

A Land Where Femmes Fatales Fear to Tread: Eroticism and Japanese Cinema

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The *femme fatale* is a familiar presence in American film. With her potent sexuality and destructive power she triumphs over her male prey and works his doom. Film noir, the American film genre developed in the forties and fifties, was the golden age of femmes fatales, but the figure had already begun to emerge in American silent films.

In Japan American silent films were eagerly screened and studied in the late 1910s and 1920s in a drive to promote the modernization of Japanese cinema. A major development at this time was the introduction of actresses to play women's roles rather than the male impersonators traditional in Japanese Kabuki theater. One result of this revolutionary change inspired by American films was the emergence of a westernized type of Japanese women called "modern girls." But the modern girls never reached the status of femmes fatales.

In the late forties and fifties a second wave of Americanization swept over the Japanese film industry, introducing westernized romance with sexual love and kiss. At this point femmes fatales began to appear on the Japanese screen. But not for long. Patriarchal power soon eliminated this phenomenon from the screen.

This is the course of events in film history that I propose to treat in this essay. Analyzing how fatal women are represented in Japanese film from the thirties through the nineties, I will suggest that a collective fear of intense eroticism sparked by the *femme fatale* ultimately aborted the *femme-fatale* scenario that had begun to develop in Japanese cinema.

Key words: ACTRESS, CINEMA, DEATH, EROTICISM, FEMME FATALE, FILM NOIR, GENDER CONFLICT, GHOST, JAPANESE FILM, LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI, MODERN GIRL, MODERNIZATION, PATRIARCHAL AUTHORITY, ROMANTICISM, SIBYL, SILENT FILM.

The *femme fatale* is characterized by her potent sexuality and destructive power, with which she triumphs over her male prey and works his doom. In Japanese films of the late forties and fifties, westernized romance with sexual love and kiss was introduced and promoted the configuration of femmes fatales on the screen. Princess Wakasa in *Ugetsu* directed by Kenji Mizoguchi in 1953, for example, revealed her devastating sexuality and successfully established a relationship with a male stranger. Indulged in an erotic life that he had never known before, the spellbound man was about to be taken to the other world, that is, the world of death. In the arms of the *femme fatale*, he was in fact on the verge of death. But Princess Wakasa was abruptly made to disappear when she had almost acquired an everlasting possession of the man. She never returned on screen.

Analyzing how femmes fatales are represented in Japanese film from the 1930s through the 1990s, I will suggest that a collective fear of intense eroticism sparked by the *femme fatale*—a fear deeply rooted in Japanese culture—ultimately aborted the *femme-fatale* scenario that had begun to develop. The films to be discussed include *Walk Cheerfully* (1930), *The Maiden and the Beard* (1931), *The Neighbor's Wife and One's Own* (1931), *Seven Seas* (1930-31),

Ugetsu (1953), *Yotsuya Ghost Story* (1959), *Himiko* (1974), *The True Story of Abe Sada* (1975), *In the Realm of the Senses* (1976), *Doubt* (1982), *One Summer with Aliens* (1988), *Wuthering Heights* (1988) and *Chushingura Version Yotsuya Ghost Story* (1994).

Three Elements of the Femme Fatale Film

Before turning to Japanese films, however, it will be useful to review briefly the development of the femme fatale convention in western film, where the theme had its origin. Film noir saw the golden age of the femme fatale, and its scenario reflected actual power relations between the sexes in postwar America. During the absence of their male partners engaged in World War II, women accrued considerable power in society, and when the men returned home at the conclusion of the war, they perceived this power as a threat to them. Women had demonstrated that in the workplace they could easily and satisfactorily replace men. It was the threat of women's economic equality that became apparent at this time, but film noir displaced this threat by turning it into a sexual threat. Women with strong sexuality and destructive power triumph over their male prey in film noir, converting their victims into mere tools for their own purposes. Caught in the web of the femme fatale, a victimized man's wheel of fortune turns infinitely downward.

At the risk of somewhat demystifying the femme fatale, I will identify three dominant elements of American femme fatale films, elements which I will apply later in my discussion of Japanese film. The three essential elements of the femme fatale film are eroticism, death, and gender conflict. A male prey is irresistibly sexually enchanted by a femme fatale, and is gradually led to destruction or death in his increasingly intimate relationship with her. Female eroticism which is destructive to a man is fundamental to the femme fatale film. So too is the element of death. Someone's death must result from a male protagonist's involvement with a femme fatale. It is often the death of a third party but can be the death of the protagonist himself or the femme fatale herself. The femme fatale and her prey may destroy one another. But she is not so complaisant as to consent to a double suicide; she would make him die alone or, if she is critically injured, would grab him into hell with her. She is a fierce creature. Such gender conflict in which she works his doom is the third significant element of the femme fatale film.

These three elements—eroticism, death, and gender conflict—are prominent, for example, in the film noir *Double Indemnity* directed by Billy Wilder in 1944.¹ The film provides an unusual ambience when the male protagonist first meets the femme fatale. Walter, the protagonist, calls at a customer's house to renew the man's expiring automobile insurance. The customer being absent, Walter is greeted by the man's wife Phyllis instead. Loosely holding a bath towel around her naked body, Phyllis offers the excuse that she was sunbathing (figure 1). Now what woman would appear in front of a stranger with a bath towel around her naked body? The element of eroticism is already introduced but, when Phyllis reappears fully dressed and wearing a radiant anklet after a short retreat to her room, intense eroticism aroused by the femme fatale is focused on as a major issue. The camera follows the woman descending the stairs, exclusively shooting her legs in close-up (figures 2-4). The camera eye identified with the male gaze skillfully reveals Walter's carnal longings.

To supply the second element of the femme fatale scenario, the film must have someone's



figure 1



figure 2



figure 3



figure 4

death occur. It may be the husband of the femme fatale or the victimized man or the femme fatale herself who dies. In *Double Indemnity* Phyllis encourages Walter to murder her husband so that she can collect a large sum of life insurance. Walter commits the crime in the hope and expectation that he will begin an amorous and wealthy life with the woman. But instead the murderer ends up paying for his crime with his life. He is shot by the femme fatale, whom he in turn shoots to death. No one wins in *Double Indemnity*. The film ends with Walter slowly dying.

A Knight Bewitched by La Belle Dame sans Merci

This summary of the three elements of femme fatale films might well remind us of John Keats's poem "La Belle Dame sans Merci" composed in 1819. In fact, the femme fatale scenario prospered in Romantic literature. Mario Praz cites the poem as a model for femme fatale literature while surveying other numerous examples in England, France, and Italy from the seventeenth century onward in his study *The Romantic Agony*.²

"La Belle Dame sans Merci" introduces an exotic woman described as a "fairy" who speaks a "language strange." A knight who has left his everyday duties and wanders into the meadows encounters this mysterious woman. After meeting, the couple engages in amorous play. The knight decorates the woman's bodily parts with flowers—with a flower-garland, flower-bracelets, and even with a flower-girdle. The "girdle," as Keats calls it, would be a belt, and the intimacy in the knight's putting it around the woman's waist hints at a sexual relationship. The woman takes him to a cave, and there he falls asleep to have a dreadful

dream:

I saw pale kings and princes too,
 Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
 They cried—"La Belle Dame sans Merci
 Hath thee in thrall!"

I saw their starved lips in the gloam,
 With horrid warning gaped wide,
 And I awoke and found me here,
 On the cold hill's side.

("La Belle Dame sans Merci," X-XD)³

These climactic stanzas identify the lady as a femme fatale. Warned by the deadly-looking men of noble birth, the knight wakes from his sleep to find himself alone on the desolate hill. Spiritless, he wanders lonely on the cold hill in early winter.

The knight does not die. Neither does the woman. But it is hinted in the warning given to the knight by the many "death-pale" noblemen that they were victimized in some way by the fairy woman and that the knight might follow their example. Death thus comes into view, or at any rate a kind of living death, and the three elements of the femme fatale scenario are firmly in place. The poem with its aura of the eerie spirit-world is a paradigm of the femme fatale story, and it has much in common with Japanese films such as *Ugetsu* and *One Summer with Aliens*, which I will discuss presently.

"Modern Girls" or Failed Femmes Fatales

The three elements of femmes fatales films are recognizable not only in film noir but in silent films. The emergence of femmes fatales in American silents needs to be given more attention, for American films of this period were eagerly screened and studied to promote the modernization of Japanese cinema or the *Jun-eigageki* movement. Norimasa Kaeriyama was an eminent advocator of the movement, and his *Splendor of Life* (1918; screened in 1919) and *The Maiden in the Mountains* (1919) are regarded as the first successful manifestations. *Souls on the Road*, directed by Minoru Murata in 1921, is also among the early accomplishments of the modernization movement.

One of the most significant characteristics of the movement is the introduction of the idea of actress into Japanese film. The tradition, derived from Kabuki plays, of assigning roles of female characters to male impersonators was discontinued, the male Kabukian actors being replaced by real women. Among the early examples of actresses were Harumi Hanayanagi in *Splendor of Life* and *The Maiden in the Mountains*, and Haruko Sawamura, Yuriko Hide, and Ryuko Date in *Souls on the Road*.⁴

The introduction of actresses was directly influenced by American films, both minor and major. A Japanese branch of Universal Film Corporation, for example, was established in 1916 and advanced rapid circulation of American minor films. These films, named "Blue Bird films" after the name of the production company, are so minor in the American film history



figure 5



figure 6



figure 7

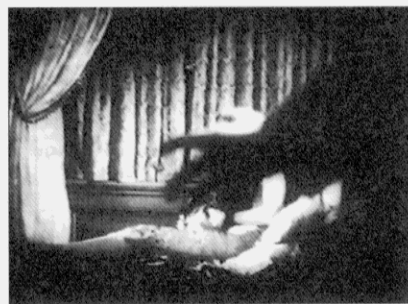


figure 8

that hardly any reference to them is found, but they played a significant role, among other things, in the decision-making of Japanese cinema companies about employing women for acting.⁵ Shochiku Kinema Gomeisha (the predecessor to Shochiku), founded in 1920, employed women from the start. The existing companies such as Tenkatsu, Nikkatsu and Taisho-Katsuei were also enthusiastic about hiring in the 1920s a variety of women from geisha-girls (such as Yoneko Sakai) and waitresses (such as Sumiko Suzuki) to daughters of noble birth (such as Takako Irie from a viscount's family). Professional stage actresses (such as Yoshiko Okada and Shizue Natsukawa) were also sought.⁶

The way of representing women was further learned from American and European major films in the 1920s.⁷ A notable outcome was the formation of a westernized type of women called "modern girls" or "mogas." Modeled on western actresses such as Mary Pickford, Greta Garbo, Clara Bow, Marlene Dietrich, Gloria Swanson, and Joan Crawford, the modern girls cut Japanese-style long hair short, wore western dress, and enkindled eroticism.⁸

*Flesh and the Devil*⁹ directed by Clarence Brown in 1927 was screened in Japan in the same year and was well received because of Greta Garbo.¹⁰ This film has all three elements of the femme fatale film I mapped out above. Leo meets Felicitas at a railway station on his return from the army. The attractive woman comes out of nowhere to enchant the male protagonist on his special homecoming occasion. He later learns her address and goes there often to indulge in sexual pleasure. The camera shoots them in rapture, gradually zooming in on the woman's face to highlight her overpowering attraction (figures 5-6). They are found in the act of infidelity by her husband, with their figures ominously shadowed by the husband's left hand (figures 7-8). In a duel that follows, the tiny human figures are mocked by the



figure 9



figure 10



figure 11



figure 12

grand surroundings, visually indicative of the absurdity to risk one's life (figure 9). The husband is killed, and the plot of the femme fatale is further carried on when a third man becomes involved to form another triangle relationship. Leo and the third man try to kill each other on the glacier for Felicitas until a sudden divine revelation stops the fight. The film ends with the death of the femme fatale, who falls into a crevasse on the glacier and drowns (figure 10).

It is noteworthy that these kinds of western films, widely screened in Japan, did not contribute to production of femme fatale films in the newborn, modern Japanese cinema. The modern girls created on the Japanese screen at that time did not develop into femmes fatales, for their eroticism is not so intense as to trigger someone's death or destruction. Modern girls are, in a sense, failed femmes fatales.

Even such little eroticism excited by the modern girls was depicted as a threat to men and society in the Japanese film of the early 1930s. Yasujiro Ozu's silents *Walk Cheerfully* (1930)¹¹ and *The Lady and the Beard* (1931)¹² present modern girls in contrast to traditional Japanese women in kimono, giving negative and positive values respectively (figures 11-12). Two types of women, westernized and Japanese, were placed in contrast with each other, and eroticism evoked by the westernized type was envied as well as despised by the other type.

It was not a mere coincidence that the first substantial Japanese talkie, directed in the same era, selected the popular contrast of the two types of women as its motif. It is Heinosuke Gosho's *The Neighbor's Wife and One's Own* (1931).¹³ A novelist has a wife who is a traditional woman in kimono and with long hair dressed in Japanese style (figure 13). She becomes jealous of a woman jazz singer in her neighborhood (figure 14) when her husband



figure 13



figure 14

visits and spends a pleasant jazz evening there. On his return, she begins an argument that the neighboring woman is a modern girl and therefore that she is erotic and seductive. The husband argues back that the woman is simply wearing western dress, which, as he deliberately neglects to acknowledge, is the very sign of eroticism.

One of the 1924 works of cartoonist Rakuten Kitazawa for *Jijishinpo* or *News Reporter* illustrates a modern girl with two small figures in the back. The background figures frown as they stare at the modern girl, obviously revealing disapproval and disgust. The modern girl elegantly clothed in western dress has short hair with a western hat, while the background woman is a traditionally attired Japanese woman. The caption of the cartoon gives a value judgment against the modern girl: "A woman with short hair and western dress makes everyone anticipate IT."¹⁴ The "IT" refers to a well-known incident at the time about a modern girl who injured a man for not paying for her sexual services. Modern girls were expected to be seductive and harmful to men. How could the Japanese sensibility of the 1920s and 30s then bear the much greater threat of femmes fatales?

From Fatal to Harmless: *Seven Seas*

It is, therefore, a mild surprise to find a female protagonist called Yumie in *Seven Seas*¹⁵ directed by Hiroshi Shimizu in 1930-31. She is a traditional Japanese woman in kimono at the beginning but, when raped by her lover's brother, begins to change her nature. The father of the rapist Takehiko is so afraid of his tribe's getting socially condemned that he decides to marry Takehiko to Yumie. Yumie accepts the marriage proposal and begins her revenge upon Takehiko, who deprives her of happiness.

Yumie asks Takehiko on their honeymoon train not to share a bed with her, and he agrees with amusement. Yumie wears a kimono on the train (figure 15) but, having returned from the trip, she begins to wear western dress (figure 16), which is, in the 1920s and 30s, indicative of becoming a modern girl. Yumie does not simply grow into a modern girl but begins to emerge as a femme fatale when Takehiko is unexpectedly attracted to her. He is teased by her, not being allowed even to enter her room. He tries to step in, but she blocks his way with her arm and closes the door (figures 17-19). Yumie's power extends to his father's property, for Takehiko is too fascinated by her to reproach her intended excessive consumerism to ruin the family.

If Yumie had kept consuming the family property and tantalizing Takehiko, a disaster



figure 15



figure 16



figure 17



figure 18

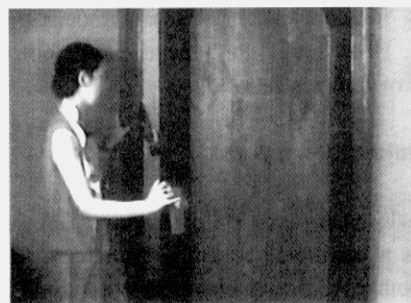


figure 19



figure 20

might have fallen on some or all of them. But she is abruptly interrupted in the middle of her project by Takehiko's patriarchal father, who says: "You are divorced!" Takehiko is shocked by his father's decision but, in a sense, he is delivered from the arms of the femme fatale. Yumie leaves Takehiko and, dressed back in kimono, returns to her former lover (figure 20). The change in her dress from western to Japanese indicates the end of her role as a femme fatale. She returns to being a humble woman, her happy life with her lover being implied.

The potential femme fatale thus ends up becoming a conventional Japanese woman in kimono. It is patriarchal authority that checks the development of femmes fatales. Takehiko's father is not a main character but he is given the authority to pluck the budding femme fatale.



figure 21



figure 22

Female Ghost as a Femme Fatale: *Ugetsu*

Japanese cinema in the late 1940s and 1950s underwent another wave of Americanization that included the introduction of westernized romance with sexual love and kiss. Women once potentially fatal matured into authentically femmes fatales, and a female character such as Princess Wakasa in *Ugetsu*¹⁶ began to appear on the screen. Captivating a man by her intense sexuality, Wakasa proves to be a well-developed femme fatale figure. *Ugetsu* in fact stands as a paradigm of the typically Japanese femme fatale film.

Genjuro meets this noble princess in a big town when he leaves his family behind to sell his pottery. Away from his ordinary life, he is given special attention by the woman of noble birth, whom a poor farmer like him cannot usually even stare at. The meaningful exchange of their gazes, expressed by the shot/reverse-shot (figures 21-22), establishes their intimate relationship. Intense eroticism excited by the femme fatale is soon presented when Genjuro is being entertained in the villa of Wakasa. She flirts with him in a hot spa in a cave and requests him to dedicate his life to her:

Wakasa: You wonder if I'm a femme fatale, don't you? But you've become mine.
You must dedicate your life to me from now.

Genjuro: I don't care if you are a femme fatale. I will never let you go.

Genjuro indulges in sexual pleasure every day. The camera shoots in a long take the couple playing with each other, producing an erotic, blissful ambience fully on the screen (figures 23-25). In intense ecstasy Genjuro confesses that he has never known such pleasures, saying "This is the zest of life, this is heaven." It is noteworthy that Wakasa herself hints at her possible identity as "femme fatale." By this intentional reference, the film shows being conscious of introducing the femme fatale motif.

Soon, however, the femme fatale scenario so far developed is broken off. Genjuro suddenly meets on a street an old priest, who warns him not to stay with Wakasa any longer.

I see a shadow of death on your face.... If you have a family, go back to them immediately. If you linger here any longer, you will be dead. Go back home.



figure 23



figure 24



figure 25



figure 26

Genjuro is too deeply in love with Wakasa to pay attention to these words, but he lets the old man write on his naked body calligraphic phrases for exorcism.

Returning to the villa, Genjuro finds the old man's words true and, when he is about to be taken to Wakasa's "hometown," that is, to become dead, he begs Wakasa and her attendant to let him go back to his family. The women cannot touch him because of the repelling power of the writing on his body. Genjuro is saved from the grip of the femme fatale by the priest whose sudden appearance can only be justified by his role as an opposing element against Wakasa. The two women disappear into the air without taking Genjuro's life. *Ugetsu* thus shows how woman's sexual power is repressed and how man is saved from falling prey to such power in Japanese culture. It is a patriarchal figure such as Yumie's father-in-law in *Seven Seas* and the priest in *Ugetsu* that castrates the femme fatale.

But the film shows some ambivalence towards the elimination of the femme fatale despite its apparent celebration of Genjuro's safe return from the grip of Wakasa. The camera frequently shoots Genjuro from the point of view of Wakasa (figure 26), feeling compassion for her. Moreover, it reduces him to an unfocused figure with his face almost always in the dark (figure 27). Genjuro's humiliated position is presented by an interesting *mise-en-scène*, in which his small figure crouches at the feet of two towering women, Wakasa and her attendant (figure 28).

Not only the camera but the dialogue between the attendant and Genjuro testifies that the woman's argument is sound.

Attendant: Why did you marry Wakasa when you have a wife and a child?



figure 27



figure 28



figure 29



figure 30

Genjuro: I don't know why I made such a mistake.

Attendant: It may be a mistake for this once for a man, but it is not so for a woman....Don't you feel guilty for destroying her [Wakasa's] happiness?

While the attendant reveals Genjuro's selfishness by words, the camera frames Wakasa, closely observing deep sadness on her face (figures 29-30). *Ugetsu* thus shows the camera's favorable eye towards the femme fatale.

But it must be emphasized that no matter how favorably the film shoots her, Wakasa must eventually be erased from the screen. The socio-cultural anxiety of the femme fatale's sexual threat to men (that is, to society) must be shown to have worked.

Princess Wakasa's Offspring: *One Summer with Aliens*

*One Summer with Aliens*¹⁷ directed by Nobuhiko Obayashi in 1988 develops its femme fatale plot along the line of *Ugetsu*. Hideo falls in love with a female resident named Kei of his apartment building. They are the only residents in the building, which is described by its janitor as a empty ghost house. Their first meeting is somewhat clumsy. The woman who cannot bear the sense of intense loneliness pays a visit to the man's apartment late at night with a liquor bottle and two glasses. Hideo is annoyed by this rude intruder and drives her away. Despite this embarrassing experience, they become friends and then lovers rapidly.

They spend several erotic nights in bed until she affirms one night, "You've become mine," echoing what Princess Wakasa tells to Genjuro in the hot spa sequence. That night the man is



figure 31



figure 32

to be taken to the world of the woman, who turns out to be a ghost. Kei confesses that she committed suicide the very night she visited Hideo only to be driven away. In other words, she is always a ghost when Hideo enjoys an erotic relationship with her.

It is interesting that Hideo in *One Summer with Aliens* is saved by a male friend as Genjuro in *Ugetsu* is saved by a male priest. Hideo's friend happens to visit himself to find a bewitched and deformed Hideo in bed with the female ghost. He violently kicks the ghost on her bosom and snatches Hideo away from her, even though Hideo asks the ghost to take himself with her (figure 31). His friend's grip is too strong and tight for the woman to wrench Hideo back. Hovering in the air with flaring hair (figure 32), the woman finally disappears. Hideo regains himself.

It is not a mere coincidence that the femmes fatales in both *Ugetsu* and *One Summer with Aliens* are not inhabitants of this world but ghosts. This is another testimony to that collective fear, deeply rooted in Japanese culture, of intense eroticism sparked by women, which prevents films from assigning such eroticism to "real" women. A female ghost is fine for a femme fatale; she can be as erotic as possible. But not a real woman. A ghost in Japanese culture is supposed to return to this world because of her/his strong attachment to something left in this world, which is often a lover. A female ghost is theoretically perfect to be a femme fatale, for she would appear in front of her lover and snatch him away to the other world. But on the screen she never fully enjoys the role of a femme fatale. She is eliminated before she exerts any fatal influence upon her lover.

The Most Famous Female Ghost Story: *Yotsuya Ghost Story*

One of the most famous ghost stories in Japan develops around a beautiful woman who is poisoned by her husband's allies so that he may marry another woman and agonizingly dies with a deformed face. It is the story of Oiwa who, upon her death, returns to this world as a ghost to blame her husband for his betrayal.

The ghost story of Oiwa has its origin in a masterpiece Kabuki play called *Tokaido Yotsuya Kaidan*,¹⁸ which is written by one of the most celebrated playwrights in Edo Japan, Tsuruya Nanboku IV. First staged in 1825, Nanboku's work has been staged for numerous times to the present day. The play is based on the legend of a betrayed wife who turns into a tenacious ghost after her death to haunt her husband and his relatives. In Nanboku's play, the ghost of Oiwa leads her unfaithful husband named Iemon to murder his new wife and his

father-in-law. Oiwa further kills her own little son in order to terminate Iemon's clan.

In the finale of the play, Oiwa takes a most effective vengeance upon Iemon. She approaches him in the guise of a peasant girl named Iwa, having an affair with him and revealing herself.

- Iemon: I had once a wife named Oiwa. She was a wicked woman. I divorced her because she was evil in spirit.
- Iwa: Are you so disgusted with your ex-wife Oiwa that you would forsake her forever, Iemon?
- Iemon: You look like Oiwa.¹⁹

It is not difficult to imagine how shocked Iemon was to find out the identity of his new lover. Though he is not killed by Oiwa, most characters in the play, including Iemon's mother, become victims of Oiwa's fierce vindictiveness. Oiwa triumphs over Iemon as a femme fatale.

Many films have been made based on Nanboku's play. Film versions still available in the form of videotapes are Keisuke Kinoshita's *Yotsuya Ghost Story* (1949), Masaki Mouri's *Yotsuya Ghost Story* (1956), Kenji Misumi's *Yotsuya Ghost Story* (1959), Shiro Toyoda's *Yotsuya Ghost Story* (1965), Issei Mori's *Yotsuya Ghost Story: The Ghost of Oiwa* (1969), and Kinji Fukasaku's *Chushingura Version Yotsuya Ghost Story* (1994).

The only internationally circulated film version, *Yotsuya Ghost Story*²⁰ directed by Kenji Misumi in 1959, transforms Oiwa from a femme fatale to a pitiable, feeble woman. She is vexed by Iemon's caprice for a woman called Oume, who wants to marry him. The brief encounter of the two women indicates Oiwa's loss, for she can do nothing when she sees Oume's palanquin following that of Iemon. Oiwa is determined to recover from a miscarriage to compete with Oume for Iemon, and takes a poison which is deceptively given to her by Iemon's wicked friend as an expensive medicine. Her transformation is witnessed by a neighboring man, who tries to calm down Oiwa at first but runs away soon. Terrified by her disfigured face, Iemon pushes away Oiwa, who falls on the unsheathed sword and dies. Her last words are: "I don't want to die. I won't let Oume have you."

Oiwa appears as a ghost before Iemon only once when he is about to go to bed with Oume. Oume now resembles Oiwa, pleading in Oiwa's voice: "Don't forsake me." Iemon draws off his sword and attacks Oume whom he mistakes as Oiwa. Oume, however, does not die. Oiwa is too benevolent to kill people. All that she can do is to prevent Iemon from having an affair with Oume.

Interestingly, Iemon himself begins to take vengeance upon his wicked friends, who plotted to poison Oiwa for money. Iemon slays them, shouting "A revenge for Oiwa." He emerges as an honorable hero, fighting for Oiwa. After his victory in the combat, Iemon stumbles towards the house of Oiwa's sister and finds by the street Oiwa's favorite kimono, which he takes in his hands (figure 33). With something like a heart attack, he soon falls on the ground and dies while the kimono moves in the air to cover his body gently (figures 34-36). The closing sequence introduces a golden and brilliant light, which can be easily associated with an aura of Buddha. It embraces both Iemon and Oiwa's kimono, giving the implication that in Buddha's mercy Iemon is forgiven by Oiwa and will happily reunite with her.

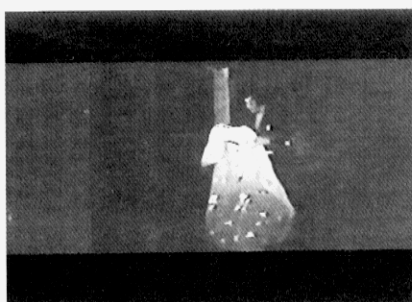


figure 33

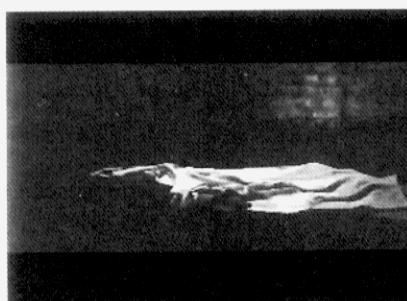


figure 34

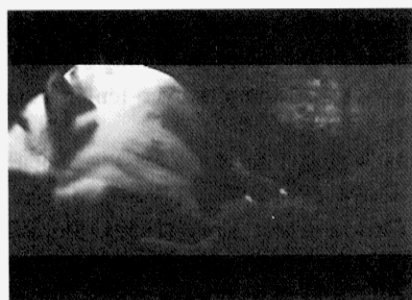


figure 35

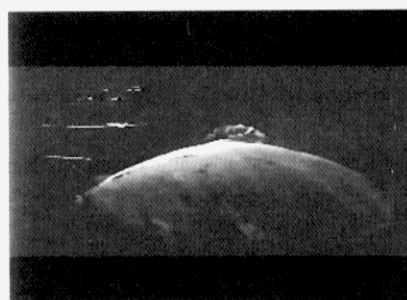


figure 36

Oiwa is not a femme fatale in the film. She does not sexually lure Iemon but remains a modest, virtuous wife though jealous of her husband's lover. The element of eroticism to lead a man to destruction is not seen in the configuration of Misumi's Oiwa. Iemon's death is not caused by Oiwa's spiteful revenge. It is understood as an atonement, designed by an external force, for his sin that dreadfully tormented Oiwa. A divine power has done justice to Oiwa, and Oiwa's garment gently shrouds his body.

The visual culture thus transforms the fierce femme fatale depicted in literature into a benevolent, obedient woman who does not function as a destructive tempter but modestly expresses her resentment. She is not as erotic and revengeful as to be a femme fatale. She is a sympathetic creature.

Not Fatal But Protective: *Chushingura Version Yotsuya Ghost Story*

The most recent film version of the story of Oiwa, *Chushingura Version Yotsuya Ghost Story*²¹ directed in 1994 by Kinji Fukasaku, makes Oiwa less of a femme fatale than Misumi's. Fukasaku's ghost of Oiwa is clearly presented as a protector or guide for Iemon. Oiwa's happy life with Iemon is given an extended expression so that her unchanged love for Iemon even after her death may be understood.

The ways Misumi and Fukasaku shoot the rival women, Oiwa and Oume, are different from each other. Misumi depicts the temporary victory of Oume over Oiwa in the sequence of two palanquins. The palanquins carrying Iemon and Oume individually pass by Oiwa, who



figure 37



figure 38



figure 39



figure 40

is left alone to become jealous of Oume. Fukasaku on the other hand does not frame the rival women in the same shot but distinguishes Iemon's love for Oiwa from his forced bond with Oume by way of an interesting *mise-en-scène*. When shooting Iemon and Oiwa, the camera frequently frames them facing each other to indicate their harmonious, happy relationship (figure 37). But Iemon and Oume are positioned back to back by the same camera in the entertainment sequence where he plays a Japanese ancient guitar and she dances to the music (figure 38).

Fukasaku furthermore avoids shooting the encounter of Iemon and the deformed Oiwa so that the audience may witness only their happy days together. Unlike Misumi's reserved ghost, Fukasaku's ghost continually appears in front of Iemon. It is not because she wants to take revenge upon him but because she wants to help him in critical moments. She tries to save his life by repelling his pursuers. When he dies and becomes a ghost himself, Oiwa stays by his side and helps him understand what is going on. Occasionally she uses her supernatural power to kill those who plotted to poison her (figure 39). At the end of the film, Oiwa returns to being a beautiful woman and, exchanging intimate glances with Iemon (figures 40-41), walks with him in the snow with the implication that they will never separate from each other (figure 42).

The ghost of Oiwa is thus transformed into an efficient guide for Iemon in the most recent film version of *Yotsuya Ghost Story*. In the Japanese visual culture, a fierce femme fatale such as the original Oiwa in Nanboku's *Tokaido Yotsuya Kaidan* is reduced to a benevolent companion. The film versions of Oiwa's story testify to the reluctance to present a femme fatale visually, though such a woman is not uncommon in the Japanese literary culture.



figure 41



figure 42

A Femme Fatale or a Guardian Angel?: *Wuthering Heights*

A Japanese female ghost tends to become a protector or a guardian angel to her former lover who is still alive in this world. Even a woman betrayed by her husband such as Oiwa does not take revenge but expresses her everlasting love when she appears in front of him.

In western films, on the other hand, a female ghost accomplishes her work as a femme fatale. She causes the death of her beloved man and draws his soul into her world. No power works to prevent her plot. *Wuthering Heights* directed by Robert Fuest in 1970,²² for example, presents the ghost of Cathy as a femme fatale. Fuest expands the theme of femme fatale that is not fully developed but only hinted in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847), and makes the ghost of Cathy actively invite Heathcliff's death. Heathcliff in Fuest's film is led by Cathy's ghost to the place where Hindley has been waiting to shoot him (figures 43-44). Heathcliff enthusiastically looks at the ghost of Cathy, which in fact is the muzzle of Hindley's gun (figures 45-48). The next moment it fires. Turning into a gun to shoot Heathcliff, Cathy clarifies her identity as a femme fatale. Stumbling, Heathcliff goes to Peniston Crag where he spent his happy childhood days with Cathy. The ghost of Cathy looks very happy to see him expire (figures 49-50). At his death, the ghost of Heathcliff pops out and runs away with the ghost of Cathy on the moor. Heathcliff's death is triggered by this femme fatale so that she may get him.

In Peter Kosminsky's film version of *Wuthering Heights* (1992),²³ too, Heathcliff's death is occasioned by Cathy. He sees the ghost of Cathy and takes her hand (figures 51-52). The next moment he stands on the moor and embraces Cathy (figure 53). Meanwhile, the dead body of Heathcliff is found in a room in *Wuthering Heights* (figure 54).

In most western celluloid versions, Heathcliff dies with a suggested or clear indication that he reunites with Cathy. The Japanese version of *Wuthering Heights*, on the other hand, does not make Heathcliff die. Yoshishige Yoshida directed *Wuthering Heights*²⁴ in 1988. Though set in medieval wartime Japan, the film basically follows the plot of the novel. But it makes a striking change to Heathcliff's fate. In Yoshida's *Wuthering Heights*, Japanese Heathcliff fights with Hareton and, one arm cut off, is about to be slain by Hareton's long sword. At that time he abruptly shouts to Hareton "Wait" and, cautiously listening to the air, says: "Kinu [the name for Cathy] calls me, Kinu calls me" (figure 55). Hareton takes pity on him



figure 43



figure 44



figure 45



figure 46



figure 47

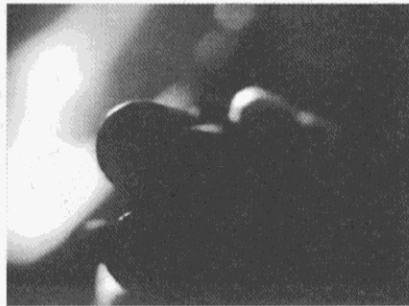


figure 48



figure 49



figure 50



figure 51

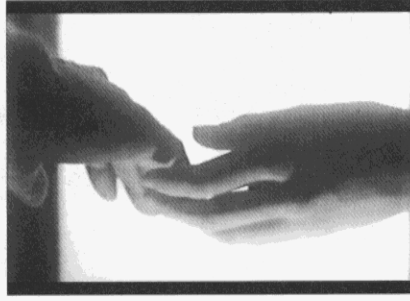


figure 52



figure 53



figure 54



figure 55



figure 56

and returns home without slaying him. Heathcliff's summon of Cathy's name prevents Hareton from killing Heathcliff. That is, Cathy does not cause Heathcliff's death; instead, she saves his life.

Heathcliff gets the coffin of Cathy and stands with it on the hill (figure 56). The closing shot reveals him slowly but stoutly stepping forward, dragging her coffin. Cathy does not function as a femme fatale but a guardian angel for Heathcliff. This change reflects the Japanese tendency to diminish the potential femme fatale. The Japanese *Wuthering Heights* clearly shows that a female figure that could be represented as a femme fatale in western culture tends to be depicted as a benign protector.



figure 57



figure 58



figure 59

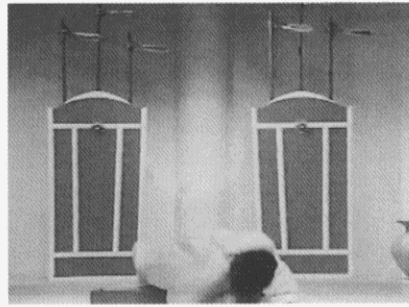


figure 60

A Sibyl Becoming a Femme Fatale: *Himiko*

The Japanese ghost films examined so far affirm that a female ghost does not function as a femme fatale though she could theoretically become one in that she returns to this world in order to snatch her beloved away to the other world. A sibyl is another example of someone who could exert a fatal power upon her prey. But she, too, enjoys little triumph as a femme fatale.

Both a sibyl and a ghost are related to the invisible world of God or Buddha. A sibyl “is selected to be wedded to God the husband and be given deity.”²⁵ And a ghost is a deified deceased person in the Japanese religious belief, where the words for dying or *jobutsu suru* literally mean to become a Buddha.²⁶

Himiko in Masahiro Shinoda’s *Himiko* (1974)²⁷ is a sibyl, conveying God’s words to her people. Anyone disobedient to her words must die. Even the king of her nation is killed by an attendant when he becomes suspicious of the authenticity of Himiko’s words and says: “These are not God’s words” (figures 57-60).

Himiko is forbidden to love a man, for she is supposed to be sexually united with Sun the God. The film opens with the ritual of Himiko’s intercourse with Sun. The light of Sun reflected by a mirror held by an attendant radiantly shines on the womb of Himiko, who rejoices in ecstasy (figures 61-64). The union of Himiko and Sun is frequently indicated until she meets her half brother called Takehiko. Having an affair with him, Himiko becomes “crazy for love,” as a new king suggests. Learning that Takehiko has become intimate with



figure 61



figure 62



figure 63



figure 64



figure 65



figure 66

one of her attendants, Himiko is enraged and orders him to be tortured and banished. Takehiko cannot escape from Himiko's web of jealousy and is eventually shot by numerous arrows. Himiko ruins her beloved man by her fanatic energy. She is a femme fatale.

Soon, however, Himiko is murdered by her people. She is worth having as a sibyl as long as she obediently stays in the place assigned to her. When it becomes clear that "Himiko is no longer the wife of God but a mere woman," as the new king points out, she is regarded as threatening and corrupting to the nation. She must be removed. The way she is murdered clarifies that her eroticism is feared. With her legs held apart by several men, Himiko is stabbed by a knife on her genitals (figures 65-66). Such female eroticism as to lead a man to death or destruction should be terminated.

A Triumphant Femme Fatale Made in France: *In the Realm of the Senses*

An exceptional film undauntedly portraying female eroticism is *In the Realm of the Senses*²⁸ directed by Nagisa Oshima in 1976. The film took the idea from the Abe Sada Case which involved a middle-aged woman and her lover in 1936 Tokyo. "An epochal incident in the development of sex consciousness in Japan,"²⁹ the Abe Sada Case reported in newspapers made it clear to the Japanese public that women had sexual desire.

The protagonist of the Abe Sada Case was a thirty-one-year-old woman named Sada. She began to work at a traditional restaurant as a live-in maid. She captivated Master Kichi at the first glance, and started having an affair with him in the house. To spend more time with her, Kichi let Sada quit her job and they continued their love affair outside the house. It was in a room at an inn that Sada and Kichi spent days in love-making until she strangled him. She further cut off his penis and testicles and wrote in blood on his body "Sada and Kichi Alone," and engraved her name on his left arm. Carrying the severed parts of Kichi in her bosom, Sada wandered through Tokyo until she was arrested on the fourth day. When the police took the parts away from her, Sada pleaded with them to give the parts back to her.

Sada's strong sexuality leading her to the desire to consume her lover was sensational at a time when sexual expressions were heavily suppressed in the public media. However, all Japan had sympathy for Sada, and when she had served her sentence and returned to society, she began to play her part in plays based on her story. Her sincere wish to be with Kichi was compassionately accepted by the people who felt that it justified her apparently cruel and crazy act of cutting off the genitals of her lover.

The details of the last days of Sada and Kichi can be found in the record of the preliminary hearing, on which most plays and films dealing with the Abe Sada Case are based. Taking the idea from the same record, however, Oshima's *In the Realm of the Senses* is entirely different from other works in that it eliminates the sympathetic part of the story, that is, Sada carrying her lover's genitals in her bosom for four days and asking the police to give them back to her when they were taken away.

Another film about Sada, directed in the previous year by Noboru Tanaka, *The True Story of Abe Sada*,³⁰ includes the episode of Sada wandering through Tokyo with her lover's genitals, with sentimental music scored edited on the sequence. Moreover, Tanaka's film lacks the most important element of Oshima's film, that is, the femme fatale motif. Tanaka makes his Sada explain why she wants to strangle Kichi: "I won't let you return to your home. I won't. I won't let your wife touch you any longer." Looking desperate and painful, she sits on Kichi to strangle him (figure 67). She even repeats "please forgive me" to Kichi five times.

Oshima's Sada, on the other hand, makes no excuse. She does not speak a word in the long-take murder sequence except calling her lover's name and indicating the start of strangling. The camera frames Kichi's face in close-up with a rope around his neck (figure 68). The shot of Kichi cuts to a close-up of Sada's face, revealing a radiant, blissful expression (figure 69). When the camera cuts back to Kichi's face, he is strangled (figure 70). The insertion of Sada's shot in Kichi's skillfully discloses her genuine rapture in sex. She strangles Kichi because she relishes ecstasy in so doing. She does not need any excuse for her murder; the femme fatale consumes her prey.



figure 67



figure 68



figure 69



figure 70

The first fully developed femme fatale film by a Japanese director, *In the Realm of the Senses* is not indexed under Japanese cinema. It was produced by Anatole Dauman in Argos Films (Paris). The film therefore reflects Dauman's preference for love combat between the sexes, magnifying the erotic exchanges of Sada and Kichi and eliminating Sada's pitiable wandering with the male genitals.

When it was imported from France to Japan in 1976, the film was retouched by customs. Its script with photographs was published in the same year in Japan only to lead the Tokyo Prosecutor to indict, by the Penal Code 175, Oshima and the publisher for obscenity, which was the beginning of the prolonged *Ai no Koriida* Case. It is difficult for femmes fatales fully to grow up in a cultural soil that is reluctant to admit women's strong eroticism causing men's destruction and death. Japan is a land where femmes fatales fear to tread.

A Mutation of the Femme Fatale Type: *Doubt*

Now briefly touching upon a sort of mutation of the femme fatale type in Japanese film, I will reiterate my conclusion that the femme fatale figure has not prevailed in Japanese visual culture. *Doubt*, directed by Yoshitaro Nomura in 1982,³¹ provides an interesting example of such a mutation. The female protagonist named Kumako seems to qualify as a femme fatale and she is, at some point, labeled as *akujo* or femme fatale. But she lacks something to be authentically called femme fatale.

Kumako is arrested on the charge of murdering her husband, Fukutaro, who has a life insurance policy of 300,000,000 yen. Fukutaro is drowned when their car falls in the water



figure 71



figure 72



figure 73



figure 74

from a pier, while Kumako saves her life by swimming out of the sinking car. The 300,000,000 yen case begins, and the first meeting of Kumako and Fukutaro is disclosed in a flashback. A widower devoted to work, Fukutaro meets Kumako in a Tokyo bar, where Kumako works as a hostess. In another flashback, a naked Fukutaro in bed proposes to Kumako in a bathrobe. This proposal sequence could show happy, erotic exchanges between the couple. But instead, the audience witnesses a pathetic-looking Fukutaro pleading with Kumako to marry him. The shot/reverse-shot of Kumako and Fukutaro reveals irritation on her face and agony on his (figures 71-72). When the camera shoots both of them in one frame, their power relations become clear. He desperately entreats while she looks sluggish and unconcerned (figure 73). On the shot is edited the following words of Fukutaro:

If you remain in Tokyo, I'll go crazy. Please marry me and come to Toyama. You may live as you like. I'll do whatever you wish. I promise. Please marry me, Kumako. Kumako. Please.

There is no eroticism but melancholy and despair.

Kumako marries Fukutaro only to find that he is deprived by his relatives of his inheritance. Infuriated, she shouts at him to sign as many life insurance contracts as possible. The close-up of her furious face cuts to the close-up of his sad, depressed face (figures 74-75). She throws and kicks the contract papers against him. He tries to calm her down, saying "All right, all right, I'll sign them all."

The audience may feel uneasy about considering *Doubt* a femme fatale film, for eroticism



figure 75

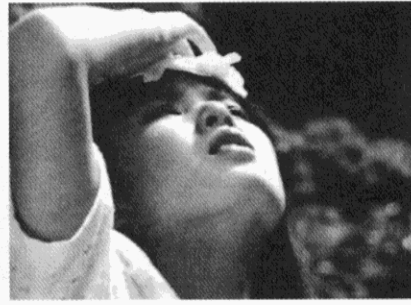


figure 76



figure 77

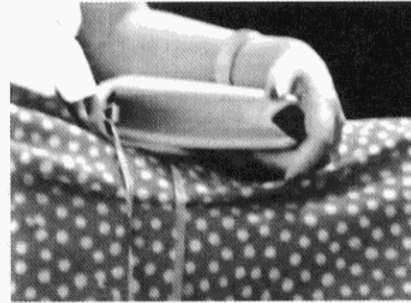


figure 78

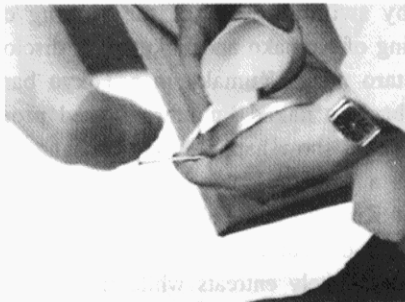


figure 79

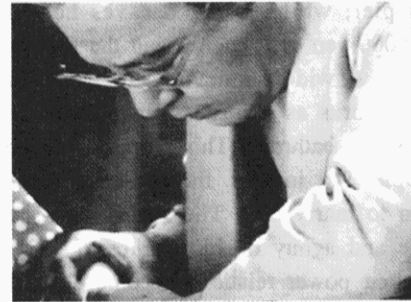


figure 80

is completely lacking in the relationship between Kumako and Fukutaro. If we replay the opening of the film, we will not overlook the deliberate camera work to deny eroticism to Kumako. The first close-up reveals Kumako's frowning face (figure 76). The camera then moves downward, showing no interest in any part of her body, until it reaches Fukutaro's hands taking off a sandal from Kumako's foot (figures 77-79). The woman's body does not interest the camera, but what the man is doing does. In the shot of Fukutaro's hands, Kumako's foot hangs from the upper left corner like a lump of flesh or fat. The camera begins to shoot Fukutaro, slowly climbing upward until it reaches his face (figure 80). It reveals the sad, depressed, and melancholic expression on his face. Their dialogue is edited on the shot:

Kumako: A pebble?

Fukutaro: No, something like a piece of glass

Kumako: Take it off, will you?

Fukutaro: Umm

This sandal sequence can be read as a drama of a daughter and her father. The daughter sticks her foot out to her overprotective father, who takes off her sandal and tries to take out something like a pebble. They thus deflect a femme fatale scenario into a story of an unruly woman who behaves like a spoiled daughter and a manageable man who behaves like a protective father. In a country where *In the Realm of the Senses* could not be produced, a woman who would be expressed as a femme fatale in another culture becomes an unruly daughter.

Kumako in *Doubt* is found innocent, for Fukutaro's letter to his son before the car accident reveals his decision to perform a double suicide or, strictly speaking, to kill her. Kumako and Fukutaro play a game, in a sense, to try the patience of each other. The father blows up, unable to put up with his willful daughter any longer.

A Japanese film incorporating the femme fatale motif follows the pattern that she is assigned the role of a ghost or a sibyl—or any “unreal” woman—and is either erased from the screen or transformed into a benevolent protector. A “real” woman is not allowed to triumph over her prey but is reduced to a spoiled daughter without destructive eroticism.

NOTES

1. *Double Indemnity*. 1944, U.S.A., 103 minutes, black & white, Warner and Brothers, directed by Billy Wilder, produced by Joseph Sistrom, screenplay by Laymond Chandler and Billy Wilder based on a James M. Cain's novel, starring Barbara Stanwick, Fred Macmallee, and Edward G. Robinson.
2. Mario Praz, *Romantic Agony*, trans. Angus Davidson (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), esp. Chapter IV (“LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI”), pp. 197-300.
3. Harold Bloom and Lionel Trilling, eds., *Romantic Poetry and Prose* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 535-536.
4. Harumi Hanayanagi in *Splendor of Life* (1918; screened in 1919) is usually regarded as the first Japanese actress, but Kikuo Yamamoto points out the appearance of the actress Yaoko Kinoshita in *Spring Rain* (1916), a Shinpa film made under the influence of American cinema. See Kikuo Yamamoto, *Influences of Foreign Films on Japanese Films: A Comparative Film Study* (Tokyo: Waseda University Press, 1983), pp. 86-91.
5. As for the details of the “Blue Bird films” and their influence on Japanese films, see Yamamoto, *op.cit.*, pp. 48-66.
6. Akira Iwasaki gives a succinct account of the efforts of Japanese film companies to employ actresses. See Akira Iwasaki, *A History of Cinema* (Tokyo: Toyokeizai-shinpo-sha, 1965). Tadashi Sato refers to Sumiko Kurishima as “the first woman super-star” in his study *Japanese Film History I, 1896-1940* (Tokyo: Iwanami-shoten, 1995), p. 177.
7. Though Kaeriyama's *Splendor of Life* and *The Maiden in the Mountains* are the first manifestations of the modernization movement, the first successful film that fully embodied the movement, says Tadashi Iijima, was *The Amateurs' Club*. Featuring Michiko Hayama in a bathing suit, *The Amateurs' Club* is, as Sato succinctly points out, a total sanction of “American modernism.” See Tadashi Iijima, “The Amateurs' Club,” in *The Great Films of the World: Japan*, ed. Kinema Junpo Editing Group (Tokyo: Kinema-Junpo-sha, 1982), pp. 6-7 and Sato, *Japanese Film History I*, p. 169.
8. The modern girls in literature and society in 1920s embodied various values, sometimes conflicting with one another, and cannot be reduced to the rather simplified erotic image that I outline here. In the films of twenties, however, their erotic enchantment was emphasized until their presence became a common sight towards the end of the thirties. For an overall summary of the modern girls in literature, see Sadami Suzuki, *Representations of Modern Cities: Self, Vision, and Woman*

- (Kyoto: Hakuji-sha, 1992), pp. 152-198. And for the definitions of modern girls, see Kiyoshi Kiyosawa, "Modern Girl" (1926) and Soichi Oya, "Moga A Hundred Percent" (1930), both of which appear in Sadami Suzuki, ed. *The Enchantment of Modern Girls* (Tokyo: Heibon-sha, 1989), pp. 403-430 and pp. 396-402 respectively.
9. *Flesh and the Devil*. 1927, U.S.A., 103 minutes, black & white, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Picture, directed by Clarence Brown, screenplay by Benjamin F. Glazer from the novel *The Undying Past* by Hermann Sudermann, starring John Gilbert and Greta Garbo.
 10. It became fashionable among Japanese women to draw the lines of their eyebrows after the style of Greta Garbo, as Kazuo Kodama points out in Kazuo Kodama and Chieo Yoshida, *A Social History of the Showa Film* (Tokyo: Shakai-shiso-sha, 1982), p. 26.
 11. *Walk Cheerfully / Hogaraka ni ayume*. 1930, Japan, 96 minutes, black & white, Shochiku, directed by Yasujiro Ozu, screenplay by Tadao Ikeda based on a Hiroshi Shimizu work, starring Minoru Takada, Hiroko Kawasaki, and Satoko Date.
 12. *The Lady and the Beard / Shukujo to Hige*. 1931, Japan, 74 minutes, black & white, Shochiku, directed by Yasujiro Ozu, screenplay by Komatsu Kitamura based on his work, starring Tokihiko Okada, Hiroko Kawasaki, and Satoko Date.
 13. *The Neighbor's Wife and One's Own / Madamu to Nyobo*. 1931, Japan, 57 minutes, black & white, Shochiku, directed by Heinosuke Gosho, screenplay by Komatsu Kitamura based on his work, starring Atsushi Watanabe, Kinuyo Tanaka, and Satoko Date.
 14. It is interesting that Kitazawa's "IT," which is deeply associated with the westernized, erotic image of women, predated the screening of Clarence Badger's *It* (1927). Clara Bow, the leading actress in the film, became the symbol of the modern girl, and "it" came to signify eroticism sparked by modern girls.
 15. *Seven Seas / Nanatsu no Umi*. 1930-31, Japan, 126 minutes, black & white, Shochiku, directed by Hiroshi Shimizu, screenplay by Takago Noda based on a Itsuma Maki work, starring Yukichi Iwata, Joji Oka, and Hiroko Kawasaki.
 16. *Ugetsu / Ugetsu Monogatari*. 1953, Japan, 97 minutes, black & white, Daiei, directed by Kenji Mizoguchi, screenplay by Matsutaro Kawaguchi and Yoshitaka Yorita based on a Akinari Ueda's work, starring Machiko Kyo, Masayuki Mori, Kinuko Tanaka, and Mitsuko Mito.
 17. *One Summer with Aliens / Ijintachi to no Natsu*. 1988, Japan, 108 minutes, color, Shochiku, directed by Nobuhiko Obayashi, screenplay by Moriichi Ichikawa, starring Toshio Kazama, Yuko Kotegawa, Tsurutaro Kataoka, and Kumiko Akiyoshi.
 18. Shigetoshi Kawatake, ed., *Tsuruya Nanboku IV, Tokaido Yotsuya Kaidan* (Tokyo: Iwanami-shoten, 1977).
 19. Quoted in Japanese in Masamichi Abe, *The Idea of Revenge in Japanese Culture: Ghost Stories* (Tokyo: Kadokawa-shoten, 1995), p. 199.
 20. *Yotsuya Ghost Story / Yotsuya Kaidan*. 1959, Japan, 84 minutes, color, Daiei, directed by Kenji Misumi, screenplay by Fuji Yatsuhiro based on a Tsuruya Nanboku play, starring Kazuo Hasegawa and Yasuko Nakata. According to research by Stuart Galbraith on the Japanese films released in the United States, Misumi's film is not the only Oiwa film introduced to the American audience. *The Ghost of Yotsuya* directed by Nobuo Nakagawa in 1959 was also released there with English subtitles, though Galbraith cannot determine the release date. See Stuart Galbraith, *The Japanese Filmography: A Complete Reference to 209 Filmmakers and the Over 1250 Films Released in the United States, 1900 through 1994* (North Carolina: McFarland, 1996), p. 182. But today Nakagawa's film is neither screened in any movie theater nor available in the form of videotape.
 21. *Chushingura Version Yotsuya Ghost Story / Chushingura Gaiden Yotsuya Kaidan*. 1994, Japan, 114 minutes, color, Shochiku, directed by Kinji Fukasaku, screenplay by Motomu Furuta and Kinji Fukasaku based on Tsuruya Nanboku's play, starring Koichi Sato, Saki Takaoka, and Masahiko Tsugawa.
 22. *Wuthering Heights*. 1970, U.S.A. and U.K., 105 minutes, color, directed by Robert Fuest, screenplay by Patrick Tirry based on Emily Brontë's novel, starring Anna Calder Marchal, Timothy Dunton, and Harry Andrews.
 23. *Wuthering Heights*. 1992, U.K., 105 minutes, color, directed by Peter Kosminsky, screenplay by Ann Deblin based on Emily Brontë's novel, starring Juliet Binosch, Ralf Fines, and Sinned O'Conner.
 24. *Wuthering Heights / Arashi ga Oka*. 1988, Japan, 133 minutes, color, Saison, directed by Yoshishige Yoshida, screenplay by Yoshishige Yoshida, based on Emily Brontë's novel, music by Toru Takemitsu, starring Yusaku Matsuda, Yuko Tanaka, Tatsuo Nadai, and Eri Ishida.
 25. Junko Nishiguchi, "Gender and Genealogy," in *Sibyls and Goddesses*, eds. Kazuo Osumi and Junko Nishiguchi (Tokyo: Heibon-sha, 1989), p. 141.
 26. Kazuo Osumi, "Memorandum on Women and Buddhism," in *Sibyls and Goddesses*, pp. 310-311.
 27. *Himiko*. 1974, Japan, 100 minutes, color, Hyogen-sha and ATG, directed by Masahiro Shinoda, screenplay by Taeko

- Yomioka, starring Shima Iwashita, Masao Kusakari, and Rentaro Mikuni.
28. *In the Realm of the Senses / Ai no Koriida*. 1976, France and Japan, 104 minutes, color, Argos Films, directed and screenplay by Nagisa Oshima, produced by Anatole Dauman, starring Tatsuya Fuji and Eiko Matsuda.
29. Tadao Sato, "The True Story of Abe Sada," in *The Great Films of the World: Japan*, p. 376.
30. *The True Story of Abe Sada / Jitsuroku Abe Sada*. 1975, Japan, 76 minutes, color, Nikkatsu, directed by Noboru Tanaka, screenplay by Akio Ido, starring Junko Miyashita and Hideaki Esumi.
31. *Doubt / Giwaku*. 1982, Japan, 126 minutes, color, Shochiku and Kiri Production, directed by Yoshitaro Nomura, screenplay by Seicho Matsumoto based on his novel, starring Kaori Momoi, Shima Iwashita, Eitaro Ozawa, and Isuzu Yamada.

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——ファム・ファタールが住みにくい国——
——エロティシズムと日本映画

今泉 容子

要旨: ファム・ファタールは強いセクシュアリティによって男をとりこにして、その運命を破滅へ導く。アメリカ映画では1940年代から50年代のフィルム・ノワールの時代にファム・ファタールたちが豪勢に花咲いた。もっともファム・ファタールはサイレント映画期から登場してはいた。

日本では、1910年代末から20年代にかけて帰山教正の「純映画劇」運動がおこり、映画のモダニズム化がすすめられたが、そのとき影響力をもったのがアメリカのサイレント映画。女優が誕生して、西洋的なモダンガールがスクリーンに出現しはじめた。モダンガールたちの特徴のひとつは「エロ100パーセント」と形容されるように強力なエロティシズムだったが、彼女たちはファム・ファタールにはなりえなかった。

1940年代後半になると、アメリカ映画の影響がふたたび強くなり、セクシュアルな恋愛が描かれるようになり、キス・シーンも登場するようになる。そうしたなかで『雨月物語』の若狭のようなファム・ファタールが出現する。ところが家父長的な力が働いて、彼女はすぐにスクリーンから抹消させられる。

ファム・ファタールが抹消されたり抑圧されたりする例を、1930年代はじめのサイレントから1990年代の映画にまでたどっていく。男を死にいたらしめるほど強力な女のエロティシズムを認容しないところに日本の映像文化の一面を見ようとするのが、このエッセイである。考察する映画は、『朗らかに赤め』『淑女と髭』『マダムと女房』『七つの海』『雨月物語』『四谷怪談』『卑弥呼』『実録阿部定』『愛のコリーダ』『疑惑』『異人たちとの夏』『嵐が丘』『忠臣蔵外伝 四谷怪談』。