of the most important factors behind this change and success is the inclusion of Noda Kōgo as a co-scriptwriter with Ozu. The collaboration was the first time in fourteen years since *Hakoiri musume/An Innocent Maid* (the non-existent final Kihachi film) that the two had worked together, and also eleven years after Noda had had a huge success with the script for *The Love-Troth Tree*. It seems the compatibility and synergy of the duo was perfect. Ozu mentioned that he and Noda were 'well matched in [their liking of] *sake* as well as in the time to rise and go to bed', which was a 'very important thing'.⁴ He also noted that each had such similar ideas in mind that they could even agree 'whether to end a sentence in "wa (わ)" or

² Tanaka, *Ozu Yasujirō shūyū*, p. 340.

³ Two predecessors, *Record of a Tenement Gentleman* and *A Hen in the Wind*, were respectively ranked at 21st and 15th in the box office records (number of audience members) among Shochiku films. Both were included in *Kinema junpō's* annual top ten list. Iwamoto Kenji and Makino Mamoru (compiled), *Eiga nenkan, sengo hen [The Film Almanac: Postwar Years]*, Vol. II (Tokyo: Jiji tsushinsha, 1950-1960; reprinted by Tokyo: Nihon tosho sentā, 1998-1999), pp. 418-424.

⁴ Ozu Yasujirō, 'Jisaku o kataru', p. 97.

“yo (よ)”⁵ Contented so much with the work with Noda, Ozu in this period established a standard *modus operandi*, which was repeated without great change throughout his postwar period. He and Noda would usually begin writing a new work in late Winter or early Spring by going together to an inn called Chigasaki kan, which had been used by Shochiku scriptwriters for writing scripts.⁶ It usually took three months and a hundred bottles of *sake*, along with many informal visitors, for them to complete a script.⁷ (Fig 8.1) Then from around late Spring through Summer, Ozu would search for locations and begin filming. The work was usually intended to be finished in Autumn in order to participate in the government-sponsored Geijutsusai (Art Festival). Such a cycle would be repeated year after year.



(Fig 8.1) Ozu and Noda in Chigasaki kan

Noda's most significant contribution, however, was the change in subject matter and theme, which, as mentioned, distinguished *Late Spring* from the first two postwar films. According to Noda, it was in fact his (critical) suggestion that *A Hen in the Wind* 'dealt with the world of phenomena', and Ozu's admittance of this, that led to their collaboration on *Late Spring*.⁸ By the word 'phenomena', I believe Noda referred to a more direct approach to social problems, especially with regard to the political and economic chaos of the Occupation era. Such a vivid, frank image of postwar reality was evident in other contemporary films such as Kurosawa's *Nora inu/Stray Dog* (Eiga geijutsu kyōkai, 1949) and Imai's *Dokkoi ikiteiru/And Yet We Live* (Shinsei eiga, 1951), where everyday life consisted of poverty, unemployment, rationing, and the black market. As Satō Tadao points out, *Late Spring* 'completely wiped out all these postwar phenomena from the screen' as if 'there had never been a

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ From *Tokyo Twilight* (1957), however, Ozu and Noda would use their cottage in Tateshina.

⁷ There is an interview with Noda's mother, who remembers, 'They probably did more drinking than working'. An interview with Noda Shizu in *Ikite wa mita keredo/I Lived But...* (Inoue Kazuo, Shochiku, 1983).

⁸ Noda Kōgo, 'Ozu Yasujirō to iu otoko [The Man Who Was Called Ozu Yasujiro]' in Kinema junpō sha (ed.), *Ozu Yasujirō: hito to geijutsu [Ozu Yasujiro: A Man and His Art]*, *Kinema junpō zōkan [Kinema Junpo Special Issue]*, 358 (Feb, 1964), p. 42.

war’, only leaving the ‘middle class life and ethos of the most stable prewar era’.⁹ Viewers can see such a deliberate selection of reality in the image of the Hattori building in Ginza – the symbol of prewar modernity, which seems to intentionally elide the other side of everyday life that is visible in Hayashi Tadahiko’s photographic image of the same location. (Fig 8.2)



(Fig 8.2) Hattori building in *Late Spring* (left) and in Hayashi Tadahiko’s photograph (1946) that shows a long line to receive supplies

Of course, stable middle class life was not Noda’s own invention, but rather a basic formula that Ozu had already been polishing in the prewar period, especially from the ‘bourgeois trilogy (*What Did the Lady Forget?*, *The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice*, and *Brothers and Sisters of the Toda Family*)’ mentioned in the previous chapter. The fact that Ozu had already been considering revisiting this wartime tendency *before* Noda’s participation in *Late Spring* can be established in relation to the aforementioned *The Moon Has Risen*. Although written with Saitō Ryōsuke in 1947 between *Record of a Tenement Gentleman* and *A Hen in the Wind*, the script deals with the life of an affluent family of *yamanote* origin, anticipating the change in *Late Spring*.¹⁰ It would thus be more appropriate to conclude that Ozu, stimulated by the critical failure of *A Hen in the Wind*, decided to return to and concentrate on the stable middle class everyday he had established, as opposed to the idea that he passively followed Noda’s suggestions.

⁹ Satō Tadao, *Kanpon ozu yasujirō no geijutsu*, p. 434, 436.

¹⁰ Filming *The Moon Has Risen* was postponed several times during the years that Ozu was making *A Hen in the Wind*, *Late Spring*, and *The Munekata Sisters*. The first postponement was due to the seasonal setting of the script – Autumn in Nara, for which the script was finished too late in November to begin filming – but the successive postponements were caused by the trouble with casting Takamine Hideko, who seemed essential for the main character Setsuko. The project was finally handed to Tanaka Kinuyo and released in 1954 under her direction. Tanaka, *Ozu yasujirō shūyū*, pp. 331, 342-43.

What Ozu importantly added to this affluent middle class life was the ideal image of traditional Japaneseness – landscape, architecture, religious icons etc. – that functioned antagonistically to the *invisible* image of war-torn Tokyo. Very unusually for Ozu, *Late Spring* starts with an explicit sign that clarifies that the film is set outside of Tokyo, in the old capital city of Kitakamakura. (Fig 8.3) Throughout the



(Fig 8.3) The first shot of *Late Spring* with ‘Kitakamakura Station’ sign. Ozu usually makes a specific geographical location ambiguous.

film, viewers are also introduced to Buddhist temples, Buddha statues and pictures located around the protagonist Somiya’s house, a tea ceremony, a Noh performance, and most of all, a trip to Kyoto, where Somiya utters the definitive thematic line, ‘Kyoto is nice, so tranquil. There’s no such place as this in Tokyo. It’s full of dust there’. (Fig 8.4) As Lars-Martin Sorensen argues, the line is charged with a criticism



(Fig 8.4) Images of Kyoto in *Late Spring*: Somiya (Ryū Chishū) utters the ‘Kyoto vs. Tokyo’ remark in the third shot. Compare the visual impact of Yasaka Pagoda in the first shot with that of Hattori building in Fig 8.2.

of the reality of postwar occupation by contrasting ‘dusty Tokyo’ with ‘peaceful Kyoto’, the implication of which the US censors did not miss.¹¹ He also notes that the same traditionalism was already evident in the script of *The Moon Has Risen*, which is full of elements such as the old capital (Nara), Buddhist temples, and Zen

¹¹ In the original manuscript submitted to CIE for review, Ozu used the word ‘*yakeato* (ruins of fire)’ to describe the state of Tokyo, which the censors marked for deletion. Nevertheless the line survived into the final film, but the word was substituted with ‘*hokorippoi* (full of dust)’. Lars-Martin Sorensen, *Censorship of Japanese Films during the U.S. Occupation of Japan: The Cases of Yasujiro Ozu and Akira Kurosawa* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2009), p. 138-139, 152.

practice.¹² And a similar formula using ‘traditional Japaneseness’ is repeated in the two successive films after *Late Spring* (i.e. *The Munekata Sisters* and *Early Summer*) with scenes set in Nara and Kamakura respectively. (Fig 8.5) Thus this tendency towards tradition expressed through spatial displacement allows the three films and one script to be grouped together and seen as Ozu’s peculiar period of ‘excursion (from Tokyo) films’, that constituted a particular response to the socio-historic condition of the Occupational era.



(Fig 8.5) Traditional images of Kyoto and Nara in *The Munekata Sisters*

The problem is then how to properly interpret the meaning of this successive (but historically demarcated) homage to traditional images and ideas. There have been three predominant approaches to this issue (except in the aesthetic tendency prevalent in early Ozu studies). The first approach is to criticise Ozu for avoiding facing social reality by escaping into old traditions, a position largely adopted by Ozu’s contemporary Japanese critics; the second is to emphasize Ozu’s recognition of Western values (such as democracy and free marriage) in the Occupation era, as Thompson and Wood do; and the third approach is to admit the traditionalism prevalent in Ozu in this period as the director’s active statement of his conservative views on society, as Sorensen and Tanaka do. I believe that none of these positions fully explains the real scope of Ozu's Occupation era work, which, immediately after the war, attempted a very sophisticated kind of balance between modernity and tradition.

First of all, Ozu never avoided social reality. As I have mentioned so far, this kind of criticism had long existed amongst Japanese critics. I have argued that it is not an appropriate accusation because Ozu’s films always touch on contemporary everyday life, even if not in the more obvious manner of social realism or leftism.

¹² Ibid., pp. 138-141. The completed script was submitted to CIE in November 1947, and just as in the case of *Late Spring*, ‘from the outset, the censors were wary of the uses of the traditional and religious features of the ancient ‘capitals of Japan’. Ibid., p. 138.

But the films of the Occupation era raise the issue more seriously because they seem to reveal concrete evidence of the director's evasion of contemporariness through spatial detachment and obsession with traditional images.¹³ What was unique for Ozu and Noda in this period was that they actively defended themselves against this criticism, often using riddle-like metaphors rather than simple explanations. The most famous one must be Ozu's comparison of himself to a *tofu* maker, who can make no other food apart from *tofu*, perhaps other 'kinds' of *tofu*, but never *tonkatsu* or steak. The remark has been interpreted as an expression of the director's will to pursue his own unique aesthetic style, but the *tofu* discourse actually came out of the context of Ozu's adamant refusal of a postwar realism that was being demanded by critics.¹⁴

During the Occupation period, Ozu repeatedly stated his position against showing reality as it is – for example, by depicting violence or destitution – because it threatened his fundamental tenet of humanism. Ultimately, Ozu's cinema is rooted in the world of the virtuous, not the villainous. But he believed that this does not imply a distortion of reality. 'Lotus in mud' is another expression he used in order to clarify the relationship between reality and *his* method of realism.

'If mud is reality, the lotus is reality, too. The former is dirty, while the latter is beautiful. ... I know there is a way of expressing the lotus flower by depicting mud and roots. But I also think it is possible to realise mud and roots by depicting the flower. Postwar society is impure. It is messy and dirty. I do not like such things, but it is a reality. On the other hand, there is also a life that humbly, beautifully and purely blooms, which is another reality'.¹⁵

Tofu making, then, can be compared to picturing the lotus only. If viewers needed mud and roots for reality, they had to go to a *tonkatsu* seller, Kurosawa for example. But, according to Ozu, either could make a nice meal (i.e. realism) anyway.

¹³ Regarding the contemporary critical response to *Late Spring*, refer to Sorensen, pp. 146-148.

¹⁴ Tanaka clarifies that the first time Ozu started to use the *tofu* maker metaphor was around the time he was making *Early Summer* in the autumn of 1951. Tanaka, *Sengo goroku*, p. 437.

¹⁵ Ozu Yasujirō, 'Deichū no hachisu o egakitai [I Want to Depict Flower in Dirt]' in *Asahi geinō shinbun* (8 November, 1949), reprinted in *ibid.*, p. 67.

I think that this riddle of the flower and dirt, and its ironic position that ‘what you see is *not* what you get’, have not been properly understood, and thus caused great confusion in Ozu studies to date. In the 1980s and 90s, Western academics attempted to redefine the director as a ‘modernist’, as a counteraction against the aesthetic approach to Ozu in the previous decade. For example, Kristin Thompson rejected the interpretation of Ozu as a conservative who championed traditional Japanese culture, and argued that ‘[his] ideology tallies closely with the new, liberalised ideas that were introduced from the West’.¹⁶ This eventually supported her main point that Ozu’s form was a reaction to classical Hollywood cinema. Her primary textual evidence for this ‘liberalism’ was the representation of the family relationship in *Late Spring*, which reflects contemporary democratic social reforms including marriage laws. Wood took a similar position, though he sought to free Ozu’s modernity from Bordwell and Thompson’s formal perspective. For him, the key issue was still Noriko’s marriage, which works as a ‘brutal curtailment of her growth’, which subdues her under ‘the rigorous indoctrination of feudal tradition’.¹⁷ The film is thus a family tragedy, where both father and daughter must abandon their freedom and yield to tradition.

In postwar Ozu, the relationship between women and marriage is an important issue, and also a complicated one, particularly in the case of *Late Spring*. I will discuss this in more detail later on in this chapter, but would like to mention here that it is too simplistic an approach to connect the theme of marriage in Ozu with either tradition or modernity per se. To see Noriko’s marriage in *Late Spring* as a reflection of the forces of Westernisation in society at that time tends to miss the whole point of Ozu’s confronting of modernity with tradition, which became the consistent thematic element of his Occupation era films. In other words, Ozu in this period was seriously contemplating the matter of ‘what Japan could be after war’, which I think naturally led him to pursue traditional elements in the four ‘excursion films’ and unmade script. In *A Hen in the Wind*, such concerns were expressed in a more direct way through the character of the repatriated husband Shūichi, who is tormented by jazz music from a nearby cabaret. In the ‘excursion films’, that confrontational line between Japan and the West is moved from Tokyo to the old capital cities, where the

¹⁶ Thompson, *Breaking the Glass Armor*, pp. 317-318.

¹⁷ Robin Wood, *Sexual Politics and Narrative Film* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), p. 120.

meaning of the Japanese postwar is re-examined against the backdrop of traditional images. In this regard, I believe there is a slight overlap between Ozu in the Occupation era and the intellectuals in the Overcoming Modernity symposium, who attempted to reconsider the meaning of modernity in a Japanese context.

In a similar sense, Tanaka Masasumi has a point when he says that reading the script of *The Moon Has Risen*, he was reminded of Kawabata Yasunari's eulogy on the death of Yokomitsu Riichi in 1947, which included the famous line, 'I will live on, thinking Japan's mountains and rivers as my spirit'.¹⁸ Arguing that Ozu in this period was 'less inclined towards modernism or American democracy than Kawabata's "nature of Japan as spirit"', Tanaka asserts that what lay in the background of this tendency was the 'deep sense of loss' at the nation's defeat in war, and hope for 'emotional healing in the lasting stability of tradition'.¹⁹ Sorensen also focuses on Ozu's articulation of tradition through 'feudalistic images' (as the US censors understood), which played an 'instrumental role' in inspiring 'awe and respect for the treasures of ancient Japan in contrast to the impurity of the present'.²⁰ He further argues that Ozu's presentation of Kyoto, Nara, and Kamakura 'harks back to the use of the nation's sacred places as utilised by wartime propagandists', and thus concludes that the 'exaltation of Japanese tradition ... must have brought remembrances of the good old days when ... nationalism reached its peak'.²¹

I, however, disagree with such arguments that designate Ozu as a conservative, traditionalist or even feudalist as much as I disagree with the attempt to present him as a simple moderniser. It is another failure that confuses phenomenon with intent, only seeing the flower while missing the mud. Even though the traditional landscapes and icons are eulogised in his 'excursion films', Ozu never suggests that the beautified world of the past should replace the present in order to construct a utopian

¹⁸ Tanaka, *Ozu Yasujirō shūyū*, p. 337. Originally a member of Shinkankakuha (New Sensationist School) – a group of young modernist writers influenced by European avant-garde movement – in the 1920s, Yokomitsu later turned to a more nationalistic ideology, searching for the possibility of 'a rejection of the West and the rediscovery of a native cultural tradition', which became the central theme of his work *Ryoshū/Melancholy Journey* (1946). Seiji M. Lippit, *Topographies of Japanese Modernism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), p. 78, 200-202.

¹⁹ Tanaka, *Ozu Yasujirō Shūyū*, pp. 335, 337.

²⁰ Sorensen, *Censorship of Japanese Films*, p. 155.

²¹ Sorensen, *Censorship of Japanese Films*, pp. 161-162. In fact, Ozu's recognition of historic sites in this era differed from the viewpoint found in other contemporary films. For example, the spatial characterisation in Yoshimura Kōzaburō's *Itsuwareru seisō/Clothes of Deception* (Daiei, 1951) is practically the opposite of that in *Late Spring*: Kyoto represented the feudal residue that would better be discharged from Japanese society, while Tokyo was the place to go for to fulfil individual freedom.

future. An excursion away from reality implies an eventual return to reality, the distance from which only makes it more perceptible. Thus the old capitals are in fact a fantasy for a temporary retreat from the everyday, by which the everyday is ironically re-recognised. As has been discussed, Ozu had already used this strategy of displacement in the prewar films. There were small scale moments of ‘deviation’, as in the lunch in a field scene in *I Was Born But...*, which disrupts normal everyday rhythm, and large scale constructs such as the *shitamachi* village in the Kihachi series, which functioned as a nostalgic destination, one that the protagonist was destined to leave. The ‘excursion films’ offer another variation on the subtle reaction between the everyday and the non-everyday, between the present and the past, using traditional images as ‘instruments’, but never endorsing tradition itself. The way in which they differ from the prewar films is that the everyday – as the counterpart of tradition – is presented as a more substantial entity, and its operation is based upon gender specific differentiation, which now will be discussed in the next section.

The Problem of the Everyday and Femininity

1. Women in Motion

What I have discussed so far suggests that the viewing and interpreting of the traditional images in Ozu is no simple matter. It constitutes, rather, the difficult task of recognising the duality of the world, of thinking mud while seeing the flower on screen. In his ‘excursion films’, Ozu presents this doubled reality by juxtaposing spaces and times of different natures. In other words, the presentness of everyday life *permeates* traditional images. Both the everyday and the tradition co-exist in this way, but they do not mingle or efface each other.

Take the example of the tea ceremony in *Late Spring*. As mentioned, the film begins by informing viewers of the traditional place of Kitakamakura. The following shots – gently moving trees at the station and the grand tiled roof of Engakuji accompanied by chirping sounds and slowly soaring string music – work to

strengthen this idea of traditionalism, which continues seamlessly into the following tea ceremony sequence with its solemn quietness and slow movements. (Fig 8.6) It



(Fig 8.6)

should, however, be noticed that this idea of traditional Japanese-ness is permeated by the everydayness inherent in this ‘monthly gathering’ of the ladies of acquaintance.²² Thompson thus makes a good point when she mentions that after war, ‘the tea ceremony was regarded more as a social event than as a private aesthetic experience’, and that ‘Ozu avoids a completely reverential treatment [of the ceremony] by introducing humorous touches’ as in the conversation between Noriko and her aunt, Masa.²³ Agreeing with her argument, I would like to add that the tea ceremony in *Late Spring* is essentially a ‘woman’s hour’ for upper-middle-class ladies with time and money to spend on themselves.

The narrative of a woman going out entirely for her own enjoyment was a new tendency in Ozu that started with *What Did the Lady Forget?* in 1937. Before that (and even in the first two postwar films), a woman’s outing is a rare occasion, and when it happens there is usually a concrete practical reason. Even the *modan gāru* characters I discussed in Chapter 5 go out at night either in order to earn money or to accompany their gangster boyfriends. Therefore the first sequence of *What Did the Lady Forget?*, wherein three leisured class ladies gather in a house for no other purpose than to chat, marks a dramatic movement in Ozu’s cinema towards the more feminine aspect of the everyday. (Fig 8.7) The ladies’ topics range from shopping,

²² That this social is ‘monthly’ is designated in the film’s script. Ozu Yasujiro and Noda Kōgo, *Late Spring*, reprinted in Inoue Kazuo (ed.), *Ozu yasujirō zenshū* [*Complete Screenplays of Ozu Yasujiro*] (Tokyo: Shiinshokan, 2003), p. 51.

²³ Thompson, *Breaking the Glass Armor*, pp. 325-326. Masa asks Noriko to resize a pair of trousers belonging to her husband for her son. Noriko worries whether the boy will like the stripes on the trouser or not, but Masa says it is alright for him, and adds, ‘reinforce the seat’. There is more humour in their conversation regarding Noriko’s father, Somiya, who could not join the ceremony on this occasion because he ‘couldn’t finish his writing due yesterday’. This light banter, which is repeated later when Noriko forbids him from playing *mahjong* before finishing the work, reinforces the everyday nature of the ceremony sequence.

fashion and beauty, to delicious food and children's education – the kinds of topics that did not appear in Ozu's films before this – with frequent puns and banter flying about. The exchange of the female dialogue, so rapid and without pause, proves that Ozu can now fully exploit the merits of talkie technology, the application of which in the previous film, *The Only Son*, was limited.²⁴ I think *Late Spring's* tea ceremony, which is the first sequence of the film, has essentially the same function of presenting this feminine space-time, in terms of an indoor social gathering of females as a pastime.



(Fig 8.7)

It is true that the tea ceremony sequence has a solemn mood, which does not exist in the casual fun of the chat in *What Did the Lady Forget?* In fact, the humour in Noriko and Masa's dialogue is compromised by the surrounding atmosphere, and they must talk softly, trying to suppress giggles. This cautious deviation, a secret joke shared between the two females, subtly contrasts with the heavy solemnity of the ceremony itself. (Fig 8.8) In the case of *What Did the Lady Forget?*, such deviations



(Fig 8.8) Conversation between Noriko and Masa in the tea ceremony scene

go unrestricted, which provoked an uncomfortable response from the contemporary critics. For example, Sawamura Tsutomu, who would soon advocate the 'spiritist film' during wartime, understood the femininity in *What Did the Lady Forget?* as an interruption of, and impediment to, the nationalistic mission of cinema that he

²⁴ Using Shigehara's talkie system, *The Only Son* had to be filmed in an empty Kamata studio after everyone had moved to Ofuna. It was from *What Did the Lady Forget?* that Ozu filmed in Ofuna studio using Shochiku's official Tsuchihashi system.

supported.²⁵ The leisured class's life in the film, where 'neither sad nor joyful things happen' except for the continuation of the everyday, was antagonistic to his historical consciousness as revealed in the quote, 'We, confronting the world outside, must recognise our self-identity as Japanese'.²⁶ Such a stance is also evidenced in his reference to Jacques Feyder's film *La Kermesse héroïque/Carnival in Flanders* (Films Sonores Tobis, France and Germany, 1935) as a symptom of 'social and ethnic agony'.²⁷ In a similar sense, it should be remembered that the reason why *The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice* – Ozu's next project after *What Did the Lady Forget?* – was censored by the militarist government was because of the frivolous conduct of its female characters.²⁸ The traditional Japaneseness apparent in *Late Spring* thus has a prehistory of conflict with femininity and the everyday, and postwar Ozu does not avoid directly facing it.

The oppositional nature of femininity is also evident in its relationship with surrounding spaces – especially domestic ones – and the movement of females within these spheres. The houses of Kamakura appearing in *Late Spring* and *Early Summer* are spacious and elaborate enough to generate a sense of stable middle class domesticity, with their various subsections including the entrance, kitchen, *engawa* (surrounding corridor), washing room, staircase and upper floor. Ozu supplements this stability with his low height and fixed camera, which creates deep perspective with multilayered walls and sliding doors overlapping on both sides. (Fig 8.9) This

²⁵ The 'spiritist film' prioritises the unique Japanese spirit, which the individual should realise for oneself through a spiritual voyage in narrative. For Sawamura, the mission of cinema is thus 'not simply to be "fun" or even "artistically excellent"' but to 'serve the state and the lives of its people', and to that end, 'lethargic hedonism' or 'purely escapist fare' in *shōshimin* films and comedies should be avoided. High, *The Imperial Screen*, pp. 223-225.

²⁶ Sawamura Tsutomu, 'Kōhuku no toiki wa kanashii [A Sigh of Happiness Is Sad]' in *Eiga hyōron [Film Criticism]* 19:4 (April, 1937), pp. 135-136.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 136. The film is a story about women in a Flemish town under the occupation of Spain in the seventeenth century. The 'stalwart' women, in lieu of men, take responsibility for greeting an approaching Spanish military expedition, with whom they fraternise. The film provoked controversy over its depiction of female 'collaboration' with the enemy, and Feyder was 'attacked by the Flemish nationalists', even though he argued that 'he wanted to make a feminist film'. Jack C. Ellis, *A History of Film* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1979), p. 181; Susan Hayward, *French National Cinema, 2nd Ed.* (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 158.

²⁸ According to the script, the bourgeois ladies in *The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice* are no less liberal than the ones in *What Did the Lady Forget?* Gatherings and trivial chat amongst females abound from the very first sequence, as in *What Did the Lady Forget?* Ayako, the female protagonist, lies to her husband in order to go on an *onsen* (hot spring) trip with her friends, and later even leaves home for a while because of her dissatisfaction with him.

typical domestic landscape, which would dominate Ozu's post-*Late Spring* films, originates from the bourgeois mansions of *What Did the Lady Forget?* and *Brothers and Sisters of the Toda Family*, affirming the stylistic and thematic connections between them. (Fig 8.10)



(Fig 8.9) Ozu's typical domestic view in *Late Spring* (left) and *Early Summer*



(Fig 8.10) A domestic shot in *What Did the Lady Forget?* (left) and *Brothers and Sisters of the Toda Family*

However, what differentiates *Late Spring* (and also *Early Summer*) from these predecessors is Noriko's cheerful movement around the house, which enlivens the otherwise static and precisely framed domestic space. She ceaselessly walks from kitchen through corridor to living room, going upstairs and downstairs, whilst busily doing various household chores. The impact of such movement is emphasised by the structure of Ozu's domestic space. Since characters suddenly appear/disappear through the layers of sliding doors and staircase on either side, their movements appear more active and rapid. (Fig 8.11) The best example of these comes from an



(Fig 8.11) Noriko's walking in *Early Summer*

evening scene in *Late Spring*, where Noriko walks around the house while arranging laundry, setting the table and attending to her father. Ozu designs the timing and

direction of Noriko's (and her father Somiya's) movement so deliberately that it almost looks like a choreographed dance. He also uses the invisible space of a back corridor behind a living/dining room (*chanoma*) to amplify the syncopated effect of the sudden (dis)appearance of movement. (Fig 8.12) Focusing on its 'spacing of time' through the shots, Eric Cazdyn praises this scene highly saying, 'I cannot think of a more perfect scene in all of cinema'.²⁹ I agree with him, but would like to add that there is also the element of movement that makes this scene a true cinematic pleasure, and more importantly, that the movement is fundamentally related to the articulation of femininity in the film.³⁰



a) Noriko enters dining room at the front while Somiya in the background enters back corridor to go to washing room at the other end



b) Somiya comes out of the back corridor to head to the washing room



c) Somiya, in the washing room, calls Noriko to fetch a towel



d) Noriko, who was in the dining room, suddenly enters the washing room through the back corridor with a towel

²⁹ Cazdyn, *The Flash of Capital*, p. 230.

³⁰ This kind of female movement can be distinguished from Ross' more pessimistic view on postwar French housewives, whose domestic movement was reorganised for producing maximum effect in managing household. Housewives "should be able to proceed from one to another in assembly-line fashion without retracing her footsteps". Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies*, p. 102.



e) Noriko returns into the corridor



f) Noriko, coming out of the back corridor, enters kitchen



g) Noriko brings a pan to the dining room



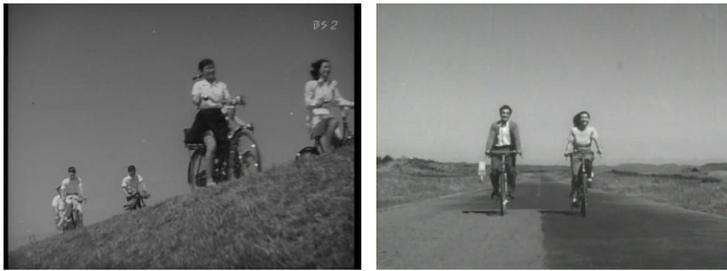
h) Camera now turns 90 degrees to the left to show the dining room. While Noriko arranges Somiya's clothes, Somiya suddenly appears in the background from the washing room through another corridor (which is seen in the shots from b to e)

(Fig 8.12) Noriko's movement in an evening scene in *Late Spring*

Noriko's active movement has been studied in the context of the modernity and postwar Westernisation her character connotes. The bicycle ride of *Late Spring* and running on a beach in *Early Summer* are obvious examples, with their open, outdoor locations coupled with an empathic sense of movement not only from Noriko but also through Ozu's camera that tracks, pans, and cranes unusually. Wood, for example, notices 'Noriko's exhilaration' in this liberated atmosphere, and described her, along with other young females (notably, Aya in *Late Spring* and *Early Summer*), as the representation of modern femininity freed from the restraint of marriage.³¹

³¹ Wood, *Sexual Politics and Narrative Film*, p. 118, 121. As a counterproof, Wood mentioned that Noriko's movement in *Late Spring* slowly dissipates as the narrative moves toward the burden of marriage later on.

However, I believe that the film is less about articulating the value of modernity against the challenge of tradition than observing the subtle state whereby the former unknowingly pervades the latter. In this sense, rather than the overt manifestation of free movement outside of the home, the trivial motion *inside* the confined domesticity are a more essential element in Ozu's films. In other words, in Ozu, modernity exists *within* the everyday, a stable flow that undulates but hardly overflows.³²



(Fig 8.13) Bicycle ride in *Blue Mountains* (left) and *Late Spring*

Female movement plays another significant role in connecting the spatiality of Tokyo to the everyday of the old capitals. Thanks to the female 'movers' who frequently come and go between the two spaces carrying something, the two terminals are in constant communication, physically detached but not completely segregated. *Late Spring* begins with such an example - the trousers for Noriko's nephew move from her aunt's in Tokyo to Kamakura. We also see a sewing machine at Somiya's, for which Noriko looks for a needle in Ginza. Somiya's gloves are found at the Takigawa restaurant in Tokyo and brought back to Kamakura by Noriko. A supper at home is followed by tea at the Balboa café in Ginza, with the talk of a gift for Hattori's wedding continuing from one site to the other. In *Early Summer*, a female gathering at a Ginza café is connected to Noriko's Kitakamakura home through the shortcake that she brings for Fumiko (Miyake Kuniko), her sister-in-law. In *The Munekata Sisters*, the spatial transfer takes the form of continuing trips around the nation, from Tokyo, where the protagonist sisters are living, to Kyoto, Nara, Kobe and Hakone.

³² If Ozu had wanted to make a film about women's rights to free marriage (and the frustration from feudal conventions ranged against it), the results could have been rather closer to Imai Tadashi's *Aoi sanmyaku/Blue Mountains* (Toho, 1949). The film actually has several comparative points with *Late Spring*; they were released in the same year, the leading female role was performed by Hara Setsuko, and they both use a bicycle ride at the seaside to express a similar thematic point. But in *Blue Mountains*, the narrative more concretely pursues the ideal of individual freedom, which is fulfilled as an anticipation of love-marriage in the end. I think this ideological directness distinguishes the film from *Late Spring*, making the former closer to 'beef steak or *tonkatsu*' in Ozu's term. (Fig 8.13)

Such mobility seems limited in *The Moon Has Risen*, where the trip to Tokyo is assumed to be difficult for the protagonist family, who took refuge in Nara during the war and have not gone back since. But ironically, because of that distance and difficulty, the space of Tokyo is ardently missed by Setsuko, the youngest and the most modern of the three daughters in the script. Her suggestion of discontentment with Nara ('Nara is Noh's tempo. ... Tokyo is allegro') and the memory of Tokyo ('I always remember...the feeling of going to Ginza. ... It's splendid') greatly contrast with her father Mokichi's resignation, 'Tokyo as you are imagining does not exist anymore'.³³ The Tokyo Mokichi imagines is 'such a messy, dusty place', a remark that clearly echoes the father Somiya's utterance in *Late Spring*. This traditionalism of both the males and the older generation is counterbalanced by the mobility of younger female characters, and their yearning for, and movement towards, Tokyo. The essence of Ozu's Occupation era films thus lies in the negotiation between these two contradictory positions with regard to history, spatiality and modernity, which are divided by gender as well as by generation.

2. Women and Food

Food is another aspect of the everyday that is attached to femininity as opposed to masculinity. Women tend to bring *tabemono* (something to eat) into their domestic boundaries, which we see frequently in *Early Summer*. A few exceptional cases where men deal with food lead to awkwardness, mistakes and even disharmony.³⁴ In contrast, food tends to bring women together and encourages their solidarity against men (and the traditional values they represent). An example of this relationship appears in a restaurant scene in *Early Summer*, wherein Noriko and Fumiko have dinner with Noriko's brother (and Fumiko's husband) Kōichi. Kōichi, a strict, patriarchal character, has an argument with the two women about the changing moral

³³ Ozu Yasujirō and Saitō Ryōsuke, *Tsuki wa noborinu* [*The Moon Has Risen*], reprinted in *Kinema junpō rinji zōkan: Ozu to kataru* [*Kinema Junpo Special Issue: Talking with Ozu*], 1136 (7 July, 1994), p. 81.

³⁴ In *Late Spring*, Somiya brings some bread and teas for Noriko and her friend Aya, but not only does he forget sugar and spoon, but his actions are also somewhat awkward. In *Early Summer*, the patriarch Kōichi brings a loaf of bread home, which his son mistakes for toy train rails that the father had promised. Disappointed and angered, the son throws it away and complains to Kōichi, resulting in conflict and the boy's running away from home.

attitude of postwar Japanese women, who he thinks are getting more and more ‘impudent’. Noriko instantly opposes him saying, ‘*Now it is just about equal. Man has been too impudent so far*’. Kōichi retorts by suggesting that Noriko is still not married because she maintains such attitudes, which she simply refutes, ‘It’s not that I can’t but that I don’t want to’.

Both Phillips and Wood interpret this scene as one of ‘female bonding’ and ‘progressive female subjectivity’, which ‘adds a new dimension to the critique of traditional marriage’.³⁵ I would like to add two more points. Firstly, as implied in Noriko’s response to Kōichi, there is a female historical consciousness that connects a critique of masculine authority to the recent history of war. I thus think that the gender discourse in the film is not confined to the marriage issue, but assumes a broader criticism of wartime militarism, which was predominantly led by men. The character of Kōichi, played by Ryū Chishū, represents such masculine authority in the face of a challenge by femininity.³⁶



(Fig 8.14) Ryū Chishū in *There Was a Father* (left), *The Inspection Tower* (centre) and *Army* (right)

Secondly, food and eating in the scene function as a sensuous pleasure that negates wartime stoicism and strengthens feminine solidarity. Whenever Noriko and Fumiko object to Kōichi’s conservative idea, they suddenly ask each other whether they should have *tempura* (deep fried foods) or *gohan* (cooked rice) as if to ignore his admonition. Their comradeship against Kōichi is visually represented by their facing positions around the table, alienating the husband/brother to one side of a three-shot. As such, Kōichi helplessly watches the two women engage in their own conversation

³⁵ Alastair Phillips, ‘Pictures of the Past in the Present’, p. 161; Wood, *Sexual Politics and Narrative Film*, p. 126.

³⁶ During wartime, Ryū had already established his image as a teacher or ‘preacher’ who seriously emphasises morality and duty. Examples include not only Ozu’s *There Was a Father* (1942) but also Shimizu Hiroshi’s *Mikaeri no tō/The Inspection Tower* (Shochiku, 1941) and Kinoshita Keisuke’s *Rikugun/Army* (Shochiku, 1944). In *Army*, especially, Ryū’s character represents a pro-war ideologue who, studying and teaching Japanese history, actively advocates the notion of the Japaneseness that justifies the current war. (Fig 8.14)

– ‘Isn’t it delicious?’ or ‘Would you like to have rice now?’ – while a bowl of rice is handed between them before his eyes.³⁷ (Fig 8.15) But at the same time, the female resistance is light and inexplicit in nature, accompanied by suppressed giggles and the exchange of implicative looks, which contrasts with Kōichi’s direct seriousness. This can be connected to the previous point about female movement, the essence of which I argue lies in a more covert domesticity than in the outward, and the outdoors.³⁸



(Fig 8.15) Female solidarity through food



(Fig 8.16) Michiyo in *Repast*: When she prepares *gohan* for her husband (*left*), and when she visits her mother (*centre and right*)

When the difference between Noriko and Fumiko – the former being younger and more modern, with the latter being older and more traditional – is considered, the female solidarity generated in this restaurant scene can be compared with that of the prewar *modan gāru* films, where the modern girl and the traditional girl construct mutual understanding through the gaze. But the postwar case is distinguished from the prewar not only in terms of narrative, which does not assume the love rivalry

³⁷ That Kōichi is uncomfortable with the connotation of the *gohan* is proven by his response, ‘go help yourself’, followed by his admonition of the ‘impudence of postwar women’. The cooked rice as a symbol of femininity also takes a central role in Naruse Mikio’s *Meshi/Repast* (Toho, 1951), which is another film that stars Hara Setsuko. In the film, the meaning of *meshi* (another word for cooked rice) is duplicated. On the one hand, it is an everyday duty of the protagonist housewife Michiyo, and thus signifies ‘a useless life, or the unglamorous necessities of life’. But as such, it also constitutes her feminine subjectivity and communality, as later confirmed when she visits her welcoming mother and shares a meal of warm *meshi*. (Fig 8.16) Catherine Russell, *The Cinema of Naruse Mikio*, p. 214.

³⁸ Hasumi Shigehiko argues the similar point about the resistance of Ozu’s young females to parental authority, which is less directly expressed in words or facial expressions than through ‘instantaneous motion’, such as throwing off a towel or clothes. Hasumi Shigehiko, *Eigaron kōgi [A Lecture on Film Theory]* (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 2008), pp. 93-103.

structure between the two female types, but also in terms of the medium of understanding, which is not the gaze but rather an everyday sensitivity combined with historical consciousness. In other words, eating food becomes a ritual for women to celebrate an everyday life regained, the return of which had to be relinquished during war. A sense of satisfaction and relief can be felt in Fumiko's remarks in the restaurant scene. While still remembering the days she wore *monpe* (women's trousers for work during wartime), she now exclaims in joy regarding the *gohan* she eats: 'How soft and delicious!'

The most radical example of this female pleasure must be the shortcake that Noriko brings home from the Ginza in *Early Summer*. The treat happens twice in the film. A small example is first bought on the wedding day of one of Noriko's friends. Fumiko likes it, and Noriko promises to buy a larger one the next time. When Noriko brings home the second one, however, Fumiko is startled to hear that it costs nine hundred Yen. Fumiko regrets the purchase, saying, 'I don't feel like eating anymore ... I'm so depressed. ... A big failure!', but Noriko looks happy and doesn't seem to mind at all. Fumiko, a typical *ryōsai kenbo*, still hesitates in joining in the indulgence, insisting on splitting the cost and saying 'I could buy a half pound of knitting ball with this'. But she eventually gives in, saying 'Well, it's alright I suppose, on this occasion' (Fig 8.17) This little non-everyday extravagance aroused great controversy amongst critics over its morality as well as plausibility.³⁹ But, when asked if this scene was unreasonable, Ozu responded after thinking briefly, 'wouldn't people eat it anyway, regretting [that they bought], but thinking it's still delicious?'⁴⁰



(Fig 8.17) Cutting the shortcake in the kitchen (*left*); Fumiko regrets (*centre*); All enjoy the dish (*right*)

³⁹ At this time, a ticket for a train ride between Tokyo and Osaka cost 770 Yen, the bus fee inside Tokyo was 10 Yen, and a cinema ticket price was 90.8 Yen. Thus even for an affluent suburban upper-middle class family – Kōichi, the patriarch, is a doctor – having shortcake would have been an unlikely treat, especially considering the state of Japan, whose economy was still struggling toward recovery. Tanaka, *Ozu Yasujirō Shūyū*, p. 363.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 362.

I think this anecdote presents another good example of Ozu's riddle of the 'flower and dirt'; it is not that Ozu was ignorant or evasive of social reality, but rather that he wanted to present another perspective on reality by which viewers could develop a better understanding of it. In terms of the movement I discussed, the shortcake represents an infiltration of Tokyo modernity into this domesticity set in a traditional background. Whether the modernity was existent or not at the time of the film's release is not of primary concern because the shortcake rather represents a 'memory' or a 'possibility' that had been lost in the midst of the long suffering of war. Thus the main point of this scene lies in the 'surprise' of rediscovery. In this sense, the shortcake offers the same joy of taste as the *gohan* in the restaurant scene, which is contingent upon female sensitivity to history and the everyday. The shortcake scene reconfirms this point by emphasising the feminine camaraderie between Noriko and Fumiko, the former's 'unassimilated identity' influencing the more conventional femininity of the latter.⁴¹ Their intimacy pervades the space of the kitchen, which Ozu retains as a safe compartment flanked by the typical layers of sliding doors and walls. (Fig 8.17)

What is also interesting about the shortcake is that it moves into (or invades) an everyday space, where its appearance is not usually expected. The resultant effect is a certain break in the normal everyday rhythm of the house, which makes Fumiko both hesitant and excited. Thus the appearance of shortcake is a variation on the 'lunch in a field' scene in *I Was Born But...*, both of which, by displacing food, constitute Ozu's characteristic moment of deviation from everyday space-time. The essential element here is the displacement, a traversing and trespassing of heterogeneous spaces, without which food would lose its disruptive effect. For example, we see another shortcake eating scene in *Late Spring*, but this time it is baked and consumed *inside* Aya's house, which looks as blatantly modern as the dish itself. Here it fails to generate the same rupture in the everyday as the shortcake in *Early Summer*. (Fig 8.18) For one thing the character of Aya represents modern femininity, and her lifestyle influences Noriko's thoughts on marriage, but the other side of the truth is that Ozu's modernity works best in an ironic sense, in a situation where it creates subtle discordance within the everyday, causing surprise or excitement. This

⁴¹ Phillips, 'Pictures of the Past in the Present', p. 161.

reiterates one of the main points of this thesis: that Ozu's everyday was active and never static.



(Fig 8.18) The shortcake scene in *Late Spring* – in such an obviously modern environment, shortcake loses its effect and becomes quotidian

The shortcake scene, however, also includes a heterogeneous element – an unexpected visit of Kenkichi, a neighbour and Kōichi's doctor colleague. Kenkichi was a close friend of Noriko's brother Shōji, who is missing in the war. Kenkichi's 'timely' appearance is important within the narrative structure, as it allows him to participate in the female ritual of having the shortcake, portending his marriage with Noriko later in the film. Her sudden (almost impulsive) decision to marry this widower with a daughter not only produces great family disturbance in the narrative, but also presents viewers with a difficult question, 'why on earth?'. It seems that even Ozu's young women in this period excuse themselves from clarifying the reason for their marrying (or not marrying). Based upon the discussion of femininity and modernity/tradition so far, I will deal with this perplexing matter of marriage in my next section.

The Problem of Marriage

Marriage was certainly Ozu's principal postwar subject. He made several films during the prewar and war period in which marriage appeared as a narrative element, but none dealt with it in as serious and extensive way as the post-*Late Spring* films. Ozu, however, seems to have considered this change of subject matter even before *Late Spring*, as revealed in the script of *The Moon Has Risen*. Although no actual marriage occurs, it is very much a romance drama about two couples, and would have been the only such case in Ozu's career if he had made it into a film. The

protagonist family, originally from Tokyo, lives in Nara and consists of a father and three daughters. The eldest, Chizuru, is a widow, but the other two, Ayako and Setsuko, are as yet unmarried. The narrative follows the love-matches of the second and third daughter in that order. Ayako meets Amemiya, a doctor from Tokyo, with whom she was briefly acquainted in her schooldays. With help from Setsuko and Shōji (Chizuru's brother-in-law and Amemiya's friend), Ayako and Amemiya become lovers, the former rejecting an offer of arranged marriage. Next it is Setsuko's turn. Shōji, repatriated after war and unemployed, finds a job in Tokyo, where he and Setsuko decide to go together as lovers. Ayako is already there with Amemiya. The script ends with the father's encouragement that Chizuru should remarry too. The moon keeps shining for all these lovers.

As a paean to romance, *The Moon Has Risen* suggests a few important points regarding marriage in Ozu. First of all, romance/marriage is articulated as a new start - not merely as a personal affair, but as a symbolic advancement towards the space of Tokyo. As mentioned, Setsuko, the youngest and the most liberal, expresses her desire to go back to her hometown, where the rhythm of everyday life is 'allegro', rather than 'Noh's tempo' in Nara. The scene where Shōji pledges a 'new life' in Tokyo to Setsuko thus constitutes the climax of the script. Secondly, memory of the past is strongly attached to the making of a love relationship. The 'sensitivities to the continuities of the past' that Phillips noted in Noriko's character in relation to other women perform an essentially similar role in intra-gender relationships.⁴² Ayako and Amemiya first met during a summer vacation spent in her family's seaside cottage more than ten years ago, the remembrance of which is repeatedly mentioned by characters until the two finally confirm their mutual affection. Setsuko and Shōji are also old acquaintances, as the latter remembers when the former was a 'snivelling' child. Moreover, Shōji's character signifies the invisible existence of his dead brother (i.e. Chizuru's husband and Setsuko's brother-in-law). The reason of his death is not clarified, except that it has been two years since he died (i.e. 1945, given the script was written in 1947). Thirdly, there is a generational gap not only between the daughters and their father but also amongst the daughters, with regard to their affinities for Tokyo or Nara (i.e. modernity or tradition). The father, Mokichi, clearly states his preference for Nara, where his family took refuge during war. However, it

⁴² Phillips, 'Pictures of the Past in the Present', p. 160.

is significant that he is aware of the young generation's preference for Tokyo and acknowledges the reality that their future (along with marriage) lies over there and not by his side. It is Chizuru, the eldest and a widow, who takes the role of intermediary between Mokichi and the other daughters. She actually plays the *ryōsai kenbo*'s role in this motherless family, placing herself closer to Mokichi's traditional world. However, as the father says, she is 'still young' for a widow and 'it is a pity if she remains in Nara for long'.⁴³ Chizuru does not actively deny the possibility of remarriage that Mokichi encourages.

All these points considered together, I conclude that the romance/marriage in *The Moon Has Risen* is a metaphorical narrative vehicle that connotes Ozu's historical recognition of both the past of the prewar and wartime and the present of the Occupation. As Tanaka argues, Nara in the script certainly does perform the function of 'emotional healing' for the postwar Japanese with its traditional elements. Or it could be understood, using my concept of displacement and deviation in Ozu, that, by distancing oneself from everyday space-time, one is afforded an opportunity to reflect on the everyday. In Ozu's terms, Nara is flower for dirt. Marriage is then a meta-movement back to the dirt, to a place for the present and future and for the young. It is the everyday regained, as is noticeable in Shōji's remark to Setsuko, '[Once in Tokyo], you will cook rice... you will do laundry'. The old, with whom I think Ozu emotionally sympathises, do not deny the flow, but rather accept it as reality. In opposition, the young, marrying and leaving, do not forget the memory of the past. In fact, the reason why they can so easily decide to leave is because the marriage offers a reunification with the forgotten past (more than ten years ago, sometime in the prewar), a natural return to the original whole. Nara, the image of the past for the present, will also be remembered, as Setsuko assures Shōji and herself while watching the moon on the night of their decision to leave together. In this sense, the marriage in Ozu is a ritual of spatiotemporal irony, advancing ahead while holding back.

No other 'excursion film' from the same era displays as clear an attitude towards romance/marriage as *The Moon Has Risen*. As mentioned, the decision to

⁴³ According to the script, Chizuru is in her early thirties, while Ayako is 25 and Setsuko is 20. *The Moon Has Risen* is the first time Ozu specifically describe the ages of the main characters in the scenario, supporting the idea that the generational issue becomes the major subject in his postwar cinema.

marry (or to stay single) is always somewhat hidden behind ambiguity and unreasonableness. But I think the case of *The Moon Has Risen* provides some important clues with which other films can be interpreted from a new perspective. Among them, *Early Summer* shows the most positive and clearest view of marriage, which I will lastly discuss in the rest of this chapter. In the film Noriko is very conscious of female subjectivity (evident in her line, ‘It’s not that I can’t [marry] but I just don’t want to’) and she makes her close acquaintances wonder if she has ‘*iroke* (interest in the opposite sex)’.⁴⁴ But on the other hand, there is no hint in the film that she clearly objects to the idea of marriage as the Noriko of *Late Spring* does. In fact, she seems agreeable with an offer of *omiai* (meeting for arranged marriage) from her boss at work, at least until the counterpart’s age is discovered to be over forty, twelve years older than her.⁴⁵ Wood suggests that arranged marriage is a social



(Fig 8.19)

convention that makes Ozu’s young females ‘succumb’ to the ‘duty’ to marry, and Sorensen’s study adds that the US censors considered exaltation of the custom as ‘propagation of feudalism’.⁴⁶ But I think we should pay due attention to the scrupulous approach that Ozu’s characters take to the process of *omiai*, and in contrast with Sorensen’s argument, arranged marriage should be clearly distinguished from forced marriage in terms of effect.⁴⁷ No father in postwar Ozu – even the one in *Equinox Flower*, who is actually called ‘feudal’ by his daughter – has such power to enable him to force his daughter to marry a bridegroom whom she dislikes.

⁴⁴ Wood thus read out of Noriko’s character ‘lesbianism in the wider, more comprehensive sense sanctioned by the women’s movement’, backed by the anecdote that Noriko collected Katherine Hepburn’s photographs in her schooldays. Wood, *Sexual Politics and Narrative Film*, p. 123.

⁴⁵ On the night of her friend’s wedding day, when she brings home the first shortcake, Noriko tells Fumiko that the offer is a ‘very good one’ according to her boss. At that moment, she shows a big, shy smile, which implies that she is not uninterested in the *omiai*. (Fig 8.19)

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 123, 127; Sorensen, *Censorship of Japanese Films*, pp. 137, 148-149.

⁴⁷ Sorensen, *Censorship of Japanese Films*, p. 150.

Nevertheless, the primary issue of the marriage in Ozu is not whether it is ‘arranged or based on love’. The major problem of Noriko in *Early Summer* is not that she is driven to a marriage that she does not want, but that she suddenly decides to marry Kenkichi, the widower with a daughter. It happens in the scene where she visits Kenkichi to hand his mother a farewell present for the family that is soon moving to Akita. The mother very hesitantly reveals her long held secret wish that her son remarry with Noriko, who, to the viewer’s as well as the mother’s surprise, accepts. How can this happen? One reason Noriko gives to Fumiko later on in a seaside scene is that she thought a man with a daughter would be more reliable than a man who, in his forties, still was idly single. This, however, explains only one side of the story (i.e. Kenkichi is better than the *omiai* partner), but does not fully justify why he should be the one for her.⁴⁸ Therefore, I want to pay attention to another reason that she gives to her friend Aya: ‘I thought I could trust a man if I had known him so well *for a long time*’. This means, as with the couples in *The Moon Has Risen*, Noriko’s romance is based upon a temporal consciousness, a sense of the memory of the past, which relates her life experience to that of Kenkichi. He is, in fact, personally related to Noriko through his close friend and her brother, Shōji. Moreover, Shōji is not just a brother, but the one that is (possibly) dead at war. Thus for Noriko, Kenkichi is not merely a ‘brother figure’, but more of a living metaphor for the dormant memory of the historical past that complements her postwar identity.⁴⁹ Once this becomes clear within the narrative, a romance instantly clicks.

Ozu, in fact, presents clear clues for this interpretation. In the previous scene to the one where Noriko accepts the marriage, Noriko takes a decisive interest in Kenkichi by hearing his personal story about Shōji. The scene begins with both of them walking up a slope in Tokyo’s Ochanomizu area, followed by a shot of Nikolai Cathedral, which turns out to be a point of view shot from a table in a café seen in the third shot. (Fig 8.20) The metaphor of war and death is already being suggested; Nikolai Cathedral was used as a place for laying dead bodies during the 1945 Tokyo bombing. A slow hymn is heard throughout the scene, as Kenkichi recalls that he and

⁴⁸ Given Noriko’s strong sense of female subjectivity, I find it difficult to accept Wood’s hypothesis that she, without love, ‘opts for the least of the available evils’ between Kenkichi and the other. Wood, *Sexual Politics and Narrative Film*, p. 127.

⁴⁹ Hence, her boss’ response to her decision to choose Kenkichi, ‘You’re such an *old-fashioned* *après-guerre!*’, makes sense. Apparently, the expression is nonsense as marrying a widower with a child is a much more socially radical decision than following an arranged marriage.

Shōji used to come to this café and sit by this table. After Noriko says that she really liked her brother, Kenkichi tells her that he still retains a letter from Shōji at the battle of Xuzhou, inside which an ear of barley was included. He then adds he was reading a novel, *Mugi to heitai/Barley and Soldiers*, at that time.⁵⁰ Noriko seems so surprised that she is lost for words for a while, and asks Kenkichi to give the letter to her, which he consents to do. And in the very next scene, we see Noriko's consent to marry him.



(Fig 8.20)

The metaphor of the barley for war and its relation to Noriko's marriage is affirmed in the final scene. Now living in Yamato region near Nara, Noriko's parents watch a wedding procession through a barley field outside their house, and wonder how Noriko is doing in Akita. The image of the procession is almost a reenactment of the soldiers' march at the battle of Xuzhou. (Fig 8.21) I thus agree with Tanaka's



(Fig 8.21) The wedding procession in *Early Summer* (left) and soldiers marching through a barley field in Xuzhou

particular interpretation that the barley field is 'full of the dead souls at war' and hence the wedding procession means 'the birth of a new life ... while the deceased watch'.⁵¹ The postwar is waiting ahead for the newlywed, but they will not be

⁵⁰ In The battle of Xuzhou during the Sino-Japanese War in 1938, Japanese soldiers had to march for a very long time – 'the endless, dusty barley fields stretching to the horizon'. The image became a popular phenomenon when a Japanese reportage novelist Hino Ashihei (1907-1960) wrote about his own experience at the battle in the book *Barley and Soldiers*. High, *The Imperial Screen*, p. 206; David M. Rosenfeld, *Unhappy Soldier: Hino Ashihei and Japanese World War II Literature* (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2002), p. 24.

⁵¹ Tanaka, *Ozu Yasujirō Shūyū*, p. 363.

entirely free from the memory of the barley field they see.⁵² This is the same historical contradiction Ozu introduced for the postwar generation in *The Moon Has Risen*. The director, however, makes it clearer in *Early Summer* that his ‘personal’ position is aligned with the older generation, the ones who are left behind. Noriko’s wedding is completely elided, only its ‘imagery’ is presented, and the procession is seen from the viewpoint of Noriko’s parents, who have now receded further into Yamato, the heartland of traditional Japan. Their cryptic expressions, ‘Many things have happened... for a long time’ and ‘We can’t get everything we desire’, now suggest a new semantic dimension – that these are not only the lamentations of aging parents, but also comments on the wartime, which tormented the lives of most Japanese people. What I see on their reticent faces is the deepest sadness of victims who are as yet deprived of the chance to make their voices heard, whether by the US or by Japanese militarists. (Fig 8.22) The last tracking shot of the film through the waving barley field, which Tanaka interprets as a ‘funeral march’, thus seems awe-inspiring, or even eerie, not because it is a traditional Japanese image, but rather a vision of an unresolved past that still haunts the present like a ghost.⁵³ (Fig 8.23) Noriko’s marriage is then a resolute decision to move on to the everyday marching through this field of agony, the vision of which will nevertheless last long in her mind.



(Fig 8.22)



(Fig 8.23)

⁵² Hence the original title is *Bakushū*, literally, Autumn of barley, whose connotation the English title *Early Summer* almost loses.

⁵³ Ibid.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed some of the key issues in Ozu's postwar cinema, from tradition and modernity to gender, the everyday, and the narrative of marriage. Ozu's approach to dealing with these concepts is ironical, showing the flower to indicate dirt. Traditional icons operate as visual 'vehicles' to reflect on the distanced existence of the present, rather than advocating tradition per se. As discussed, this 'distancing' (expressed in the form of the 'excursion') is closely related to Japan's recent history of war and Occupation. It is in fact surprising to see how obsessively conscious Ozu was of the question of war throughout the excursion films. And it is in this sense that I strongly disagree with the suggestion that he lost touch with the reality of postwar society. Accusations of traditionalism and escapism are in fact inappropriate and stereotypical responses based on a misunderstanding. The concept of tradition here should be replaced with the more concrete notion of the historical past and its residual memory.

In a similar sense, marriage is a narrative vehicle that connotes the tension between the past and the present. To understand it only as a social custom under the influence of Westernisation is to ignore this historical implication, which involves it directly with the negotiation between the burden of memory and progress towards the future. Ozu's basic solution for this problem is generational division – while parents remain attached to the past, children advance ahead. After all, marriage in Ozu does not represent the constraining of individual freedom, but rather articulates the re-contextualisation of individuality within history. Ozu's historical consciousness, however, is unable to overcome the limitations of the victim's consciousness, which I believe is the pervasive psychological undercurrent dominating the sorrowful vision of the parents who are left behind.

The female everyday is interwoven with this grand narrative of tradition and marriage. Although existing as a continual-present (even in traditional spaces), it acquires a special meaning for the future to come (or to return) in the 'excursion films'. That peculiar vitality expressed in the flow of moving, chatting, eating etc. effectively permeates and enlivens the static world of tradition, maintaining a connection with the modern world, namely Tokyo, where postwar progress continues. The new departure of marriage is in fact a return to this trivial everyday

life, as accepted by the brides-to-be themselves. There are certainly aspects of repetition and oppression in the everyday, which are imposed upon women as their 'duty'.⁵⁴ Though caught in this trap, Ozu's female characters have the ability to transform this positively into the potential for liberation from the masculine order. Ozu makes this point clear by emphasising the cheerfulness of the female everyday that contrasts with the reticence and lethargy of his male characters. It is also important that such vitality is shared and mutually supported by female solidarity amongst sisters, sisters-in-law and female friends. When this gender division gains historicity (as in the example of the restaurant scene in *Early Summer*), the female everyday can provide an active revelation of the rigidity and oppressiveness of male-driven history. This reconfirms the main point of this chapter, that Ozu's Occupation period was never free from the contemplation of war.

⁵⁴ In *Late Spring*, on the last night in Kyoto, Somiya speaks to Noriko about the housewife's virtue of enduring marital life. I think this 'sermon' – a revisit to the actor Ryū Chishū's wartime role as patriarchal teacher – could possibly be an exaggeration (along with Somiya's acknowledgement of remarriage) as part of his desperate effort to persuade Noriko to marry.

CHAPTER 9

Two Tales of a City: Tokyo Regained, Tokyo Lost

Introduction – The Return to the City

In the previous chapter, I presented the Occupation era as a distinctive period in Ozu's career, characterised by the recurring theme of reflecting on the city of Tokyo, but distanced from the space. This spatial displacement was related to Ozu's historical consciousness, which objectified the reality of the *post-war* by placing the self in the *pre-war* as visualised in the images of the old capitals. This epistemological division was also based upon gender and generation, making the marriage of young woman a symbolic departure for the future of the postwar that lay in the space of Tokyo.¹ From the early 1950s, beginning with *Ochazuke no aji/The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice* (1952, revised from the original script of the same title from 1940), Ozu attempted a postscript to this return to the city, to the place of the everyday and of the now. What would be waiting there for the young that had left their old parents behind in the fields of the past and the dead? In the script of *The Moon Has Risen*, Mokichi, the father of the three daughters, has already given a specific answer to this question. When the youngest, Setsuko, wonders what their abandoned home in Kōjimachi (a town in *yamanote*) would be like now, his short response is, 'No doubt there are weeds growing'. Along with the 'dust' statement in *Late Spring*, this kind of attitude reveals the basic view of the prewar generation

¹ In *Late Spring*, it is not certain whether Noriko will live in Tokyo after marriage, and in *Early Summer*, Noriko will actually live in Akita, but I think these deviations can be seen as departures for Tokyo at a symbolic level (i.e. the place of living the present).

towards the war-devastated Tokyo under reconstruction, which Mokichi does not want to return to.

But that was the late 1940s, and now we move on to the early 1950s, with the US Occupation – the primary political source for the postwar transformations – ending in 1952. Did this historical change establish conditions that would prompt Ozu to revise the thinking of his Occupation era films? It would appear so, since the primary setting of his filmmaking now moved back to Tokyo after the previous few years' 'excursion'. This odyssey of Ozu's, however, required a re-examination of his earlier notion that the 'prewar Tokyo does not exist anymore'.² This deplorable realisation that the communal consciousness of *shitamachi* no longer existed in everyday life was also confirmed by the failure of *Record of Tenement Gentleman* and *A Hen in the Wind*, both of which had attempted a reconstruction of this consciousness, but were criticised as depicting an 'unreal' Tokyo. As a result, Ozu moved away from the city towards an outside world unaffected by the war. But now his attention moved back to Tokyo, and the difficult duty of redefining what existed there now in reality, whether it was dusty weeds or something new and different.

This structure of disappearance and return was not a completely new element in his cinema. As discussed in Chapter 4, the Kihachi series was mainly based upon the repeated formula of 'vagrancy', between the nostalgic *shitamachi*, which had already been a disappearing utopia in the 1930s, and Tokyo as reality, suffering from depression and unemployment. The similar double spatial structure reappeared in *The Only Son*, which set a communal *shitamachi* town against metropolitan Tokyo. On the other hand, there was a more frank acceptance of the disappearance and returning to the present world, as seen in the bourgeois trilogy during wartime (beginning with *What Did the Lady Forget?* in 1937), which marked the director's transition from *shitamachi* to *yamanote* – two contrasting geographical entities inside Tokyo. In this sense, I understand his first two post-Occupation era films – *Ochazuke no aji/The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice* (1952) and *Tokyo Story* (1953) – as revisitations of his final prewar ('before he went to war') films – *What Did the Lady*

² In an interview of 1951, when asked why the typical *shitamachi* images in his prewar films – factories, gas tanks, shepherd's purse and the inhabitants – had disappeared in his postwar films, the director answered, 'I have become less affectionate towards those people living there than I used to be. In the past, they were not as cold-hearted as now'. Ozu yasujirō, 'Eiga e no aijō ni ikite [Living for the Love of Cinema]' in *Eiga shinchō* (November, 1951); reprinted in Tanaka (ed.), *Sengo goroku*, p. 107.

Forget? and *The Only Son*. If *Tokyo Story* and *The Only Son* offered a similarly compassionate gaze upon the *shitamachi* humanism that was increasingly being forgotten, the other two films were in praise of a *yamanote* optimism that seemed to last forever. Ozu's Tokyo is thus basically comprised of these two different tales of 'Tokyo Lost' and 'Tokyo Regained', which, in the case of the postwar, also assumed the structure of a long delayed return to the city after the Occupation. By discussing each in separate sections, I will explore how the two tales present different sides of the reality that Ozu discovered after returning to the city.

Tokyo Regained: *The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice*

The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice has long been neglected by Western academics. Not only was the film made in between two of the most revered films by the director – *Early Summer* and *Tokyo Story* – but also its dominant mood was pleasantly trivial (with some narrative elements drawn from the light-hearted comedy *What Did the Lady Forget?*). Ozu himself was conscious of the linkage, acknowledging that it was 'the first time in 15 or 16 years since *What Did the Lady Forget?* that [he] had made a comedy'.³ The film was also a revival of his unfinished wartime project of the same title, which had actually been planned as the next release after *What Did The Lady Forget?* As discussed in Chapter 7, this was Ozu's bourgeois drama period, and it was mainly the liberated behaviour of the leisured-class female characters that made the government censor the script. It seems that Ozu may have taken up this old project in a makeshift fashion. Three years later, in 1955, Ozu remembered in an interview that 'it [had been] old material brought in to fill up the year, not properly planned as usual'.⁴ Accordingly, his evaluation of the

³ 'Ozu kantoku tōfu ya dangi [Director Ozu Discusses Tofu Shop]' in Tanaka (ed.), *Sengo goroku*, p. 118.

⁴ Ozu Yasujirō, Noda Kōgo and Kishi Matsuo, 'Sōshun Kaidan [Free Talking about *Early Spring*]' in Tanaka (ed.), *Sengo goroku*, p. 232. Ozu and Noda were actually preparing a different script earlier in 1952. But in dealing with a story of a mother and her five grown-up children, it became a more serious work closer to *The Only Son* than they had wanted (for commercial viability). The project was eventually aborted and they began work on revising *The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice*. This anecdote suggests that Ozu might have been thinking of something close to *Tokyo Story* as his next film for the year. *Ibid.*, pp. 113, 116-117.

film was unfavourable, calling it ‘a film with a terrible aftertaste’.⁵

The general response of critics was not that different. Even though the film continued Ozu’s postwar commercial success – in terms of box office revenue it was the most popular Shochiku film and the second most popular Japanese film released in that year – *The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice* was not included in *Kinema Junpo*’s annual top 10 list (which ranked it at 12), the first time one of Ozu’s films had been left off the list since he began to be listed in 1930. A Japanese critic, Shimizu Chiyota, wrote in the magazine, ‘Among Ozu’s postwar films, none disappointed me as much as this one’.⁶ Shimizu argued that unlike the original script that had included ‘a critique of society and war, even if only slightly’, the final film only articulated ‘Ozu’s view of the husband and wife relationship and contemporary custom and manners (*fūzoku*)’, and in result ‘lost touch with the outside world and became isolated’.⁷ The criticism was, as usual, directed towards Ozu’s understanding of the real world, which had ‘just been liberated from the Occupation’, with ‘complex undercurrents and torrents’ still swirling.⁸ Tanaka Masasumi agrees in retrospect that the film in ‘attempting to adjust itself to current *fūzoku*, has become discursive and lost the original’s tight composition and rich cultural maturity’⁹

I believe that this shift of focus onto ‘custom and manners’ makes the film a very important turning point in the progress of Ozu’s postwar cinema. It is true that the war references in the original script had to be removed (for example, the protagonist going to war became a business trip), diminishing the impact of the narrative. But instead, Ozu’s new interpretations, inundated with various signifiers of urban everyday culture, drew a *representative* (though caricatured) portrait of postwar Tokyo, which would become the prototype of his post-1958 ‘new *sararīman* films’, such as *Equinox Flower* (1958), *Late Autumn* (1960) and *An Autumn Afternoon* (1962). In this sense, I agree with Tanaka’s opinion that the film, for all its weaknesses, ‘ironically reflects the phenomenon called the postwar’.¹⁰ Virtually everything relevant to postwar urban everyday life (except for television) seems to

⁵ Ibid., p. 232.

⁶ Shimizu Chiyota, ‘*Ochazuke no aji: Ozu yasujirō no gobyū* [A Mistake of Ozu Yasujiro]’ in *Kinema Junpō*, 49 (1 October, 1952), p. 36.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Tanaka Masasumi, *Ozu yasujirō shūyū*, p. 373.

¹⁰ Ibid.

appear here – from cars to planes, from newspapers to radio, from baseball to *pachinko*, and from bars to *ramen* restaurants – the dizzying array of which itself is characteristic of the postwar period.¹¹ In this sense, the film may be seen as a very early document of recuperated mass culture in Japan, matching the new political environment instituted by end of the US Occupation (with the signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1952). The celebratory mood of the vibrant urban culture depicted in the film is further supported by the elements of comedy that are also present.

From the very first scene, the film emphasises its references to urban culture, opening with the female protagonist Taeko and her niece Setsuko taking a taxi ride through Miyakezaka to Ginza district in central Tokyo. The two women are visiting Taeko's friend Aya, who runs a luxury boutique in Ginza, and they engage in ladies' talk of eating out, watching kabuki theatre and the experience of *pachinko*. As such, the scene is surely another presentation of the feminine everyday that I discussed in the previous chapter. In fact, if the reference to *pachinko* is ignored, the 'gathering of ladies' scene is a direct adaptation from the 1940 original script. A major difference of the film is the opening scene's movement through the cityscape of Tokyo seen through the taxi window. Forward and side tracking shots, showing trams, other cars, buildings and pedestrians, move us through the busy streets towards the Hattori building – the symbol of Ginza.¹² (Fig 9.1) Never before had Ozu's Tokyo obtained



(Fig 9.1)

such visual immediacy, such a sense of documenting the here and now. In

¹¹ The inclusion of these cultural elements was intentional from the earliest stages of the script rewriting as evidenced by Noda's mention of a weekly magazine article about the *pachinko* phenomenon in an interview in January 1952. 'Kessaku no umareru sizukana oheya [The Room Where the Masterpieces Are Born]' in Tanaka (ed.), p. 117.

¹² For the taxi ride scene, according to Ozu's cinematographer Atsuta Yūharu, a special type of automobile was built because Ozu did not want to use rear projection. That car-body was installed on the loading platform of a truck, which not only the camera but also Ozu himself could get on. Atsuta remembers the strange look from pedestrians in Tokyo watching this 'car on a truck' going around the roads near the Imperial Palace. Atsuta and Hasumi, *Ozu yasujirō monogatari*, p. 189-190.

comparison, *Late Spring*'s train ride scene, though more speedy and dynamic, does not articulate the 'cityness' of Tokyo as it happens on the street. Also, the Hattori building in *The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice* is not merely a stilled image as in *Late Spring*, but also a living object floating on the horizon, growing slowly nearer as the taxi approaches it. There is a kind of joy at the 'rediscovery of landscape' rising at this moment, which makes this opening scene a welcoming statement of Ozu's return to the city. (Fig 9.2)



(Fig 9.2) The Hattori building seen far ahead (*left*), followed by its individual shot

This cheerful ride happens on a sunny 'afternoon with a gentle breeze in May', accompanied by light, piano-led chamber music.¹³ The sunshine from the side window falls on the laps of the two ladies, while they talk about a Jean Marais movie that Setsuko will see that day. In the next scene we see Aya's boutique in Ginza, which, filled with bright coloured Western furniture and commodities, constitutes one of the most modern spaces Ozu ever created. (Fig 9.3) The image of Aya in her



(Fig 9.3) Aya in her office (*left and centre*); Taeko and Setsuko arriving at Aya's boutique

office represents the professional working woman, who, for the first time in Ozu, governs the modern space as a subject. Her black stylish dress harmonises with the immaculate surroundings, and a shiny pearl necklace is juxtaposed with a tape measure around her neck. Meanwhile, Taeko, who has arrived at the shop with Setsuko, casually buys a bottle of perfume before going up to the office to see Aya and begin the ladies' chat. With all this mobility, brightness, capability and leisure,

¹³ Ozu Yasujiro and Noda Kōgo, *The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice*, in Inoue (ed.), *Ozu Yasujiro zenshū*, p. 151.

the postwar Tokyo of this Ginza sequence seems to leap off the screen with an unprecedented sense of optimism and confidence. In the original script, the ladies' gathering scene focuses on the affluence and leisure time of the female characters, which, in relation to the subject matter of forced *omiai*, functions as the basis for female resistance to male-driven social order.¹⁴ It is easy to see how such an element generated tension in the narrative in the context of the wartime in which the script was written. The focus of the film version, however, is transferred to urban modernity, where females were already a predominant subject of everyday life. Although the question of Setsuko's *omiai* still remains, it does not have sufficient momentum to lead the narrative, and the balance of focus shifts to the enjoyment of the everyday.

Such changes do not apply only to female characters but also males, especially younger ones. Okada, who is twenty six and called by his nickname 'Non-chan' and whose character did not appear in the original wartime script, represents the new postwar generation. He had an older brother who died at war, the memory of which, however, hardly affects the narrative, in contrast with Ozu's previous Occupation era films. Always *nonbiri* (carefree; his nickname might come from this word), Non-chan's character is imbued with the film's optimism, or in his own terms, 'simplicity', meaning he does not interpret the world in a convoluted way. He is thus not worried about passing the entrance exam for a job at a company asserting that he 'will definitely succeed', and also thinks *omiai* is an enjoyable opportunity to 'meet someone first and see if love grows afterwards'. He is also active in pursuing the pleasures of urban life such as eating and drinking out, playing *pachinko* and going to bicycle races. The scene where he drinks at a bar with Mokichi, a friend of Non-chan's dead brother and Taeko's *sararīman* husband, reminds viewers of the long forgotten world of the *sararīman*. Drinking after work did not exist in the prewar *shōshimin eiga*, but would become a typically recurring motif of the postwar white collar's everyday life in the new *sararīman* films a few years later on. (Fig 9.4)

¹⁴ Setsuko, the youngest female, as the Setsuko of the film version is, is forced to see a man who she dislikes for her arranged marriage, which becomes the main topic of the ladies' gathering. After she leaves for the *omiai*, the older ladies plan an unexpected *onsen* trip in order to cheer themselves up. One of them, Ayako, plans to lie to her husband so that she can join the trip.



(Fig 9.4) Non-chan drinking with Mokichi (*left*); Mokichi in his office (*centre and right*) – Ozu would repeat the same *mise-en-scène* for office spaces in his new *sararīman* films.

The urban modernity discussed so far is characterised by its openness and accessibility, which more fundamentally presupposes the existence of anonymous masses. Viewers are often presented with shots of crowds in which the main characters are embedded – such as in baseball stadiums, at bicycle race tracks and in airports. *Ramen* restaurants, *pachinko* parlours, and the back alleys that connect such small places of cheap pleasure are also open spaces in which anonymous people can pass without noticing each other. This public nature of urban space is strongly distinguished from the more privately oriented spaces that appeared in Ozu's prewar films. For example, the *ramen* restaurant where Non-chan and Setsuko enjoy a bowl of *ramen* is very different from Iida Chōko's restaurant in the Kihachi films. Although Non-chan loves the *ramen*, he and Setsuko are just two of the customers at the restaurant, and there is no intimate relationship established between the couple and the shop's owner as in Kihachi's *shitamachi* world. (Fig 9.5) What instead fills the gap created by anonymity is the ardent wish of the masses for sound, speed and thrills. *Ramen* exists as a palatable experience to be admired and exclaimed at. Non-chan and Setsuko's slurping sounds add an auditory sensation to this joy of life, supporting the carefree 'simplicity' that he explains to her while they eat.



(Fig 9.5) A back alley outside the ramen restaurant (*left*); Setsuko and Non-chan enjoy *ramen*

It is a similar sound of the city that defines the atmosphere of the *pachinko* parlour, the baseball stadium and the race track, but with the speed of ball and bicycle, the experience comes closer to being a momentary thrill rather than mere enjoyment. *Pachinko* players, all facing the machine in silence, wait for the tinkling

sound of scoring, and the spectators at a bicycle race, watching the final spurt towards the goal, all inadvertently stand up from their seats.¹⁵ (Fig 9.6) I agree with Hasumi Shigehiko's point that there is 'unnatural artificiality' in the 'unidirectional gaze' of these people at such moments, which he interprets as Ozu's intentional visual 'exaggeration', which works against otherwise repressed and refined narrative structures.¹⁶ (Fig 9.7) The enormous energy dormant within this visual orderliness also signifies the attraction to the thrill of instantaneity, which is not irrelevant to the regained everyday life after war. The everyday as momentary pleasure, which was not prominently articulated in Ozu's films of the early 1930s when urban culture was at its height, now emerges as the central dominant theme of the film. I believe that this is the most fundamental vision of the New Tokyo that Ozu found on his return to the city.



(Fig 9.6) The *Pachinko* parlour where Non-chan and Setsuko play the game (*above*) and the bicycle race



(Fig 9.7) Other examples of unidirectional gazes at an airport (*left*) and a baseball stadium

This does not mean that Ozu himself is actively affirming this change, though

¹⁵ Non-chan's remark, 'bicycle race is like *pachinko* with the ball riding on saddle', eloquently describes the essential commonality shared by these urban activities.

¹⁶ Hasumi, *Kantoku Ozu Yasujiro*, pp. 101-103.

he does not deny it either. His personal stance is conveyed through the character of Mokichi, the 42 year old *sararīman* and generous husband. For example, his remark about *pachinko* summarises Ozu's critical view of postwar mass society as well as of urban culture itself:

‘One enters a state of self-annihilation while being with many other people. It is a simple way of becoming alone ... separated from all the woes of the world. The ball is me, and I am the ball. It is pure loneliness that enchants the people – happiness in loneliness’.¹⁷

On the other hand, Mokichi has his own life principle, that is, favouring an ‘intimate, primitive, and relaxed’ way of life in contrast with the ‘aloofness and propriety’ of Taeko's bourgeois lifestyle. The film's narrative is structured as a moral drama of reforming the latter's world-view through the former's values, and rebuilding their relationship. The key metaphor for Mokichi's principle is the dish of *ochazuke*, a simple and plain *tabemono* usually eaten by commoners. Sharing a bowl of *ochazuke* with Mokichi on the night before his departure for a business trip, Taeko finally understands what her husband meant by his remark regarding ‘intimacy and primitiveness’ – that such should be the basis of conjugal affection – and repents her defiant attitude. This conclusion comes across as a trite moral conservatism (as found in the ‘failed *moga*’ narrative) that attempts to redress all the excesses of urban modernity in the earlier part of the film.¹⁸ The two consecutive scenes related to *ochazuke* (its preparation in the kitchen and consumption in *chanoma*) are the best examples of where Ozu succeeded in visualising the quintessence of his idea of the everyday. Mokichi and Taeko's gracious movements inside the confined spaces (Ozu's camera never remains for so long in the kitchen in his other films), and their interactions with various foodstuffs, kitchenware and tableware provide this farewell

¹⁷ Having suffered an official ban during wartime, the *pachinko* industry was revitalised in the early years of the postwar. During the period from 1949 to 1953, when *The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice* was also made, the number of parlours increased to almost nine times the wartime figure. The general perspective on this new social phenomenon in the early 1950s was unfavourable, largely due to its gambling nature. Wolfram Manzenreiter, ‘Time, Space, and Money: Cultural Dimensions of the “Pachinko” Game’ in Sepp Linhart and Savine Fruhstuck (eds.), *The Culture of Japan as Seen through Its Leisure* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1998), pp. 359-365.

¹⁸ In this sense, the *ochazuke* is a very different signifier from the cooked rice or shortcake in *Early Summer* that articulates female subjectivity as discussed in the previous chapter.

midnight dinner scene with an unforgettable flavour: the joy of sensing the present moment. (Fig 9.8)



(Fig 9.8) The *ochazuke* sequence: preparation in the kitchen (*above*) and eating in *chanoma*

But how is this relevant to the vision of the urban modernity prevalent in other parts of the film? If the film had been released in 1940 as planned, the *ochazuke* sequence, as the quintessence of the everyday, would have obtained a different significance within the context of the then prevailing militarism. In 1952, however, it seems to work as an anticlimactic ending to a film that is otherwise full of vibrant urban modernity. Ozu, I assume, attempted to reduce the gap between this new Tokyo and his unique world of the everyday through the young male character Non-chan. In fact, Mokichi's principle of 'intimacy and primitiveness' is a paraphrase of Non-chan's 'simplicity', which is indicated by their shared relaxed attitude towards life. As the one who introduces *pachinko* and bicycle races to Mokichi, Non-chan seems to incarnate Ozu's ideal of the new postwar generation, who can adapt to the changes while retaining Ozu's fundamental values. However, *The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice* is clearly a film for Mokichi's voice rather than Non-chan's. In contrast with his female characters, Ozu would never seriously develop a major young male character, which I think is part of the reason why the director would be faced with an uncomfortable relationship with postwar generation a few years later on.

As discussed in the previous chapters, Ozu's everyday obtains a deeper meaning when it constantly violates the border between two different realms,

whether they are modernity and tradition or the present and the past. If they do not permeate each other and are segregated, the everyday turns into the mere repetition of mediocrity. Perhaps *The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice* might be the first film where Ozu shows a sign of failing to achieve that sophisticated balance and negotiation. I see the symptom of this especially in the first *pachinko* parlour scene in the film, where Mokichi, along with Non-chan, encounters his war comrade, Hirayama, who happens to run the business. Delighted and surprised, Hirayama invites them into his living area, which is just the inner space adjacent to the parlour. As such, the parlour is supposed to be a recreation of the typical *shitamachi* space, where living and working areas are openly combined together as we have seen in Iida's restaurant. But, Hirayama's place loses that complex 'public yet private' spatial nature, and is separated into two very distinguished areas: the bright, noisy, and buoyant *pachinko* parlour, and Hirayama's dim, calm and somehow melancholic inner space. (Fig 9.9)



(Fig 9.9) Hirayama's busy *pachinko* parlour (left) and his inner living space

What Ozu intends with this sheltered inner area is certainly the flickering memory of the past, which was the central theme in the 'excursion films', but is articulated in this scene alone in *The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice*. Hirayama – the role properly given to none other than Ryū Chishū again – misses the wartime, and he drinks and sings a sorrowful song about a dead comrade in Singapore. Moreover, he confesses that he dislikes his job because 'enjoying [*pachinko*] is [morally] bad'. Thus a great contradiction – making a living on a means that is despised – defines the retrospective life of Hirayama, who cannot easily find his proper place in postwar society. When Hirayama's song reaches the climax of the second verse, Ozu cuts from the saddened face of the singer to the parlour outside, which, now empty and darkened, finally resonates with the memory of the past Hirayama is mourning. (Fig 9.10)



(Fig 9.10) Hirayama singing (*left*) while the parlour outside is emptied

Ozu, however, does not pursue this conflict between the past and the present as thoroughly as he did in his previous films, leaving Hirayama's character with a very minor role in the film. Nor does he succeed in conveying Hirayama's alienation and dilemma to Mokichi or Non-chan. It is certain that the sheltered spatiality of Hirayama's living room resembles that of Mokichi's domestic spaces, especially the kitchen, but the *ochazuke* sequence – the thematic core of the film – is devoid of an acute sense of temporality (neither the present nor the past), with which the film could have developed some important points suggested in the *pachinko* parlour scene. Ozu's later years can be seen as his ongoing struggle to resolve this problem of the widening gap between contemporariness and retrospection, which would not always be successful. Before entering that slow declining phase, however, he would make another masterpiece, one which displayed a restored sensitivity for the contrasting temporalities existent in the evanescent everyday.

Tokyo Lost: *Tokyo Story*

1. The Vision of *Shitamachi* in *Tokyo Story*

Among all the rhetoric that describes *Tokyo Story*, I think the most precise and appropriate description is one that comes from Ozu himself – he once claimed that it was his most 'melodramatic' film.¹⁹ This seems like a great understatement regarding a film that is regarded as one of the most influential works in film history, as well as of his career. As discussed earlier, 'melodrama' carries a negative nuance

¹⁹ The whole quote reads, 'Through the change of relation between parents and children, I wanted to depict how Japan's family system was breaking down. Among my films, this is the work that has the strongest melodramatic tendency'. Ozu Yasujiro, 'Jisaku o kataru', p. 98.

that was attached to Shochiku's commercial films of the early 1950s (as represented by *What Is Your Name?* and *hahamono*), which could be further traced back to prewar *shinpa* tragedy traditions. However, I believe that what Ozu wanted to suggest with this remark was that he did not intend the film as an artistic masterpiece (as it is regarded today), but as a return to the familiar world of the *shitamachi*, and the *ninjō* of its people, through the typical subject matter of the parent-child relationship. *Tokyo Story*, in other words, could be seen as Ozu's personal confession, a look back on what had been for a while his unique territory, which, however, did not exist anymore, as he himself declared. If *The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice* deliberately avoided this point by focusing on the new, *Tokyo Story* sincerely confronts the reality, probably for the last time in his career.

Ozu aimed to achieve a lot with this film. First of all, he had to recover the failure he felt he had made with the previous *The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice*. Secondly, he wanted to complete what he had planned but could not have dealt with in *Early Summer*.²⁰ According to Noda, the original idea of *Early Summer* was to articulate the egoism inherent in family life; 'although every family member seems concerned about [Noriko's] matter ... they are in fact thinking only of themselves'.²¹ In writing a script with this theme, Noda and Ozu found the narrative became more discursive, focussing on all the family rather than just Noriko, whose character they wanted to emphasise in order to make use of Hara Setsuko's star power. After all, *Early Summer* became a story about Noriko's marriage, just as *Late Spring* was, and Ozu wanted to revise this in *Tokyo Story* in order to fully explore the theme of familial relationships. He thus clarified the intent of the production as, 'I would like to depict aversive feeling inherent in blood relationships from the perspective of children'.²² In this regard, the role of the selfish children in the film, such as the first son Kōichi and the first daughter Shige, should not be underestimated in comparison with the more thoughtful characters, Noriko and Kyōko. Thirdly, Ozu nevertheless did not want *Tokyo Story* to be a 'realistic' film about increasing individualism and

²⁰ In Ozu's own words: 'The idea of *Tokyo Story* did not suddenly occur, but had been discussed with Noda for a while. In fact, we tried to include it in *Early Summer*, but soon gave up'. Ōguro Toyoshi, 'Ozu yasujirō no enshutsu [The Direction of Ozu Yasujiro]' in Tanaka (ed.), *Sengo goroku*, p. 192.

²¹ Tanaka, *Ozu Yasujirō shūyū*, p. 359.

²² 'Nikushinai ni ireta mesu [Plunging a Scalpel into the Affection of Blood Relation]' in Tanaka (ed.), *Sengo goroku*, p. 186. Ozu was also fond of an aphorism of Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, 'The unhappiness of the human being begins with the parent-child relationship', which he used in the opening credits of *The Only Son*. Ibid., p. 449.

familial disintegration in postwar society, but rather a hopeful vision of the virtue of filial piety. Ozu thus had in mind another complex intention of ‘dirt for the flower’, that is, showing dispassionate familial relationships embedded in urban daily life in order to ‘make audiences realise the need for filial duty even if oppressing their [aversive] feeling’.²³

The main reason why *Tokyo Story* is an *effective* melodrama lies in this mixture of rationalism and emotionalism. It may well be ‘didactic’ as Bordwell evaluates; Ozu and Noda’s script is sometimes too direct in conveying the theme of filial piety, as is evident in the reference to a Confucian maxim – ‘It’s too late to mourn over a parent’s tomb’.²⁴ However, by brilliantly distributing the narrative weight amongst the different characters – from the more realistic Kōichi, Shige and Keizo to the more sympathetic Noriko and Kyōko – Ozu does not easily allow viewers to fall prey to melodramatic sentimentalism for the sake of these moral concerns. Rather he confronts viewers with an acute but frank realisation that there is nothing much that can be done about these situations. None of the children eventually regrets or repents their actions (or inaction) in relation to their parents in the film; just as the married daughters in the ‘excursion films’ did, they advance towards a future situated in Tokyo, leaving the dead and dying past behind. If the film is melodramatic, the thing that triggers our emotion is that cold realistic rigour of the young generation, which provokes thought rather than tears in viewers. That is why Ozu still argued, ‘neither Noda nor I intended to make audiences cry while watching this film. We only wanted to write the parent-child relationship as it is, neither denying nor affirming it’.²⁵

Contemporary Japanese critics generally agreed that the result was the greatest achievement of the director’s postwar years. In any case, it was a long awaited return to a more realistic rendition of *shitamachi*’s lower-middle class struggle and everyday life. Togawa Naoki, distinguishing *The Only Son* from *What Did the Lady Forget?*, designated *Tokyo Story* as ‘Ozu’s new stage’, which, while retaining the ‘elaborate [formal] expression’ of the latter, attempted to ‘depict the emotion in the

²³ Ibid., p. 186.

²⁴ Bordwell, *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*, p. 329. The transliteration of the Japanese proverb used in the film is ‘It’s no use putting a quilt over a tomb’.

²⁵ From his comments after receiving the Japanese Geijutsusai [Art Festival] prize with *Tokyo Story*. ‘Tatoeba tōfu no gotoku [Like *Tofu*, For Example]’ in Tanaka (ed.), *Sengo goroku*, p. 202.

life of *shomin*' whose existence had been forgotten since the former.²⁶ Imamura Taihei, declaring this was 'the best among Ozu's postwar works', was more than welcome that the film 'had returned to the poor life of lower-middle classes', with a 'feel of faithfulness'.²⁷ For Imamura, Ozu's works from *Late Spring* to *The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice* revealed a tendency to reflect the 'taste of parvenus', who appeared amid the confusion of class shifts caused by unstable postwar economy. This strategy, Imamura argued, could not succeed because the lives of the wealthy were not part of Ozu's world, and *Tokyo Story* owed its success to the 'return to the *seikatsu* closer to Ozu himself'.²⁸

Thus in *Tokyo Story*, *seikatsu* (more specifically, that of *shomin* in the *shitamachi*) becomes the heart of the matter. In the previous 'excursion films', the everyday was only hinted at as the future that the young brides would soon face after marriage, and in *The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice*, it was presented more as an optimistic vision of urban modernity. It is also different from Kihachi's life in his *shitamachi* town, which was an idealised retreat of a past era, to and from which Kihachi journeyed. *Tokyo Story*'s *shitamachi* is the here and now of the postwar, where the past is reduced to a bare glimmer of memory in the midst of the present life. Even *The Only Son*, which similarly dealt with the life of *shitamachi* people, was not as contemporary as *Tokyo Story*, for its conclusion was mellowed by the unforeseeable future of *risshin shusse* (and its origin in the past as well). In *Tokyo Story*, Ozu discovers the presentness of the *shitamachi* through the eyes of the old parents, whose generation, in the 'excursion films', chose to remain in (or retreat into) the past, refusing to return to the land of the 'dust' and 'weed'. It is thus natural that the narrative of the film is structured around a trip by the parents from their hometown in Onomichi, which 'evaded war damage' as the old capitals in the 'excursion films' did, to the once ruined city of Tokyo, the place of *seikatsu*.

The locality of *shitamachi* is depicted through the everyday life of the first son Kōichi and the first daughter Shige.²⁹ Kōichi's surrounding neighbourhood

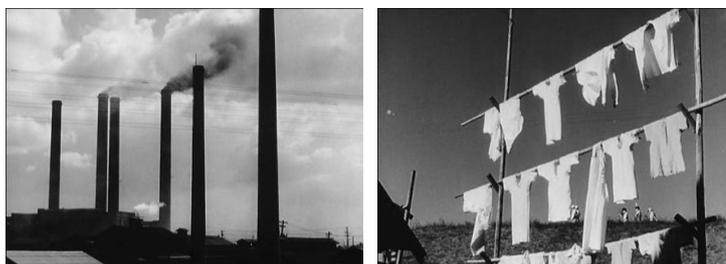
²⁶ Togawa Naoki, 'Tōkyō monogatari [Tokyo Story]' in *Kinema Junpō*, 78 (November, 1953), p. 67.

²⁷ Imamura Taihei, 'Saikin no nihon eiga [Recent Japanese Cinema]' in *Eiga hyōron* [Film Criticism], 11:6 (June, 1954), p. 30.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

²⁹ The background information that Kōichi is a doctor should not confuse his status as a *shitamachi* resident; compared to the Kamakura professionals in *Late Spring* and *Early Summer*, he only runs a small general practice office in a town near the River Sumida, the background of the Kihachi series as

especially shows the typical visual signifiers of *shitamachi* – smoking factory chimneys and the riverbank – which filled the urban landscape of *An Inn in Tokyo*, *The Only Son* and *A Hen in the Wind*, but had largely disappeared from the suburbs of the ‘excursion films’. (Fig 9.11) Kōichi’s and Shige’s work spaces are directly adjacent to their living spaces, which is the typical spatial structure of the *shitamachi*, as we saw with Iida’s restaurant. This proximity of work and domesticity, however, does not articulate an intimate relationship between the private and the public as in the Kihachi films, but rather functions to reveal the reality of the busy life that Kōichi and Shige are leading.³⁰ (Fig 9.12) Ozu is also conscious of the changes of the temporal rhythm of everyday life. The dialogue of the film is pervaded by the word *isogashii* (busy), which rarely appears in Ozu’s other films. Noriko, for instance, is late to meet her parents-in-law as they arrive at Tokyo Station because she ‘was so messy [at work] to forget the time’. Later in the film, the busyness of life results in a more serious situation when the last son Keizō does not arrive on time to keep his mother’s deathbed. But once the funeral is over, the children (except for the daughter-in-law Noriko) hurry to return to Tokyo, back to the usual everyday rhythm.



(Fig 9.11) Kōichi’s neighbourhood



(Fig 9.12) Shige’s beauty salon and its adjacent living room

The *seikatsu* in *shitamachi* is restricted in terms of space as well. The three houses that the parents visit in Tokyo – Kōichi’s, Shige’s and Noriko’s – are commonly characterised by their compactness, which is implied through the mise-en-

well as *The Only Son*.

³⁰ Kōichi’s day-off is interrupted by an emergency message heard from the porch of his house, and Shige eats breakfast while watching her assistant prepare to open her beauty salon.

scène of domestic shots crowded by various domestic objects on walls or shelves. (Fig 9.13) Domestic movement is also accordingly restricted. In the first Tokyo scene, Kōichi's wife Fumiko cleans the house, moving from room to room to prepare for the parent's visit, which almost repeats Noriko's domestic movement in *Late Spring*. However, as this is a chore that must be finished in time for their arrival (constantly interrupted by her children as well), Fumiko's movement subtly lacks Noriko's cheerfulness and vitality. (Fig 9.14) Shige's place suffers even more from this spatial restriction as seen in a brief shot of the rooftop of her house, where her father Shūkichi, sitting alone, spends a boring afternoon. (Fig 9.15) With black smoke from factory chimneys in the background filling the grey sky and incessant metallic sounds from nearby machinery on the soundtrack, the depressive scenery is the most pessimistic vision of the postwar *shitamachi* since the incinerator scene in *The Only Son*.



(Fig 9.13) Kōichi's house



(Fig 9.14) Fumiko's cleaning. Notice the things on the shelf seen over Fumiko's head in the second shot, a succinct visual metaphor of cramped space



(Fig 9.15) Compare with Fig 6.4

The *shitamachi* space in *Tokyo Story* is also marginal in relation to the urban centre. Ozu does not specify how the former is spatially linked to the latter, but the

distance is inferable from the parent's conversation that 'it took quite long by car [from Tokyo station to Kōichi's]'. The parent's visit to the city centre is delayed for more than half an hour after the film begins, a significant contrast with the emphatic beginning of the taxi ride scene in *The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice*. Compared with the taxi ride, *Tokyo Story*'s city sightseeing sequence is less about the enjoyment of the present everyday than an observation and reading of the city from an outsider's point of view on a tourist bus. The text is historical, as indicated by the tour conductor's announcement, 'Let's read the history of Great Tokyo together', followed by her explanation that the Imperial Palace is 500 years old. The bus then arrives at Ginza, where none other than the Hattori building reappears at the conclusion of the ride. (Fig 9.16) But if the two women in the taxi in *The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice* have full command of the urban life in terms of both space (Taeko tells the driver where to turn and pull in) and time (they talk about how to spend the day, whether to go to the cinema or visit Aya's boutique), the tourists (including the parents) on the bus in *Tokyo Story* appear to be totally lacking in such authority and seem alienated from the cityscape flowing past outside the window. All they do is turn their heads left and right according to the conductor's announcements, in absolute reticence and simultaneity. (Fig 9.17)



(Fig 9.16) The Imperial Palace (*left*) and Hattori building as seen from the tour bus



(Fig 9.17)

This passive relationship with the urban centre continues into the next scene set on a Ginza department building rooftop, where Shūkichi and his wife Tomi, guided by Noriko, try to figure out where their children's homes are located. Although

Noriko indicates approximate directions with her finger, Ozu's camera, showing only the backs of the three characters, refuses to give a clear answer to the parents' (and viewers') doubtful question, 'where?'. The last shot of the scene finally presents a panoramic point of view shot of the cityscape, and it only turns out to be dense clusters of indifferent buildings aimlessly stretching into the horizon. (Fig 9.18) At



(Fig 9.18) Tokyo seen from a rooftop

that moment, the city loses its spatial contextuality between the centre and the periphery and becomes an incomprehensible text for the parents to read. The bewilderment of Shūkichi and Tomi is reaffirmed later in the film when they, watching over the city again, utter their impressions: 'How vast Tokyo is' and 'If lost, we'll never meet again'. (Fig 9.19) The same applies to the temporal references



(Fig 9.19) 'How vast Tokyo is'

of the city. Postwar Tokyo, now largely reconstructed both in Ginza and the *shitamachi*, has already effaced most of the traces of war from its surface.³¹ The 'dust' that the father Somiya (Ryū Chishū, who plays Shūkichi also) mentioned in *Late Spring* when describing Tokyo is nowhere to be found. Losing these temporal as well as spatial contexts, the city is left only to the present moment, the bizarreness of which is acutely recognised by the parents who represent the past as well as the spatially remote hometown.³²

³¹ In the script, Shige's neighbourhood is specified as 'the outskirts of Tokyo: a town that is reconstructed after receiving war damage'. Ozu Yasujirō and Noda Kōgo, *Tōkyō monogatari*, in Inoue (ed.), *Ozu Yasujirō zenshū*, p. 191.

³² The feeling of loss in the postwar urban space, however, was not necessarily bound to Tokyo but was rather a nation-wide phenomenon. In a roundtable discussion about the customs and manners of

2. Mourning and *Seikatsu*: Two Contesting Temporalities

For Shūkichi and Tomi, there are two places in the film where they can make sense of the city. One is Noriko's apartment. In terms of *seikatsu*, the apartment space, though a modern form of residence, retains the restricted nature of the *shitamachi*, even more than Kōichi's and Shige's homes. Consisting of only a small room and an attached kitchen, it is the most impoverished space in the film. But as such, it also faithfully recreates the old neighbourhood community of *shitamachi*, as evidenced when Noriko goes next door to borrow a bottle of *sake* and cups. (Fig 9.20) Noriko has lived here for a long time, for she remembers that her husband



(Fig 9.20) Noriko's apartment

Shōji, who died at war, used to bring his drunken *sararīman* colleagues home late at night. In other words, this apartment is not a postwar space but a memorial space, where the memory of the prewar still lingers. It is thus unsurprising that Shūkichi and Tomi, emblems of the prewar existence, feel at home here. In the apartment, they finally find a visual text – Shōji's photograph – that is legible to them. (Fig 9.21)



(Fig 9.21)

They are also finally seen to eat and drink here, the first time this is allowed for them since the film began. So far in the narrative, food has been an element of denial

contemporary Japanese society, Japanese director Yoshimura Kōzaburō pointed out that 'after the war, there disappeared the locality that had distinguished each city from others', leaving only 'Kyōto, Kanazawa, and Nara'. He thus declared, 'That's why it is Kyoto films these days. Kyoto is now exoticism'. Yoshimura Kōzaburō et al., 'Dai issen yondai kantoku gendai nihon fūzoku o kataru [Four Major Japanese Directors Talk about Contemporary Japanese Customs and Manners]' in *Kinema Junpō*, 29 (1 January, 1952), p. 36.

and restriction. At the first dinner at Kōichi's, *sukiyaki* is served but *sashimi* is omitted, and at Shige's, cheap *senbe* is chosen for their snack instead of expensive bean-jam cake. This is an unusual abstinence in Ozu, if the liberating role of shortcake in *Early Summer* is considered. But the period of 'fast' effectively functions in the narrative to signal the transition into the past in the memorial space of Noriko's apartment. In fact, Noriko's pouring of *sake* and Shūkichi's first sip of it (with an irresistible smile on his face – he has abstained from drinking for a long time) becomes the crucial moment in this change of temporality that suddenly brings old memories back into the minds of the three characters, resulting in the first reference to the dead son/husband. (Fig 9.22)



(Fig 9.22)

The second place that rouses the memory of the past in the film is bar and restaurant. Shūkichi visits his old hometown friend Hattori, and along with another friend Numata, gives himself over to a night of heavy drinking. The topics that the three old drunk men engage in discussing are exclusively related to temporal sensitivity. They remember their long gone heyday in Onomichi, lament the deaths of their sons at war and are disappointed by surviving sons who do not live up to their past expectations. (Fig 9.23) As an extended variation of the drinking scene at the



(Fig 9.23) Compare with Fig 9.9 and 9.10

pachinko parlour in *The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice*, the drinking sequence of *Tokyo Story* thus deals with the same theme of the disappearing memory of the prewar and wartime, and the powerlessness of older generation in the face of changing postwar society. Instead of Hirayama's sorrowful elegy for a dead comrade,

what is heard in the restaurant scene in *Tokyo Story* is the popular wartime melody of the Gunkan (warship) March, whose cheerful tune contrasts ironically with the men's contemplation of the painful (yet nostalgic) past. As if to express his deep grief for the loss of the time, Shūkichi performs a memorial re-enactment of what his dead son used to do – getting dead drunk and bringing Numata to Shige's to spend the last night in Tokyo. This unexpected intrusion completely upsets Shige, which not only makes for the most comic situation in the film but also becomes the clearest moment of permeation of the past into the place of *seikatsu* (i.e. Shige's beauty salon). Shige's angry reactions – volatile bodily movements and high pitched grumbles – towards her father indicate the opposing natures of the two characters in terms of the temporality that each of them represents in the film. (Fig 9.24)



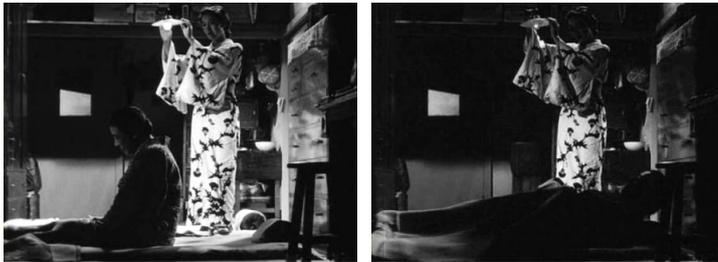
(Fig 9.24) Angry Shige throws her drunk father's hat on his head (*left*); grumbles about the shameful history of her father's drinking (*centre*); and reluctantly prepares the bed for the drunkards (*right*)

As a memorial place, the two abovementioned spaces also portend the death of the parents (literally for Tomi, metaphorically for Shūkichi) in the narrative. Shūkichi's drinking is thus a very ritualistic behaviour, part of a process of mourning the death of his own generation. As if to express this sorrow, a deep shadow frequently falls upon his face throughout the 'last night in Tokyo' sequence, a variation on which turns up later in the form of the white handkerchief on Tomi's face on her deathbed. (Fig 9.25) Tomi's death is also more explicitly implied in the scene of her second visit to Noriko's apartment. When she slowly lies down to sleep at night, her body and face drown in darkness when Noriko turns off a ceiling light and says, '*oyasuminasai* (good night)' as if it were the last farewell to the mother-in-law. (Fig 9.26) The fact that the *futon* Tomi sleeps on once belonged to her dead son Shōji also implies her impending death, as well as the retrospective nature of her character. The next morning, Tomi will indulge her memory of Shōji for the last time by looking at his picture again for a while. Noriko's apartment, in this sense, is a tomb – a tomb for the dying parents, a tomb for the dead husband/son upon whose memory the survivors sleep, and a tomb for the times that have been forgotten and

left to dwell in deep shadow. No wonder this space is so stiflingly tiny.



(Fig 9.25) Shadows on Shūkichi's face (*above*) and Tomi's deathbed



(Fig 9.26) Tomi lies down on her dead son's *futon*

Ozu does not appeal to pity for the parents to produce a melodramatic effect and draw a thematic conclusion to the film. Rather, his way is, as always, to make the opposing temporal elements confront each other. In this sense, the first daughter Shige (Sugimura Haruko) occupies an important position in the film as the counterpart of her parents. Her character indeed incarnates the concept of *seikatsu* (if slightly exaggerated) from the standpoint of Ozu's postwar femininity as discussed in the previous chapter. For example, she is the one who governs the transfer of food and the activity of eating in the film. In the first Tokyo sequence where she visits Kōichi's with her parents, Shige brings *senbei* (rice cracker) and *tsukudani* (seafood simmered in soy sauce) as presents to Fumiko, leading Ozu's camera into the kitchen. (Fig 9.27) She then confirms Kōichi's decision that *sukiyaki* would be enough for the parents' dinner. Shige is also seen having breakfast with her husband at her place, the first appearance of actual eating in the film, and later treats herself to the bean-jam cake that her husband brings home for the parents, reproving, 'this is too expensive to serve them'. As such, Shige's eating constructs her selfish character

in relation to her parents, which is repeatedly confirmed throughout the narrative.³³



(Fig 9.27) The kitchen scene in *Tokyo Story* (Compare with Fig 8.17)

Selfishness, however, is only another expression of resilience for Ozu's female characters. As discussed with the example of the 'expensive but delicious' shortcake, there is always a certain affirmative aspect in women's indulgence in everyday life that transcends a moral value judgement. Thus Shige's character exists not to be simply 'disliked', but rather to be 'experienced' by the viewers of the film. Ozu's contemporary critics were well aware of this point. Sugiyama Heiichi claimed that audiences seemed to enjoy her, laughing at the scene when she reproved her husband for buying the expensive cake.³⁴ Togawa Naoki also defended Shige, saying that she was 'not necessarily malicious' but 'only did her best to protect her own living', and as such, her character played an integral part in Ozu's new direction in *Tokyo Story*, and his project of articulating the everyday life of the lower-middle classes.³⁵ In this sense, the breakfast scene at her place – the first 'eating' of the film – exhibits the quintessential attitude of Ozu's everyday, the 'intimacy and primitiveness' that Mokichi advocated in *The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice* while eating his *ochazuke*. There is neither constraint nor concealment of self in this brief situation; Shige, telling her husband not to care about her parents' visit, competes with him for the delicious bean dish on the table. Meanwhile, another undifferentiated day of her life is about to begin as her assistant does the morning cleaning of the beauty salon, which permeates directly into Shige's dining space. Such is the most honest image of *seikatsu* as it happens anywhere and anytime. (Fig 9.28)

³³ Clothing is also another everyday element deployed to articulate Shige's character. On hearing about Tomi's sickness, she wonders if she had better bring a mourning dress in preparation for the worst circumstance, and later after Tomi has died, Shige wants to take the mother's fabric as a relic. Shige's 'selfish' and 'callous' character has been discussed in other studies on the film as well. For example, regarding the funeral dress episode, see Darrell William Davis, 'Ozu's Mother' in David Desser (ed.), *Ozu's Tokyo Story* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 80-81.

³⁴ Sugiyama Heiichi, 'Tōkyō monogatari [Tokyo Story]' in *Eiga hyōron [Film Criticism]*, 11:1 (January, 1954), p. 69.

³⁵ Togawa, 'Tōkyō monogatari', p. 67. Togawa even thought Noriko in the film was too much of an 'idealised type', who might make Shige's problem a 'matter of her character', not an 'inevitable result of the contemporary'. He thus thought Noriko's character constituted Ozu's 'romanticism'. Ibid.



(Fig 9.28) Breakfast as usual at Shige's: Shige's assistant is seen in the background of the second shot.

Shige's eating offers a decisive contrast with Shūkichi's drinking later in a family dining scene. Tomi's funeral has just ended, and Shūkichi expresses his gratitude to all the family for their coming in spite of their 'busy' schedules. Shige, however, suddenly changes the subject of conversation from condolence to lively planning of the 'return to Tokyo', and it is her sharp utterance of 'can I have a bowl of rice?' that confirms the irrevocable transition. (Fig 9.29) Shūkichi regrets the fact



(Fig 9.29) Shige receives her bowl of rice (Compare with Fig. 8.15)

that the children must leave and continues to drink in reticence, which Shige reproves again, 'Don't drink too much'. With the series of opposing binaries between rice and *sake*, young woman and old man, and enjoyment and remembrance, Ozu here produces another variation of the postwar female subjectivity that chooses to move ahead towards *seikatsu* rather than remain caught up in the past. The scene thus can be related to the restaurant scene in *Early Summer*, although Shūkichi is a different character to the strict and conservative brother/husband Kōichi, who the sisters-in-law Noriko and Fumiko banter over with their exchange of a bowl of rice. The final shot of the family dining – a juxtaposed two-shot of Shūkichi drinking *sake* and Shige eating rice – eloquently summarises the fundamental contradiction and dissonance of the two temporal dimensions, which nevertheless always coexist in Ozu's cinema.³⁶ (Fig 9.30) It is not that Shige does not understand or dislikes her father; she is merely faithful to her life in the present of the postwar, while her father

³⁶ It can be compared to the three-shot of the father and his two children who eat rice balls together in *I Was Born But....* Although lacking the temporality that Shūkichi and Shige obtain in *Tokyo Story*, there still exists a generational discordance between the conceding father and the unconvinced children with regard to the fate of the *sararīman* class that the family will face.

(along with her dead mother and brother) slowly disappears into an overlapping memory.



(Fig 9.30) Eating/drinking with father/children in *Tokyo Story* (left) and *I Was Born But...*

The intermediary who witnesses both of these parting temporal movements is Noriko, upon whose character the film's melodramatic effect mainly depends. It should not be misinterpreted that Noriko, with her filial actions, takes the side of her parents-in-law. In fact, the opposite is true, as is revealed in her discussion with Kyōko regarding the selfishness of Shige and the other siblings: 'Being [Shige's] age, it is natural that she should have her own *seikatsu* apart from her parents. ... For anyone, it is their *seikatsu* that is the most important thing'. Kyōko, reluctant to accept the truth, asks Noriko, 'Will you be the same?', which Noriko affirms. On the one hand, Noriko is certainly distinct from Shige, suffering from the persistence of the memory of her dead husband Shōji, which casts the shadow of the past upon her, comparable to the darkness drawn upon the faces of Shūkichi and Tomi. Noriko, nevertheless, does not deviate much from Ozu's principle of the postwar gender relationship that requires the young woman to advance into the future, leaving the past behind. Whenever Shōji comes up in conversation with her parents-in-law, Noriko implies that she is not obsessed with the dead husband anymore. Both Shūkichi and Tomi misunderstand this, believing that Noriko hesitates to remarry because of Shōji, but tries to conceal it in order not to worry them. That Noriko is embarrassed by this misunderstanding is not only revealed through her facial expressions but also conveyed through her tenacious, repeated denial of the parents' eulogy for her virtue and attempts to persuade her to remarry. More exactly put, it is for her a regretful feeling that she cannot live up to that expectation, to be eternally bound to the painful remembrance of the past. After all, Noriko is a woman of Tokyo, the place where her *seikatsu* will continue.³⁷

³⁷ Hasumi Shigehiko pays attention to Noriko's remark '*tondemonai* (nonsense!)' that she makes as a response to Shūkichi's eulogy, 'you're indeed a good woman'. He interprets that Noriko, with a strong

The film's most 'melodramatic' moments appear when these diverging times momentarily overlap with each other. For example, this occurs when the new dawn silently clears away the night of Tomi's death. Ozu presents five landscape shots of Onomichi in succession, which, as they appeared in a similar fashion at the beginning of the film, indicates that this is the beginning of just another ordinary day regardless of the passing on of the mother. (Fig 9.31) There is an acute, painful



(Fig 9.31) The five dawn shots after the night of Tomi's death

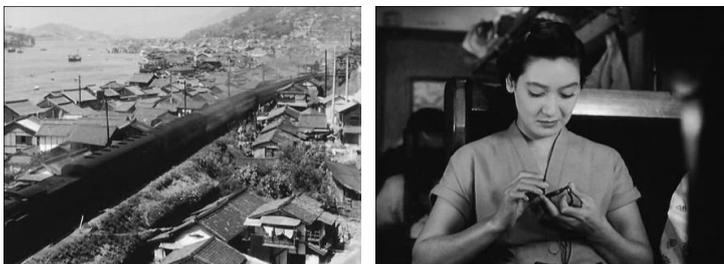
sensation of this contradiction in Shūkichi's cryptic remark after he watches the dawn: 'It will be another hot day'. Underneath the apparent everydayness and banality of this statement lies the utmost form of sorrow, which makes this a deeply moving scene. Noriko, as the intermediary character, is in the position to be most sensitive to this kind of temporal consciousness in the film. As the one who poured *sake* and turned off the light, she can internalise the passage of time that she observes of the parents within her own temporality of everyday life. It may be seen when she suppresses her tears after hearing Tomi's sobbing in the bed beside her, sensing their separating ways. It is also apparent when Shūkichi hands Noriko Tomi's watch as a relic, which finally makes her burst into tears. (Fig 9.32)

tone, 'criticises [Shūkichi] for lack of understanding' of her true feeling. Agreeing that it is an expression of 'denial', I believe, however, that Noriko's intention is less a 'criticism' towards the father than a regret or sorrow regarding herself, that she is unable to remain in the memory and mourning of Shōji anymore. Hasumi, Shigehiko, *Eigaron kōgi*, pp. 107-108.



(Fig 9.32) Noriko's mourning of the past: Compare the first shot with the third shot from the famous night at an inn scene in *Late Spring*, which I believe is more about Noriko's thought of leaving her father Somiya than the enigmatic existence of vase.

Through the watch, the time she experiences in the present overlaps with the time Tomi (and Shōji and Shūkichi as well) lived in the past, which Noriko will carry into the future in Tokyo. Thus her train ride back to Tokyo in the final sequence is the same journey back to the present that many of Ozu's earlier characters – from Kihachi to the brides in the 'excursion films' – have already undertaken. But in *Tokyo Story*, by more concretely showing how distant (even lost) this destination is from the origin, Ozu completes the bitterest story he ever told, bidding the best (if not the last) farewell from the postwar to the remembrance of the prewar and the wartime past. (Fig 9.33)



(Fig 9.33) Noriko looks at Tomi's watch on the train back to Tokyo (Compare with Fig. 4.16, Fig. 8.21)

Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed two different perspectives on post-Occupation era Tokyo. One is *seikatsu*, whether it is the high-spirited urban modernity consumed by the masses, as depicted in *The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice*, or the busy lower-middle class's life of the reconstructed *shitamachi* region, as in *Tokyo Story*. Both may be different phenomena in terms of class and geography, but in Ozu's cinema, I believe that they are merely two sides of a coin called the reality of the present. It is

too restrictive a view to claim that *Tokyo Story* is closer to ‘realism’ than *The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice*. As shown in the prewar examples of *The Only Son* and *What Did the Lady Forget?*, Ozu had already dealt with the lives of the upper and lower-middle classes within the terms of his cinema of the everyday. Rather, I find the vision of modern life in *The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice* – at the Ginza boutique, the baseball stadium, the *ramen* restaurant, and most of all, the *pachinko* parlour – an exciting case study of the postwar urban everyday life, even truer than what Ozu depicted in *Tokyo Story*. It is thus more important to note the commonality shared by these two films: the new Tokyo that Ozu discovered on returning from his ‘excursion’ during the Occupation years.

The second perspective is memory, and in relation to this, the two films’ attitudes diverge greatly, making one a tale of ‘regaining’ and the other one of ‘being lost’. In *The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice*, the memory of the past is no more than an embellishment, as we see in the drinking scene at Hirayama’s place inside his *pachinko* parlour. Hirayama’s consciousness – his objection to postwar mass culture as well as obsession with wartime experience – is not concretely connected to the other characters in the film, including Mokichi and Non-chan who share the drink with him. *Tokyo Story* largely revises this with the characters of Shūkichi and Tomi, and the narrative of death. The Tokyo that we see in the film is mainly presented from their point of view, and they do not find any concrete trace of the past in its cityscape and culture. In the prewar (for example, in the Kihachi films), *shitamachi* was still presented as an idealised presence, which a character could retreat into and depend upon. But if that refuge is no longer available after war, what place, then, should we return to? *Tokyo Story* directly confronts this dilemma in the context of postwar Japanese society, and the resulting tensional energy between the *seikatsu* and memory makes this film possibly the director’s greatest achievement.

CHAPTER 10

The Return of the *Sararīman*

Introduction

As discussed so far, Ozu's postwar cinema is defined by its acute sense of temporality. It does not conform to a simple past or present tense, but a complex participial form that relates the past to the present and the future. The main subject matter that Ozu deployed toward this thematic goal was the question of generational tensions, conflicts and relationships. That Ozu's cinema is about parent-child relationships is not a cliché that can be taken for granted. There is rather a significant truth implicated in the proposition, which transcends the boundary of familial matters, and I have already discussed this in relation to Japanese postwar history and the changes to everyday life. Now reaching the final part of this thesis, as well as Ozu's career, I would like to broaden the scope again, and return to the original point with which I began my discussion. After *Tokyo Story*, Ozu interestingly began to replay the prewar genre of *shōshimin eiga*, starting with *Sōshun/Early Spring* (1956) and continuing with *Equinox Flower* (1958), *Good Morning* (1959), *Late Autumn* (1960), until his last film *An Autumn Afternoon* (1962). Not only do these films constitute the majority of Ozu's post-*Tokyo Story* works, but they are also some of the most familiar and accessible Ozu films for general viewers today. However, although dealing with the similar subject matter of a *sararīman*'s family life, they are substantially different from the genre of *shōshimin eiga*, which invariably focused upon the specific historical conditions of the 1930s' depression era. As products of

the late 1950s and early 1960s, the abovementioned films thus cannot be called ‘*shōshimin eiga*’ according to its exact definition. Nor would I directly apply the categorisation of *hōmudorama* (home drama) to these late Ozu films, as discussed in Chapter 7. Calling them instead ‘new *sararīman* films’, in this chapter I will explore the potential for differentiating them from any established generic terms and re-situating them within the context of Ozu’s postwar films as I have discussed them so far.

This means that I will maintain the familiar problematic of Ozu’s postwar oeuvre – the uneasy co-existence of distinct and generationally defined temporal consciousnesses, with past history and present *seikatsu* playing a central role. The issue of inter-generational conflict already existed in the prewar *shōshimin eiga*, as seen in *I Was Born But...*, but it gained much more complexity in the postwar period, when the conflict between generations gained wider historical implications. The young generation of the post-*Tokyo Story* films, as portended in *The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice*, tended to lose this attitude and to step further away from the memory of war and into the present everyday life. The first section of this chapter will focus on the emergence of this new generation in Japanese society, within the film industry, and in Ozu’s films. It will analyse how the director dealt with the ensuing conflict between these young people and their parental generation. I will also pay attention to whether, and in what way, the possibility of mutual permeation – as successfully manifested through the character of Noriko and the image of Tomi’s watch in *Tokyo Story* – is searched for in the ‘new *sararīman* films’. The second section will move the focus onto the everyday *seikatsu* itself, which, regardless of the generational conflict, continues to exist as the reality of present experience. In Chapter 6, I mentioned the changes to postwar everyday life in Japanese society accompanied by electrification and privatisation. I will examine how these changes were reflected in the *seikatsu* of young characters in the ‘new *sararīman* films’, and to what extent everyday space and time became de-historicised in the process.

A New Generation

The late 1950s and early 1960s, when Ozu was making the ‘new *sararīman* films’, corresponded to a new phase of Japanese cinema defined by the emergence of young filmmakers, actors and audiences. For Shochiku, as discussed in Chapter 7, this signalled a gradual downturn for its *ōfunachō* from its heyday in the early 1950s. Ozu, as *the* representative Shochiku director, became an object of criticism and avoidance for a young generation that included directors such as Ōshima Nagisa. Who were these young people then, who suddenly appeared as both the subject and the object of the national cinema? Although there was a wide spectrum of ‘youth’ in terms of age and social status, it largely gathered into a single group according to the shared and distinct historical experience of the recent war and its aftermath. In the elder range, there was the *shōwa hitoketa* generation, which was born in the single-digit years of Showa (1925-34) and reached its twenties by the end of the US occupation era.¹ Slightly younger than this was the *shōwa futaketa* (double-digit) or the *yakeato* (burnt-out ruins) generation, which was born between 1935 and 1944, experienced the war in their early childhood, and grew up to become youths after the mid-1950s. I, however, recognise both of these as the single ‘post-Occupation generation’, who, faced the nation’s integration into the magnetic field of postwar US international policy. The San Francisco Peace Treaty, signed in 1951, sanctioned the presence of the US armed forces in the nation, in order ‘to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security in the Far East and to the security of Japan’.² The most dramatic resistance to this system would emerge later as the crisis of Anpo in 1960, when the conservative Liberal Democratic Party attempted to renew the Treaty, but the tension should be understood within the broader context of the Cold War politics that had already developed throughout the previous decade. (Fig 10.1)

¹ Some of them had to directly participate in the latter stages of the war as *shōnenhei* (child soldiers) and others stayed on the home front, but *shōwa hitoketa* can be commonly characterised as ‘the generation that was old enough to have suffered but young enough not to have inflicted suffering’. Kelly, ‘Metropolitan Japan’ in Gordon (ed.), p. 197.

² From Article 1 of the Bilateral Security Treaty Between the United States of America and Japan, Marlene Mayo, ‘The Occupation Years, 1945-1952’ in Wm. Theodore de Bary et al. (compiled), *Sources of Japanese Tradition, Second edition, Volume Two: 1600 to 2000* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), p. 1071.



(Fig 10.1) Street demonstration at the Anpo crisis in 1960

The disbelief and antipathy of the young generation was not only politically expressed but also mediated through various cultural forms. In literature, according to Margaret Hillenbrand, there were the writings of Ōe Kenzaburō, whilst in film the epitome of this current of thought can be found in the early works of Ōshima.³ Japanese film critic Iwasaki Akira, in his history written in the early 1960s, also praised Nikkatsu's *taiyōzoku* (Sun Tribe) films as an expression of youthful resistance, which he believed influenced Ōshima and Shochiku's *nouvelle vague* movement. Iwasaki understood that the response of Japanese youth to Cold War geopolitics was contradictory. On the one hand, there was a tendency for 'psychological stability and self-contentment' based upon economic recuperation, which Japan earned in return for providing a base for US military action in East Asia since the Korean War. Iwasaki argued this had resulted in 'indifference to social reality' and 'complacency in pleasant individual life'.⁴ The phenomenon of *taiyōzoku* – as a 'reckless rush of complete repudiation' – constituted the alternative (and opposite) reaction.⁵ The series of *taiyōzoku* films after *Taiyō no kisetsu/The Season of the Sun* (Furukawa Takumi, Nikkatsu, 1956), notably starring Ishihara Yūjirō, was thus a cinematic form of the 'challenge of youth to the hypocrisy of the older generation and stagnation, corruption, or "reverse course" of conservative politics and culture'.⁶ (Fig 10.2) These youth films provided a sharp contrast to the

³ Margaret Hillenbrand, *Literature, Modernity and the Practice of Resistance: Japanese and Taiwanese Fiction, 1960-1990* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), p. 113.

⁴ Iwasaki Akira, *Eigashi [History of Film]* (Tokyo: Tōyō Keizai Shinpōsha, 1961), p. 282-283.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 283.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 285. Named after the title of Ishihara Shintarō's original novel and Nikkatsu's filmic adaptation, the *taiyōzoku* films were characterised by a hedonistic and dissolute lifestyle, including sex and violence. For more on the *taiyōzoku* phenomenon and *taiyōzoku* films, refer to Standish, *A New History of Japanese Cinema*, pp. 222-237; Raine, 'Ishihara Yujiro: Youth, Celebrity, and the Male Body in Late-1950s Japan', in Dennis Washburn and Carole Cavannaugh (eds.), *Word and*

films of Kinugasa Teinosuke, Itō Daisuke, or Inagaki Hiroshi, who, old in age and high in status, had ‘lost their revolutionary will of the prewar’ and exploited the ‘carefree mood’.⁷



(Fig 10.2) *The Season of the Sun* (1956)

Ozu, as mentioned, was a central figure encumbered with this ‘legacy of the prewar’. But, was there ever a time during his career when he was safe from the criticism of contemporary critics? Ozu’s cinema and its attitude towards realism (i.e. how to faithfully reflect society) was a decades-old critical issue stretching back to his *shōshimin eiga* era, and, as I have discussed, Ozu’s position never deviated from the principle that he could only make *tofu* and nothing else. His approach did not change with regard to the new post-Occupation generation. In an interview from 1958, Ozu clarified, ‘I do not particularly favour the young people. If anything, I feel rather for the old. ... It seems the films these days, in order to please the young generation, acknowledge their eccentricities and allow them to have the idea that old people are useless’.⁸ According to Ozu, *Equinox Flower*, which was being filmed at the time, was also a consolation addressed to the old generation: ‘since an author perceives things with the view of his age, it is natural that his contemporaries become the subject matter. Frankly speaking, I cannot understand the feeling of the young’.⁹ The conflict between the daughter character in the film and her ‘feudal’ father regarding her love marriage is thus not intended as a defence of the younger

Image in Japanese Cinema (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 202-215.

⁷ Iwasaki, *Eigashi*, p. 285.

⁸ Ozu Yasujirō, Iwasaki Akira, and Iida Kokomi, ‘Sake wa furui hodo aji ga yoi [The older *sake* is, the better its taste becomes]’ in *Kinema Junpō*, 212 (15 August, 1958) reprinted in Tanaka (ed.), *Sengo goroku*, p. 297.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 300.

generation's position, but rather as an excuse for the father's behaviour by showing that anyone can sometimes act 'contradictorily' even while being aware of it. 'Through this', Ozu explained, 'I want young audiences to understand [the father's] goodwill as a parent'.¹⁰

This did not mean that Ozu was either uninterested in or critical of the new generation. In terms of casting, he actively adopted young actresses (if not actors) in his post-*Tokyo Story* films, who represented the Japanese cinema of the 50s and 60s. Starting with Kishi Keiko (born in 1932) in *Early Spring*, many of the most popular younger actresses of the time appeared in Ozu's films. Among them were Arima Ineko (b. 1932) in *Tokyo Twilight* and *Equinox Flower*, Yamamoto Fujiko (b. 1931) in *Equinox Flower*, Kuga Yoshiko (b. 1931) in *Equinox Flower* and *Good Morning*, Wakao Ayako (b. 1933) in *Floating Weeds*, Okada Mariko (b. 1933) in *Late Autumn* and *An Autumn Afternoon*, and Tsukasa Yōko (b. 1934) in *Late Autumn* and *Kohayagawa ke no aki/The End of Summer* (Takarazuka Eiga, 1961).¹¹ (Fig 10.3)



(Fig 10.3) Ozu's young actresses: From above and left, Kishi Keiko, Arima Ineko, Yamamoto Fujiko, Kuga Yoshiko, Wakao Ayako, Okada Mariko and Tsukasa Yōko

All of the above belonged to the aforementioned *shōwa hitoketa* generation, and they

¹⁰ Ibid. In the film, the father Hirayama (Saburi Shin) does not approve of his first daughter Setsuko (Arima Ineko)'s love marriage, mainly out of disappointment that he was ignored during the process of her decision to marry him. His objection continues even after the bridegroom-to-be turns out to be a very nice young man.

¹¹ Among the major actresses of this generation, the only one who did not have a chance to play a prominent role in an Ozu film would be Kitahara Mie (b. 1933), Nikkatsu's heroine often formed a pair with Ishihara Yūjirō, whom she would later marry. However, she was not without connections to Ozu. Her film debut was a very small role in *The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice*, and after she moved to Nikkatsu, she would star in *Tsuki wa noborinu/The Moon Has Risen* (Tanaka Kinuyo, 1954), the film based on Ozu's original script in 1947, which I discussed in Chapter 8.

certainly provided a fresh atmosphere in Ozu's post-*Tokyo Story* films, in contrast to the female characters of the previous generation, as represented by Hara Setsuko's Noriko.¹²

As for male characters, Ozu did not cast an equivalent number of important young actors. The only exception would be Sada Keiji (b. 1926), who, already a major Shochiku star based on his leading role in *What Is Your Name?* with Kishi Keiko, appeared in several of Ozu's 'new *sararīman* films' as a young *sararīman*. His clean-cut, well-behaved image offered a strong contrast to Ishihara's tough, sexy style, visually registering the distance that Ozu maintained from the *taiyōzoku* films. (Fig 10.4) However, Ozu's attitude towards the *taiyōzoku* phenomenon and Ishihara



(Fig 10.4) Sada (left) and Ishihara (right)

as its icon was not one of total rejection but rather selective adoption. What was new about Ishihara, according to Ozu, was his frank, natural attitude towards acting; if other actors had so far been concerned only with how their 'facial expression' looked on screen, Ishihara acted with his 'whole body', without being conscious of the camera.¹³ Ozu paid special attention to *Ubaguruma/The Baby Carriage* (Tasaka Tomotaka, Nikkatsu, 1956), where he saw the actor's unexpected potential in the role of a gentle young man who is 'fond of a carefree, relaxed *seikatsu*'.¹⁴ Thus Ozu, acknowledging Ishihara's novelty, actually understood the possibilities that the actor could offer for his family dramas of generational conflict, rather than approving of

¹² Ozu's cameraman Atsuta remembers that Kishi Keiko was Ozu's 'first "postwar" [generation] actress' who 'was not afraid of appearing in Ozu's film', and 'Ozu, in return, enjoyed such a youthful vigour'. Atsuta and Hasumi, *Ozu Yasujirō monogatari*, p. 165.

¹³ Ozu Yasujirō, 'Ishihara Yūjirō ni omou [Thinking about Ishihara Yujiro]' in *Eiga hyōron* (March, 1958), reprinted in Tanaka (ed.), *Sengo goroku*, p. 287.

¹⁴ Ibid. *Ubaguruma* is about the conflict between a father who maintains an extramarital family and the two women related to this affair (his wife and mistress). Ishihara, the brother of the mistress, together with the daughter of the father (Ashikawa Izumi), becomes 'instrumental in guiding the parent generation, acting as mediators between the two families'. (Fig 10.5) Ishihara's image accordingly was 'softened' from that of a rebellious youth to a representative of social mores appropriate for the genre of family drama. Standish, *A New History of Japanese Cinema*, p. 230-232.

the actor's original rebellious image. Even *taiyōzoku*, for Ozu, was just another ingredient to make *tofu*.



(Fig 10.5) Ishihara in *Ubaguruma* (1956)

Seen from this point of view, Ozu did not strive for something particularly 'new' with regard to the young generation in his 'new *sararīman* films'. As for marriage, for example, generational conflict and resistance had always played a role in Ozu's films, as evidenced in the 'excursion films'. Daughters consistently rebel against *omiai* forced on them by their parents and choose their own partners. In this sense, Setsuko's resistance to her father in *Equinox Flower* is only a variation on Noriko's sudden decision to marry Kenkichi regardless of her family's objection in *Early Summer*. However, the marriage narrative that appears repeatedly in the 'new *sararīman* films' seems to have lost some of the tense energy that had existed in the 'excursion films'. I think the difference comes mainly from the fact that marriage does not retain the same temporal connotations in relation to the past as the marriages in *The Moon Has Risen* or *Early Summer* did. In Setsuko's marriage in *Equinox Flower*, there is not the same strong ironic tension between 'moving on' and 'holding back' as seen in the wedding procession through a barley field in *Early Summer*. There is a similar absence in other 'new *sararīman* films'. For example, the daughter Michiko (Iwashita Shima) in *An Autumn Afternoon* refuses an *omiai* offer just as Noriko in *Late Spring* did, but her reason is that she has her eye on someone else, rather than her emotional attachment to her widower father (Ryū Chishū), as in Noriko in *Late Spring*'s case. Once it is revealed that the man she is fond of is interested in another woman, Michiko soon changes her mind and marries the partner that her father introduces, during which concern for her father hardly becomes an issue. This 'aloofness' makes the last farewell scene on Michiko's wedding day look fairly dry and composed, compared to the heartbreaking moment of the same parting moment in *Late Spring*. (Fig 10.6) After all, marriage for the new generation is

something ‘natural’ or even ‘banal’ that accords with one’s desire, but is barely related to the temporality of the parent generation. And, as such, the everyday loses its previous quality as an element that permeates various temporal spheres and registers.



(Fig 10.6) The last farewell scene in *An Autumn Afternoon* (above) and *Late Spring* (below)

Segregated from their children, the aging *sararīman* fathers exclusively take on the role of reflecting on the passage of time. For this purpose Ozu tends to use the settings of bars or restaurants and the activity of drinking, which consistently appear in the series of ‘new *sararīman* films’. Here, the fathers, who suffer dwindling masculinity at home, typically worry about marrying off their daughters, reminisce about the old days and lament the loss of their youth.¹⁵ (Fig 10.7) Such places are



(Fig 10.7) The drinking scenes in *Equinox Flower* (left), *Late Autumn* (centre) and *An Autumn Afternoon* (right)

the ‘realm of old men’, a special ‘retreat’ not permitted to the preceding *sararīman*

¹⁵ For more on the alienation of *sararīman* fathers within the domestic space, refer to my other study; Woojeong Joo, ‘There Were Fathers’, pp. 92-98.

group of the *shōshimin eiga* in the 1930s. Women are excluded from this space, and their interruption – as seen in the restaurant scene in *Early Summer* – is precluded. (Fig 10.8) In this place of safety, the fathers enjoy suggestive sexual jokes as if they are struggling to rekindle their dying masculine power. Nor can the younger generation become a genuine part of the drinking space. In *An Autumn Afternoon*, when the father Hirayama (Ryū Chishū) and his eldest son Kōichi (Sada Keiji) visit a bar – Torys – to talk about the *omiai* of their daughter/sister Michiko, Kōichi somehow looks unbecoming in this ‘father’s space’. In fact, he never drinks whisky as Hirayama does, but instead eats fried rice and drinks tea, deploying the same contrast between rice and *sake* as was seen with Shige and her father Shūkichi in *Tokyo Story*. (Fig 10.9) Moreover, Kōichi does not agree with Hirayama’s opinion that the bar’s madam resembles his dead mother, which evinces his lack of sympathy for the father’s desire to reincarnate the past out of the bar space.



(Fig 10.8) Women do not enter the men’s drinking space, even if they are invited (Compare with Fig. 8.15)



(Fig 10.9) Hirayama drinks whisky (*left*) while Kōichi eats rice. Compare with Fig 9.30

The fathers’ drinking in the ‘new *sararīman* films’ is not generally connected to the historical recognition of war as in the drinking at the *pachinko* parlour in *The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice*, or the reunion sequence in *Tokyo Story*. In the late 1950s, war now seemed too distant a memory to be directly referred to through a dead son or friend. Instead, the past that the fathers struggle with is a more personal and ordinary one, often to do with the realisation that they get old while their children grow up and get married. But there are a few exceptions to this tendency.

Firstly, in a reunion party scene in *Equinox Flower*, the father Hirayama's old classmates sing a song together called, 'Sakurai no ketsubetsu [Parting at Sakurai]', which, dealing with a loyalist samurai, was popular during wartime.¹⁶ It is not that these singing fathers, whose eyes are closed with touching emotion, are missing war itself and lament the defeat: Hirayama in an earlier scene has clearly stated that he 'hates the war and the people who swaggered at that time'. But the song 'epitomises the sense of resignation, poignancy, and *aware* (pathos)', and still creates a peculiarly nostalgic mood for what is lost in the postwar present.¹⁷ As discussed in Chapter 3, the reunion party in *Tokyo Chorus* worked as a collective antidote to the threat of Western capitalism. 27 years later, now grown old and betrayed by war, the *sararīman* fathers at the reunion in *Equinox Flower* look tired and lost in the face of the postwar society that they struggle to make sense with. (Fig 10.10)



(Fig 10.10) The singing fathers at a reunion party (Compare with Fig 3.15)

A clearer historical consciousness returns in *An Autumn Afternoon*. The aforementioned Torys Bar becomes a memorial place for the war, just as the room inside the *pachinko* parlour in *The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice* or Noriko's apartment in *Tokyo Story* was. There, the father Hirayama shares drinks with Sakamoto, who is his former subordinate in the navy, and together they listen to the Gunkan March – the famous war tune Ozu also used in the reunion scene from *Tokyo Story*. Cheered by the march, Sakamoto asks Hirayama, 'Why did Japan lose the war?' and 'What if we had won?', the first and the last time such fundamental questions are raised so directly in Ozu's films. Sakamoto then dreams of a Japanese occupied New York and re-enacts a march with salute along with the ongoing

¹⁶ *Sakurai no ketsubetsu* tells the story of the last farewell between a samurai named Kusunoki Masahige and his son before the father goes to war and dies for his emperor. Due to their extreme loyalty, the Kusunokis became the icons of nationalist heroism during the Pacific War period. After the war, the name of Kusunoki was officially removed from school textbooks, and the song *Sakurai no ketsubetsu* was also prohibited. *Ibid.*, p. 104.

¹⁷ Ivan Morris, *The Nobility of Failure*, p. 131.

Gunkan March. (Fig 10.11) Again, the point of the scene is not to glorify wartime militarism; Sakamoto agrees that ‘stupid blokes were swaggering’ at that time. Rather, the wartime is perceived as the epitome of the past, in relation to which the changes to postwar society can be reflected upon. For the generation old enough to ‘remember’ the war, time has now ripened and enabled these men to perceive this history as a detached ‘object’, which can be bantered about or played with over a simple drink. In other words, war is now truly a part of the everyday. And the young Japanese, who Sakamoto grumbles ‘imitate Americans by playing records and shaking their hips’, are excluded from any enjoyment of this memory. No wonder that Hirayama, on another visit to the bar with Kōichi, does not let the madam play the Gunkan March again, preventing the son from listening to the music.



(Fig 10.11) Hirayama and Sakamoto at Torys Bar. Notice that both share whiskey (*left*) as well as the joy of saluting to the tune of Gunkan March (*centre and right*). Compare with Fig 10.9, where Kōichi does not share a drink with his father.

Thus in the ‘new *sararīman* films’, the generations are separated, even more so than before in Ozu’s postwar cinema. And the separation is ‘naturalised’ or ‘taken for granted’. Without an intermediary character such as Noriko in *Tokyo Story*, each generation does not seem to interact with the other in order to resolve differences. Rather, the conflict is transformed into a paternal character’s ‘inner turmoil’ after his realisation that there is no role left for him in his relationship with his child. It is a postwar version of the masculine lethargy that plagued the dwindling *sararīman* fathers in the *shōshimin eiga*. The Hirayamas of both *Equinox Flower* and *An Autumn Afternoon* reveal this symptom in the final scene of each film, where they murmur the melody of the past (i.e. *Sakurai no ketsubetsu* and the Gunkan March) alone. The Hirayama of the former sings it on a train to Hiroshima to meet and reconcile with Setsuko, who is now married. Compared to the train ride in *Tokyo Story*, where Noriko carries Tomi’s past into her future, Hirayama’s singing, as it was in the reunion sequence, is only a lament of the disappeared past and an expression of his alienation from the present. This is reconfirmed in the case of the latter, where

the drunken father's singing is interrupted by his younger son, who finds it annoying while he tries to sleep. In the end, what the two fathers show in common on their faces is absolute tiredness, which not only describes their loneliness, but also evidences how helpless their existence is in the changing postwar society. (Fig 10.12) In that sense, Ozu succeeded in making the 'new *sararīman* films' a tale for the old generation rather than the young one as he had originally intended.



(Fig 10.12) The enervated singing fathers at the ending of *Equinox Flower* (left) and *An Autumn Afternoon*

A New *Seikatsu*

The new generation, however, is not exempt from this tiredness. If their parents suffer from the burden of an unresolved past, the young characters are troubled by the reality of an everyday life that they have to manage in the present. As the Japanese economy recovered from the destruction of the early postwar years, more opportunities presented themselves, especially in the form of commodity culture. As Marilyn Ivy notes, mass products became the 'objects of desire, the signs of middle-class inclusion, the unparalleled commodity fetishes for the Japanese'.¹⁸ And the process of satisfying these desires accompanied democratic 'equalisation', or negatively put, the 'homogenisation' and 'privatisation' of middle class society.¹⁹ Now more things were available to more consumers, but in exchange, they became more strongly integrated into a capitalistic wage labour system. This kind of subject

¹⁸ Marilyn Ivy, 'Formations of Mass Culture' in Andrew Gordon (ed.), *Postwar Japan as History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p. 249.

¹⁹ 'If every household contained the same electric appliances in similarly constricted domestic spaces, then households were democratically equalised'. However, this can also mean 'homogenisation, an elimination of differences as nuclear familial units constructed themselves as "micro-utopias" sealed off from external conflict; or as privatisation, a dangerous shrinking of social networks and forms of association into the modular confines of "my home"'. Ibid., p. 250.

matter had also been dealt with in the *shōshimin eiga*, in the form of the *sararīman* father's struggle to maintain his buying power for his family. In the 'new *sararīman* films', however, 'buying' per se is not of great concern; it is indeed possible to buy something, but not without the accompanying fatigue and boredom, which are exchanged for the pleasure of purchase and possession. Ozu's everyday is thus finally 'modernised' in the sense that it starts to foreground the connections between restricted labour and mass production and consumption.

On one side of this system lies office space, the stronghold of the *sararīman*. Ozu's office scenes in the 'new *sararīman* films' visualise one of the most tasteless and expressionless spaces he ever created. And he repeats almost the same mise-en-scène for this again and again throughout the period as if to confirm the banal nature of the space. The rigid colour palette is dominated by monotonous blues and greys, and seamlessly blended profile shots of a working *sararīman* father are repeatedly shown, whilst the sounds of noisy machinery or traffic are heard from outside. Typically, an acquaintance will walk down a long corridor to visit the *sararīman* in the office. And throughout such a scene the camera never moves an inch. (Fig 10.13) Ozu, however, hardly permits the *sararīman* characters reflection upon the meaning of this monotonous repetitiveness; for most of the time, they and their visitors talk about marriage and the opportunity of an *omiai*.



(Fig 10.13) Office scenes in *Equinox Flower*

The exception to this rule is the earliest 'new *sararīman* film', *Early Spring*, where the main *sararīman* characters are much younger than the *sararīman* fathers of management level that we frequently see in the later films. These young *sararīman* are first presented in an early morning commuting scene, where one by one they gather at Kamata station, ending up in a huge cluster of commuters lined up on a platform. (Fig 10.14) With the familiar elements of the suburb and the commuting train in the morning, this scene offers a variation on the final scene of *I*

Was Born But..., where the *sararīman* Yoshii's two sons, still in doubt about their future, headed to school with the other pupils. The whole film can actually be read as Ozu's delayed answer to the ambiguous conclusion of *I Was Born But...* regarding the fate of the *sararīman*. Nothing has fundamentally changed here; what is waiting for the children's generation after nearly a quarter century is the same everyday all over again, which the father Yoshii had hoped his children would avoid.



(Fig 10.14) *Sararīman* in *Early Spring* go to work (above) and schoolchildren in *I Was Born But...* go to school (below).

Early Spring faces this reality directly, with a self-reflexive attitude, which brings it closer to the 1930s' *shōshimin eiga* than the later 'new *sararīman* films'. In the following scene after the train-commuting, two *sararīman* characters inside an office building look out of a window in order to watch other commuting *sararīman* hurrying along a street. One of them offers his impression, 'It's a flood of *sararīman*', and the other adds, 'There are three hundred and forty thousand *sararīman* who commute to Tokyo station everyday'.²⁰ (Fig 10.15) Their high-angled point of view shot over the street – a rare case in Ozu – permits them an 'objective' perspective. This allows them to realise the fact that they are merely part of this massive group of people. For these *sararīman*, the view is thus a sorrowful

²⁰ In the postwar, the *sararīman* became an even more prevalent demographic group than before, as the number of college graduates had constantly increased during the war and postwar period. Thus in 1955, when *Early Spring* was filmed, 'half of all households were headed by *sararīman*'. This expansion was 'linked to the processes and discourses of the re-emergence and successes of the state-capitalism system', which, as I discussed, was also possible through Japan's integration into the Cold War politics. James E. Roberson and Nobue Suzuki, *Men and Masculinities in Contemporary Japan: Dislocating the Salaryman Doxa* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 7.

self-portrait, which can be compared to the father Yoshii's clown image, as seen through his boss' home movie in *I Was Born But....*



(Fig 10.15)

What exists on the other side of this everyday life is domesticity. Ozu always excelled at depicting the domestic environment, but those of the 'new *sararīman* films' are distinct for their more stable and affluent atmosphere. An important space that contributes to this change is the living room (*chanoma*) as a place for family gathering. It is not that Ozu had not deployed the space before, and I have discussed this in relation to female movement in the previous chapters. But in the 'new *sararīman* films', the *chanoma* finally obtains its full function as an everyday space where family members encounter each other 'without a specific purpose' except to talk, read or snack, creating a conventional middle class domestic landscape.²¹ (Fig 10.16) The one who controls this space and time is not the patriarch but the



(Fig 10.16) *Chanoma* in *Equinox Flower*, *Good Morning* and *Late Autumn*

housewife/mother, who, even while appearing subservient to her husband, adroitly mediates communication between the blunt father and the resistant child in order to maintain familial harmony. Ozu also strengthens this domestic stability with his static camera, which concentrates extensively on layered spatial structures and various domestic objects. Again, this is far from a novel experiment for the director, but in the 'new *sararīman* films', his virtuosity reaches the point of utmost visual

²¹ In Ozu's previous films, *chanoma* was used as a specific 'meeting' place to have a meal, welcome a guest or talk about a serious familial issue such as marriage. Individual space was accordingly much more important, such as Noriko's upstairs room in *Late Spring*.

pleasure. I do not want to repeat here the points that critics have already made on this formal refinement, except for the fact that the use of colour, which Ozu began to employ from *Equinox Flower* in 1958 on, greatly contributed to the emphasis on domestic space and objects, which is effectively contrasted with the dullness of the office spaces mentioned earlier.²² (Fig 10.17)



(Fig 10.17) Domestic shots in Ozu's colour films

This new tendency of the 'new *sararīman* films' has attracted criticism. Wood, referring to Burch, argues that Ozu's work of the latter years fell into formalism ('academicism', in Wood's term) in order to defend his stylistic position.²³ Sakamoto, as discussed in Chapter 7, understands Ozu's films of this period as fitting into the genre of *hōmudorama*, which is characterised by its restricted scope, focussing mostly on family life separate from any social context. Tanaka Masasumi defines the characteristics of the late Ozu as 'elaboration and jokes' in terms of style, and 'self-emulation' in terms of content, and suggests that the tendency had begun after the critical and commercial failure of *Tokyo Twilight* (1957).²⁴ Whatever the cause, I concur with the assertion that Ozu's late films evidence a gradual decline in the director's creativity, as he becomes too involved with formal consideration and repetitive subject matter. However, I also think that the emphasis on domesticity is not merely degeneration into formalism and the space 'inside' the home. Rather, Ozu maintained an aspect of social commentary by letting the symptoms of postwar

²² Ozu is known to have been sensitive to all the subtle differences of a colour, saying 'There are about ten different shades of red'. He thus preferred Agfa film, instead of Fuji, Konishiroku or Eastman colour stock, and used it for all of his six colour films. Agfa's was known to be more 'supple, more responsive to natural light, [and] paler', and also separated colours more softly to generate 'muted edges'. Okajima Hisashi, 'Colour Film Restoration in Japan: Some Examples' in *Journal of Film Preservation*, 66 (October 2003), p. 32-33; Dudley Andrew, 'The Postwar Struggle for Colour' in *Cinema Journal*, 18:2 (Spring 1979), pp. 46-47; Bordwell, *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*, p. 83.

²³ Wood says, 'I agree – tentatively ... - with Noel Burch, though for utterly different reasons, that Ozu finally declined into academicism. Only I set the date much later: the last colour films strike me as tired, the creative impetus weakened, a retreat into a formal play with colour that, at its worst, becomes almost a kind of painting-by-numbers'. Wood, *Sexual Politics and Narrative Film*, p. 137.

²⁴ Tanaka Masasumi, *Ozu yasujirō shūyū*, pp. 389-391.

everyday life – most importantly, consumerism – permeate into this static domestic space. The shiny consumer electronics that pervade the ‘new *sararīman* films’ – such as the rice cooker, vacuum cleaner, refrigerator and television – are not just there to evoke visual pleasure, but act as a strong signifier of the changing postwar society that is fundamentally influencing the lives of Ozu’s characters, especially his younger ones. The obsessive interest they show towards these domestic objects is nothing but commodity fetishism. (Fig 10.18)



(Fig 10.18) Consumer electronics in the ‘new *sararīman* films’: A rice cooker is an effective signifier of the everyday life of the new generation, for whom eating rice is more important than drinking *sake*. Notice in the third shot that Kōichi in *An Autumn Afternoon* is seen inside a kitchen making a ham omelette over rice for himself, the first ever scene in Ozu where a male character is involved in ‘feminine’ work.

The best example of this appears in *An Autumn Afternoon* in relation to the everyday life of Kōichi and his wife Akiko (Okada Mariko). Both being young *sararīman*, Kōichi is urged by Akiko to buy a refrigerator. Unable to afford it with their salary, Kōichi borrows money from his father. But he receives more money than he needs, which allows him to buy a set of used golf clubs from his colleague, without telling his wife. Akiko, learning of this fact and upset that she has been ignored, declares that she will also buy herself an expensive handbag, in return for allowing Kōichi to buy the clubs. The society that surrounds this young couple of the *shōwa hitoketa* generation is structured around a commodity culture that stimulates the ‘homogenisation’ of young people, which is different from the community consciousness of the *shitamachi* neighbourhood. Akiko’s decision to buy a refrigerator is actually influenced by her neighbour in a *danchi* (a block of collective apartment buildings), who already owns one along with a TV and a vacuum cleaner. When she visits the neighbour to borrow a couple of ‘chilled’ tomatoes, her envious and admiring gaze does not miss the vacuum cleaner on the floor, which she tries turning on just to hear the motor sound. (Fig 10.19) Kōichi is no exception to such fetishism when he swings and ‘caresses’ the clubs several times saying ‘This is a good product’. (Fig 10.20) Thus if the oppressed desire of the *taiyōzoku* is vented

through sex and violence, Ozu's young characters pacify it through possession obsession. Although one is denied and the other accepted by social mores, both desires are fundamentally the same phenomenon: the reconfiguration of Japanese society according to its new postwar economic and political imperatives.



(Fig 10.19) Apartment *danchi* (left and centre) and Akiko's admiration of vacuum cleaner



(Fig 10.20)

Crucially, Ozu develops the penetrating insight that what exists deep inside this phenomenon is the boredom of the everyday. As Akiko complains, Kōichi, a *sararīman*, almost always comes home late at night, only to immediately go to bed saying he is tired. But tiredness is the other name of commodity obsession, which Akiko herself is participating in. This is demonstrated in a night scene where Akiko talks about buying a refrigerator with Kōichi, who has just returned home and is 'sleepy'. A profile shot of Kōichi, who yawns while hearing her enthusiastic plan for the purchase, is followed by a reverse shot of Akiko, who, upset by the husband's indifferent response, devours a grape. (Fig 10.21) In return, when Akiko objects to



(Fig 10.21)

Kōichi's buying of the golf clubs, his languor transforms into resentment, which he

expresses by being unresponsive to Akiko's conversation. This sequence is set on a fine Sunday morning, and the mood is peaceful, with sunshine brightening the apartment and the sound of a woman singing *Caro mio ben* with piano heard from outside. However, the morning as such also becomes the most lethargic time of the week. Staying at home on such a day foregrounds the banality of the everyday; Akiko is busy doing household chores, and Kōichi, lying on the floor and smoking without a word, is asked by his wife to wind up a wall clock. (Fig 10.22) For this couple, commodity fetishism is the only way to escape from this dead end everydayness. Kōichi's boredom instantly dissipates when he finally obtains the clubs with Akiko's approval (and her declaration that she will buy the handbag as well) at the end of this sequence.



(Fig 10.22) A boring Sunday morning

Seen from this perspective, commodity culture can be understood as a means of 'deviation' from the terms of the everyday that I have discussed in this thesis. The *sararīman* in *An Autumn Afternoon* cannot skip his work as the children in *I Was Born But...* did to enjoy a day-off on an empty field. Instead they can indulge in the pleasure of planning and practicing consumption in order to break the monotonous rhythm of the everyday. Granted, the *sararīman*'s deviation is subordinate to the postwar capitalistic order, lacking the anti-establishment potential of the children's behaviour in *I Was Born But...*, but Ozu accepts it as a reality of contemporary society without making any value judgement. Such a position is more clearly stated in *Good Morning*. The film is usually regarded as a light comedy, but Ozu in fact asks a more fundamental question regarding the necessity of commodity culture and its effect on postwar society. Set in a small suburban town outside Tokyo, the film depicts how the impetus towards 'homogenisation' – buying consumer electronics that a neighbour already has – influences the life of the middle class residents. The child protagonists, whose normal everyday time and space is completely disrupted by watching television, demand that their *sararīman* father buy a TV set for the family.

(Fig 10.23) The father sternly rejects this, designating television (and the desire to possess in general) as a ‘useless’ thing. But is not the world made of such useless things anyway?²⁵ After all, consumerism is already an indispensable part of the Japanese’ *seikatsu*, as people make a living by selling and buying commodities with each other. Through comic episodes related to money, sales and commodities, Ozu concedes that the contemporary everyday life is essentially constructed around such elements.



(Fig 10.23) Children engrossed in watching television

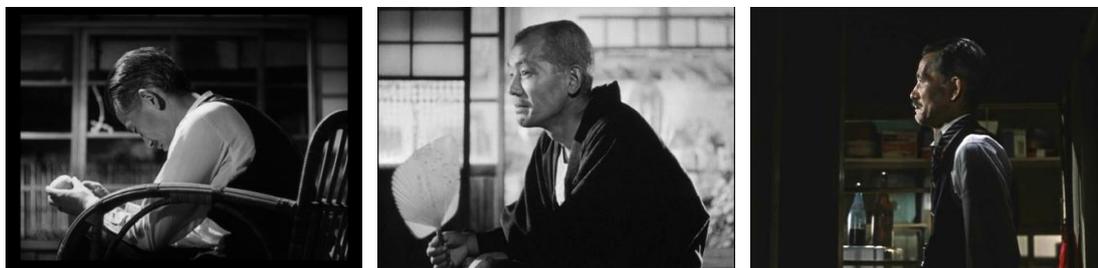
Conclusion

Ozu’s ‘new *sararīman* films’ of the late 1950s and early 1960s are characterised by their acute sense of a generational gap. The key influence that dominated the young generation’s life during this period was Japan’s economic and political reconfiguration during the early Cold War era, which can ultimately be related to the presence of the US and American culture. There were two contrasting attitudes towards this reality – indulgence and resistance – and with his usual attentiveness to *seikatsu*, which I discussed in relation to commodity culture, Ozu seemed to lean towards the former for his depiction of the young generation in the ‘new *sararīman* films’. However, as Iwasaki has quite rightly pointed out, these are merely two different expressions of the same reality of the postwar, and in this sense, I conclude that Ozu’s problematic was not essentially different from that of the *taiyōzoku* films or Ōshima’s work. I also suggest that the boredom of the everyday, and the desire to deviate from it, is the quintessential concept that can combine these

²⁵ The examples given in the film include drinking and smoking as well as daily greetings and chitchat as a social lubricant, which the protagonist children refuse to take part in as an expression of their resistance to the father (and his contradictions).

apparently different works together under the banner of ‘Post-Occupational Japanese Cinema’.

Ozu’s older characters continue on a separate path from this tendency. As discussed in the previous chapters, they are the ones who make Ozu’s postwar films ‘post-war’, with their memory of both the prewar and wartime past. Such a temporal sensitivity, however, no longer permeates the younger generation, whose everyday life is encroached upon by commodity fetishism. As a result, the old *sararīman* fathers are alienated from their children, and confined within the memorial spaces of the bar and restaurant. There, they are permitted to lament the wartime as a distanced, abstracted concept of the past, an entity quite different to the one that directly troubled the elderly parents in Ozu’s previous postwar films. In this sense, the ‘new *sararīman* films’ faithfully succeeded the *shōshimin eiga*, with their central issue of weakened masculinity, although the cause of the threat and the extent of the middle class consciousness are not exactly the same. It is undeniable that Ozu eventually perceived postwar society from this older generation’s point of view, concluding most of the ‘new *sararīman* films’ with images of tired and lonely parents. However, it should not be overlooked that the younger generation was also vulnerable to a similar fatigue, as evinced by the image of Kōichi yawning in *An Autumn Afternoon*. The profile image of an enervated father had long been used in Ozu’s cinema to imply the impending death of the memory of the past, but in the ‘new *sararīman* films’, such a shot gains a new metaphoric dimension, which is connected more to a general tendency of boredom and tiredness in relation to the everyday *seikatsu*, where such things as endings or death do not exist. (Fig 10.24)



(Fig 10.24) Profile shots of Ozu’s paternal characters (Compare with Fig 10.21)

CONCLUSION

'Cinema is drama, not accident'¹
- Ozu Yasujiro

'My films may look all the same to you,
but I begin each work with a new interest,
trying to express new things'²
- Ozu Yasujiro

In this thesis, I have explored Ozu's cinema from the viewpoint of the everyday. Despite the inherent complexity of the concept of the everyday, its relation to the work of Ozu has largely been taken for granted, and has not been given the examination that it deserves. That relation, I think, is not merely confined to the direct impression that viewers get from Ozu's films. Ozu's everyday may seem to be a void; one may choose to point to the silently flowing cloud shots that are frequently seen in his films in order to assert the 'emptiness' of the present, which essentially constructs the everyday. However, arguments such as this often miss out on the more significant point that such shots never stand alone in the narrative; the cloud implies the 'gaze' of a subject of the everyday (even if absent or elided), and, moreover, a 'drama' that has been building which necessitates the gaze. Ultimately, we do not merely respond to the meaningless beauty of the scenery Ozu presents us with; we also respond to the 'feeling' it evokes, or a meaning that 'saturates' Ozu's everyday.

¹ Yoshida, *Ozu's Anti-Cinema*, p. 2.

² Tanaka (ed.), *Sengo goroku*, p. 397.

In order to conceptualise that abstract feeling from the texts, I have actively drawn upon the history of Japan and the Japanese film industry in my argument. Within that framework of enquiry, Ozu's everyday becomes a more concrete phenomenon, placed within the context of modern Japanese history. I have articulated the multiplicity of modern life, discussing the three differentiated layers of Japanese modernity in Chapter 1, wherein I have shown how a cultural text – a woman's magazine, for example – can reveal the varied perspectives of the modern subject on the everyday. One of the major purposes of this thesis is to extend this principle of multiplicity to the subjects related to Ozu's cinema, including not only Shochiku and Ozu himself, but also the characters on screen.³ The result reveals a much more multifaceted topography of Ozu's work, wherein the positions of each subject can be related and compared. I have distinguished the prewar suburban middle classes (*shōshimin*) from the inner-city lower-middle classes in the *shitamachi* region (*shomin*), whose everyday lives were founded upon different aspects of modernisation – that is, expanding capitalism and pre-modern communalism – although both indicate the same critique of modernity.⁴ The contrast between male and female points of view has also been discussed with regard to the women's film genre, in which female subjectivities are also divided – into categories such as *moga* and *ryōsai kenbo* – by their relationship with dominant patriarchal ideology conveyed through the 'failed *moga*' narrative. I have also shown how Ozu's use of domestic objects and space – such as mirrors and movement within a room – displays (and violates) this gender-based order of subjectivity.

The characterisation of modern subjects in Ozu's films changes significantly after the war. Textual analyses of his postwar films – at least before the 'new *sararīman* films' – demonstrates that the war and its aftermath became the primary thematic concern for the director. I have suggested that Ozu's historical consciousness during this period can be seen to share a basic problematic with the wartime intellectuals of the Overcoming Modernity symposium, where the specificities of Japanese modernity were actively re-examined in the context of the

³ However, I have not included the audience in my discussion, whose subjectivity is too ambiguous an issue to examine without greatly expanding the scope my study. For example, to show how Japanese female audiences constructed their subjectivity while watching Shochiku's women's films, a more detailed investigation of the actual discourses produced by female audiences – for instance, through the pages of women's magazines – would be necessary.

⁴ The differentiation can be also applied to his later films, which are distinguishable according to their degree of communal affinity, as in the case of *Good Morning* vs. *Late Autumn*.

current war with the US. Records of Ozu's utterances, as well as the frequent images of old capitals in his films, exhibit the extent to which he was engaging with the matter of 'Japaneseness' at this time. However, I would caution against equating 'Japaneseness' with traditionalism (both aesthetically and politically), or hastily concluding that Ozu was in agreement with militarism or nationalism. Rather, I interpret this 'Japaneseness' as Ozu's active contemplation and questioning of the concept of postwar Japan, specifically; 'how Japan was led into this history' and 'what Japan can do from now on'. From this critical viewpoint wartime totalitarianism cannot be exempted.

In the immediate postwar films of Ozu, such questions were presented in a more direct form, through images and characters such as Saigō's statue in *Record of a Tenement Gentleman* or the repatriated soldier Shūichi in *A Hen in the Wind*, but the conflict was soon transformed and integrated into the familiar form of the everyday, as in the prewar films (although with more complexity). Female subjectivity (in contrast with male) was a conspicuous example of how Ozu successfully addressed Japan's historical dilemma of continuing the present while retaining the burden of the past. I have shown that women's predominance in the domestic everyday contrasted with the alienation of male characters from domesticity, which not only reveals a symptom of patriarchy in crisis, as found in the prewar films, but also connotes the temporal conflict that existed in postwar society. The narrative of marriage, which has long been one of the main issues in Ozu studies, should thus be reconsidered within this historical context, not in the sense of a 'reflection' of the democratic reformation of the US occupation period, but as a narrative element facilitating a complex interaction between the past and the present. In this sense, *Early Summer's* final wedding procession through the barley field summarises the quintessence of postwar Ozu, making the past 'recognisable' in the present through a 'historical index' in Benjamin's terms. As such, the 'mystical' reticence and sighs of the parents as they watch the procession may be demystified.⁵

⁵ This instance of watching can be compared with a 'cloud-watching' scene earlier in the film, where Noriko's father, with a similar solemn face and a deep sigh, gazes at the clouds in the sky. Unless we consider this in relation to the fact that this appears after Noriko's declaration to marry, the cloud remains merely a sign of an evanescent present moment, or the 'empty' everyday. (Fig C.1)



(Fig C.1) Watching the wedding procession and clouds in the sky in *Early Summer*

The contrast between classes also obtained a temporal dimension in the postwar. Kihachi's *shitamachi* world and its communality rapidly loses its ground in postwar society, as depicted in *Tokyo Story*, while an urban daily life based around consumerism, which was mostly ignored in the prewar *shōshimin* films, finally finds agency in the 'new *sararīman* films'. The realm of the past, without the kind of vibrant contemporariness found in Iida Chōko's restaurant in the Kihachi films, is pushed into the dark recesses of memory, which are almost literally visualised in the *pachinko* space in *The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice* and in the old fathers' bar and restaurant spaces in the new *sararīman* films. The object of memory is still the loss of war, as represented by the dead son remembered by the father Shūkichi while he is drinking with his old hometown friends in *Tokyo Story*. I have concluded that the success of Ozu's films largely depends upon this memory of the past permeating into the everyday of the present. This important role is mainly given over to Ozu's young female characters, as seen in the occupation era's 'excursion films', and in the character of Noriko in *Tokyo Story*. However, as they begin to lose their connection to the wartime past – as represented by their parent characters – more and more in the new *sararīman* films, the tension inherent in Ozu's cinema seems to lose its greatest source of momentum. This can be seen as the reason for the common underestimation of this late period as simple *hōmudorama*, but I have argued that this should not lead to the conclusion that Ozu turned his back on society and indulged in stories of private life. Rather, the new *sararīman* films exhibit a more frank examination of the contemporary consumerist culture that dominated postwar

everyday life, for which Lefebvre's analysis of French society can offer a theoretical background. The bored young generation inherits the anxiety of the prewar *shōshimin* class in the form of commodity fetishism, while their parents are confined to a space of nostalgia.

I have deployed the concept of deviation to explain the characteristics of Ozu's everyday as discussed so far. It is a way of interpreting recurrent narrative and visual elements that set a different spatial and temporal tonality or rhythm against the usual, rationalised system of daily life. In the *shōshimin* films, intermediary spaces such as the vacant lot or public park, which are neither home, school nor workplace, function as alternative spaces, where the characters can not only 'deviate' from, but also reflect upon, the capitalistic order that dominates their everyday life. In the postwar period, the best example is the living room inside the *pachinko* parlour in *The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice*, which, just a step away from the bustling reality of postwar mass culture, affords the male characters a chance to look back on the wartime past. I have also pointed out that such a small-scale spatial 'displacement' and temporal 'retrogression' can be extended to larger scale movements as found in Kihachi's vagrant movement to/from a *shitamachi* town, or the escape from and return to Tokyo in the excursion films. The distancing from usual everyday space and time works as a critique of Japanese modernity in the above-mentioned cases. However, female characters, though the main subjects who perform the return to Tokyo in the excursion films, generally tend not to be involved in such spatial displacement. Women instead disrupt and restructure domestic space and time where their existence is firmly rooted, which is clearly contrasted with their male counterparts' choice to retreat to a secluded place. Their movements at home, or their ability to bring an unexpected object into the domestic space (such as the shortcake in *Early Summer*) generate a similar deviating effect, which breaks the normal everyday logic that governs the otherwise static domesticity.

How was Shochiku's style of *kamatachō/ōfunachō* related to the everyday of Ozu's films? Although Ozu's work has been regarded as the epitome of Shochiku style, and the name of Shochiku also has been equated with the female-oriented family drama that Ozu excelled at, my research suggests a more complex relationship

– both personal and artistic. It is undeniable that Kido's realism, that is, an aesthetic striving to represent the world as it is, became the basic principle for Ozu's style in depicting the everyday. However, both Kido and Ozu deviate from that commonality. Kidoism was more of a commercial sensitivity than an artistic belief in realism, and the Kamata/Ofuna studio reflected this tendency in its *shinpa* flavoured melodramas and happily-ending family drama, the tradition of which continued until the postwar period. On the other hand, Ozu wanted to further pursue his artistic ambitions for more serious subject matter and style, as revealed in the form of the deep pathos of his *shōshimin* films. Thus in order for Ozu's cinema to exist within the realm of Shochiku, a compromise had to be made. It should not be underestimated that Ozu thought of himself as 'an employee of Shochiku', and as he himself acknowledged, some of the typical elements now understood to be the essence of Ozu – the themes of paternal or maternal love for instance – were adopted for commercial reasons. But in spite of this compromise, it is also true that Ozu's way of dealing with the everyday was distinct from other Shochiku films (such as *What Is Your Name?* or *Our Neighbour Miss Yae* for example, the latter of which deals with a very similar subject matter in a similar tone). The principal reasons for this differentiation are, as discussed above, the wide variety of subjectivities and the issue of historicity that Ozu emphasises throughout his films, which I believe transcend the stereotypical *kamatachō/ōfunachō* film that is largely devoid of social concerns. In this sense, Ozu's cinema may not represent the whole of Shochiku's *kamatachō/ōfunachō*, although his works did have a great influence on the genre's stylistic legacy.

The discussion above also suggests an important point in relation to the complex of interactions between a filmmaker, the text s/he produces, and the contextual influences on the production of the text (from the film company the filmmaker works for to the larger socio-political environment at the time of the production). Ozu's case demonstrates that the relationships surrounding his filmmaking practice were not as linear, discrete and hierarchical as Bordwell's concentric circle model suggests. As mentioned, Ozu's relationship with Shochiku was not simple at all, as it became entangled in continuing negotiations between commerciality and artistry. In comparison, Ozu's work was more directly responsive to the ever-changing issues of Japanese society, from the early *shōshimin* films of the depression era to the later new *sararīman* films of the privatised postwar society. As

in the example of the *pachinko* parlour in *The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice*, Ozu was quick to comment on cultural tendencies in contemporary society in his films. This can be partly attributed to the unique production system that Ozu was involved in (at least in the postwar period), in which he could supervise the whole process from the initial planning and writing stage with Noda Kōgo. Again, this does not mean that he was free of any kind of restriction during the production, as it appears that Ozu's wish to confront darker subject matter was checked by Noda's contributions. However, it is clear that both Ozu and Noda were concerned with maintaining close contact with contemporary society in order to provide the main subject matter of everyday life in Ozu's films. I would suggest that the reason that a film is detached from social context in the concentric circle model is because Bordwell devised it *from the point of view of cinematic form*; it would be unreasonable to assert a 'direct' connection between the change in Ozu's visual style and, for instance, the social reformation of the occupation era. But seen from the point of view of content, such a connection becomes acutely necessary for studying the workings of the everyday. Now this also does not mean that while rescuing Ozu from formal excessiveness, I attempt in return to reduce everything in Ozu's films to a reflection of Japanese society. Rather, I have discussed some counterproofs against 'reflectionism' by showing a contradictory relationship between the text and the context, especially with regard to the influence of social ideology on the formation of subjectivity in film (e.g. patriarchy vs. female subjectivity, or nationalism vs. the consumerist subject). The point I am making is not to ignore the importance of the text, but rather to prompt an examination of its complex contextual linkage in order to fully enrich its meaning.

The relation between Ozu and society finally leads us to the big question of 'Is Ozu conservative?' This question needs clarification because there are both formal and thematic dimensions to the term 'conservative'. For example, Rosenbaum's similar question, 'Is Ozu slow?', approaches this matter from a point of view that focuses on the formal, even though he confirms that it is 'impossible to speak about

one without speaking about the other'.⁶ While I agree with his conclusion, I would like to think about this issue from the other point of view, i.e. Ozu's thematic conservatism. Ozu was perennially exposed to the criticism of Japanese critics throughout his career, which focused largely on three distinct tendencies (that I have discussed earlier): his petit-bourgeois ideology in the *shōshimin* films; escapism (or traditionalism) in the occupation era 'excursion films'; and apolitical conservatism in the new *sararīman* films.⁷ Although the concrete object of criticism changed over the years, these critical attacks were united by their antagonism toward Ozu's lukewarm moderatism, which defied radical change, offered a compromise with ambiguous humanism, and held him back from consummating the potential social realism inherent in his films of the everyday. Declaring that he could make only *tofu*, Ozu hardly tried to transcend the boundaries he himself demarcated, and in this sense, he self-defensively acknowledged that he was a 'conservative'. While agreeing with this, I also want to draw attention to the dynamic quality of his cinema, which has always interacted with Japanese society. Although they share a similar look, his film work was not a single entity, but rather consisted of different aspects of different everyday lives of different kinds of people at different times.⁸ The accusation that he did not change misses this inconspicuous undercurrent, which is actually a great sea encompassing a complex of multi-directional currents.

Thus his conservatism should be understood as a form of versatility in response to varying social realities in this history, that nevertheless does not see its basic principles transformed. Confronted by various external challenges, whether they be the prewar proletarian movement, postwar democratic reformation, or the young generation of the 1960s, Ozu affirmed and emphasized the continuity of the everyday, which, however detached from social concerns it may have seemed, was, in fact, an active social statement that survived longer than any of the abovementioned challenges. Ozu made only *tofu*, nothing else. But there are many

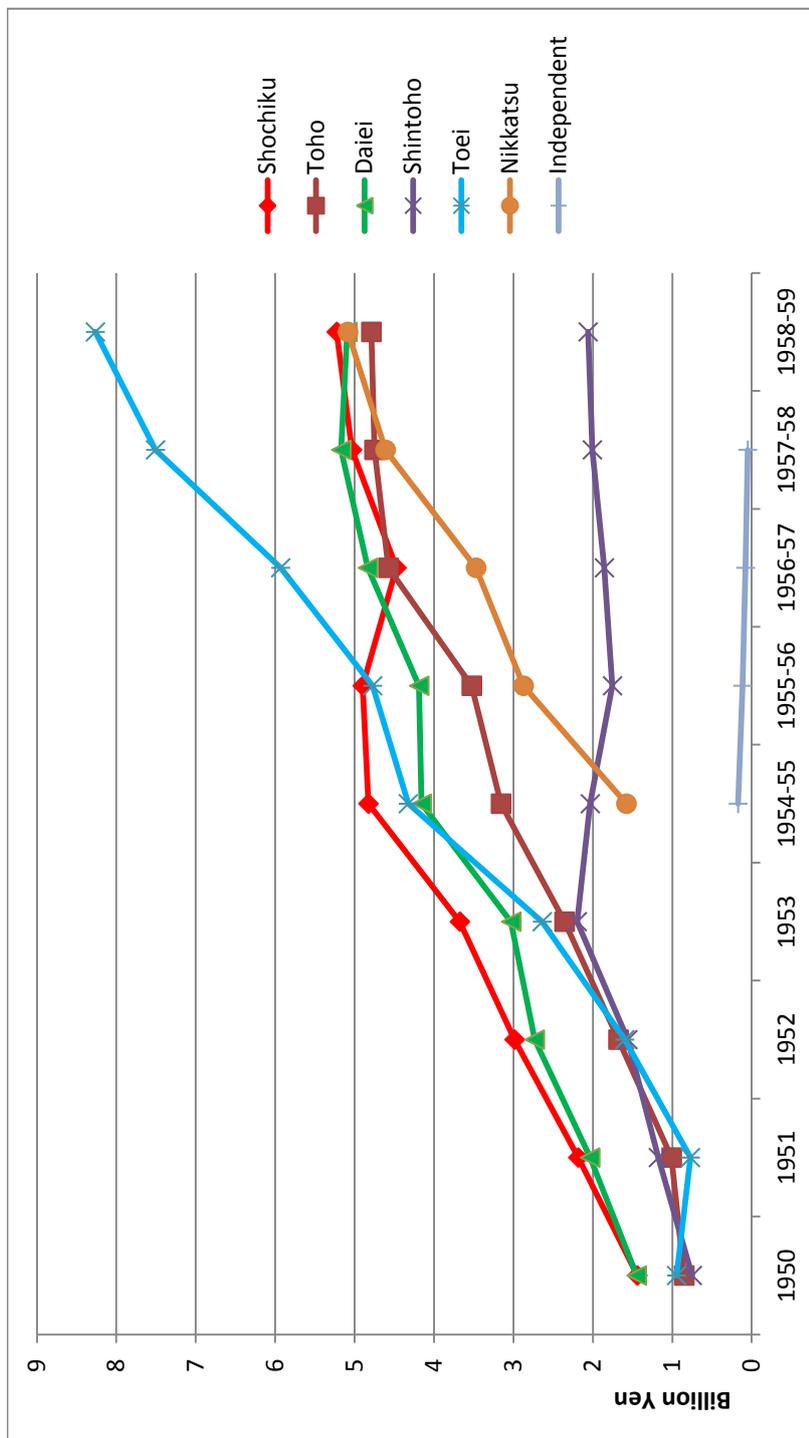
⁶ Jonathan Rosenbaum, *Essential Cinema: On the Necessity of Film Canons* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), p. 146.

⁷ Although his wartime script, *The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice*, was rejected by government censorship, Ozu in this period seemed to be exempt from criticism, as his two wartime releases were well received by critics as well as the public. More research is necessary in order to determine whether this can be related to a special condition of the field of Japanese film criticism during the war.

⁸ Ozu himself noted, 'It may look all the same to you, but I begin each work with a new interest, trying to express new things'. Tanaka (ed.), *Sengo goroku*, p. 397.

kinds of *tofu*, each with a different taste. But again, *tofu* is still *tofu*, always retaining its distinctively plain flavour of the everyday intact.

APPENDICES



Appendix 1. Annual Revenues of Japanese Film Studios in the 1950s (from Iwamoto Kenji and Makino Mamoru (compiled), *Eiga nenkan, sengo hen* [*The Film Almanac: Postwar Years*], Vol. 11-20 (Tokyo: Jiji tsushinsha, 1950-1960; reprinted by Tokyo: Nihon tosho sentā, 1998-1999)

	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958
1	<i>Five Men of Edo</i> (Itō Daisuke)	<i>The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice</i> (Ozu Yasujiro)	<i>What Is Your Name? Part I</i> (Ōba Hideo)	<i>What Is Your Name? Part III</i> (Ōba Hideo)	<i>Shuzenji Story</i> (Nakamura Noboru)	<i>Typhoon over Nagasaki</i> (Yves Ciampi)	<i>Times of Joy and Sorrow</i> (Kinoshita Keisuke)	<i>Equinox Flower</i> (Ozu Yasujiro)
2	<i>Early Summer</i> (Ozu Yasujiro)	<i>Wave</i> (Nakamura Noboru)	<i>What Is Your Name? Part II</i> (Ōba Hideo)	<i>Chūshingura</i> (Ōsone Tatsu)	<i>An Exile</i> (Nomura Yoshitarō)	<i>The Trio with Mortarboards</i> (Nomura Yoshitarō)	<i>A Matter of Valour</i> (Ōsone Tatsu)	<i>Narayama Bushiko</i> (Kinoshita Keisuke)
3	<i>School of Freedom</i> (Shibuya Minoru)	<i>The Moderns</i> (Shibuya Minoru)	<i>The Life of a Flower</i> (Ōsone Tatsu)	<i>Twenty-four Eyes</i> (Kinoshita Keisuke)	<i>The Private's Story</i> (Fukuda Seichi)	<i>The White Devil Fish</i> (Nakamura Noboru)	<i>Elegy of the North</i> (Gosho Heinosuke)	<i>The Eternal Rainbow</i> (Kinoshita Keisuke)
4	<i>Crossing That Hill</i> (Mizuho Shunkai)	<i>A Cheerful Migratory Bird</i> (Sasaki Yamushi)	<i>Tokyo Story</i> (Ozu Yasujiro)	<i>The Sun Never Sets</i> (Nakamura Noboru)	<i>Diary of Sorrow</i> (Tabata Tsuneo)		<i>A Bride Hugged</i> (Banshō Yoshiaki)	
5		<i>Tsukigata Hanpeita</i> (Uchide Kōkichi)	<i>The Garden of Women</i> (Kinoshita Keisuke)	<i>Somewhere Beneath the Wide Sky</i> (Kobayashi Masaki)	<i>Distant Clouds</i> (Kinoshita Keisuke)		<i>Yaji and Kita's Journey for Gold</i> (Ōsone Tatsu)	

Appendix 2. Top Grossing Shochiku Films in the 1950s (from Iwamoto Kenji and Makino Mamoru (compiled), *Eiga nenkan, sengo hen* [*The Film Almanac: Postwar Years*], Vol. 11-20 (Tokyo: Jiji tsushinsha, 1950-1960; reprinted by Tokyo: Nihon tosho sentā, 1998-1999)

GLOSSARY OF JAPANESE WORDS

Atarashii onna (新しい女) A term designating ‘new women’, originating from a group of female intellectuals/writers active in the magazine *Bluestocking* in the 1910s

Aware (哀れ) Pathos

Bakufu (幕府) A Japanese political system where a *shōgun* (将軍, general) rules the government. Also known as Shogunate

Bon odori (盆踊り) A collective dance performed during *Obon* festival period in August



Bon odori

Bunka (文化) Culture

Bunmei (文明) Civilisation

Bushi (武士) See *samurai*

Bushido (武士道) ‘Way of the warriors’. The ethical code governing the behaviour of the warrior (*bushi*)

Chanoma (茶の間) Living room (and sometimes functioning as dining room as well) in Japanese style house



Chanoma

Chichimono (父もの) Japanese film genre that centres on a story of father

<i>Chōnin</i> (町人)	The petit-bourgeois class (merchants or craftsmen) in Edo period Japan.
<i>Chū</i> (忠)	Loyalty to the monarch
<i>Danchi</i> (団地)	A block of collective apartment buildings
<i>Edo</i> (江戸)	The old name of Tokyo during the Tokugawa regime
<i>Edokko</i> (江戸っ子)	An Edo native
<i>Engawa</i> (縁側)	A wooden floored corridor outside a room in Japanese style house



Engawa

<i>Fujin zasshi</i> (婦人雑誌)	Woman's magazine
<i>Fūkiri</i> (封切)	A release of a film (literally, 'cutting the seal')
<i>Futon</i> (布団)	Japanese style bedding that is usually laid on the floor to be used



Futon in a Japanese style room

<i>Fūzoku</i> (風俗)	Custom and manners of a contemporary society
<i>Geijutsu</i> (芸術)	Art
<i>Geinin</i> (芸人)	Performing entertainer of traditional art
<i>Gendaigeki</i> (現代劇)	Japanese contemporary dramas with contemporary settings (after the Meiji Restoration)
<i>Giri</i> (義理)	Duty, obligation

<i>Gohan</i> (ご飯)	Cooked rice for a meal
<i>Gohan</i> (ご飯)/ <i>meshi</i> (めし):	Cooked rice
<i>Gōrika</i> (合理化)	Rationalisation
<i>Gunkan Māchi</i> (軍艦マーチ)	‘Warship March’
<i>Hahamono</i> (母もの)	Japanese film genre that centres on a story of mother(s)
<i>Hari</i> (張り)	Typical edokko’s willed and spirited personality
<i>Hōmudorama</i> (ホームドラマ)	Japanese film genre that deals with family life, which became popular in the postwar period
<i>Ie</i> (家)	Japanese patriarchal family system
<i>Iki</i> (粋)	A refined manner and a highly sophisticated taste and regard for beauty
<i>Irimuko</i> (入婿)	A bridegroom who marries into his bride’s family
<i>Iroke</i> (色気)	Sex appeal or interest in the opposite sex
<i>Isogashii</i> (忙しい)	Busy
<i>Jidaigeki</i> (時代劇)	Japanese period dramas
<i>Jissaisei</i> (実際性)	Actuality
<i>Jokyū</i> (女給)	A woman who serves drinks at a bar, night club, or café often becoming an erotic object of male customers’ gaze
<i>Jōruri</i> (浄瑠璃)	A form of Japanese music, where a story is told by narration, accompanied by <i>shamisen</i> play
<i>Jun bungaku</i> (純文学)	Pure literature
<i>Junsui bijutsu</i> (純粹美術)	Pure art
<i>Kabuki</i> (歌舞伎)	Japan’s traditional theatre since Edo period
<i>Kachō</i> (家長)	The head of a family in <i>ie</i> system
<i>Kamatachō</i> (鎌田調)	The characteristic style of the films made in Shochiku’s Kamata studio
<i>Kamishibai</i> (紙芝居)	Picture story show



Children watching *kamishibai* show

<i>Kateigeki</i> (家庭劇)	Home drama
<i>Kateishōsetsu</i> (家庭小説)	Home novel
<i>Kazoku kokka</i> (家族国家)	Japan as family State with the emperor as the head of the family
<i>Kindaika</i> (近代化)	Modernisation
<i>Kissaten</i> (喫茶店)	Coffee house
<i>Kō</i> (孝)	Filial piety
<i>Kokuhaku kiji</i> (告白記事)	Confessional articles, e.g. readers' contributions in woman's magazines about various concerns including family and love.
<i>Kokutai</i> (国体)	The national polity or essence of the state of Japan appearing in the form of the lineage of Japanese emperors that has been descended eternally without a breakage
<i>Koseki</i> (戸籍)	A family registration system as stipulated in the Meiji Civil Code, where the position of each family member is identified in relation to the family head
<i>Koshu</i> (戸主)	The head of a family register under <i>koseki</i> system
<i>Mahjong</i> (麻雀)	A table game that originated from China, played with tiles
<i>Manzai</i> (漫才)	Japanese style stand-up comedy usually with two performers
<i>Meishō</i> (名匠)	A skilled, renowned master
<i>Meshi</i> (飯)	Cooked rice for a meal
<i>Messhihōkō</i> (滅私奉公)	Selfless devotion of oneself for the sake of the public
<i>Mijika</i> (身近)	Near to oneself, close to one's life

- Mochiie* (持家) Owned house by life-long loan
- Modan gāru* (モダンガール) The Japanese translation for the English word, modern girl, who were popular during the 1920s and 1930s, and characterised by their interest in fashion and commodity culture as well as liberal pursuit of eroticism.
- Moga* (モガ) An acronym of *modan gāru* (modern girl) with a nuance to emphasise her consumerist and morally liberated aspects.
- Mono no aware* (物の哀れ) A traditional Japanese aesthetic consciousness about the sorrowful feeling towards the transiency of the things in the world
- Monpe* (もんぺ) A woman's trouser for manual work, encouraged to wear by government during the Pacific War period



Japanese women wearing *monpe*

- Nagauta* (長唄) A form of Japanese music played in kabuki theatre
- Nagaya* (長屋) Japanese row houses
- Naniwa-bushi* (浪花節) Story recitation and singing accompanied by *shamisen*
- Nattō* (納豆) Fermented soybean
- Nichijō* (日常) Everyday
- Nichijōsahanji* (日常茶飯事) Daily occurrences
- Nihondate* (二本立て) Double feature exhibition
- Ninjō* (人情) Human feelings, especially compassionate, warm-hearted
- Nonbiri* (のんびり) Carefree

Ochazuke (お茶漬け)

Japanese dish that has steamed rice and savoury toppings over which green tea is poured to be served



Ochazuke

Ōfunachō (大船調)

The characteristic style of the films made in Shochiku's Ofuna studio

Okura (お蔵)

Literally, a storehouse; an act of suspending release, publication etc.

Omiiai (御見合い)

A meeting for an arranged marriage

Onnagata/Oyama (女形)

An actor who impersonates a female's role in *kabuki* theatre and in early Japanese cinema

Onsen (温泉)

Hot spring

Pachinko (パチンコ)

A Japanese game machine that resembles pinball. By passing large number of small metal balls through pins, gamers aim to put them inside a certain location, releasing more balls.



Pachinko machine in the 1950s

Rakugo (落語)

Japanese verbal performance of comic story

Ramen (らめん)

Japanese style noodle soup

<i>Risshin shusse shugi</i> (立身出世主義)	Careerism, or literally, ideology of standing and advancing in the world
<i>Ryōsai kenbo</i> (良妻賢母)	Good wife and wise mother. One of the essential familial ideologies directed towards Japanese women by the Meiji government
<i>Sake</i> (酒)	Japanese alcoholic beverage
<i>Samurai</i> (侍)	Literally meaning, “those who serve”, the word historically indicated supporters of the powerful landowners in the master-servant relationship. The <i>samurais</i> from warrior families were named <i>bushi</i> .
<i>Sarigenai</i> (さりげない)	Nonchalant, casual
<i>Sashimi</i> (刺身)	Raw fish
<i>Seikatsu</i> (生活)	Life or living
<i>Seikatsufūzoku</i> (生活風俗)	Custom and manners in life
<i>Senbei</i> (煎餅)	Japanese rice cracker
<i>Sengo</i> (戦後)	Postwar (after World War II)
<i>Sensō</i> (戦争)	War
<i>Senzen</i> (戦前)	Prewar (before World War II)
<i>Shajitsusei</i> (写実性)	Reality
<i>Shamisen</i> (三味線)	Japan’s three-stringed musical instrument



Shamisen

<i>Shigusa</i> (仕草)	Gestures and movements in acting that expresses a subtle change of feeling
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<i>Shinpa</i> (新派)	Literally, a new wave; A theatrical style that rose to popularity during the early twentieth century against old <i>kabuki</i> style
<i>Shisō</i> (思想)	Thoughts, ideologies
<i>Shitamachi</i> (下町)	Literally the town in the low. A region in Edo and Tokyo including such places as Nihonbahi, Kyōbashi, and Kanda, where merchant and artisan classes resided
<i>Shōgyō bijyutsu</i> (商業美術)	Commercial art
<i>Shomin</i> (庶民)	General term for middle classes or common people, which is a broader concept than <i>shōshimin</i> that indicates white-collar new middle classes.
<i>Shōshimin</i> (小市民)	Literally, petit-bourgeois, more exactly, Japanese urban, white-collar middle classes
<i>Shōshimin eiga</i> (小市民映画)	Japanese film genre that deals with white-collar middle class' life
<i>Shūshinkoyōsei</i> (終身雇用制)	Lifetime employment
<i>Sukiyaki</i> (すき焼き)	Japanese hot pot with sliced beef
<i>Tabemono</i> (食べ物)	Foods, something to eat
<i>Taibōseikatsu</i> (耐乏生活)	Life in austerity, as demanded during the Pacific War
<i>Taishū bungaku</i> (大衆文学)	Popular or mass literature
<i>Taiyōzoku</i> (太陽族)	The sun tribe
<i>Tatami</i> (畳)	Japanese style floor mat made of straw
<i>Tenpura</i> (天ぷら)	Japanese style deep fried foods
<i>Tofu</i> (豆腐)	Bean curd made from soy milk
Tokugawa (徳川) period	A period in Japanese history when Tokugawa <i>bakufu</i> (幕府) in Edo reigned the country from Edo (1603 – 1868)
<i>Tsukudani</i> (佃煮)	Seafood, seaweed or vegetables simmered in sweetened soy sauce
<i>Ukiyo-e</i> (浮世絵)	Japan's woodblock printing that became popular since Edo period

<i>Yakeato</i> (焼跡)	Burnt out ruins. It is used to describe the Japanese postwar youths who experienced the war in their very early childhood.
<i>Yamanote</i> (山手)	A region in Edo and Tokyo mainly to the western part of Edo castle, populated by noble samurai classes, thus contrasting with <i>shitamachi</i> region
<i>Yose</i> (寄席)	Vaudeville theatre that was popular among the commoners in Edo period
<i>Yukata</i> (浴衣)	Casual style kimono often worn in summer or for loungewear or sleepwear
<i>Zōri</i> (草履)	Japanese style thonged sandals with flat sole, made of straw or other materials.



Zōri

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FILMOGRAPHY

Ozu Yasujiro's Films¹

(All films are made in Japan and the production company is Shochiku except when specified)

Akibiyori/Late Autumn (1960)

Agfa Shochiku colour. 11 reels (3,518 metres). 128 min.

Producer: Yamanouchi Shizuo. Original Story: Satomi Ton. Script: Noda Kogo and Ozu Yasujiro. Assistant Director: Tashiro Kozo. Producer: Yamanouchi Shizuo.

Cinematography: Atsuta Yuharu. Colour Technique: Oikawa Motoshige. Editing: Hamamura Yoshiyasu. Lighting: Ishiwatari Kenzo. Recording: Senoh Yoshiaburo. Art Director: Hamada Tatsuo. Music: Saito Takanobu.

Main Cast: Hara Setsuko (Akiko), Tsukasa Yoko (Ayako), Okada Mariko (Yuriko), Sada Keiji (Gotō), Saburi Shin (Mamiya).

Bakushū/Early Summer (1951)

B&W. 13 reels (3,410 metres). 125 min.

Producer: Yamamoto Takeshi. Script: Noda Kogo and Ozu Yasujiro. Assistant Director: Yamamoto Kozo. Producer: Yamamoto Takeshi. Cinematography: Atsuta Yuharu. Lighting: Takashita Itsuo. Editing: Hamamura Yoshiyasu. Recording: Senoh Yoshizaburo. Art Director: Hamada Tatsuo. Music: Ito Senji.

Main Cast: Hara Setsuko (Noriko), Ryu Chishu (Koichi), Miyake Kuniko (Fumiko), Awajima Chikage (Aya), Sugai Ichiro (Shukichi), Higashiyama Chieko (Shige), Sugimura Haruko (Yabe Tami), Nihonyanagi Hiroshi (Kenkichi).

Banshun/Late Spring (1949)

B&W. 12 reels (2,964 metres). 108 min.

Producer: Yamamoto Takeshi. Script: Noda Kogo and Ozu Yasujiro. Assistant Directors: Yamamoto Kozo, Tsukamoto Shokichi, Tashiro Kozo, Saito Buichi.

Producer: Yamamoto Takeshi. Cinematography: Atsuta Yuharu. Lighting: Isono Haruo. Editing: Hamamura Yoshiyasu. Recording: Senoh Yoshizaburo. Art Director: Hamada Tatsuo. Music: Ito Senji.

Main Cast: Ryu Chishu (Shukichi Somiya), Hara Setsuko (Noriko), Sugimura Haruko (Taguchi Masa), Tsukioka Yumeji (Aya), Usami Jun (Hattori), Mishima Masao (Professor Onodera), Miyake Kuniko (Ms. Miwa).

Chichi ariki/There Was a Father (1942)

B&W. 11 reels (2,588 metres). 87 min.

Producer: Isono Rishichiro. Script: Ikeda Tadao, Yanai Takao, Ozu Yasujiro.

Assistant Directors: Nishikawa Nobuo, Suzuki Kiyoshi, Yamamoto Kozo,

Tsukamoto Yoshio. Cinematography: Atsuta Yuharu. Editing: Hamamura Yoshiyasu.

¹ Based upon Kyoko Hirano's filmography published in Yoshida, *Ozu's Anti-Cinema*, pp. 155-174.

Lighting: Naito Kazuji. Recording: Senoh Yoshizaburo. Art Director: Hamada Tatsuo. Music: Saiki Gyoichi.

Main Cast: Ryu Chishu (Horikawa Shuhei), Sano Shuji (Ryohei), Tsugawa Haruhiko (Young Ryohei), Sakamoto Takeshi (Hirata), Mito Mitsuko (Fumi).

***Daigaku yoitoko/College Is a Nice Place* (1936)**

B&W. *Saundoban*.² 13 reels (2,352 metres). 114 min.

Original Idea: James Maki (penname of Ozu Yasujiro and his co-scriptwriters).

Script: Arata Masao. Cinematography: Shigehara Hideo. Main Cast: Konoe Toshiaki (Fujiki), Ryu Chishu (Amano), Kobayashi Tokuji (Nishida), Oyama Kenji (Kawara), Ikebe Tsuruhiko (Inoue).

***Deki gokoro/Passing Fancy* (1933)**

B&W. Silent. 10 reels (2,759 metres). 103 min.

Original Idea: James Maki (penname of Ozu Yasujiro and his co-scriptwriters).

Script: Ikeda Tadao. Assistant Directors: Kiyosuke Akira and Hara Kenkichi.

Cinematography: Sugimoto Shojiro. Editing: Ishikawa Kazuo. Lighting: Nakajima Toshimitsu.

Main Cast: Sakamoto Takeshi (Kihachi), Tokkan Kozo (Tomio), Obinata Den (Jiro), Fushimi Nobuko (Harue), Iida Choko (Otome).

***Haha wo kowazuya/A Mother Should Be Loved* (1934)**

B&W. Silent. 9 reels (2,559 metres). 71 min. (surviving part only).

Original Idea: Komiya Shutaro (penname of Ozu Yasujiro). Composition: Noda Kogo. Script: Ikeda Tadao. Cinematography: Aoki Isamu.

Main Cast: Iwata Yukichi (Father, Kajihara), Yoshikawa Mitsuko (Mother, Chieko), Obinata Den (Elder son, Sadao), Mitsui Hideo (Younger son, Kosaku), Nara Shinyo (Okazaki).

***Hakoiri musume/An Innocent Maid* (1935)**

B&W. *Saundoban*. 8 reels (1,847 metres). 89 min.

Original Idea: Shikitei Sanyu (penname of Ozu Yasujiro, or joint penname of Noda Kogo, Ozu Yasujiro and Ikeda Tadao). Script: Noda KOGO and Ikeda Tadao.

Cinematography: Shigehara Hideo.

Main Cast: Iida Choko (Otsune), Tanaka Kinuyo (Oshige), Sakamoto Takeshi (Kihachi), Tokkan Kozo (Tomiboh).

***Higanbana/Equinox Flower* (1958)**

Agfa Colour. 12 reels (3,225 metres). 120 min.

Producer: Yamanouchi Shizuo. Script: Noda Kogo and Ozu Yasujiro. Assistant Director: Yamamoto Kozo. Producer: Yamanouchi Shizuo. Cinematography: Atsuta Yuharu. Colour Technique: Oikawa Motoshige. Editing: Hamamura Yoshiyasu. Lighting: Aomatsu Akira. Recording: Senoh Yoshizaburo. Art Director: Hamada Tatsuo. Music: Saito Takanobu.

² Sound films with background music and sound effects only

Main Cast: Saburi Shin (Hirayama), Tanaka Kinuyo (Kiyoko), Arima Ineko (Setsuko), Kuga Yoshiko (Fumiko), Sada Keiji (Taniguchi), Kuwano Miyuki (Hisako).

***Hijōsen no onna/Dragnet Girl* (1933)**

B&W. Silent. 10 reels (2,769 metres). 100 min.

Original Idea: James Maki (pennname of Ozu Yasujiro and his co-scriptwriters).
Script: Ikeda Tadao. Assistant Director: Kiyosuke Akira, Hara Kenkichi, Sano Toyotomi, Hiratsuka Hiroh. Cinematography: Shigehara Hideo. Editing: Ishikawa Kazuo and Kuribayashi Minoru. Lighting: Nakajima Toshimitsu. Art Director: Wakita Yoneichi.

Main Cast: Tanaka Kinuyo (Tokiko), Oka Joji (Joji), Mizukubo Sumiko (Kazuko), Mitsui Hideo (Hiroshi), Aizome Yumeko (Misako).

***Hitori musuko/The Only Son* (1936)**

B&W. 10 reels (2,387 metres). 83 min.

Original Idea: James Maki (pennname of Ozu Yasujiro and his co-scriptwriters).
Script: Ikeda Tadao and Arata Masao. Assistant Directors: Hara Kenkichi, Negishi Hamao, Nishikawa Nobuo. Cinematography: Sugimoto Shojiro. Editing: Shigehara Hideo and Hasegawa Eiichi. Lighting: Nakajima Toshimitsu. Art Director: Hamada Tatsuo. Music: Ito Senji.

Main Cast: Iida Choko (Otsune), Himori Shinichi (Ryosuke), Ryu Chishu (Okubo), Tsubouchi Yoshiko (Sugiko), Yoshikawa Mitsuko (Otaka), Tokkan Kozo (Tomiboh).

***Hogaraka ni ayume/Walk Cheerfully* (1930)**

B&W. Silent. 8 reels (2,704 metres). 95min.

Original Idea: Shimizu Hiroshi. Script: Ikeda Tadao. Assistant Directors: Ogawa Jiro and Sasaki Yasushi. Cinematography and Editing: Shigehara Hideo. Assistant Cinematography: Kuribayashi Minoru and Atsuta Yuharu. Lighting: Yoshimura Tatsumi. Set Design: Mizutani Hiroshi.

Main Cast: Takada Minoru (Kenji), Kawasaki Hiroko (Yasue), Date Satoko (Chieko).

***Kaze no naka no mendori/A Hen in the Wind* (1948)**

B&W. 10 reels (2,296 metres). 84 min.

Producer: Kubo Kozo. Script: Saito Ryosuke and Ozu Yasujiro. Assistant Directors: Yamamoto Kozo, Tsukamoto Shokichi, Tashiro Kozo, Nakagawa Yoshinobu. Cinematography: Atsuta Yuharu. Lighting: Isono Haruo. Editing: Hamamura Yoshiyasu. Recording: Senoh Yoshizaburo. Art Director: Hamada Tatsuo. Music: Ito Senji.

Main Cast: Sano Shuji (Shuichi), Tanaka Kinuyo (Tokiko), Murata Chieko (Akiko), Ryu Chishu (Satake).

***Kohayagawa ke no aki/The End of Summer* (Takarazuka Eiga, 1961)**

Agfa Colour. 17 reels (2,815 metres). 103 min.

Producers: Fujimoto Sanezumi, Kaneko Masaaki, Teramoto Tadahiro. Script: Noda Kogo and Ozu Yasujiro. Assistant Director: Takemae Jukichi. Cinematography: Nakai Choichi. Editing: Iwashita Koichi. Lighting: Ishii Choshiro. Recording: Nakagawa Koichi. Art Director: Shimogawara Tomoo. Music: Mayuzumi Toshiro.

Main Cast: Nakamura Ganjiro (Kohayagawa Manbei), Hara Setsuko (Akiko), Tsukasa Yoko (Noriko), Aratama Michiyo (Fumiko), Kobayashi Keiji (Hisao).

***Mata au hi made/Until the Day We Meet Again* (1932)**

B&W. *Saundoban*. 10 reels (2,127 metres). 103 min.

Script: Noda Kogo. Cinematography: Shigehara Hideo.

Main Cast: Okada Yoshiko (Woman), Oka Joji (Man), Nara Shinyo (Father), Kawasaki Hiroko (Sister).

***Munekata kyōdai/The Munekata Sisters* (Shintoho, 1950)**

B&W. 12 reels (3,080 metres). 112 min.

Producer: Koi Hideo and Higo Hiroshi. Original Story: Osaragi Jiro. Script: Noda Kogo and Ozu Yasujiro. Assistant Director: Uchikawa Seiichiro. Cinematography: Ohara Joji. Editing: Goto Toshio. Lighting: Fujibayashi Ko. Recording: Kamiya Masakazu. Art Director: Shimogawara Tomoh. Music: Saito Ichiro.

Main Cast: Tanaka Kinuyo (Setsuko), Takamine Hideko (Mariko), Uehara Ken (Hiroshi), Takasugi Sanae (Yoriko), Ryu Chishu (Father Munekata), Yamamura So (Mimura).

***Nagaya shinshiroku/Record of a Tenement Gentleman* (1947)**

B&W. 7 reels (1,973 metres). 72 min.

Producer: Kubo Kozo. Script: Ikeda Tadao and Ozu Yasujiro. Assistant Directors: Hongo Takeo, Tsukahara Shokichi, Yamamoto Kozo, Tashiro Kozo, Takeda Yoshiharu. Cinematography: Atsuta Yuharu. Editing: Sugihara Yoshi. Lighting: Isono Haruo. Recording: Senoh Yoshizaburo. Art Director: Hamada Tatsuo. Music: Saito Ichiro.

Main Cast: Iida Choko (Otane), Aoki Hohi (Kohei), Yoshikawa Mitsuko (Kikuonna), Kawamura Reiikichi (Tamekichi), Ryu Chishu (Tashiro), Sakamoto Takeshi (Kihachi).

***Nikutaibi/Body Beautiful* (1928)**

B&W. Silent. 5 reels (1,505 metres).

Script: Fushimi Akira. Revisions: Ozu Yasujiro. Cinematography: Shigehara Hideo.

Main Cast: Saito Tatsuo (Ichiro), Iida Choko (Ritsuko), Kimura Kenji (Okura Denemon), Oyama Kenji (Toyama).

***Ochazuke no aji/The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice* (1952)**

B&W. 12 reels (3,156 metres). 116 min.

Producer: Yamamoto Takeshi. Script: Noda Kogo and Ozu Yasujiro. Assistant Director: Yamamoto Kozo. Cinematography: Atsuta Yuharu. Editing: Hamamura Yoshiyasu. Lighting: Takashita Itsuo. Recording: Senoh Yoshizaburo. Art Director: Hamada Tatsuo. Music: Saito Ichiro.

Main Cast: Saburi Shin (Mokichi), Kogure Michiyo (Taeko), Tsujima Keiko (Setsuko), Miyake Kuniko (Chizuru), Tsuruta Koji (Noboru), Ryu Chishu (Hirayama Sadao), Awajima Chikage (Aya).

Ohayo/Good Morning (1959)

Agfa Shochiku Colour. 7 reels (2,570 metres). 94 min.

Producer: Yamanouchi Shizuo. Script: Noda Kogo and Ozu Yasujiro. Assistant Director: Tashiro Kozo. Cinematography: Atsuta Yuharu. Colour Technique: Oikawa Motoshige. Editing: Hamamura Yoshiyasu. Lighting: Aomatsu Akira. Recording: Senoh Yoshizaburo. Art Director: Hamada Tatsuo. Music: Mayuzumi Toshiro.

Main Cast: Shigaraki Koji (Minoru), Shimazu Masahiko (Isamu), Ryu Chishu (Hayashi Keitaro), Miyake Kuniko (Tamiko), Sugimura Haruko (Haraguchi Kikue), Sada Keiji (Fukui Heichiro), Kuga Yoshiko (Setsuko).

Ojōsan/Young Miss (1930)

B&W. Silent. 12 reels (3,705 metres).

Script: Kitamura Komatsu. Gagman: Fushimi Akira, James Maki (pennname of Ozu Yasujiro and his co-scriptwriters) and Ikeda Tadao. Cinematography: Shigehara Hideo.

Main Cast: Kurishima Sumiko (Ojōsan), Okada Tokihiko (Tokio), Saito Tatsuo (Tatsuji), Tanaka Kinuyo (Kinuko).

Otona no miru ehon: Umareta wa mita keredo/I Was Born But... (1932)

B&W. Silent. 9 reels (2,507 metres). 90 min.

Original Idea: James Maki (pennname of Ozu Yasujiro and his co-scriptwriters). Script: Fushimi Akira. Assistant Directors: Kiyosuke Akira and Hara Kenkichi. Cinematography and Editing: Shigehara Hideo. Lighting: Nakajima Toshimitsu. Set Design: Tsunoda Takejiro and Kimura Yoshiro.

Cast: Saito Tatsuo (Father Yoshii), Yoshikawa Mitsuko (Mother), Sugawara Hideo (Elder son), Tokkan Kozo (Younger son), Sakamoto Takeshi (Boss), Hayami Teruyo (His wife), Kato Seiichi (Taro).

Sanma no aji/An Autumn Afternoon (1962)

Agfa Shochiku Colour. 9 reels (3,087 metres). 113 min.

Producer: Yamanouchi Shizuo. Script: Noda Kogo and Ozu Yasujiro. Assistant Director: Tashiro Kozo. Cinematography: Atsuta Yuharu. Editing: Hamamura Yoshiyasu. Lighting: Ishiwatari Kenzo. Recording: Senoh Yoshizaburo. Art Director: Hamada Tatsuo and Hagiwara Shigeo. Music: Saito Takanobu.

Main Cast: Ryu Chishu (Hirayama Shuhei), Iwashita Shima (Michiko), Sada Keiji (Kouichi), Okada Mariko (Akiko), Mikami Shinichiro (Kazuo), Tono Eijiro (Hyotan), Kishida Kyoko (Bar hostess).

Shukujo to hige/The Lady and the Beard (1931)

B&W. Silent. 8 reels (2,051 metres). 75 min.

Script: Kitamura Komatsu. Assistant Directors: Sasaki Yasushi and Kiyosuke Akira. Cinematography and Editing: Shigehara Hideo and Kuribayashi Minoru. Lighting: Nakajima Toshimitsu. Set Design: Wakita Yoneichi.

Main Cast: Okada Tokihiko (Okajima Kiichi), Kawasaki Hiroko (Hiroko), Iida Choko (Her mother), Date Satoko (Satoko).

***Shukujo wa nani wo wasuretaka/What Did the Lady Forget?* (1937)**

B&W. 8 reels (2,051 metres). 75 min.

Script: Fushimi Akira and James Maki (penname of Ozu Yasujiro and his co-scriptwriters). Assistant Directors: Negishi Hamao, Nishikawa Nobuo, Ishikawa Kazuo, Yoshimura Kozaburo. Cinematography: Shigehara Hideo and Atsuta Yuharu. Editing: Hara Kenkichi. Recording: Tsuchihashi Takeo and Senoh Yoshizaburo. Lighting: Nakajima Toshimitsu. Art Director: Hamada Tatsuo. Music: Ito Senji. Main Cast: Kurishima Sumiko (Tokiko), Saito Tatsuo (Komiya), Kuwano Michiko (Setsuko), Sano Shuji (Okada), Sakamoto Takeshi (Sugiyama), Iida Choko (Chiyoko), Yoshikawa Mitsuko (Mitsuko).

***Sōshun/Early Spring* (1956)**

B&W. 16 reels (3,956 metres). 144 min.

Producer: Yamanouchi Shizuo. Script: Noda Kogo and Ozu Yasujiro. Assistant Director: Tashiro Kozo. Cinematography: Atsuta Yuharu. Editing: Hamamura Yoshiyasu. Lighting: Kato Masao. Recording: Senoh Yoshizaburo. Art Director: Hamada Tatsuo. Music: Saito Takanobu.

Main Cast: Ikebe Ryo (Sugiyama Shoji), Awajima Chikage (Masako), Kishi Keiko (Kaneko Chiyo), Takahashi Teiji (Aoki Taizo), Ryu Chishu (Onodera Kiichi), Yamamura So (Kawai Yutaka).

***Toda ke no kyōdai/Brothers and Sisters of Toda Family* (1941)**

B&W. 11 reels (2,896 metres). 105 min.

Producer: Isono Rishichiro. Script: Ikeda Tadao and Ozu Yasujiro. Cinematography: Atsuta Yuharu. Editing: Hamamura Yoshiyasu. Lighting: Naito Kazuji. Recording: Senoh Yoshizaburo. Art Director: Hamada Tatsuo.

Main Cast: Fujino Hideo (Father Toda), Katsuragi Fumiko (Mother Toda), Yoshikawa Mitsuko (Chizuru), Saito Tatsuo (Shinichiro), Miyake Kuniko (Kazuko), Saburi Shin (Shojiro), Tsubouchi Yoshiko (Ayako), Takamine Mieko (Setsuko), Toshiaki Konoe (Amemiya).

***Tōkyō boshoku/Tokyo Twilight* (1957)**

B&W. 15 reels (3,841 metres). 141 min.

Script: Noda Kogo and Ozu Yasujiro. Assistant Director: Yamamoto Kozo. Cinematography: Atsuta Yuharu. Editing: Hamamura Yoshiyasu. Lighting: Aomatsu Akira. Recording: Senoh Yoshizaburo. Art Director: Hamada Tatsuo. Music: Saito Takanobu.

Main Cast: Hara Setsuko (Takako), Arima Ineko (Akiko), Ryu Chishu (Sugiyama Shukichi), Yamada Isuzu (Soma Kisako), Takahashi Teiji (Kawaguchi Noburo), Taura Masami (Kimura Kenji), Sugimura Haruko (Takeuchi Shigeko), Yamamura So (Sekiguchi Seki).

***Tōkyō kōrasu/Tokyo Chorus* (1931)**

B&W. Silent. 10 reels (2,487 metres). 90 min.

Original Idea: Kitamura Komatsu. Script: Noda Kogo. Assistant Directors: Kiyosuke Akira, Hara Kenkichi, Negishi Hamao. Cinematography and Editing: Shigehara Hideo. Lighting: Nakajima Toshimitsu. Set Design: Wakita Yoneichi.

Main Cast: Okada Tokihiko (Okajima), Yagumo Emiko (Sugako), Sugawara Hideo (Son), Takamine Hideko (Daughter), Saito Tatsuo (Omura), Iida Choko (Mrs. Omura), Sakamoto Takeshi (Yamada).

***Tōkyō mongatari/Tokyo Story* (1953)**

B&W. 14 reels (3,702 metres). 135 min.

Producer: Yamamoto Takeshi. Script: Noda Kogo and Ozu Yasujiro. Assistant Director: Yamamoto Kozo. Cinematography: Atsuta Yuharu. Editing: Hamamura Yoshiyasu. Lighting: Takashita Itsuo. Recording: Senoh Yoshizaburo. Art Director: Hamada Tatsuo. Music: Saito Takanobu.

Main Cast: Ryu Chishu (Hirayama Shukichi), Higashiyama Chieko (Tomi), Hara Setsuko (Noriko), Sugimura Haruko (Shige), Nakamura Nobuo (Kaneko), Yamamura So (Koichi), Miyake Kuniko (Ayako), Kagawa Kyoko (Kyoko), Osaka Shiro (Keizo).

***Tōkyō no onna/Woman of Tokyo* (1933)**

B&W. Silent. 7 reels (1,275 metres).

Original Story: Ernst Schwarz's *Nijuroku jikan* (fictional name and title). Revisions and Script: Noda Kogo and Ikeda Tadao. Assistant Directors: Kiyosuke Akira, Hara Kenkichi, Kashiwabara Masaru, Hiratsuka Hiroh. Cinematography: Shigehara Hideo. Lighting: Nakajima Toshimitsu. Art Director: Kanesu Takashi.

Main Cast: Egawa Ureo (Ryoichi), Okada Yoshiko (Chikako), Tanaka Kinuyo (Harue), Nara Shinyo (Kishita).

***Tōkyō no yado/An Inn in Tokyo* (1935)**

B&W. *Saundoban*. 10 reels (2,191 metres). 80 min.

Original Story: Uinzato Mone (pennname for Ozu Yasujiro, Ikeda Tadao and Arata Masao). Script: Ikeda Tadao and Arata Masao. Assistant Directors: Hara Kenkichi, Negishi Hamao, Nishikawa Nobuo, Ishikawa Kazuo. Cinematography and Editing: Shigehara Hideo. Recording: Tsuchihashi Haruo. Music Composition and Conducting: Ito Senji. Music: Horiuchi Keizo. Art Direction: Hamada Tatsuo. Lighting: Nakajima Toshimitsu.

Main Cast: Sakamoto Takeshi (Kihachi), Tokkan Kozo (Zenko), Suematsu Takayuki (Shoko), Okada Yoshiko (Otaka), Kojima Kazuko (Kimiko), Iida Choko (Otsune).

***Ukigusa /Floating Weeds* (Daiei, 1959)**

Agfa Colour. 9 reels (3,259 metres). 119 min.

Producer: Nagata Masaichi. Script: Noda Kogo and Ozu Yasujiro. Assistant Director: Nakamura Masuya. Cinematography: Miyagawa Kazuo. Colour Technique: Tanaka Shozo. Editing: Suzuki Toyo. Lighting: Ito Yukio. Recording: Suda Takeo. Art Director: Shimogawara Tomoh. Music: Saito Takanobu. Theatre Guidance: Ueda Kichijiro.

Main Cast: Nakamura Ganjiro (Arashi Komanjuro), Sugimura Haruko (Oyoshi), Kawaguchi Hiroshi (Kiyoshi), Kyo Machiko (Sumiko), Wakao Ayako (Kayo).

***Ukigusa monogatari/A Story of Floating Weeds* (1934)**

B&W. *Saundoban*. 10 reels (2,438metres). 86 min.

Original Idea: James Maki (penname of Ozu Yasujiro and his co-scriptwriters).
 Script: Ikeda Tadao. Assistant Directors: Hara Kenkichi, Negishi Hamao, Tanaka
 Tokio, Ishikawa Kazuo. Cinematography and Editing: Shigehara Hideo. Lighting:
 Nakajima Toshimitsu. Art Director: Hamada Tatsuo.
 Cast: Sakamoto Takeshi (Kihachi), Iida Choko (Otsune), Mitsui Hideo (Shinkichi),
 Yagumo Rieko (Otaka), Tsubouchi Yoshiko (Otoki), Tokkan Kozo (Tomiboh).

***Gakusei romansu, Wakaki hi/Days of Youth* (1929)**

B&W. Silent. 10 reels (2,854 metres). 103 min.

Script: Fushimi Akira. Revisions: Ozu Yasujiro. Assistant Directors: Ogawa Jiro and
 Fukada Shuzo. Cinematography and Editing: Shigehara Hideo. Lighting: Nakajima
 Toshimitsu. Set Design: Wakita Yoneichi.

Main Cast: Yuki Ichiro (Watanabe), Saito Tatsuo (Yamamoto), Matsui Junko
 (Chieko), Iida Choko (Chieko's aunt).

***Wasei kenka tomodachi/Fighting Friends* (1929)**

B&W. Silent. 7 reels (2,114 metres).

Script: Noda Kogo. Cinematography: Shigehara Hideo.

Main Cast: Watanabe Atsushi (Tomekichi), Yoshitani Hideo (Yoshizo), Takamatsu
 Eiko (Ogen).

Other Director's Films

(All films are made in Japan except when specified)

Aijen katsura/The Love-Troth Tree (Nomura Hiromasa, Shochiku, 1938)

Anjōke no butōkai/The Ball at the Anjo House (Yoshimura Kōzaburō, Shochiku,
 1947)

Aoi sanmyaku/Blue Mountains (Imai Tadashi, Toho, 1949)

Aru onna (Shibuya Minoru, Shochiku, 1942)

Cha wo tsukuru ie/Tea Making Family (Shimazu Yasujiro, Shochiku, 1924)

Champ (King Vidor, MGM, USA, 1931)

Danryū/Warm Current (Yoshimura Kōzaburō, Shochiku, 1939)

Danshun/Warm Spring (Nakamura Noboru, Shochiku, 1965)

Dokkoi ikiteru/And Yet We Live (Imai Tadashi, Shinsei Eiga, 1951)

Chikyōdai/Foster Sisters (Nomura Hōtei, Shochiku, 1932)

Fue no shiratama/Undying Pearl (Shimizu Hiroshi, Shochiku, 1929)

- Fukōsha/A Bad Son* (Shimazu Yasujiro, Shochiku, 1924)
- Genroku Chūshingura/The 47 Ronin* (Mizoguchi Kenji, Shochiku, 1941-1942)
- Gojira/Godzilla* (Honda Ishirō, Toho, 1954)
- Gonin no sekkōhei/Five Scouts* (Tasaka Tomotaka, Nikkatsu, 1938)
- Haha/Mother* (Nomura Hōtei, Shochiku, 1923)
- Haha/Mother* (Nomura Hōtei, Shochiku, 1929)
- Hō no namida/Tears of Law* (Nomura Hōtei, Shochiku, 1921)
- Honjitsu Kyūshin/The Doctor's Day Off* (Shibuya Minoru, Shochiku, 1952)
- Hutari no yūkanbai/A Couple Selling Evening Papers* (Nomura Hōtei, Shochiku, 1921)
- Ikite wa mita keredo/I Lived But....* (Inoue Kazuo, Shochiku, 1983)
- Itsuwareru seisō/Clothes of Deception* (Yoshimura Kōzaburō, Daiei, 1951)
- Izu no odoriko/Izu Dancer* (Gosho Heinosuke, Shochiku, 1933)
- Jigokumon/Gate of Hell* (Kinugasa Teinosuke, Daiei, 1953)
- Jinsei no onimotsu/Burden of Life* (Gosho Heinosuke, Shochiku, 1935)
- Junjō nijūso/Naïve Duet* (Sasaki Yasushi, Shochiku, 1939)
- Kabe atsuki heya/The Thick Walled Room* (Kobayashi Masaki, Shochiku, 1956)
- Kagiri naki hodo/Street without End* (Naruse Mikio, Shochiku, 1934)
- Kago no tori/A Bird in a Cage* (Matsumoto Eiichi, Teikoku Kinema, 1924)
- Kid* (Charles Chaplin, Charles Chaplin Productions, USA, 1921)
- Kimi no na wa/What Is Your Name?* (Ōba Hideo, Shochiku, 1953-1954)
- Kon'yaku sanba garasu/The Trio's Engagement* (Shimazu Yasujirō, Shochiku, 1937)
- La Kermesse h'éro ÷que/Carnival in Flanders* (Jacques Feyder, Films Sonores Tobis, France and Germany, 1935)
- Ladri di biciclette/Bicycle Thieves* (Vittorio De Sica, Produzioni De Sica, Italy, 1948)
- Madamu to nyōbō/The Neighbour's Wife and Mine* (Gosho Heinosuke, Shochiku, 1931)
- Mata au hi made/Until We Meet Again* (Imai Tadashi, Toho, 1950)
- Meshi/Repast* (Naruse Mikio, Toho, 1951)
- Mikaeri no tō/The Inspection Tower* (Shimizu Hiroshi, Shochiku, 1941)
- Minshū no teki/The Enemy of People* (Imai Tadashi, Toho, 1946)
- Moyuru ōzora/The Flaming Sky* (Abe Yutaka, Toho, 1940)
- Nani ga kanojo wo sō saseta ka/What Made Her Do It?* (Suzuki Shigeyoshi, Teikoku Kinema, 1930)

- Nasanu naka/Not Blood Relations* (Naruse Mikio, Shochiku, 1932)
- Nichiyōbi/Sunday* (Shimazu Yasujirō, Shochiku, 1924)
- Nihon no higeki/A Japanese Tragedy* (Kinoshita Keisuke, Shochiku, 1953)
- Nihon no yoru to kiri/Night and Fog in Japan* (Ōshima Nagisa, Shochiku, 1960)
- Nijyūshi no hitomi/Twenty-four Eyes* (Kinoshita Keisuke, Shochiku, 1954)
- Nipponsengoshi: Madamu onboro no seikatsu/History of Postwar Japan as Told by a
Barmaid* (Imamura Shōhei, Nihon eiga shinsha, 1971)
- Nishizumi senshachōden/Legend of Tank Commander Nishizumi* (Yoshimura
Kōzaburo, Shochiku, 1940)
- Nora inu/Stray Dog* (Kurosawa Akira, Eiga geijutsu kyōkai, 1949)
- Norowaretaru misao/Damned Chastity* (Shimazu Yasujirō, Shochiku, 1924)
- Otoko wa tsurai yo/It's Tough Being a Man* series (Yamada Yōji, Shochiku, 1969-
1996)
- Otōsan no kisetsu/Father's Season* (NHK, tx. October 1958 – March 1961)
- Otōsan/Father* (Shimazu Yasujirō, Shochiku, 1923)
- Rashōmon/Rashomon* (Kurosawa Akira, Daiei, 1950)
- Rikugun/Army* (Kinoshita Keisuke, Shochiku, 1944)
- Rojō no reikon/Souls on the Road* (Murata Minoru, Shochiku, 1921)
- Seidon/Sunny Cloud* (Nomura Hotei, Shochiku, 1933)
- Seishun hōkago/Class Dismissed* (NHK, tx. 21.3.1963)
- Shanghai rikusentai/The Naval Brigade at Shanghai* (Kumagai Hisatora, Toho, 1939)
- Shima no onna/A Woman of Island* (Henri Kotani, Shochiku, 1920)
- Shin josei mondō/New Woman's Dialogue* (Sasaki Yasushi, Shochiku, 1939)
- Shūbun/Scandal* (Kurosawa Akira, Shochiku, 1950)
- Stranger's Return* (King Vidor, MGM, USA, 1933)
- Taiyō no kisetsu/The Season of the Sun* (Furukawa Takumi, Nikkatsu, 1956)
- The Barker* (George Fitzmaurice, First National Pictures, USA, 1928)
- Tonari no Yae chan/Our Neighbour Miss Yae* (Shimazu Yasujirō, Shochiku, 1934)
- Tsubaki Hime/Camille* (Murata Minoru, Nikkatsu, 1927)
- Tsuchi to heitai/Mud and Soldiers* (Tasaka Tomotaka, Nikkatsu, 1939)
- Tsuki wa noborinu/The Moon Has Risen* (Tanaka Kinuyo, Nikkatsu, 1954)
- Ubaguruma/The Baby Carriage* (Tasaka Tomotaka, Nikkatsu, 1956)
- Ugetsu monogatari/Ugetsu* (Mizoguchi Kenji, Daiei, 1953)
- Yogoto no yume/Every Night Dreams* (Naruse Mikio, Shochiku, 1933)