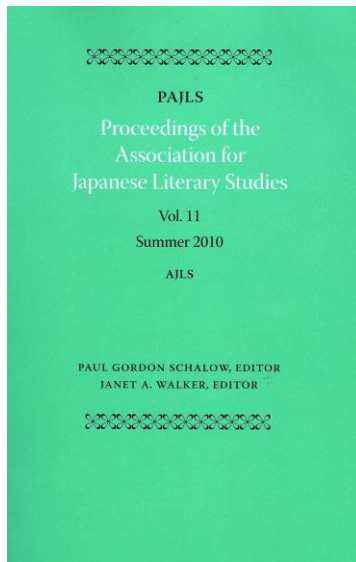


“Re-imagining Ozu: Hou Hsiao-Hsien’s *Café Lumière* and the Contemporary Tokyo Woman”

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Re-imagining Ozu

Hou Hsiao-Hsien's *Café Lumière* and the Contemporary Tokyo Woman

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"Urban Space is always and inevitably social space involving subjectivities and identities differentiated by class and race, gender and age, education and religion."¹

"There aren't many streetcars left in Tokyo,' she went on. 'They've switched to buses most everywhere. The few that are left are kind of a memento of the past, I guess.'"²

In the final scene of the Japanese-language film *Café Lumière* (*Kōhī jikō* 珈琲時光, 2003), director Hou Hsiao-Hsien 侯孝賢 avails himself of one more chance to contextualize his two principal characters, the 27-year-old Yōko 陽子 (played by singer-actress Hitoto Yō 一青窈) and the 30-year-old Hajime 肇 (played by actor Asano Tadanobu 浅野忠信), within the densely networked environment of Tokyo that is the setting of the work. At this point, as throughout *Café Lumière*, Hou's Tokyo is most fully realized in the complex layers of sound and visual imagery associated with the city's network of continually circulating train lines—a network that is both expressive of and enables the daily lives of Hou's characters. As the film draws to a close, Hajime stands almost protectively over Yōko as she sits, eyes closed, gently rocked to sleep by the familiar rhythms of travel along the Yamanote 山の手 line. In the penultimate shot (just before cutting to a final overview of multiple moving trains), Yōko stands with Hajime on a station platform. Wearing earphones and holding a microphone, Hajime pursues his artistic and urban-anthropologist-like project of recording the soundscape of the city by capturing the mechanical,

¹Huyssen 2008, p. 3.

²Murakami 2006, p. 273.

metal-on-metal noises of the trains and the loud and distinctive musical notes and announcers' voices that audibly define Tokyo's intricately timed transportation system. Although no spoken words pass between the two characters in their last moments on screen, the audience understands that Yōko finds in Hajime a correlative to herself—creative, curious, and independent from the mainstream. Hou leaves audiences of the film with the sense that having Hajime as a supportive close friend and, perhaps, future life-partner represents a possible way for Yōko to maintain her highly mobile life in Tokyo, where she is building a career as freelance writer. She is, as Hajime has recently learned, pregnant with the baby of her Taiwanese boyfriend. She met him in Taiwan, where she had been following a path familiar to a number of young female college graduates from Japan: teaching Japanese abroad. Yōko's character is most clearly distilled in her adamant refusal to marry the father of her child because, as she tells her parents, he is too dependent on his own mother and because he can only offer Yōko the life and work of an umbrella-manufacturing family that runs factories in Thailand and China. She would not be able to follow the more creative path that defines her life in Tokyo. She is determined, she also tells her parents, to raise the baby on her own.

Café Lumière re-imagines the iconic family films of Ozu Yasujiro 小津安次郎 in its construction of the contemporary Tokyo woman. Hou, the leading voice of "new wave" cinema in Taiwan and a director of considerable interest worldwide for films such as *A City of Sadness* (1989), *Flowers of Shanghai* (1998), and *Millennium Mambo* (2001), was commissioned by Shōchiku 松竹 Films—Ozu's own studio—to produce a work commemorating the 100th anniversary of Ozu's birth. The film's title is a metonym for a Tokyo in which personal space is carved out of—and physical and psychological sustenance is derived from—tiny (but highly functional) apartments, well stocked used-book stores, and quiet coffee shops that provide work- and rest-places. Hasumi Shigehiko 蓮實重彦 has pointed out the subtle, but real, expressions of anger evident in Ozu's female characters—women like Noriko 紀子 in *Late Spring* (*Banshun* 晩春, 1949)—who resist society's expectations in an attempt to control the trajectory of their lives.³ This paper examines Hou's deployment of an analogous anger in Yōko. By pointing to possible new ways of configuring interpersonal and familial relations and framing social issues, the film is an important commentary on, and a kind of cinematic intervention for, educated and independent women like Yōko in 21st-century Japan—and beyond.

Ozu Intertexts / A Woman's "Home" / Anger

In his analysis of Rei 玲, the central character in Hiroki Ryūichi's 広木隆一 film *Vibrator* ヴァイブレータ, which also came out in 2003, David Leheny has written: "By 2000, women like Rei were part of a developing narrative about contemporary

³Hasumi 2004.

Japan, in which institutions of social and economic life had broken down, leaving in their wake a new generation untethered by traditional expectations of how their lives are supposed to work."⁴ The observation applies well to Yōko. Twenty-first-century women like Rei and Yōko are no longer limited by so-called traditional expectations, while women in mid-20th-century Ozu films, which constitute a significant intertext for Hou's Ozu-celebrating *Café Lumière*, were famously tied to them. In this section, I explore ways in which Yōko can be read in relation to Noriko in *Late Spring*, Noriko in *Early Summer* (*Bakushū* 麦秋, 1951), and Ayako アヤ子 in *Late Autumn* (*Akibiyori* 秋日和, 1960),

Even though they are separated by a span of some forty to fifty years, Hou's Yōko and the three women in the Ozu films just mentioned are nevertheless united in their resistance to society's expectations regarding what constitutes a woman's home. For Yōko home is an array of distinct and fragmented urban spaces that metaphorically embrace her as she circulates at will among them. They include the apartment where she sleeps and hosts visitors, the café she uses as daytime rest-and workplace, the used bookstore where she is both customer and close friend of the proprietor (Hajime), and they extend to the transitional environments of streets and train cars. Even the clothes she wears—protective yet unrestrictive—and the large, functional shoulder bag she carries provide the "shell" she needs to move comfortably from one locale to another throughout her day. Her choice of clothes, from her street-smart newsboy-style hat to her loosely fitting shirts and slacks to her easy-on-the-feet sandals, and the way she moves in them—always purposeful, always aware of her surroundings—proclaim her self-reliance and independence, as well as her own brand of cosmopolitan sophistication. For the women in the Ozu films, engagement with the city is qualitatively different. Carefully dressed for the most part in well-pressed, well-tailored, and often closely-fitting dresses, skirts, and blouses—as well as polished heels that stiffen the wearer's gait—the two Noriko characters and Ayako carefully plan their excursions—to work, shop, and socialize with friends—and always return home at the end of the day to their parent's home, where they report on where they went and what they did.

In *Late Spring* and *Early Summer* trains transport Ozu's women (who live in Kamakura 鎌倉) to and from the city. But for Hou, the enormous infrastructure of Tokyo train lines, which, of course, was far less extensive when Ozu directed his films, represents the city in which Yōko makes her home. Yōko's Tokyo is always in motion and she is always in motion within it. Her physical movement—repeatedly illustrated as she is shown walking along crowded streets, riding busy trains and streetcars, and, at one point, pedaling a bike—is the graphic representation of her freedom. At the outset of the film she has just returned from Taiwan, and almost immediately reclaims her place in the Tokyo network of streets and trains. In the latter part of *Café Lumière*, it is a shock for the viewer when Yōko obviously starts to feel unwell on the train and has to get off to rest and recover. It is even more of a shock

⁴Leheny 2006, 28.

when she seems on the verge of collapsing in the street. In both instances, the physical effects of pregnancy have temporarily restricted her freedom of movement.

Ozu's women were the freshly-minted beneficiaries of Japan's new postwar constitution, which was ratified in 1946 and took effect in 1947. The constitution "gave women explicit guarantees of equality in marriage, divorce, property, inheritance, and 'other matters pertaining to marriage and the family.'"⁵ However, society had yet to accord them the full liberty that they were granted under the letter of the law. To a degree, the two Noriko's and Ayako freely move about, but as unmarried women from "good" families the only sanctioned way for them to leave home permanently is to get married.⁶ Social norms, in fact, required that they get married and leave home. In their late twenties, Ozu women such as Noriko in *Late Spring* and Noriko in *Early Summer* push the generally accepted limits of *tekireiki* 適齡期 and are repeatedly reminded by family members, bosses, and friends that it is time for them to get married. Noriko in *Late Spring* and Ayako in *Late Autumn* notably push back, declaring that they do not want to leave home at all. Noriko wants to continue living with her father; Ayako wants to continue living with her mother. It is not just that each is protective of her one surviving parent—though Ozu has Noriko say that her father would not be able to manage day-to-day life without her. Both women state emphatically that they are satisfied not being married. But, social pressures weigh on the parents and the daughters alike: in the two films each parent "threatens" remarriage as a way to ensure that the daughter will leave home. In publicly articulating their angry responses, Noriko and Ayako assert that remarriage by the living parent is an affront to the memory of the deceased parent. But the real issue is more complex: it is clear that each woman assumes that she has successfully constructed her own adult identity within her parent's home. Remarriage of the parent carries the assumption that the grown daughter would have no place in the reconstituted household, and destroys the sense of identity that she has unilaterally wrought. The suggestion that the father (in *Late Spring*) and the mother (in *Late Autumn*) would marry shatters each daughter's self image as both child and adult partner in the household. Noriko and Ayako become angry—an emotion expressed in a sustained and intense way in both films through words, tears, and gestures. They eventually become reconciled to the inevitability of their own and their parent's marriage (although in the two films the parents reveal that they do not plan to go through with a new marriage).⁷

⁵Gordon 2003, p. 231.

⁶Ozu's office-working women are early examples of the OL (office ladies), who, as Karen Kelsky notes, have often been required by the companies for which they work to live in their parents' home. Kelsky 2001, p. 85.

⁷There is a different, though important, scene of anger in *Early Summer*. It occurs when Noriko, her brother, and her sister-in-law are in a Tokyo restaurant having dinner before going to the train station to meet their uncle, who will be visiting them in Kamakura. When the conversation turns to the subject of "etiquette," the brother asserts that since the end of the war women have become brazen (*zūzūshii* 図々しい). Noriko's eyes flash displeasure at her brother as she forcefully retorts that it is men who have been that way up until now.

At the end of *Late Spring* and *Late Autumn*, Noriko and Ayako are shown in their wedding attire about to leave home. The gorgeous formality of the highly stylized outfits starkly contrasts with the atmosphere of shared parent/daughter sadness at the prospect of the daughter's departure. For Ozu, the wedding kimono becomes a costume in a drama of conformity to powerful social expectations. As Robin Wood has observed in his discussion of *Late Spring*, "Ozu's analysis makes it clear that with her father, and only with him, can Noriko preserve a personal freedom which the other options the culture makes available to women would destroy; she can wander about the city at will . . . [and] enjoy a freedom of movement which is both physical and spiritual. The essence of this freedom, and what the society cannot tolerate (our own still has great problems with it), is that she remains undefined, except as herself—no identity in the form of social role is imposed on her."⁸ In other words, when she gets too old to be *ojōsan* お嬢さん, the next step is necessarily and inevitably to become *okusan* 奥さん.

In *Café Lumière* Yōko defies such labels and in so doing challenges the social structures behind them. Yōko has long been living—and acting—independently. At the same time, Hou establishes Yōko early on as a person who identifies herself as a member of a family entity. Near the start of the film she goes to her early childhood "home" in Yoshii 吉井 (on the outskirts of the city of Takasaki 高崎, some sixty miles northwest of Tokyo) for a visit during Obon お盆—and readily participates in the ritual cleaning of the family gravestones. Maintaining family ties is entirely the free choice of a woman with a busy schedule: when her father, who picks her up at the local station when she arrives, asks how long she will stay, she quickly answers "two or three days." The visit is notably the occasion that Yōko tells her father and stepmother that she is pregnant. She never raises the possibility of not giving birth to the baby. Yōko is her parents' only child; her own child will for another generation ensure the continuity of the family line—a decision not imposed on Yōko, but made by her on her own terms.

Hou provides the following back-story for Yōko: When she was four her mother walked out, shattering Yōko's sense of "home." Her father, who says little throughout the film even when criticized by his wife for his silence, exemplifies what Susan Napier has identified as "the growing powerlessness of the father figure in both [Japanese] literature and popular culture."⁹ Home in Yōko's experience is not static; it is multiple and contingent. It is the place that she knew as home before her mother left. It is also Café Erika, with warmth and coziness emanating from the polished dark woods of its well-used counter, chairs, and tables—a quiet, home-like place where the grandfatherly waiter carefully places on the table in front of Yōko the cup of hot milk that she orders and agreeably summons her to the telephone when a call comes in. At her apartment building, Yōko's landlady

⁸ Wood 1998, p. 117.

⁹ Napier 2008, p. 36.

is a kind of surrogate mother—taking care of Yōko's place while she is away and lending her the everyday items that she needs (in response to which Yōko's stepmother expresses her "embarrassment" when she learns about her stepdaughter's practice of matter-of-factly going to the landlady to borrow things).

At the end of *Café Lumière* the question of where home will be for Yōko and the baby who will be born in six months' time is unresolved. Yōko's anger is subdued, expressed in clipped responses to her stepmother's questions about whether she is going to the doctor and what she plans to do now that a baby is on the way. The stepmother's questions are motivated by what appears to be sincere concern for Yōko's wellbeing as well as anxious concern for the future life of her husband and herself. She worriedly reminds her husband that Yōko has no savings. The parents are facing retirement. Their modest house is depicted in the film; it is evident that they don't have the financial resources to comfortably support themselves along with Yōko and a baby. Although he says nothing to Yōko on the subject, her father's behavior towards his daughter (giving her the best bits out of the home-cooked stew that she craves) indicates his affection for her. His utter wordlessness reflects his knowledge that fathers in Japan today can no longer make any demands on their 27-year-old daughters.

The New Tokyo Woman

There is a scene in *Early Summer* when the soon-to-be-married Noriko visits the office where she used to work in order to say goodbye to her boss. This "patriarch," like a number of such father-boss figures in Ozu's films,¹⁰ readily makes the private lives of his employees his business. Such men are active promoters of mid-twentieth-century state-sanctioned ideologies surrounding marriage and family. Noriko is not marrying the man her boss had in mind—and of whom her family approved—but she is engaged to an acceptable man and is behaving properly in society's eyes by showing her willingness to marry.¹¹ The boss's approval is expressed smilingly and in warm words of congratulation. In the corporate world

¹⁰The patriarchs of *Late Autumn*—the friends of Ayako's deceased father—literally express their desire for Ayako's mother, Akiko 秋子, even to the point of joking (at their wives' expense) that they wish they themselves were free to marry her. They make clear that the most desirable female is the young-twenties beauty—but that Akiko is "still" very attractive (made all the more so by their memories of her when they were young). It is an expression of male prerogative that they make Ayako's future their business—as much as it is male prerogative, as Ozu repeatedly shows, for men to drop their clothes on the floor when they return home at the end of the day. Wives (and, sometimes, daughters) immediately pick up the garments. Whenever the men leave home, the women invariably see them off. Male prerogative extends to speech: women, like all lower-status people, are generally addressed as *kimi* 君.

¹¹Noriko's family reacts with displeasure when she tells them that she wants to marry Yabe Kenkichi 矢部謙吉, a widower with a child—even though the man is a well-liked, close family friend with a solid career as a physician. Their feeling is that Noriko could "do better"—that she doesn't have to "settle" for a man with a child (the concern being that there will be discord with the child because Noriko is not her biological mother).

depicted here, marriage unquestionably means the end of the woman's employment outside of the home. The boss does not express regret that Noriko is leaving his employ—the assumption being that another young woman will easily be found to take her place—but at the moment of departure he summons her to join him in looking out of the upper-floor window near his desk and to take in a the view of the busy city below. He tells her to have a good look at Tokyo and to remember what she sees (“Yoku mite oku yo—Tokyo o” 「よく見ておくよ—東京を」). Tokyo is a fine place (“Tokyo mo nakanaka ii zo” 「東京もなかなかいいぞ」), he says. His words carry two meanings: once Noriko gets married, Tokyo will no longer be hers. In her particular case, she will be moving with her husband to northeastern Japan. But, even if she were staying in or near the city, her new role as wife will preclude an independent, “Tokyo life” of access to jobs in high-rise office buildings and of freedom to socialize at will with a wide range of friends and acquaintances.

In the Ozu films I have discussed, the city is a place where men confidently work and play and where women less confidently do the same. Young, unmarried women typically occupy seats in the crowded typing pool, where they are carefully scrutinized as possible future brides for the male employees. Young men at the start of their careers sit in crowded workrooms, too, but as time passes and they rise up through the company ranks they can look forward to the perquisites of the older and “important” man. Such perquisites may include a large and quiet private office served by a secretary who politely knocks and bows each time she comes to announce a visitor. There are, of course, no older women employees.

Noriko in *Late Spring*, Noriko in *Early Summer*, and Ayako in *Late Autumn* are all examples of women who conform to patriarchal expectations. As Laura Miller and Jan Bardsley have observed, “Women who defy patriarchies, whether they are interpreted as liberatory models or serious malefactors, provoke intense concern, censure, and public debate.”¹² Ozu, too, showed what can happen to bad girls: the most egregious example is the Akiko 明子 in *Tokyo Twilight* (*Tokyo boshoku* 東京暮色, 1957). Unmarried, she gets pregnant, gets an abortion, gets drunk, and winds up getting killed by a train. The original bad girl of that film is Akiko's own mother, who years earlier had left her husband and children to be with another man. It is as if the daughter is the heir to—and gets punished for—the mother's earlier actions.

Fifty years later, as Jan Bardsley and Hiroko Hirakawa have noted, “[s]elf-expression has replaced self-sacrifice as the new orthodoxy.”¹³ If they have a choice, women today steer clear of what passes as the contemporary equivalent of the typing pool. A career that now best represents the desirable enactment of individual expression is that of freelance writer—which, not coincidentally, is the chosen career path of Yōko in *Café Lumière*, Rei in *Vibrator*, and, to cite one recent

¹² Miller and Bardsley 2005, p. 1.

¹³ Bardsley and Hirakawa 2005, p. 112.

popular television series, Kimiko 君子 in *Erai tokoro ni totsuide shimatta* エライとこ
ろに嫁いってしまった (TV Asahi, 2007). All three are in their own way a kind of “bad
girl”—of the sort who “always points beyond established ideas of normativity and
propriety.”¹⁴ Yōko is pregnant: how will she take care of and support the child? Rei
takes off with a married truck driver on a trip that transports her to far-flung spots
around Japan, but leaves her in exactly the same convenience store parking lot
and the same unresolved situation where she began. The comical Kimiko makes
concepts such as “perfect housewife” and “submissive daughter-in-law” into a
joke as she navigates the start of marriage with a happily childish and dependent
husband. Each woman is in her late-20’s or early 30’s—and each in her own way is
unsettled and defiant.

Café Lumière explores the anxieties and contradictions faced by women in
twenty-first-century Japan (and elsewhere). Hou Hsiao-Hsien’s Yōko points to new
ways of looking at male-female relationships and to understanding social issues.
She is determined to give birth to a baby—a choice that resonates in rapidly aging
Japan. At the same time, she rejects the prospect of life with the man who is the
baby’s father—a man who, it should be noted, would take her and her baby outside
of Japan. Yōko’s deepening ties with Hajime specifically establish *Café Lumière* as a
cultural text of contemporary Tokyo—and of the contemporary Tokyo woman. For
Hou Hsiao-Hsien the city is no mere backdrop. Tokyo is an example of an exorbi-
tant city, to use Ackbar Abbas’s term—meaning that it is “as much a physical pres-
ence as it is idea and dream . . . As dream and idea the city projects a specific kind
of *eroticism*. This eroticism has nothing to do with romantic clichés. . . . Rather, it
relates to the kinds of uncertain sociality found in cities, where social relations
with others are either changing or have broken down.”¹⁵

The relationship between Yōko and Hajime exemplifies the eroticism that
Abbas identifies. Eroticism is a particularly appropriate term here; the comfort
that the characters obviously feel in each other’s presence indicates that the rela-
tionship between them may become that of lovers in a future that extends beyond
the end of the film. But, within the actual timeframe of *Café Lumière*, Hou’s focus
is strictly on the “uncertain sociality” illustrated by their relationship. When she
returns to Tokyo, having made the Obon visit to Yoshii, Yōko settles into Café Erika,
where a friend mentions that a woman has approached Hajime with the stated
intention of trying to develop an intimacy with him. Yōko seems coolly amused, but
she has been threatened: in the very next scene she visits Hajime at his bookstore,
where she has a surprise gift of mid-day coffee service sent in to him by Café
Erika. At this juncture Hajime also gives a gift to Yōko, a clear mark of his growing
connection to her. It is a copy of Maurice Sendak’s *Outside Over There*. In the film
Yōko turns to Hajime for help in trying to understand disturbing dreams that she
has been having of a baby being violently taken away. Hajime listens attentively,

¹⁴ Miller and Bardsley 2005, p. 2.

¹⁵ Abbas 2003, p. 145.

suggesting that stories of goblins, such as those that appear in *Outside Over There*, have perhaps entered her dreams.

Yōko knows that she can tell Hajime her innermost fears, and that he will respond with compassionate concern. In the scene following the one in which Hajime accompanies Yōko on a day out as companion and volunteer research assistant—the day that Yōko briefly “collapsed” in the street and tells Hajime that she is pregnant (to which he responds with some surprise but does not ask any questions)—Yōko is shown asleep in her apartment. She is not feeling well. As if knowing that she might need him, Hajime arrives on her doorstep. He repeatedly rings the buzzer and knocks until she finally rouses herself and answers. He fixes food for her and shares with her the product of his impressively executed efforts at computer art. Revived, Yōko delightedly looks at what Hajime shows her: colorful graphics of multiple trains, in the middle of which is a baby—Hajime himself, he says—which can be read as Hajime’s acceptance of Yōko-with-baby and his willingness to be there for her.

Hou creates for the character Yōko a temporally multilayered Tokyo. Geographically, psychologically, and emotionally Yōko is at a remove from the clichéd glitter of the trend-conscious, consumerist parts of the city. The streets of the Kishi Bojin 鬼子母神 neighborhood where her apartment is located are noticeably well populated by older people, who give the film an air of Tokyo as a real place—rather than the location of a fashion shoot or music video. The residents ride the old Toden Arakawa 都電荒川 line, one of only two surviving streetcar lines in Tokyo. The primacy of memory is further emphasized by the used-book store where Hajime works. Even Yōko’s well-received birthday present to him—an old-style trainman’s pocket watch—underscores the sensitivity to the past that both characters share.

Through Yōko, Hou also moves toward recapturing another thick layer of memory by revealing the presence of Taiwan’s colonial past within the fabric of Japanese culture.¹⁶ As a freelance writer, Yōko’s project in *Café Lumière* focuses on Jiang Wenye 江文也 (1910–1983), a composer whose evocative works make up the soundtrack of the film. Jiang Wenye (whose name is commonly pronounced Kō Bun’ya in Japan) was originally from Taiwan, but was educated and developed his musical career in Japan. There is a scene in which Yōko interviews Jiang’s elderly Japanese wife, who speaks lovingly of her husband as Yōko immerses herself in an album containing old photographs of the couple. Helping Yōko with her work, Hajime finds an old map of the city (like photographs, the map is itself a beautiful artifact); together they go in search of a Ginza 銀座 café where Jiang spent time. Like Café Erika for Yōko, Jiang’s Ginza café was a kind of home. The café is long gone, erased and replaced in the continually changing cityscape. Yōko memorializes her quest by taking pictures of the office building that now stands at the address.

¹⁶I would like to express my thanks to Richard Okada for his comments regarding *Café Lumière* within the context of Taiwan’s colonial past.

Conclusion

Shōchiku's choice of Taiwanese director Hou Hsiao-Hsien to direct a film in honor of Ozu underscores national/corporate initiatives to develop new transnational relationships for Japan by opening up domestic sociocultural issues to critique and even intervention from outside of Japan's borders. By casting popular singer Hitoto Yō as the character Yōko in her first film role, Hou interestingly helps neutralize and even transcend the inevitable political implications of his choice as director of this Ozu-celebrating film. Daughter of a Taiwanese father and Japanese mother, Hitoto is known as a fluent speaker of both Chinese and Japanese. In real life and in her role as Yōko, she embodies the boundary-crossing woman who wants "freedom from constraint."¹⁷

Like Ozu, Hou is able to read the lives of contemporary women through the city in which they work and play. As Tony Fitzmaurice has pointed out, films "in their exploration of the fabric of contemporary urban spaces, articulate the dynamics of contemporary power."¹⁸ Yōko has, for the time being, won the power to be her own person and make her own decisions in a way that the female characters of Ozu's works could never have imagined. In the person of Yōko's father, Ozu's patriarchs have been reduced to silent figures whose daughters would not necessarily listen even if they did speak. The viewer gets the impression that the constantly on-the-move Yōko decides where she will go and the camera follows. Having Hajime, another quiet man of the film, stand over the sleeping Yōko with a warm and caring expression on his face as they ride along in the train is perhaps Hou's happy ending—that Hajime will continue to stand by Yōko, and that with Hajime she will find a way both to raise a baby and keep her "Tokyo life."¹⁹ On the other hand, there is the possibility that there is no way out, no "home," for Yōko and the baby. She does not have savings, as her stepmother said—and her parents have little money to spare.

If Yōko stops moving freely, she loses her Tokyo life. But she cannot conceivably keep moving with a baby in arms. She is already collapsing in the street. As Abbas has written, "not only does the cinematic image come out of urban experience; it also incorporates such experience in a new aesthetic principle, an aesthetic of movement where instability becomes paradoxically the principle of structure."²⁰ The instability Ozu depicted had its antidote in a patriarchal ideology that demanded that women become good wives (and mothers). The instability that Hou depicts has no such antidote and therefore can no longer be contained. Women like Noriko in *Late Spring* got angry, but they eventually conformed, donning the ornate wedding costumes that marked their capitulation. Women like

¹⁷Napier 2008, p. 37.

¹⁸Fitzmaurice 2001, p. 19.

¹⁹Even if they don't marry, Hajime could conceivably become the father figure in a "pseudo-family" (see Napier 2008, p. 38).

²⁰Abbas 2003, p. 144.

Yōko in *Café Lumière*, too, get angry at attempts to constrain them. Determined not to give in to arrangements and institutions that do not suit them, they are left on their own to sort out the complex strands of the problems that they confront. Hajime already forms part of Yōko's home in her networked Tokyo. Hou offers their relationship, as in the other cinematic examples that Susan Napier has cited, as "a richly imagined alternative to the loneliness and fragmentation of contemporary Japan."²¹

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