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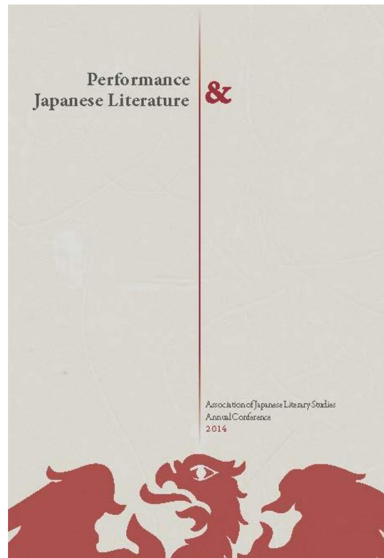
Proceedings of the Association for Japanese Literary Studies 15 (2014): 181–191.



PAJLS 15:
Performance and Japanese Literature.
Ed. Michael Bourdaghs, Hoyt Long, and Reginald Jackson

Pan Pan Girls and Transvestite Patriarchies: Performing and Recovering Masculinity in Post-1945 Literature and Film

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In an essay on what she calls "reverse Orientalism" in contemporary scholarship, Ueno Chizuko employs the term "transvestite patriarchy" to describe the phenomenon of male writers and intellectuals taking on a feminine "transvestism" as a means to express "Japanese" thought. Ueno warns that the danger of this "transvestism" is that it perpetuates discourse about Japan that, despite its attempt at encapsulating a vision of femininity, remains entirely a product of patriarchy designed to marginalize a woman's position in society. While maintaining that the transvestite patriarchy is not entirely unique to Japan, she argues that it nonetheless persists within the Japanese language literary realm as a testament of "an inevitable path for colonized male discourse" that forces gender dualism onto women. In other words, feminocentric texts by male writers from Japan (or other regions with colonial histories) provide the "feminine perspective" insofar as they use it as an instrument to free themselves from the gendered structures of colonialisms and other inter-national power relations. Writing in "Japanese," "as a woman would,"[1] served to not only to associate a "Japanese" identity with femininity, but also to disentangle "masculine" intellectualism from a specifically "Oriental" feminine penetrability. In other words, the transvestite patriarchy is a symptomatic manifestation of a male writer's struggle against an imposed otherness via assimilating "Western" discourse on a feminized Japan and imposing another layer of otherness onto his other (woman). Through the apparent transferability of otherness onto a fabrication of femininity, the writer thereby asserts his participation in a "masculine" discourse, capable of dissociating itself from foreign occupation.

Ueno's theory on the transvestite patriarchy emerged only in the past decade and has certain commonalities with other similar perspectives on textual performances of a "feminine" voice.[2] But its specific relation to literatures that

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[1] "This tradition of men as 'transvestite' writers started back in the thirteenth century, when the aristocrat Ki no Tsurayuki wrote down his personal memories of a trip in *kanamoji*, the "feminine" script used only by women at the time. In the guise of a woman writer, he began his story with the following sentence: 'I will try to write a journal, as men do.'/This is why I am tempted to call Japanese patriarchy 'transvestite patriarchy.' Even when it cloaks itself in femininity, patriarchy is patriarchy. It can never be matrilineal or matriarchal. Even worse, this female disguise makes women's situation more complicated and the struggle against patriarchy more difficult."Chizuko Ueno, "In the Feminine Guise: A Trap of Reverse Orientalism," in *Contemporary Japanese Thought*, ed. Richard Calichman. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 227.

[2] In her writings on the phenomenon as it manifests in French literatures from the eighteenth century, Nancy K. Miller uses the term "pseudo-feminocentricism." Nancy K. Miller, *French Dressing: Woman, Men and the Ancien Régime.* (New York: Routeledge, 1995).

address the state of Orientalism and analysis on the impact of colonialism on self-representation proves especially constructive in this discussion on literatures by male writers in post-1945 Japan that enact the phenomenon. Her theory thus provides ample ground for its application to the study of how these writers inscribed a view of the feminine body, sexuality and identity in their works as a response to Occupation period sociopolitics. The constructs that dominate Orientalism already define a complex relationship between the feminized subject of (neo)colonialism and "her" colonizer. Forced sex or sexual labor, in the history of Orientalism, has always appeared in literature as a means through which a European or American "conqueror" can gain access to Asian territories, rendering the figure of "Japaneseness," for instance, in the representation of a raped, low-class woman submitted to "Western" colonization. Such constructs were widespread in the policies involved in the U.S. Occupation of Japan from 1945-1952. And when men respond to colonialism by writing as a projection of femininity, the experience of colonialism as a woman—whom Ueno suggests would be doubly feminized—is far more compromised than that of the colonized male intellectual. As the latter retains agency over imposing another level of "otherness" on his female counterpart, he participates in bolstering the continuity of imbalances of power.

Emergence of the Pan Pan Girls

During the Occupation years, Japan's government underwent an intense period of reform under the supervision of the U.S. government, where appointed officials held significant control over the proverbial "democratization" of their wartime enemy. The U.S.'s visible influence over Japan was not, however, restricted to political matters. In response to an influx of U.S. American soldiers who established temporary residence in Japan, the government recruited young, impoverished women into sex work to better accommodate the "needs" of their uncontrollable American soldiers who would otherwise presumably wreak havoc and infiltrate more valued forms of "Japanese" bodies without the patriotic services of the "Special Comfort Women." Under the institution, the "Special Comfort Women" (colloquially regarded as the "pan pan girls") were lower or working class recruits who, according to government rhetoric, had enlisted in the Recreation and Amusement Association (RAA) to "protect" the purity of the "Yamato bloodline" as "shock absorbers."[3] Alongside such moral, paternalistic justifications for the establishment of the system, the government also armed their recruits with special condoms called "Be First To Attack"—recycled remnants of the contraceptives supplied to soldiers of the Japanese Imperial Army during the war.[4] Not only were the pan pan girls serving their

[3] Naoko Shibusawa, *America's Geisha Ally* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 39.

[4] Michiko Takeuchi, "Pan-Pan Girls' performing and Resisting Neocolonialism(s) in the Pacific Theater," in *Over There: Living with the U.S. Military Empire*, ed. Maria Höhn and Seungsook Moon (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 78-108. This passage appears on 82.

country as protectors of an idealized myth about race in Japan, but they also replaced their male counterparts in a fight against total colonization by acting as buffers between the GIs and more valuable "Japanese" bodies. Regardless of their patriotism or of the actual "purity" that the mythical "Yamato bloodline" sustained after a siege of rape, forced colonial slavery, indentured military service and all the events of "blood-mixing" that occurred during several decades before the inauguration of the RAA, this system exploitatively used women's bodies as strategic patriarchal rhetoric in the service of nation-state propaganda.

Even when acting from the standpoint of the "losers," the government retained a certain voice of authority (even if it was a U.S-influenced voice) when it came to the reformation. U.S. presence in Japan nonetheless became increasingly tangible with the institutionalization of the RAA. For many onlookers, sexual exchange between the women employed for their services to the GIs represented an obvert infiltration of U.S. neocolonialism within the Japanese body. And although the body of the nation state remained only inadvertently under U.S. influence, the visibility of the pan pan girls strained perceptions on the presence of the GIs within social spaces. And that the bodies being literally offered up for infiltration in the early stages of the development of this sexual exchange happened to be female bodies (valuable or not) furthermore communicated a sense of the Japanese government's implicit role in becoming a sort of concubine, disempowered and emasculated servant state for the United States during the Occupation.[5] The gendered aspect of the U.S. Occupation essentially disclosed the damage that U.S. neocolonialism inflicted on Japan's patriarchal, political body. Loss of government control over certain policies and political reforms betrayed the appearance of Japan's political power. And, more apparent, the visible occupation of Japanese women's bodies in the government's furnishing of institutionalized prostitution for their colonizer implied a surrender of the agency of "Japanese masculinity" or paternal right over its "feminine" bodies to its previous enemy.[6] Though the government's direct involvement in providing such "services" to the American GIs lasted for only four months before being nixed in January 1946, the effects of the program, and the role that the government took in its establishment, were, at least symbolically, noticeable.

[5] "Acknowledging Japan's neocolonized status, then-Minister of Finance Hayato Ikeda stated that 'Japan is like a concubine of America...' Japan was a concubine, a symbol of American power and privilege. Ikeda's statement was not merely a representation of the gendered sexualized relationship between two nations embedded in European colonial practices. This unofficial male and female sexual bonding symbolized the neocolonial domination by the United States specific to Japan." Takeuchi, "'Pan Pan Girls,'" 83.

[6] "Dressed in brightly colored dresses, wearing pancake make up with cigarettes dangling from their lips, the *pan-pan*—or streetwalkers—seemed to embody both the fall of Japan's empire and the rise of something shockingly new. Decades later, the way Japanese talked about, or did not talk about, sex under occupation... continued to show the influence of this singular, searing experience." Sarah Kovner, *Occupying Power: Sex Workers and Servicemen in Postwar Japan* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2012), 2.

Even when the government no longer regulated or supported their work, the pan pan girls' presence heavily decorated the streets post-1945 Japan's urban spaces.[7] On a symbolic level, the relationship between the pan pan girls and the American GIs seemed to reinforce established metaphors regarding the perceived "masculinity" of a "Western" presence in confrontation with an imagined "feminine" Japan, further illuminating the absence and loss of representations of "Japanese masculinity" (both literally, in the wake of a war where many Japanese male soldiers perished, and figuratively, in metaphorical representation).

Textually Performing the Feminine Drag

For this essay, I want to focus on examining depictions of the so-called pan-pan girls within two works of fiction from the postwar period: Sakaguchi Ango's short story, *Zoku sensō to hitori no onna* (One Woman and the War, Part Two) from 1946 and Tamura Taijirō's 1947 novel, *Nikutai no mon* (Gate of Flesh), as well as its cinematic adaptation by Suzuki Seijun from 1964.

Thanks to the influential scholarship on their texts, the works by these authors (among other such illustrious contributors to the literary culture of the Occupation Period) participate in an unofficial category valued for its encapsulation of post-1945 society in urban Japan. Many previous analyses on these narratives review the way in which they represent sexuality as radical and revolutionary, often remarking on how their adaptation of sexuality and, specifically, feminine sexuality contributed to discourse on political liberation. Here, however, I will attempt to argue that representations of sex workers in these texts operate as means to express resentment over a sense of emasculation in the aftermath of the war and, more importantly, in the context of the U.S. Occupation. Though reading these works as sociopolitical allegories or pure intellectual discourse has its salient merits, I am interested instead in examining them as literary performances of gender. My reading is therefore an attempt to contributing to a developing discussion on theories on textual transvestisms as an alternative reading for a deeper understanding of these literatures and the insights that they provide. Especially considering the postwar and postcolonial contexts within which these texts were produced, I also aim to eventually question the erasure of female identity as an erasure of the plurality of ethnic and social identities of the pan pan girls.

Under the influence of Ueno's established theory on the transvestite patriarchy, my reading suggests that textual transvestism acts, in these two stories, as a means to perform a recuperation of "Japanese masculinity" through seemingly feminocentric texts, where the femininity and sexuality of the pan pan girls (or other such Japanese sex workers and streetwalkers) become

[7] Takeuchi, Kovner and John Dower write extensively about the historical context of the pan pan girls and their visibility during Occupation Period. See John Dower, *Embracing Defeat* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999).

camouflage for exulting the fantasized revival of a possibility for the imagination of "Japanese" masculinity, even when that concept exists as a marginal reality in mainstream discourse. The issues raised through these representations of pan pan girls do overtly address discontentment with postwar political reforms, but also "perform" a metaphysical revolt against Occupation Neocolonialisms as symbolic of a widely imagined, gendered representation of U.S. hegemony.

Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* imparted scholars of gender theory and literature with invaluable material to address the constructions of gender identity in its various configurations. And prior to Butler's seminal work, Hélène Cixous famously exhorted the inauguration and praxis of an *écriture feminine* (feminine writing), dismissing written language, and language as such, as an oppressive language of men that fails to represent a "feminine mode." Such scholarship provided blueprint for disseminating the falsity of gender roles, but readings that deconstruct fabrications of fabricated gender projections and, in general, theories on textual transvestisms remain scarce, especially in readings focusing on the postcolonial dimensions of literatures.

If one can consider a textual body a space through which to explore and mold gender identities, then literary representations of the prostitute within immediate post-1945 literatures may aptly serve as theaters upon which male writers explored such gender molds. Unlike visual performances, not marked by an audible voice or actual, *visible* performance, literary fiction still operates within a paradigm of roles, masks and appropriated voices. Further, unlike visual performances, literary fiction allows for the readily unrecognizeable erasure of explicit ethnic, social and cultural identities.

By imagining the subjugated woman's body as an abstract space for discourse, the feminine thus becomes a medium for the re-enforcement of a mainstream social theory—in this case, "Japanese" and "masculinity." The identities of women who lived and experienced the hardships of the postwar have virtually no space within the narratives analyzed in this paper. However political and idealistic, literary and popular discourse on sex workers relegate women like the pan pan girls into a fantastical space through which to attempt to fulfill a desire. Sexual difference (or any difference, for that matter) remains a configured veil that covers the realm of a masculine—perhaps indirectly colonial—ideal.

Sakaguchi's "One Woman" at War

Sakaguchi Ango's descriptions of decadence, carnality and sexuality captured the imaginations of his readers, heavily informing postwar critique of prewar politics and visions on culture and society. But while his writings put forth notions of a humanist endeavor, the identity that Sakaguchi's writing sympathizes with tends to be exclusively masculine. His female characters meanwhile often occupy or are occupied by the place of liberation, and, as Douglas Slaymaker discusses, later obliterate the figure of the ruined man;

the sexualized body of a woman thus is a setting for recovering and, indeed, rebirthing an ideal of "Japanese masculinity" otherwise absent from the reality that the fiction writer and intellectual criticizes.[8] In a famous interview with the notorious murderer and twentieth century pop culture icon Abe Sada, Sakaguchi highlights his experience of asking Abe about how many times she had sex over the course of her life, along with other similar questions, shortly after accentuating his impression of her as being a "completely regular woman."[9]

Sequel to a short story appeared a month earlier in 1946 in the same publication, *Zoku sensō to hitori onna* (One Woman and the War, Part Two) [10]is a first-person narrative about a woman living in a wartime Japan that is otherwise entirely inhabited by male characters. The Woman referenced in the first part as "Woman" and here *watashi*, has no name. The descriptors that her "voice" ascribes to her body and her sexuality are the only indicators of her characterization as a woman. And, despite the violent backdrop of the war, a significant portion of her narration assimilates a pornographic text: "My body was parched for sex; naturally perverse, I was a truly bad woman, I thought."[11] Even when disguised as a heroine in a love story this nameless protagonist repeatedly reminds her readers that she embodies an ideology that embraces male fantasies about the female flesh and sexuality. And though suggested as a manifestation of feminine desire, she better functions as a projection of male desire—a phallic, hyper-masculine vision of sexuality masked in the guise of femininity:

> I am aware that men in general, from the age of forty or so, change completely in their attitude toward women... [T]hey become infatuated with the woman's body. It's from this time on that men really go overboard on women. From the start, without a thought of the soul, they're besotted with a dream of the flesh from which they never awaken. Men of this age think they can see through women, know all their tricks, and if anything generally feel dislike for the feminine. But since their desire is already nothing more than carnal lust, it doesn't change because of their dislike. More often it's stirred up by it.[12]

[8] Douglas Slaymaker, *The Body in Postwar Japanese Fiction* (New York: Routledge, 2004).
[9] Sakaguchi Ango. *Abe Sada-san no inshō* (My Impression of Abe Sada). (*Aozora Bunko Sakusei File,* 2008).
[10] The original was published in Salon magazine in November of 1946, a month after Sensō to hitori no onna, which appeared in October of the same year. Quotes from the narrative here come from Lane Dunlop's 1986 translation.
[11] Sakaguchi Ango, "One Woman and the War," trans. Lane Dunlop, *New England Review and Bread Loaf Quarterly* 3 (1986): 339. Accessed 12 May 2013..
[12] Sakaguchi, "One Woman and the War," 337.

Despite her heavy criticism of men, the Woman's derision of men in general (including, particularly, a miserly character dubbed Mantis, whom she describes as "a decrepit, dirty old man") is not without an exception. As the story progresses, her admiration and love for a man called Nomura, who represents a quintessence of manhood and sexual prowess, becomes the main focus of the story.

A self-identified ex-streetwalker, the Woman finds love and sexual satisfaction in the arms of this Nomura, who, like her, expresses a liberal approach to matters of the flesh, possessing, even, near superhuman abilities to cater to her carnal desires:

> In the old days, I was a street-walker. I was a woman who hung around in front of the latticework of shops, calling out: Hey there, big boy, hey... I slept with just about all the customers...
>
> But I had always liked Nomura, and gradually fell in love with him. I came to think that if only Nomura wanted it, I'd like to be his lifelong mate. A whore by nature, I was a woman who had to have fun on the side. A woman like me does not believe in such things as the chastity of the flesh. My body was my plaything, and I was going to play with my toy all my life.[13]

By dedicating the majority of her narrative to describing her emotional and physical desire for Nomura, she embraces a masculine vision and fantasy about feminine sexuality. Even when Sakaguchi suggests her to be a manifestation of something identified as feminine, she ultimately operates as a projection of male desire; the representation remains a phallic, hyper-masculine vision of sexuality masked in a performatively feminine voice. Further, by granting Nomura a name (while still denying the narrator from such form of identification), Sakaguchi's text ascribes him with a certain significance. His creation demands that he retains an identity, while the protagonist's remains abstract beyond the anecdotes that she provides.

In the passages following her introduction to Nomura, she creates a romanticized vision of war (in contrast to the bland landscape of the postwar), where her liberated sexuality seems almost contingent on the persistence of violence and combat during the wartime:

> But, if I were asked what about the night bombings was most magnificent, truth to tell, my real feeling, more than anything, was one of pleasure at the vastness of destruction. The dull silver B-29's, too, as they suddenly hove into view amid the arrows of the searchlights, were beautiful... The incendiary

[13] Sakaguchi, "One Woman and the War," 338.

> bombs, that burst into the sky like fireworks. But only the vast, world-destroying conflagration on the ground gave me complete satisfaction.[14]

On the one hand, the story can be read as a heartfelt memoir of a sexually and politically liberated woman professing her devotion to matters of pleasure and flesh amidst a backdrop of the brutality of politics. This reading, though, is only possible when we ignore how Sakaguchi's nameless heroine spends the entirety of the story worshipping Nomura's sexual prowess. Rather than appropriating a feminine voice to express the sentiments and experience of a Japanese woman, during the war, Sakaguchi expropriates her non-sexualized identity and focuses solely on this perspective to incarnate and glorify masculine sexuality through a declaration of "feminine" characterization.

The end of *Zoku Sensō to hitori no onna* leaves a clear sense of Nomura's disappearance after the Allied victory. The heroine never describes him as dead, though: he is, for some reason, handicapped and "lost." And though she's the narrator of the story, the conclusion does not provide a clear sense of her fate after Nomura's disappearance. She simply discloses that, with the loss of her love interest and his masculine sexuality that complimented her desire for sex, the end of the war brought her boredom and sexual dissatisfaction. She gambles, sleeps around and once again begins uses her body as a means for self-sustenance during the years following Japan's defeat (and Nomura's disappearance), but never again finds a man to love and desire as much as she did Nomura. The postwar leaves her wondering why "people [were] supposed to hate war and love peace."[15]

Toward the end, the heroine hints at a craving for revolt—for the restoration of a (presumably Japan-identified) political and sexual control through the eradication of the "peace" that came as a result of the postwar. While Sakaguchi's narrative demonstrates a lamentation of a certain "reality," it also calls for the recovery of a symbol, like Nomura, of masculinity and sexual magnetism; it demands, in essence, the revitalization of something that can finally quench the now insatiable woman's thirst for the violent throes of war, breaking free from the sexual and political restraints of the present through the revival of the flesh. The woman-turned-metaphor thus sacrifices the possibility to even imagine woman as an active participant in her own sexual desire since her ability to fulfill her sexual fantasies predicates on the presence of a particular, politicized sexually virile masculinity.

Inverted Pan Pans in *Gate of Flesh*

As a contributor to the unofficial genre *nikutai bungaku* ("literature of the flesh"), Tamura Taijirō's work offers a critique of mainstream philosophies on

[14] Sakaguchi, "One Woman and the War," 339.
[15] Sakaguchi, "One Woman and the War," 347.

morality. His works encourage the disintegration of a masculinized patriarchal ego of the empire through sexuality and, particularly, through representations of female sexuality.[16] By glorifying the flesh, Tamura engages with the repudiation of the *kokutai* (国体, or emperor-centered "national body") in an inversion of the human, sexual body (just the *tai*, 体, sans the "nation") as a subject of worship in place of wartime ideological constructs. His works thereby render meaningless the power of the nation state and all discourse associated with wartime rhetoric, as he puts them into question.[17]

The premise of one of his best-known works, *Nikutai no mon* (Gate of Flesh), rewrites the postwar and the role of the pan-pan girls by attributing to the latter one significant difference from the role with which they are historically represented. Instead of catering sexual services exclusively for the Allied Troops, a gang of prostitutes militantly avoids American soldiers in favor of providing themselves solely to Japanese men. As he presents this politically-infused motif, Tamura inadvertently commits to refashioning history into a vision that favors a specific discourse about sexual bodies in Occupation-period society, and, further, about the role of the pan pan girls in that political history. His rewriting of the figure imprints upon his audiences a vision of the sex workers otherwise unfound in reality, yet realized, nonetheless, within his textual performance.

Set in U.S.-Occupied Tokyo, Tamura offers a seemingly dystopian, yet increasingly sardonic, vision of a Japan infested with garishly dressed prostitutes who run amok soliciting Japanese men for sex. In the film adaptation by Suzuki Seijun, the story begins with a recounting of the protagonist's (a young woman named Maya) experience within the coercive postwar "Special Comfort Women" system in a U.S. army base. Soon, though, Maya finds asylum in joining a band of prostitutes hiding out in a bombed-out building. The women, whose vibrant clothes and makeup clearly serve to identify them as a rendition of the pan pan girls, live by a strict code of rules and survive through the war-torn arena by militantly protecting each other and their territory.

The pseudo-feminist space (if it could have ever been read as such) soon becomes ruptured, however, upon the arrival of Ibuki Shintarō, a runaway fugitive injured after a confrontation with a GI. Though at first wary of the male intruder, the women soon fall for him and begin to dedicate themselves to nurturing him back to health. Gradually, the almost-matriarchal regime established at the beginning of the plot disintegrates to glorify Ibuki's regained virile sexuality as all the prostitutes begin to conspire against one another to win him over.

At the end of the narrative, Maya and Ibuki decide to run away together. Nevertheless, their potential idyll ends quickly after the yakuza and American troops find and shoot Ibuki. The final scene of Suzuki's film almost symbolically

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[16] Christine Marran, *Poison Woman: Figuring Female Transgression in Modern Japan* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 142.

[17] Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 157.

illustrates Ibuki's death as the passing away of a true representation of old-fashioned "Japanese masculinity." In the sequence, shot as he crosses a bridge to meet Maya, he falls back into the river, and the last shot shows his bloodied corpse sinking underneath a now blood-tainted Japanese flag. Peculiarly, what culminates in the iconic finale is not the narrative of the yakuza and U.S. troops' pursuit of the fugitive, but the competition among the prostitutes that inevitably leads to Ibuki's demise. Although the story concludes pessimistically, *Gate of Flesh* nevertheless still carries out a male-centric fantasy about the Japanese feminine as an entity which has the power to both recover and destroy a fantasy of sexuality and masculinity. Reading the text from an angle that considers the influence of the pan pan girl on such literary products, it is possible to critique Tamura's work as a commentary on the visibility and impact of the pan pan girls within postwar society, even as criticism of the popular discourse that it produced: if the pan pan girls had completely renounced their forced postwar role during the U.S. Occupation and instead dedicated themselves to wholly nurturing the local masculine ego back to its sexual prowess, then Japan's manhood would not have to constantly submit itself to the double-defeat of its occupiers. Even in the satirical possibilities for the narrative, the possibility for female sexual fantasy to enter into the narrative remains dislocated at the margins. In a story so involved with taking on a voyeuristic lens on feminine desire and sexuality, the loss of the masculine ego negates entry to feminine *jouissance*.

Conclusions

For the male writers who reconstructed her body into the politics of their works as a way to reaffirm and recuperate a sense of lost masculinity during the Occupation, the pan pan girl represented a threat to the imbalance of power between the colonized male and the colonized female. In their articulations about the historical role of the pan pan girl, Sarah Kovner and Michiko Takeuchi both highlight the meaning of the pan pan girl's visibility in urban spaces during the Occupation. Still, the *kind* of pan pan girls that had visibility and full exposure of their genealogical, geopolitical and, indeed, historical links to comfort women and other military sex workers remain undisclosed in popular and academic discourse. And in favor of locating the pan pan girl as a singular figure of her time, agency becomes the locus for critical appraisal on the matter as a product of discourse—an evident nod toward John Dower's brief mention of the pan pan girls in *Embracing Defeat*, where the matter of the pan pan girl's "advantageous" position in Occupation period society is expounded.

To further paraphrase, her relationship to the U.S. GIs presumably allowed the pan pan girl (reduced to a symbol for academic discourse to enjoy certain privileges otherwise restricted to Japanese citizens, the pan pan girl also became the target of criticism for her "complicity" in the Occupation. In reality, however, this seeming passive complicity could be symptomatic of a lack

of agency over her body just as much as it could indicate the same individual pan pan girl's independent decision to engage in the multifaceted economically-geared role that she filled as a participant in and as a biopolitical apparatus. This question of agency that previous scholarship tackles from a historical perspective transforms into a question of representation and representability when transferred into the literary realm. The pan pan girl, as a figure and as an identity marker for many displaced women's experiences during the postwar, was not powerless or rendered to an entirely abject existence. But that chauvinist writing who assumes leftist ideologies appropriates her into their political rhetoric did marginalize her position as a sex worker and woman of low socioeconomic status whose body serves as a space for the projections of power fantasies.

Writing as a woman, writing like a woman, writing *for* a woman does not, after all, constitute the act of providing a woman's voice so much as it does providing a voice that pretends to represent in absolution a reflection of femininity. The excess of that voice—its failure to recognize the myth of absolution—drifts into the margins of the narrative and the other side of the reflection remains a discombobulated, inconsistent representation of a subject deprived of entrance into the language of its mirroring image. Similarly, writing for any Other, any marginalized sexual, political or ethnic "outside" to the "self" renders itself to the same failure, even in attempts to recuperate or bolster it as an idealistic inquisition into "truth." Such literature that tries to reclaim the feminine body and liberate a universal ideal of sexuality through adaptations of the pan pan girls furthermore collapses its own logic as it imposes yet another level patriarchal dominance over a figure already caught up in oppressive structures. Patriarchy glamours itself in feminine drag to paint an expectation for something that never existed. Yes, one must recognize the contributions of these literary drag artists, whose works have imparted readers with a glimpse into the underbelly of the seedier parts of society during the Occupation. It is equally imperative to note this, though: that glimpse, to which readers often attribute a sense of responsibility for illustrating a certain historic voice, remains situated behind a limited and markedly masculine perspective. Portrayal neither creates solidarity nor forms an escape for the women who were victims of the oppressive politics that resulted from the postwar. Instead, it further constricts them into a marginalized category. Their history becomes repressed, and chauvinistic imaginations pose the danger of becoming valued as legitimate representatives of their voices.