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TRANSFIGURING THE FEMALE: WOMEN AND GIRLS ENGAGING THE
TRANSNATIONAL IN LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY JAPAN

BY

JAMES WELKER

DISSERTATION

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Dissertation Committee:

Professor Ronald P. Toby, Chair
Associate Professor Karen L. Kelsky, Director of Research
Associate Professor Martin F. Manalansan, IV
Assistant Professor Robert T. Tierney

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines three spheres of women and adolescent girls who overtly challenged gender and sexual norms in late twentieth century Japan: the women involved in the *ūman ribu* [women’s liberation] movement and the *rezubian* [lesbian] community, as well as young women artists and girl readers of what I call queer *shōjo* manga [girls’ comics]. The individuals in these three spheres found the normative understanding of “women” untenable and worked to destabilize it in part through “transfiguring” elements appropriated from a loosely defined West. Based on both archival research and interviews, this dissertation specifically focuses on uses, effects, and experiences of transfiguration both within and beyond these spheres. The primary chronologic focus of this study is the 1970s and 1980s, when these three spheres emerged, then variously flourished, faltered, fragmented, and took on new forms. At times, I do, however, trace threads both backward to the beginning of the twentieth century—to point to deeper transnational roots than may be immediately apparent—and forward to the beginning of the twenty-first century—to show some of the effects of the cultural work of these women and girls.

The introduction situates this project within existing scholarship and introduces “transfiguration,” the central concept I use to frame this study. Chapter two, “Trajectories,” provides histories of the three spheres at the heart of this work. Chapter three, “Terminology,” draws on archives stretching back to the beginning of the twentieth century to trace the transnational etymologies of three terms used within and about these spheres: “*ūman ribu*” [women’s lib], “*rezubian*” [lesbian], and “*shōnen ai*” [boys’ love]. Chapter four, “Translation,” examines direct translations and other transfigurations of early radical feminist writing from the US, the landmark texts *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (1971) and *The Hite Report* (1976), as well as

twentieth century literature with an eye toward acts and impacts of translation. Chapter five, “Travel” considers the effects of real and vicarious voyages both on these spheres and on the individuals within them. Finally, the conclusion offers reflections on how engagements with the transnational shaped the *ribu*, *rezubian*, and queer *shōjo* manga spheres, the women and adolescent girls within them, and, ultimately, the meaning of “women” in Japan.

This dissertation shows that, while some women turned to what they perceived as an advanced West for solutions to or an escape from local issues, most were firmly focused on the local—even as they selectively adapted, even celebrated, Western practices. For the majority of even the most radical women, the Western turn was not a turn away from Japan. Rather, it was integral to being a modern woman *within* Japan. More significantly, among women and girls in the *ūman ribu* movement, the *rezubian* community, and the queer *shōjo* manga sphere—and, ultimately, beyond it—the act of transfiguring Western cultural practices into something locally meaningful, as well as the products thereof, resulted not just in change at the individual and community level, but the transfiguration of the category “women” in Japan. This more expansive notion of the female accommodated not merely a significantly increased number of public roles not bound to being a mother or a wife but a greater diversity of gender and sexual expression.

For the women in Japan who have imagined different worlds
and strived to create them

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A NOTE ON LANGUAGE AND NAMES

Japanese words are transliterated into Roman letters using the Hepburn system, with macrons used to indicate long *o* and *u* sounds, except for words and place names commonly used in English. In Japanese, which does not place spaces between words, multi-word terms transcribed from European languages are often, if inconsistently, separated with a black dot—a *nakaguro*—to indicate a separation between words. To give a sense of the inconsistency of transcription in Japanese, when I transcribe these words into Roman letters, I indicate the presence or absence of *nakaguro* with the presence or absence of a space.

Japanese names are given in their natural order of surname preceding given name, except for references to English writing in which the author has adopted the English name order. In keeping with Japanese convention, the novelists Mori Ōgai and Inagaki Taruho, are referred to by their given names. I have also deviated in the Romanization of names in accordance with individuals' spelling preferences. Many individuals in the *ribu* and *rezubian* communities used pseudonyms within the communities. With the exception of those individuals who have since publicly linked their pseudonym with their real name, I refer to women by the name(s) by which they were known in the community without indicating whether it is a pseudonym. I indicate those pseudonyms I assigned by enclosing them in quotation marks the first time I use them.

Finally, while I am uncomfortable with expressions like “female artist,” which tend to imply a male standard, I make use of such awkward locutions—along with “male journalist” and so on—when the sex of an individual is relevant but cannot otherwise easily be inferred. I do so for the sake of readers unfamiliar with Japanese given names, which usually indicate an individual's sex.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

At the opening of the 1970s, certain women and adolescent girls in Japan began to challenge gender and sexual norms in novel ways. Their various moves for change came on the heels of over a decade of rapid economic growth, accompanied by increasing consumer comforts as well as sometimes dramatic citizen protests. Between 1970 and 1971, three new spheres of women and girls began to take form and to take on the norms that compelled them to be first passive girlfriends, then “good wives and wise mothers,” forestalling other possibilities.¹ These three spheres—the women involved in the *ūman ribu* [women’s liberation] movement and those in the *rezubian* [lesbian] community, as well as young women artists and girl readers of what I am calling queer *shōjo* manga [girls’ comics]—responded to these norms in often quite distinct ways. What they had in common was, above all, their engagement in acts and activities that overtly and covertly worked to undermine or circumvent the normative understanding of the category “women.”² In addition, these spheres all selectively and creatively deployed “transfigured” elements—texts, ideas, images, practices, and the like—appropriated from Euro-American cultures to use as tools to carry out this project. In the following pages, I examine the *ribu*, *rezubian*, and queer *shōjo* manga spheres with an emphasis on the use, effects, and experience of this process of transfiguration both within and beyond these three social collectivities. Through their creative transnational engagements, building upon the layers of

¹ The “good wife, wise mother” (*ryōsai kenbo*) paradigm dates to the Meiji era and has been linked to both early modern and modern understandings of Japanese womanhood. See Kathleen S. Uno, “Womanhood, War, and Empire: Transmutations of ‘Good Wife, Wise Mother’ Before 1931,” in *Gendering Modern Japanese History*, ed. Barbara Molony and Kathleen S. Uno (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2005), 494. Kathleen Uno has argued that this paradigm “remained influential in Japan into the late 1980s.” See Kathleen S. Uno, “The Death of ‘Good Wife, Wise Mother’?” in *Postwar Japan as History*, ed. Andrew Gordon (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993) 303.

² I use the plural “women” here rather than “woman” in recognition that even narrowly defined categories such as “women” under a patriarchal system operate in the plural, based on numerous factors including, in the case of Japan, age, class, educational background, occupation, and ethnic or other social background.

transfiguration imbricated in the construction of contemporary Japanese culture, these women and girls transfigured not just the “foreign” but also the meaning of “women” in Japan.

The primary chronologic focus of my study is the 1970s and 1980s, when these spheres emerged, then variously flourished, faltered, fragmented, and took on new forms. At times, I do, however, trace threads both backward to the beginning of the twentieth century—to point to deeper transnational roots than may be immediately apparent—and forward to the beginning of the twenty-first century—to show some of the effects of the cultural work of these women and girls. Like many social and cultural phenomena, the nature of these amorphous spheres makes them impossible to precisely define in terms of moment of origin or composition, and in the case of the *ribu* movement when or whether it has ceased to be. These three spheres’ overlapping memberships complicates matters further.

Initially the most prominent of these spheres, the *ūman ribu* movement first drew widespread public attention with a protest rally for “women’s liberation” (*onna kaihō*) held in Tokyo’s fashionable Ginza district on October 21, 1970. Its existence as a “movement” prior to this is somewhat hazy. Did it begin when *ribu*’s soon-to-be de facto leader and most prominent spokesperson Tanaka Mitsu began handing out pamphlets several months earlier? Or did it start with the small groups, such as Thought Collective S.E.X., which had already formed that year around the goal of women’s liberation and, often, the belief that a reexamination of sex/sexuality (*sei*) was key to accomplishing that objective? Or did it, in fact, come into being at the *ribu* retreat held the following year in Nagano, where for the first time hundreds of *ribu*-identified women from around the country would meet in person and draw new strength and energy from each other?

Who precisely should be counted as having been involved in the *ribu* movement is

similarly difficult to enumerate. In most discourse on *ribu*, whether from within or without, the movement is positioned as distinct from earlier women's movements in Japan—a product of a new generation of women, many of whom were university students or recent graduates. And, yet some older women, including those involved in earlier women's activism were directly involved as well in this new movement. Previous generations of women activists were associated with the quest for “*fujin kaihō*,” a term for “women's liberation” that the *ribu* women rejected for its old-fashioned and bourgeois connotations.³ *Fujin kaihō* in the pre- and postwar—as well as certain streams of “*feminizumu*” [feminism] that have become increasingly prominent from the late 1970s—might best be classified as representing strains of “liberal feminism,” seeking to expand rights and opportunities for women without attempting to undo the social fabric or redefine “woman” on a fundamental level.⁴ By contrast, the *ribu* women referred to themselves instead as engaging in “*josei kaihō*” or, more radically, “*onna kaihō*.” Both expressions also mean “women's liberation,” but the dated term “*fujin*”—meaning woman or lady, almost certainly married with children—has been superseded by the relatively neutral term for woman, “*josei*,” or its more blunt—and assertive—counterpart, “*onna*,” neither of which gives an indication of a woman's marital status. Fujieda Mioko (1930–), a feminist a generation older than most in the *ribu* movement but who later took part in *ribu* activities, notes that when the *ribu* women adopted “*onna*” as their preferred term, it was widely considered vulgar and some women experienced a definite resistance to using it. *Ribu* activists' choice to dispense with “*fujin*” and to call themselves and each other “*josei*” or “*onna*” was a declaration of independence from the roles of wife and mother, and—particularly in the use of “*onna*”—from

³ See Inoue Teruko, *Joseigaku to sono shūhen* (Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 1980), 178–81.

⁴ See the discussion of liberal feminism in chapter one of Rosemarie Putnam Tong, *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction*, 2nd ed., (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1998).

normative notions of femininity.⁵ *Ribu* activist Yonezu Tomoko (1948–) explains that “*onna*” had a very base image, implying an inferior woman, with no ability, no education, and no career, in addition to being, in some male discourse, a sexual object. As Yonezu explained to me, it was precisely because of what “*onna*” implied that in order “to liberate ‘myself=*onna*,’ to insist that ‘I’ am not inferior, [we in the movement] used not ‘*josei*’ but the word ‘*onna*.’”⁶ In fact, in much *ribu* discourse both words were used almost but not quite interchangeably, but, as I understand it, with “*onna*” conveying a greater sense of power and pride than “*josei*.” In addition, toward the end of 1970, under circumstances that will be examined in chapter three, these women came to identify themselves and their movement with the terms “*ūman ribu*” and “*ribu*.”

While *ribu* activists were concerned with many of the same issues as earlier women’s movements, such as motherhood and discrimination, what set this new movement apart was the centrality given to sex and sexuality in their discourse of women’s and personal liberation. This foregrounding of women’s sex and sexuality, more than anything else, that helps to link the *ribu* sphere with the concerns of the *rezubian* and queer *shōjo* manga spheres. While many of the perhaps hundreds of small *ribu* groups around the country were loosely networked and dialogued via exchange of *mini-komi* [“mini communications,” that is, newsletters/zines], as well as at various gatherings and events, there have been no definitive tallies of groups or their memberships.⁷ For the purposes of this study, women who at any point affiliated with a *ribu*

⁵ Fujieda Mioko, “Nihon no josei undō: ribu saikō,” *Joseigaku nenpō* 11 (1990): 3.

⁶ Yonezu Tomoko, interview with author, June 2009.

⁷ Yonezu has estimated the number of groups around the country to be in the hundreds at the movement’s peak. Cited in Muto Ichiyo, “The Birth of the Women’s Liberation Movement in the 1970s,” in *The Other Japan: Conflict, Compromise, and Resistance Since 1945*, ed. Joe Moore (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1997), 158.

Mini-komi, Japanese shorthand for “mini communication,” are periodicals produced regularly or irregularly and ranging in appearance and scope from simple newsletters to glossy magazines. The earliest of these were often hand-written and mimeographed rather than word-processed and photocopied. In the *ribu* sphere, members of one group sometimes published essays in the *mini-komi* of others, and cross-promotion and analysis of the contents of the *mini-komi* of other groups was a staple of the genre within the *ribu* sphere.

Mini-komi were first used in the student movement of the 1960s. Primarily distributed among members and

group or participated in a *ribu* event or even identified with the *ribu* movement from afar might be considered in some way a part of the *ribu* sphere.

In spite of—or perhaps because of—its infusion in the first half of the 1970s by a degree of energy, enthusiasm, and spirit that words can hardly begin to capture, the *ribu* movement began to lose steam in the middle of the decade. And while feminist activism has continued in various forms, involving many of the same women, the word “*ribu*” lost its cachet and had largely faded from public discourse by the end of the 1970s. Some *ribu* women would go on to identify as “*feminisuto*” [feminist] after that word was reclaimed in the late 1970s, while other *ribu* women were to reject both the idea of “*feminizumu*,” which they perceived to be more academic than activist, and the related field of women’s studies (*joseigaku*). My focus in this project is on the discourse of the *ribu* sphere, rather than the strains of feminism that developed later. And, although I do situate *ribu* within a loosely defined notion of feminism and trace certain threads from *ribu* forward into later feminist activities, it is beyond the scope of my project to tease out the distinction between *ribu* and other feminisms, which is largely idiosyncratic—as is clear from later reflections on *ribu* by former activists.⁸

Just two months after that first *ribu* demonstration in October, artist Takemiya Keiko published a short *shōnen ai* [boys love] manga narrative in the commercial press, marking the emergence of a new genre of *shōjo* manga depicting boy-boy rather than boy-girl romance, a new genre around which fans and other artists would coalesce.⁹ But perhaps this queer sphere began in actuality with the serialization in 1974 of Hagio Moto’s *shōnen ai* tale *The Heart of*

shared with other groups, some *ribu mini-komi* were available at a limited number of leftist bookstores. Not yet completely supplanted by the internet, today some *mini-komi* can be found at women’s centers as well. A sense of the diversity of *mini-komi* as well as of the scope of the *ribu* community can be had by perusing the writing produced by a seemingly endless number of groups contained in the oversized, three-volume collection, Mizoguchi Akiyo, Saeki Yōko, and Miki Sōko, eds., *Shiryō Nihon ūman ribu shi*, 3 vols. (Kyoto: Shōkadō Shoten, 1992–1995).

⁸ I found this to be the case both in interviews conducted with activists and in the many roundtable discussions and other essays that have been published.

⁹ Takemiya Keiko, “Sanrūmu nite,” in her *Sanrūmu nite* (1970; Tokyo: San Komikkusu, 1976).

Thomas, which is far better remembered and has sometimes (erroneously) been called the beginning of the genre.¹⁰ Or, we might say it really came together with the female middle and high school students who, in thrall to the work of Hagio and others, formed the vast majority of participants at the first “Comic Market” event in Tokyo in 1975. The publication in October 1978 of the premier issue of *June*, the first commercial magazine focused on the new genre that would at last allow fans around the country to communicate with each other as well as with some of their favorite artists, might also be said to mark a beginning of sorts.

The queer *shōjo* manga sphere is far and away the largest of the three spheres under consideration in my project, and the most challenging to define. Based on mere readership of queer *shōjo* manga, a majority of adolescent and even pre-adolescent girls from the 1970s onward would fall into this camp, as well as a number of boys and adult women and men. In the 1970s, these texts were drawn by some of the most popular—and mainstream—*shōjo* manga artists, who over the course of the decade, developed a degree of celebrity in popular culture. Some of the pioneering boy-boy romance manga printed by commercial presses were themselves discussed enough in the popular media to stimulate curiosity across a broad spectrum of the population.¹¹ Rather than the casual or simply curious reader, I provisionally delimit the queer *shōjo* manga sphere to encompass those passionate readers who read such texts repeatedly, who sought out new ones, who bought or borrowed magazines such as *June* and *Allan (Aran)* catering to fans of *shōnen ai* manga, and who may have written in letters to these magazines, sharing their thoughts about these texts and related topics with other readers, artists, and editors.¹² While I

¹⁰ Hagio Moto, *Tōma no shinzō* (1974; Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1995).

¹¹ Articles discussed the *shōnen ai* genre in high- and lowbrow magazines alike. See, for instance, the lowbrow treatment of the genre in Bishōnen-dan, “Ima, kiken na ai ni mezameru toki.....ka na?” *Takarajima* (December 1979); and the highbrow in Hagio Moto and Yoshimoto Hiroaki, “Jiko hyōgen toshite no shōjo manga,” *Yuriika* 13, no. 9 (July 1981), especially 89–92.

¹² *June* even ran a letters column called, in English, “Readers’ Writers’ and Editors’ Bedroom.”

will primarily focus on the production and consumption of manga, similar narratives appeared in prose form in these and other magazines, leading by the early 1980s to periodicals dedicated to them, such as *Shōsetsu June* [*June* fiction]. As evident in letters and editorial content in the pages of *June* and *Allan*, and in letters from female readers in *homo* magazines like *Barazoku* [Rose tribe], as well as later during the gay boom of the 1990s, this fandom also extended beyond just the consumption of works produced locally by women and by the late 1970s incorporated representations of homosexuality produced by *homo* men in Japan as well as gay art, fiction, pornography, and reportage from and about gay cultures abroad.

This sphere was not simply one of reception and interpretation, however. I also count artists as integral. Born at roughly the same time as most *ribu* activists as well as the women who established the *rezubian* community, the professional artists who developed *shōnen ai* and other commercial queer *shōjo* manga saw themselves as intervening with the genre in readers' lives, liberating *shōjo* readers from normative restrictions that positioned females as passive players in the romance script, as well as innocent and uninterested in sexuality. For this reason, some artists, later specifically identified the genre as "*feminisuto*" in effect—although not all feminists or former *ribu* activists agree.¹³ This also helps explain why girls who would grown up to identify as "*rezubian*" or otherwise queer found *shōnen ai* texts particularly influential to them during their formative years.¹⁴ Artists were not just creating queer texts with readers in mind, however,

¹³ See, e.g., Takemiya Keiko, "Josei wa gei ga suki?" *Bungei shunshū* 71, no. 6 (June 1993). Mizoguchi Akiko describes the male-male homoerotic genre of *yaoi*—which developed in part out of *shōnen ai*—as a lesbian-feminist genre. See her "Mōsōryoku no potensharu: rezubian feminisuto janru toshite no yaoi," *Yuriika* 39, no. 7 (June 2007). By contrast, while she was herself formerly a devoted reader of the genre, former *ribu* activist Nakano Fuyumi, for instance, sees "*yaoi*," a queer *shōjo* manga genre discussed below, as discriminatory toward women by denying them affirmation through their narrative absence. See Nakano Fuyumi, "Yaoi hyōgen to sabetsu: onna no tame no porunogurafii o tokihogusu," *Josei raifusutairu kenkyū* no. 4 (November 1994). While most former *ribu* activists were already in their twenties when the earliest queer *shōjo* manga was produced, and thus, they say, too old to have read it at the time, several with whom I have spoken indicated that they had been fans of the genre, and one woman had even published *yaoi* novellas.

¹⁴ See, for instance, the discussion of these texts in *Aniisu*, "Komyuniti no rekishi, 1971–2001: nenpyō to

but also actively engaged in exchange with readers, including responding to letters from fans and even incorporating fan suggestions into their own work. Further blurring the distinction between artist and reader, the girl readers themselves were also actively producing drawings, manga narratives, and stories on *shōnen ai* and other queer themes, both for sharing among friends and broader readerships. Indeed, reader submissions formed a significant part of magazines like *June*, which ran regular features in which readers could have their work critiqued by professionals. Finally, a further step removed from the commercial sphere, the production and consumption of queer *shōjo* manga has from the beginning constituted a large part of the amateur manga scene, which revolves around the Comic Market. It was the Comic Market that, by the end of the decade, fostered the emergence of the more graphic, less plot driven male-male erotic genre of *yaoi*, still primarily drawn by and for adolescent girls and young women. From early on, *yaoi* often involved the parodying *shōnen* manga [boys' comics], and their refiguration into male-male romance narratives. While classic *shōnen ai* texts remained (and remain) popular, this more literary style was ultimately overtaken by texts favoring sexual over narrative climax. *Yaoi* consumption and production came into its own in the 1990s as a commercially viable genre, increasingly called “*bōizu rabu*” [boys love] and “BL” (pronounced “*bii eru*”) and increasingly a global phenomenon.¹⁵

A full year after the *shōjo* manga magazine with Takemiya's *shōnen ai* narrative hit the

intabyū de furikaeru” (Summer 2001): 35. Elsewhere I speculate that these early *shōnen ai* works were influential on women who would later identify as “*rezubian*” or otherwise queer because of their openness to “lesbian” readings, while the few female-female narratives to be found in the 1970s and early 1980s were largely dark and unappealing. See James Welker, “Beautiful, Borrowed, and Bent: Boys’ Love as Girls’ Love in *Shōjo* Manga,” *Signs* 31, no. 3 (2006).

¹⁵ As discussed in chapter three, distinctions are sometimes made between *yaoi* and BL, but for the majority of casual readers the terms are roughly synonymous. On BL as a global phenomenon, see Andrea Wood, “‘Straight’ Women, Queer Texts: Boy-Love Manga and the Rise of a Global Counterpublic,” *Women’s Studies Quarterly* 34, no. 1/2 (2006). Around 2000, a global fandom emerged centering around the consumption of images of female homosexuality in *shōjo* manga, which has been labeled “*yuri*” (lily). The primary audience for *yuri* is a mix of heterosexual men and variously queer women.

bookstores, a twenty-one-year-old woman used a message-exchange notebook in the back of an adult bookstore near Tokyo's Shinjuku Station to find other women who, like her, were “*rezu*” [lez]. This was first step in the creation of Wakakusa no Kai [Young Grass Club], an organization later identified as the beginning of Japan's “*rezubian komyuniti*.” Yet, as much as the group's founder later tried to reach out to women around Japan through advertisements and media appearances, is it fair to call describe the women cramming her post office box with letters a “community”? Self-identified *rezubian feminisuto* [lesbian feminists] would later criticize the group, perhaps unjustly, for being little more than a glorified dating service. For some, the emergence of *rezubian-feminisuto* activism in the mid-1970s itself constituted the beginning of the *rezubian* community.

The use, dating largely from the 1990s, of the word “*komyuniti*” among self-identified *rezubian* and other women in Japan seems, on one level, to include all women in Japan romantically or sexually attracted to other women and who participate in the community by, for example, attending community events, subscribing to a community publication, or going from time to time to a community space. So defined, the true origins of this community become more ambiguous than the narrative dating the community back to just Wakakusa no Kai. While there were no women-only “*rezubian bars*” prior to the 1980s, there was, in fact, a limited bar scene dating back at least to the 1950s, including, by the 1960s, bars featuring “dandy beauties” (*dansō no reijin*)—women in male drag—which drew on the popular appeal of the Takarazuka Revue and similar all-female musical theater troupes.¹⁶ While such bars catered to an ostensibly heterosexual crowd, women attracted to other women could go there to meet others like

¹⁶ Histories of these bars can be found in Shiba Fumiko, “Shōwa rokujū [*sic*] nendai rezubian būmu,” in *Tanbi shōsetsu, gei bungaku bukkugaido*, ed. Kakinuma Eiko and Kurihara Chiyo (Tokyo: Byakuya Shobō, 1993); and Toyama Hitomi, “Dansō no reijin no jidai,” in her *Miss dandi: otoko toshite ikiru joseitachi* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1999).

them—whether they identified as *josei no homo* [female homos] or *dōseiaisha* [homosexuals]; or, by the late 1960s, as *resubian*, *rezubian*, or *rezu*; or none of those. There is evidence to suggest a sense of camaraderie and connectedness among these women created at least a limited sense of community.¹⁷ Nevertheless, the founding of Wakakusa no Kai in 1971 was a milestone: this was the first time a small group of women attempted to establish a tangible space of their own—if only at monthly tea parties—where, shielded from the outside world, they could meet others like them. In recognition of this, and in parallel with my studies of the *ribu* and queer *shōjo* manga spheres established by and for women at the beginning of the 1970s, I follow histories produced within the *rezubian* community itself in situating Wakakusa no Kai as its symbolic starting point.¹⁸

A majority of those generally included in discourse within and about the *rezubian* community are unmarried, female-bodied women who identify as “*rezubian*.” For the sake of simplicity, I use “*rezubian*” to point to members of this loosely defined community rather than the identities claimed by specific individuals. Although this runs the risk of erasing those who differ from the majority, the women whose experiences and discourse I directly examine in this research have claimed the label “*rezubian*” for themselves. Yet, I also acknowledge that the community has always been diverse. While Wakakusa no Kai was criticized by *rezubian feminisuto* for admitting married women, who were benefiting from rather than working to quash the patriarchal system, over 21 percent of respondents in a mid-1980s survey of community members conducted by *rezubian feminisuto* were either currently married or had divorced, suggesting that they were a significant presence in the community.¹⁹ This survey itself assumed

¹⁷ See for instance the roundtable discussion, Saijō Michio et al., “Zadankai: josei no homo makari tōru,” *Fūzoku kagaku* (March 1955).

¹⁸ E.g., *Aniisu* “Komyuniti no rekishi,” 29.

¹⁹ This survey, discussed in greater detail in chapter four, was distributed through *rezubian* groups and bars,

participants to be “*rezubian*.”²⁰ Later surveys in community publications would not always be so identitarian, often asking rather than assuming the identities of those who counted themselves as members of the community; and respondents included those who identified themselves as bisexual or asexual, or as female-to-male or male-to-female transgender.²¹ The commercial *rezubian* magazine *Anise* also regularly featured columns by male-to-female transsexual and self-identified *rezubian feminisuto* Mako Sennyō. The *rezubian feminisuto* movement itself emerged largely out of the *ribu* movement and included women for whom being a *rezubian* was a political choice rather than rooted in an innate desire for other women—at times a major point of contention. And, in spite of sometimes profound wounds felt on account of their invisibility or the harassment they occasionally felt from other *ribu* activists, *ribu* women who also identified as *rezubian* represent a clear point of overlap between the *ribu* and *rezubian* spheres.

The *rezubian* community really came into its own in the 1990s, with new organizations, events, and spaces, sometimes created in cooperation with the *gei* community. This development built on the foundations laid by *rezubian* in the 1970s and 1980s and was aided by changing economic and social conditions that made it easier to reject a heteronormative life course, as well as by a “gay boom” (*gei būmu*) in the media—a boom which developed in no small part as a result of queer *shōjo* manga fandom in the previous two decades.²²

and advertized in the correspondence sections of a limited number of magazines See Hirosawa Yumi [Sawabe Hitomi] and *Rezubian Ripōto-han*, “Rezubian ripōto: Nihon de hajimete! 234-nin no rezubian ni yoru shōgen,” in Bessatsu Takarajima, no. 64, *Onna o ai suru onnatachi no monogatari* (Tokyo: JICC Shuppankyoku, 1987), 151, 157.

²⁰ Question two in the aforementioned survey asks, “At what age did you realize you were a *rezubian* (a woman who loves women)?” See *ibid.*, 284.

²¹ For instance, the first question in a survey included in a special feature on community history in the commercial *rezubian* magazine *Anise* asks, “What sexuality (*sekushuariti*) do you identify as?” See *Anisu*, “Komyuniti no rekishi,” 72. Similar questions appear in surveys printed in other issues of the magazine.

²² The gay boom is sometimes considered to have started with the publication of a special “Gay Renaissance” issue of the young women’s magazine *Crea* (*Kurea*, 1989–), whose readers grew up reading *shōjo* manga, including *shōnen ai*. See *Kurea*, “Gei runessansu ’91,” special feature, February 1991. For a discussion of the gay boom, see Wim Lunsing, “Gay Boom in Japan: Changing Views of Homosexuality?” *Thamyris* 4, no. 2 (1997).

Transfiguration

Each of these spheres is at once a local construction and a product of transnational flows. The now global “boys love” manga sphere—with its amateur and commercial translations and dubs of Japanese manga and anime into many Asian and European languages, as well as innumerable original works—is considered in the discourse of its consumers and producers to have emanated from Japan. And, indeed, *shōnen ai* manga and its successors are indisputably a product of a confluence of events and conditions in Japan. Yet, an examination of the origins and development of queer *shōjo* manga in Japan demonstrate that it arguably would not have come to be, at least not in the form it took in the 1970s, without the influence of translated literature.

The *rezubian* community in the 1990s came to resemble lesbian communities elsewhere, with pride events (“*puraido ibento*”), film festivals, and *rezubian* spaces that might seem at first glance to have been directly imported as part of what has been called “global queering.”²³ As noted above, however, these practices clearly built on the foundations laid by both the *rezubian* community and the queer *shōjo* manga sphere. The *rezubian* community of the 1970s and 1980s, including both the ostensibly non-political Wakakusa no Kai and the decidedly political *rezubian feminisuto*, built on the decades of transnational discursive exchange that had developed into contemporary understandings of gender and sexuality in general, as well as more specifically, what it meant to be a “*rezubian*.”

Finally, nowhere have there been more vehement denials of foreign influence than those

²³ The term “global queering” can be dated at least to Dennis Altman’s 1996 article, “On Global Queering,” *Australian Humanities Review* 2 (July–August 1996), which, via a discussion of the globalization of gay and lesbian culture, offers a critique of “queer theory” and its disruption of attention to activism in lesbian and gay studies. Demonstrating the interest in Japan in this discourse, Altman’s subsequent provocative article on this form of globalization, “Global Gaze/Global Gays,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 3, no. 4 (1997), was published in Japanese the same year as the original, as “Sekaiteki na manazashi, zen’iki-ka suru gei,” trans. Matsumura Tatsuya, *Gendai shisō* 25, no. 6 (May 1997). A synopsis of this discourse and Altman’s role therein, can be found in Jon Binnie, *The Globalization of Sexuality* (London: Sage, 2004) 37–42.

coming from the *ribu* community and its feminist heirs regarding the origins of the *ribu* movement. Although few in Japan would refute that the “*feminizumu*” of the late 1970s and beyond was in no small part a product of translation and travel, outspoken *ribu* leaders such as Tanaka Mitsu and Miki Sōko have repeatedly and to this day continued to insist that the *ribu* movement was simply a local reaction to local conditions for women, and to deny that its emergence was inspired by the second-wave feminist movement in the United States. Tanaka, Miki, and others are correct to reject the idea, first circulated in the press by way of an introduction of *ūman ribu* in 1970, that the movement was a mere import. And yet, such an insistence forecloses an examination of *ribu* discourse as, in part, a result of active engagement with feminists and feminist thought from the United States and elsewhere, thus obfuscating a key site of feminist agency in 1970s Japan. This agency is manifest not merely in women’s seeking of information and ideas from abroad that might be of use in their own struggles. It is also evident in the way that women selected and adapted this information to suit their needs and interests, as well as the sharing by women in Japan of their own experiences and ideas with their counterparts abroad, demonstrating that, however imbalanced, this was not an import of ideas but an exchange.

To begin to unravel these multiplex webs linking girls and women as well as ideas and images across borders and across time, I deploy the concept of “transfiguration” as a way to think about these relationships and the changes they have brought about. At its most basic, I use transfiguration to refer to *a change in form in the process of crossing from one culture to another*. In so doing, I am drawing both on the term’s constituent parts: *trans* (across) and *figure* (form), as well as the meaning of the whole term (a change in form or appearance). The notion of transfiguration has had some rather dramatic uses. In the Bible, it is one of the miracles of Jesus,

who is seen by several of his apostles to be “transfigured”—his raiment turned bright white and his countenance glowing—when speaking to Moses and Elijah on a mountaintop.²⁴ More recently, in J.K. Rowling’s Harry Potter series, “transfiguration” refers to spells that change the shape of an object—or a person—into something entirely different, such as a pupil into a frog. According to the character Minerva McGonagall, a professor at the fictional Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, “Transfiguration is some of the most complex and dangerous magic” students learn at the school.²⁵ Transfiguration as I use it, however, is in no way miraculous or magic, but it is at once very powerful and the effect of the workings of power, both within the cultures of origin and of reception, as well as between the two.

I borrow the kernel of my own use of transfiguration from Dilip Gaonkar and Elizabeth Povinelli, who use the idea of transfiguration as part of an effort to elucidate “the circulatory matri[ces], both national and global, through which new discursive forms, practices, and artifacts carry out their routine ideological labor of constructing subjects who can be summoned in the name of a public or a people.”²⁶ They posit that more productive than continued attention to “meaning and translation” as a means to understand the workings of transnational flows would be a focus on the circulation, transfiguration, and recognition of “cultural forms.”²⁷ They call specifically for “form-sensitive analyses of [these] public texts, events, and practices” that highlight the conditions whereby they are transfigured to take on recognizable forms within cultures of circulation and in the process of public-making.²⁸ They ultimately see a focus on transfiguration as means through which to map the “generative matrices” themselves—and the

²⁴ See Matt. 17:2 (King James Version).

²⁵ J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* (London: Bloomsbury, 1997), 100.

²⁶ Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar and Elizabeth A. Povinelli, “Technologies of Public Forms: Circulation, Transfiguration, Recognition,” *Public Culture* 15, no. 3 (2003): 386.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 387, 392–94.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 386.

workings of power within them.²⁹

While they never offer a precise definition of transfiguration, they use it to index *processes of change*. I would like to refine the usage of this idea of transfiguration via an expansion of sorts. As I understand it, transfiguration sets in motion “ripples of change” that do not end with the newly (re)invented “thing” that has been transfigured.³⁰ Thus, to me a focus on transfiguration calls on us to examine the *effects of those changes*. I would also like to draw attention to the subjects of transfiguration. That is, if things—texts, practices, individuals—are transfigured as they transit from culture to culture, there must be actors who are engaged—consciously or unconsciously—in the act of transfiguring. Like Gaonkar and Povinelli, I too am interested in the workings of power, specifically both the power that the women and girls in the *ribu*, *rezubian*, and queer *shōjo* manga spheres seek to confront or circumvent via transfiguration, as well as the power they draw on and exert in so doing. Accordingly, in my wish to highlight the subjecthood of these women and girls, my own use of transfiguration also calls on us to identify *acts of change*. Finally, transfiguration, as I use it, has no fixed direction or terminal point. These ripples of change can extend *indefinitely in any direction*, including back to the culture whence the transfigured thing originated or on to a third culture. Thus, an examination of transfiguration in the (re)production of cultural forms has no logical or fixed stopping point and might take us in surprising directions.

There are, of course, myriad other ways to describe cultural change concomitant with flows of things and of people. Yet, none adequately encapsulates transfiguration as I have just outlined it. Some frequently used terms, such as “localization” and “glocalization,” give the

²⁹ Ibid., 394, 396.

³⁰ I borrow the term “ripples of change” from a documentary about a young Japanese woman who traveled to New York City and came to discover the *ribu* movement almost twenty years after it faded from public discourse: *Ripples of Change: Japanese Women's Search for Self*, directed by Nanako Kurihara (Japan/US: Women Make Movies, 1993.)

impression of a wholly one-way and finite process, when, even in the face of disjunctures and imbalances, purely one-way flows are rare in any context.³¹ Many of the ways this process of change in transit is framed developed out of studies of colonial and post-colonial societies. Fernando Ortiz's notion of "transculturation," for instance, describes a process whereby a people, deracinated by force or by choice, come into contact with another culture and go through a period of "deculturation," the loss of culture, and "acculturation," its acquisition. This may lead to novel cultural forms, or "neoculturation."³² Mary Louise Pratt situates transculturation within what she calls the "contact zone"—"the space of colonial encounters"—and highlights the inherent agency of colonized peoples in this process. The "subordinated or marginal groups," she writes, "select and invent from materials transmitted to them by a dominant or metropolitan culture."³³ This agentic process of selection and (re)invention has also been described as one of "hybridization," "syncretism," and "creolization" to reflect how the cultural forms and practices created by a combination or a collision of cultures are neither purely local nor left unchanged in the transit(ion) from culture to culture.³⁴ Although useful in some contexts, such terms tend to assume a colonial or post-colonial power relationship. And while they have been adapted for other contexts, they continue to lack both the simplicity and the open-endedness of transfiguration.

This flexibility helps transfiguration function as a heuristic device to elucidate varied facets of transnational cultural flows. Transfiguration tells us to look for changes in transit, and

³¹ Arjun Appadurai writes that these flows "of objects, persons, images, and discourses" occur in "relations of disjuncture." See Arjun Appadurai, "Grassroots Globalization and the Research Imagination," *Public Culture* 12, no. 1 (2000), 5.

³² Fernando Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*, trans. Harriet de Onis (1940; Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1995), 98, 102–3.

³³ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), 6.

³⁴ For an often cited example of the use of application of hybridity to the post-colonial context with an emphasis on the agency of people in post-colonial cultures in the selection and adaptation the culture of their former colonizers, see Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994).

to pursue them beyond any initial change because the process is not finite. It does not limit the kinds of changes it indexes to objects or ideas or practices. Anything and anyone can, and often does, change in transit. It makes no assumptions about relations of power—and yet attention to transfiguration can shed light on such relations. In its use as an active verb, it reminds us that these changes are the result of acts, often conscious, sometimes deliberate. Accordingly, it tells us to seek out these agents and to query their motivations. It is in this way that I put transfiguration to work in the pages that follow to help unravel the formation and development of the *ribu*, *rezubian*, and queer *shōjo* manga spheres.

Locating This Study

This project is situated both within the burgeoning body of scholarship at the intersection of globalization studies and gender and sexuality studies (sometimes framed as queer studies), and within Japan studies. Scholarship on globalization's relationship to gender and sexuality has largely focused on either transnational feminist networks or on sexual minorities.³⁵ This work has amply illustrated how ideas and images crossing national and cultural borders have led to profound changes in the experience of being a woman or being a man. Critically, this scholarship has shown that communities of like-minded individuals, such as feminists or members of sexual minority groups, are often the agents of these changes in a process that has frequently been

³⁵ Studies focused on transnational networks include Myra Marx Ferree and Aili Mari Tripp, eds., *Global Feminism: Transnational Women's Activism, Organizing, and Human Rights* (New York: New York University Press, 2006); Mary E. Hawkesworth, *Globalization and Feminist Activism* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006); Valentine M. Moghadam, *Globalizing Women: Transnational Feminist Networks* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005); Nancy A. Naples and Manisha Desai, eds., *Women's Activism and Globalization: Linking Local Struggles and Transnational Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2002). Those focused on sexual minorities include Leila J. Rupp, *Sapphistries: A Global History of Love between Women* (New York: New York University Press, 2009); Tom Boellstorff, *The Gay Archipelago: Sexuality and Nation in Indonesia* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005); Megan J. Sinnott, *Toms and Dees: Transgender Identity and Female Same-Sex Relationships in Thailand* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004); Martin F. Manalansan, IV, *Global Divas: Filipino Gay Men in the Diaspora* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2003); and Arnaldo Cruz-Malavé and Martin F. Manalansan IV, eds., *Queer Globalizations: Citizenship and the Afterlife of Colonialism* (New York: New York University Press, 2002).

referred to as “globalization from below.”³⁶ Though invaluable, this work tends to concentrate on either networks or communities in either feminist or queer spheres, thus obscuring often complex links among them and their cumulative social effects.³⁷ As a result, these studies fail to adequately address how transnational flows of ideas and images are fundamental not just to women’s rights or sexual minority identities and practices but to the re-envisioning of fundamental categories such as “women,” the examination of which is the crux of my own project. My focus on the queer *shōjo* manga sphere also draws attention to the vital role of adolescents that has been overlooked in this literature. This is a particularly striking omission given that, as Penelope Eckert’s studies of linguistic change demonstrate, “adolescents are society’s transition teams, reinterpreting the world, resolving the old with the new...culture with culture, local with transnational.”³⁸

While scholarship on transnational feminist networks has demonstrated the critical role of networks in social change, as studies of sexual minorities show, compelling evidence of the lived effects of transnational flows is to be found in the local. Moreover, by focusing on local practices, my project contributes to the “disrupt[ion of] the universalizing tendencies of...academic and activist discourses.”³⁹ Japan is a crucial site for this kind of study due to its own role as a “center of globalization” and as a filter for “Western” cultural products prior to their transfiguration elsewhere in Asia and globally.⁴⁰ Given the influence of Japanese popular culture in Asia and

³⁶ Valentine Moghadam asserts, however that globalization from below is not spontaneous but rather is “engendered” by globalization from above. See Moghadam, *Globalizing Women*, ix.

³⁷ See Mark McLelland and Romit Dasgupta, “Introduction,” in their *Genders, Transgenders, and Sexualities in Japan* (London: Routledge, 2005), 5.

³⁸ Penelope Eckert, “Language and Adolescent Peer Groups,” *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 22, no.1 (2003): 115.

³⁹ Evelyn Blackwood, “Transnational Sexualities in One Place: Indonesian Readings,” *Gender & Society* 19, no. 2 (2005): 221–22.

⁴⁰ See Harumi Befu, “Globalization Theory from the Bottom Up: Japan’s Contribution,” *Japanese Studies* 23, no. 1 (2003); and Koichi Iwabuchi, *Recentring Globalization: Popular Culture and Japanese Transnationalism* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2002).

beyond, as well as the networking of queer and feminist activists in Japan with activists elsewhere in Asia, which has yet to receive significant academic attention, my project lays some of the necessary groundwork for studies of Japan's own role in the transnational diffusion of sexual and gender practices.⁴¹

Further, my work synthesizes and contributes to scholarship on three dynamic and diverse communities of women in Japan who, “turn[ed] to the foreign...to resist gendered expectations of the female life course.”⁴² In her study of women's “narratives of internationalism” in the late twentieth century, Karen Kelsky analyzes the experiences of women longing to be in or somehow belong to the West itself.⁴³ By contrast, most women in these three spheres looked to the global—for them, usually the West—while remaining primarily focused on and committed to the local. Prior academic and popular analyses of the ways in which women in Japan have collectively resisted social norms have noted, often in passing, the use of Western ideas and images in the *ribu* movement, the *rezubian* community, and the queer *shōjo* manga sphere.⁴⁴ Yet, with the exception of Ishida Minori's recent work on the origins of *shōnen ai*

⁴¹ Cindy Patton, for instance, notes that Taiwanese feminism draws heavily from both American and Japanese feminism. See Cindy Patton, “Stealth Bombers of Desire: The Globalization of ‘Alterity’ in Emerging Democracies,” in Cruz-Malavé and Manalansan, *Queer Globalizations*. More recently, exchange between Korean and Japanese lesbian activists and politicians, including Otsuji Kanako, who in 2007 became Japan's first open lesbian candidate for a national office, was repeatedly discussed on the Japanese blog Delta G (<http://www.delta-g.org/>) and the Korean blog Lzine (<http://www.lzine.net/>) between 2007 and 2008.

⁴² Karen Kelsky, *Women on the Verge: Japanese Women, Western Dreams* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2001), 2.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴⁴ Discussion of an interest in Western feminism among *ribu* activists can be found in academic and popular discussions of the *ribu* movement, but it is always positioned as having been discovered after the emergence of the *ribu* movement—rather than simultaneous with it, which, as I demonstrate below, is what actually happened. Recent studies of *ribu* include Setsu Shigematsu *The Women's Liberation Movement in Japan* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, forthcoming), and “Tanaka Mitsuru and the Women's Liberation Movement in Japan: Towards a Radical Feminist Ontology” (PhD diss. Cornell University, 2003); Nishimura Mitsuko, *Onna (ribu) –tachi no kyōdōtai (korekutibu): nanajū nendai ūman ribu o saidoku suru* (Tokyo: Shakai Hyōronsha, 2006); and Kanō Mikiyo, ed., *Ribu to iu “kakumei”: kindai no yami o hiraku* (Tokyo: Inpakuto Shuppan Kai, 2003). Recent studies of the *rezubian* community in the 1970s and 1980s include Sugiura Ikuko, ed. *Nihon no rezubian komyuniti: kōjutsu no undō shi* (Tokyo: privately printed, 2009); and Iino Yuriko, *Rezubian de aru “watashitachi” no sutōrii* (Tokyo: Seikatsu Shoin, 2008). Finally, notable studies of queer *shōjo* manga include Ishida Minori, *Hisoyaka na kyōiku: “yaoi/bōizu rabu” zenshi* (Tokyo: Rakuoku Shuppan, 2008). Fujimoto Yukari, *Watashi no ibasho wa doko*

manga, none extensively engages with women's acts of transfiguration, and none of the scholarship focuses on the relationship between this transformative appropriation and women's identities or the communities they constructed.⁴⁵

Finally, while linkages are at times drawn between these three communities, this study is unique in its focus on their commonalities, even as it remains aware of the sometimes vast differences between them. Indeed, in its attention to the distinct challenges each of these diverse communities posed to gender and sexual norms—both through their activities and by their very existence—this study foregrounds how these groups collectively—if unconsciously so—worked to unsettle “women” as a coherent category.⁴⁶ As Tani Barlow argues in her study of Chinese feminisms, and as this dissertation demonstrates, the category “women” always fails to adequately represent the people it purports to encompass.⁴⁷

Approach and Limitations

In order to shed light on women's transnational engagements and concomitant transfiguration of selectively imported elements from Western cultures in late twentieth century Japan, in this study I examine three distinct if overlapping socio-cultural spheres. As noted above, the *ribu*, *rezubian*, and queer *shōjo* manga spheres all emerged at the same moment—when increasingly prosperous conditions made it possible for more women to choose paths outside the

ni aru no? Shōjo manga ga utsusu kokoro no katachi (Tokyo: Gakuyō Shobō, 1998), especially section three; and Akiko Mizoguchi, “Male-Male Romance by and for Women in Japan: A History and the Subgenres of *Yaoi* Fictions,” *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal* 25 (2003).

⁴⁵ Ishida, *Hisoyaka na kyōiku*.

⁴⁶ Chandra Mohanty, for instance, has famously criticized Western feminist discourse on Third World women for its “assumption of women as an already constituted, coherent group...regardless of class, ethnic, or racial location, or contradictions.” See Chandra Talpade Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses,” in her *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2003), 21.

⁴⁷ Tani E. Barlow, *The Question of Women in Chinese Feminism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004).

normative life course—and they all challenged gender and sexual norms for women through acts of transfiguration. Further, most activists and artists who established these spheres are of the same generation, having grown up in the first two decades or so after the war, while the *shōjo* manga readers I discuss predominantly belonging to the subsequent generation. To give a sense of this generationality, I indicate birth (and death) years for individuals linked to these spheres when possible. To some extent, these spheres also overlap not just in age but in terms of actual membership, most prominently in the *rezubian feminisuto* movement and among the subsequent generation of *rezubian* who were readers of queer *shōjo* manga and related publications.

Still, this is unquestionably an awkward juxtaposition. These three spheres are ultimately incommensurate on a number of levels. Women in *ribu* and the *rezubian feminisuto* segment of the *rezubian* community were overtly political, while other *rezubian* and queer *shōjo* manga artists and consumers generally were not. *Ribu* received significant media attention in the early 1970s, while the other spheres remained under the radar until later. The *rezubian* community and the queer *shōjo* manga sphere are stronger now than they were during the period under consideration here, whereas, depending on whom you ask, the third, *ribu*, either ended around 1975 or lingered on perhaps into the 1980s, possibly longer. Finally, queer *shōjo* manga fandom was and is vast and diverse, whereas the *rezubian* and *ribu* communities are—or were—more limited in scope and population.

Nevertheless, by juxtaposing these three spheres that were most actively engaged in challenging or circumventing gender and sexual norms in the 1970s and 1980s, I can offer a far more complete mapping of changes in the understanding of “women” than would be possible were I to focus on a single sphere. One side effect of this awkward juxtaposition, however, is a lack of balance in some chapters in the treatment of each sphere. This is in part a reflection of the

kinds of resources available for the three spheres (discussed below), and in part a reflection of differences in their scale and composition. I believe, however, that conclusions I am able to draw more than compensate for occasionally unavoidable disparity.

I examine these communities from a number of different angles, drawing methodologically and theoretically from the disciplines of history, anthropology, sociology, literary studies, and linguistics, as well as the interdisciplinary fields of globalization studies, translation studies, and queer studies. My choice of approaches is based in part on the nature of my resources, which vary in kind and in availability from sphere to sphere. For all three spheres, my analysis is based on both archival resources and interviews with women and, in a few cases, with men linked thereto.

My primary resources are archival, and involve a wide array of commercial and non-commercial texts. In all three spheres, non-commercial publications, including *mini-komi* and pamphlets, were a central site of the exchange of ideas. Of the three, the women of the *ribu* community have done the most to save such materials, maintaining archives—sometimes at personal residences—of collections once amassed at *ribu* spaces. Since the 1990s they have begun reprinting many of these texts in whole or in part in order to preserve them for subsequent generations.⁴⁸ Members of this sphere have also done the most to reflect in print on their experiences, taking part in numerous roundtable discussions and writing essays that have appeared in special issues of commercial journals and magazines, and in some cases writing memoirs that address or primarily focus on their time in the *ribu* movement. The relatively limited availability of *mini-komi* from the *rezubian* community as well as *dōjinshi* [coterie

⁴⁸ The most notable collections of reprinted materials are Mizoguchi, Saeki, and Miki, *Shiryō Nihon ūman ribu shi*; and Ribu Shinjuku Sentaa Shiryō Hozon Kai—hereafter RSSHK—ed. *Ribu Shinjuku Sentaa shiryō shūsei*, 3 vols. (Tokyo: Inpakuto Shuppan Kai, 2008). Individual pamphlets are also included in volumes such as Inoue Teruko et al., eds., *Ribu to feminizumu* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1994).

magazines] from the queer *shōjo* manga sphere in the 1970s and 1980s has led to an unintentional balance toward the *ribu* movement in terms of the depth of my analysis of such community-produced texts. This imbalance is mitigated, however, through my use of a plethora of commercial texts, including popular magazines and newspapers; manga and anime; translated literature, essays, and tracts; and popular criticism and history. These texts also help me position these three spheres in popular discourse. In many cases they also provide access to the voices of community members themselves, who sometimes shared their thoughts and experiences in the form of articles or letters, or via interviews appearing in the commercial press.

My study is heavily informed by open-ended interviews involving almost seventy individuals, conducted between 2004 and 2009, primarily with women directly affiliated with one or more of my three focal communities.⁴⁹ Participants in my interviews were roughly balanced among those whom I interviewed in regard to their ties to the *ribu*, *rezubian*, or queer *shōjo* manga sphere. And majority were primarily aligned with just one community, but a number of women were connected to two of these spheres, most commonly a *rezubian* who had also been involved in *ribu* or had been an avid reader of *shōnen ai* manga.

I met these individuals in a variety of ways, including through personal introductions from friends, acquaintances, and former interviewees, all primarily based in one of the metropolitan areas surrounding Tokyo, Nagoya, or Osaka. I also contacted some individuals directly and posted self-introductions and requests for participants on several feminist and lesbian email lists as well “communities” related to all three spheres on the popular networking website Mixi (<http://mixi.jp>). The diverse ways in which I was able to find participants has allowed for great variety of perspectives and experiences and yet has its own limitations. The

⁴⁹ Most interviews were conducted one-on-one with individuals, but in a few cases I conducted interviews in pairs, and twice in lieu of interviews I had discussions with groups of four individuals. Finally, six interviews were conducted via email.

participants were ultimately all self-selected and include only those who continue to feel enough of a sense of connection to these communities to volunteer. I was unable to hear from women who had joined the *ribu* movement briefly and dropped out of feminist activism completely, or women who had gone to a few *rezubian* community related activities but who have since suppressed any desire they feel for women, or from women who completely lost interest in queer *shōjo* manga and related cultural forms. And I had the opportunity to interview only two individuals who moved and have remained abroad permanently, though I did speak with and access interviews with several others who lived abroad for a decade or more.

Moreover, some of those who I would have liked to interview, particularly in the *ribu* and *rezubian* spheres, declined my request, generally for unstated reasons. One woman who had been involved in the *ribu* movement told me she did not wish to relive her experience, and suggested that her departure from the movement was emotionally difficult, and another woman who was prominent in one of the communities explained that she was simply tired of being interviewed. Still a third woman expressed concern over how I was going to use the information, which may have been related to my request coming in the wake of a controversy over a book written about the *rezubian feminisuto* community. One former *ribu* activist who did participate told me she would never have allowed a man to interview her except that she had heard from the person who introduced us that I am gay. Several women in the *rezubian* community and several queer *shōjo* manga fans also expressed feeling comforted (*anshin*) that I identify myself as gay. This is, in fact, not something I deliberately shared in advance in most cases, but I am a member of several gay groups on Mixi and it sometimes came up in the course of interviews, so those I met through Mixi (who presumably looked at my profile before contacting me) or through introductions may have known prior to consenting to be interviewed. Finally, while I can in no way claim to look

anything like the beautiful boys of the most popular queer *shōjo* manga, my being a slender white male with blondish hair and blue eyes appears to have helped me recruit volunteers as well, and not just fans of *shōnen ai* manga.⁵⁰ Moreover, given that many of those in my target population were interested in foreign cultures, they may have also been seeking the chance to interact with a foreigner, though I do not recall more than two or three women attempting to speak to me in English.

Most of those I interviewed were in their forties to mid-sixties, though a few were slightly younger or older. Five participants were men, all but one of whom were involved in publishing or journalism. I was able to interview a number of women who were prominent in the *ribu* or *rezubian* sphere who have allowed me to refer to them by their actual name or their public penname. To protect the anonymity of others, in some cases I have assigned pseudonyms, and omitted or altered identifiable personal details. Although I have not been able to give a majority of individuals I interviewed a direct voice in my writing, the experiences and feelings these individuals shared with have played a large role in shaping my understanding of the *ribu*, *rezubian*, and queer *shōjo* manga spheres.

Coming to Terms

Before outlining the remainder of this dissertation, I would like to take a step back and clarify the reasoning behind my choice of terminology with regard to these three spheres. As will have become obvious by now, I refer to the *ribu* and *rezubian* spheres with the Japanese

⁵⁰ For whatever reason, my appearance seems to appeal to middle-aged women in Japan, and I got the impression that it helped me get more volunteers. I posted my picture on both my Mixi profile and on a website I created to explain my research project to potential interviewees to reassure them that I was a real person and not menacing. I was, however, repeatedly praised about my appearance by my informants from all three communities, who sometimes told me that they had also heard this from the acquaintance who introduced us or had thought so based on my posted picture. One *rezubian* I interviewed who blogged about the experience on her popular blog commented on my appearance and suggested other women should volunteer to be interviewed so they could meet me in person. Several women did in fact end up participating in my research after having read that.

transliterations used, in one form or another, in Japanese discourse rather than the terms' English "originals." In public discourse, as well as for most of the women with whom I have spoken, "*ribu*" and "lib" as well as "*rezubian*" and "lesbian" are generally understood as synonymous. I use the Japanese terms, however, in recognition that neither "*ūman ribu*" nor "*rezubian*" has the same history or valence in Japanese as their ostensible English language equivalents, as I spell out in chapter three.⁵¹ This does run the risk of exoticizing the terms and the spheres they name. It is my hope, however, that given their near equivalence to English words, my choice to transcribe rather than translate will be just unsettling enough to remind readers that the spheres to which I point with these terms are not completely equivalent to counterparts elsewhere without positioning them as exotic Others. The line between second-wave feminism in Japan—of which *ribu* was the most visible manifestation in the 1970s—and the radical second-wave feminism springing up elsewhere from the late 1960s onward is murky, however.⁵² The same can be said about the *rezubian* community in Japan and lesbian communities abroad. Accordingly, I make use of the English terms when I wish to indicate second-wave feminist and lesbian spheres both outside of and in excess of these spheres in Japan and utilize other transliterated terms in use within these spheres, particularly "*feminisuto*" and "*rezubian feminisuto*," to emphasize their specificities as the need arises. And I do the same with other transliterated terms on occasion for similar reasons.

I use "*shōjo manga*" in reference to comic art aimed at young female readers, using the

⁵¹ While "*ribu*" did not come into common use until the end of 1970, I use it anachronistically at times in regard to the movement earlier in 1970 for the sake of simplicity. Similarly, although "*rezubian*" was competing with the pronunciation "*resubian*" from 1967 through the mid- to late 1970s, I use the latter pronunciation only in quotations and when I discuss this shift and its significance, as I do in chapter three.

⁵² I use "radical second-wave feminism" with regard to the US to point specifically to the feminism that emerged out of the Civil Rights movement and the student movement in the late 1960s to distinguish it from earlier liberal feminist movements, such as lead by Betty Friedan. Tong distinguishes between "liberal feminism," seeking rights, and "radical feminism," seeking "women's liberation," though she concedes that the distinction is not always clear. See Tong, *Feminist Thought*, 23.

Japanese term rather than its most common English translation, “girls’ comics,” in recognition of the specificity of the Japanese art form as well as what has become increasingly standard practice in the broader field of comics and animation criticism.⁵³ *Shōjo* manga encompasses genres and subgenres of comics aimed at elementary school girls and high school students alike. Its readership, particularly since its renaissance in the 1970s, has included boys as well as adult women and men. By “queer *shōjo* manga,” I am referring to genres and narratives that break with the standard heteronormative script, not to any specific generic classification. I use “queer” here in its English academic sense of non-normative in terms of gender or sexuality rather to make any claims about the identities or desires of artists or readers.⁵⁴ In the 1970s and 1980s, the most common queer *shōjo* manga were the *shōnen ai* and, later, *yaoi* narratives mentioned above. Queer *shōjo* manga of these decades also include tales of cross-dressing girls, which in fact date at least to the 1950s, but which, like *shōnen ai*, reached their apex in the 1970s.⁵⁵ Finally, I am additionally referencing tales of girl-girl romance that, unlike the most popular *shōnen ai* and cross-dressing girl narratives, failed to attract the same attention—though they developed at the same time and were drawn by many of the same artists.⁵⁶

My application above of the word “community” to the *rezubian* sphere and to Wakakusa no Kai specifically comes, foremost, from a special feature on “community history” (*komyuniti no rekishi*) in a 2001 issue of the commercial *rezubian* magazine *Anise*, which positions the group—“Japan’s first *rezubian* circle”—at the head of a timeline on the history of Japan’s

⁵³ I do not italicize “manga” or its animated equivalent, “anime,” in recognition of their establishment as English words, as evidenced by their presence in dictionaries.

⁵⁴ This sense of “queer” in English is largely a product of the 1990s, and the emergence of the field of queer studies. While its Japanese transliteration, “*kuia*,” now has limited currency in Japan, it was not in use in the 1970s and 1980s and has not been established as a generic classification of manga or anime.

⁵⁵ Tezuka Osamu, *Ribon no kishi*, 2 vols. (1953–1956; Tokyo: Kōdansha Manga Bunko, 1999).

⁵⁶ The earliest girl-girl romance narrative in *shōjo* manga is said to be Yamagishi Ryōko’s “The Two in the White Room,” which appeared in *Ribon Comics (Ribon komikku)* in February 1971, just two months after the first *shōnen ai* narrative saw print. See Yamagishi Ryōko, “Shiroi heya no futari,” in her *Refuto ando raito: Yamagishi Ryōko zenshū* 28 (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1988).

rezubian community.⁵⁷ The feature’s use of the Japanese transliteration of “community” about Wakakusa no Kai is, in fact, anachronistic: the group predates by nearly two decades the use of this term about *rezubian* circles and spaces. And while direct definitions of “*komyuniti*” appearing in community publications since the 1990s foreground tangible manifestations of community like the bars in Tokyo’s Ni-chōme district, *rezubian* circles, and publications, the word “community” as well as the newer word “*komyuniti*” also point to an intangible, affective sense of connection to others, what the definition in *Anise* seem to be pointing to when it says the “*komyuniti*” includes “all of *rezubian* society.”⁵⁸

It is this sense of connectedness that I wish to emphasize by observing that the *ribu*, *rezubian*, and queer *shōjo* manga spheres functioned to varying degrees as “communities.” While, to my knowledge, the term was not widely applied to or used within any of these spheres in the 1970s and 1980s, it is arguably applicable.⁵⁹ Certainly the commonality of purpose, shared emotions, and collective activities—including, in some cases, communal living—contributed to a palpable sense of community among *ribu* activists.⁶⁰ *Ribu* activists indeed sometimes referred to themselves and their communal activities in terms of “*kyōdōtai*,” which can be translated as “community,” as well as “*korekutibu*” [collective], this term stemming from the language of the

⁵⁷ *Aniisu*, “Komyuniti no rekishi,” 29. See also Doi Yuki, “Joseikan paatonaashippu no yukue: josei no jiyu o motomete, seikatsu o mamoru tame ni,” in *Dōsei paatonaa: dōseikon, DP hō o shiru tame ni*, ed. Akasugi Yasunobu, Doi Yuki, and Tsutsui Makiko (Tokyo: Potta Shuppan, 2004), 181–82.

⁵⁸ The earliest of these definitions I have found is in the first commercial *rezubian* magazine, *Phryné*: Hagiwara Mami, “Furiine Key Words,” *Furiine* no. 1 (June 1995): 172. The same or similar definitions would appear in word lists in all subsequent issues of *Phryné* and *Anise*. A similar definition for “*gei komyuniti*,” one that includes “*rezubian*” and “*gei*” [gay(s)], can be found in the back of a book commemorating the 2000 Tokyo Lesbian and Gay Parade: Sunagawa Hideki, ed., *Tōkyō rezubian ando gei pareedo 2000 no kiroku* (Tokyo: Potta Shuppan, 2001), 212.

⁵⁹ A short piece in the September 1987 issue of *Regumi tsūshin*, a *mini-komi* [newsletter/zine] produced by the produced by the *rezubian-feminisuto* group Regumi (short for *rezubian gumi* [group]), suggests the need to establish a “*komyuniti*”—a word the author feels the need to define with a footnote—making it clear that this was not a word the author felt applied yet to what they had established to date, including Regumi Studio, the group’s headquarters and meeting place. See Yanagihara Rin, “‘Regumi Sutajio Tōkyō’ no mirai: dansei shakai ni taikō dekiru kyōryoku na komyuniti zukuri o!” *Regumi tsūshin* no. 7 (September 1987): 1.

⁶⁰ See James Goodwin, James M. Jasper, and Francesca Polletta, “Introduction: Why Emotions Matter,” in their *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 21–22.

New Left. Similarly, readers of what I am calling queer *shōjo* manga communicated regularly with artists and with each other, thinking about and discussing these texts, and forming what are often called “interpretive communities.”⁶¹ The idea of an interpretive community does not, however, adequately encompass the types of collective creative production occurring within this sphere that extended far beyond simply reacting to the work of certain artists.⁶² Acknowledging both these varying senses of connectedness among these women and girls as well as the ambiguous boundaries of these collectivities, I choose simply to vacillate between referring to them as the *ribu*, *rezubian*, and queer *shōjo* manga communities and referring to them more nebulously as spheres. And I also refer to *ribu* using a term the *ribu* women themselves used, as a “movement” (*undō*).

Finally, with the exception of quotations, including direct translations, I deliberately use the expression “women in Japan” rather than Japanese women. I do so in recognition that not all women involved in these spheres are of Japanese nationality or ethnicity, even if this was seldom recognized in the discourse I examine.⁶³

⁶¹ See, for instance, Janice Radway’s germinal examination of the interpretive communities sharing heterosexual romance narratives in her *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984).

⁶² In its focus on textual consumption—or “poaching”—even Henry Jenkins’s expansive notion of “media fandom,” which incorporates the idea of interpretive communities, does not include the non-parodic, non-imitative texts also created collectively and individually among the girls and young women in the queer *shōjo* manga community. See Henry Jenkins, *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 1–2.

⁶³ In particular, members of Japan’s population of ethnic Koreans, many of whom have taken Japanese nationality, many of whom have not, have had mixed experiences in these spheres. At “Kogoroshi to kosodate no aida de: 70-nendai ribu, Yūsei hogo hō, soshite ima,” a symposium, sponsored by Soshiren, held at Bunkyo Kumin Sentaa on September 21, 2008, in conjunction with the publication of reprints of many materials from the archive of Ribu Shinjuku Center (RSSHK, *Ribu Shinjuku Sentaa shiryō shūsei*), an ethnic Korean woman with whom I spoke, who was perhaps in her 50s or early 60s, expressed lingering resentment to me over the treatment she experienced in the *ribu* movement in the 1970s. As late as 1992, there was a serious controversy when someone at the Asian Lesbian Network meeting in Tokyo introducing the *rezubian* from Japan as “[ethnic] Japanese lesbians in Japan” (*Nihon ni iru Nihonjin no rezubian*) rather than simply “lesbians in Japan,” coupled with one or more organizers not respecting the Korean pronunciation of ethnic Korean *rezubian*’s names. See Izumo Marou et al., “Nihon no rezubian mūvumento,” *Gendai shisō* 25, no. 6 (May 1997): 67.

Dissertation Overview

The remainder of this dissertation examines the *ribu*, *rezubian*, and queer *shōjo* manga spheres via the lens of transfiguration. First, chapter two, “Trajectories,” sketches historical overviews of the three communities that are the heart of this project, tracing their roots and their emergence around 1970 and following their development over the course of the next two decades. They are necessarily partial rather than comprehensive histories—which would be three very different projects.⁶⁴ The chapters that follow themselves do, however, contribute to the telling of these histories from different vantage points and elucidating different aspects.

Chapter three, “Terminology,” reaches back to the early twentieth century to offer etymologies *qua* genealogies of key terms used within and beyond these spheres to name the women and girls’ communities, their activities, and the objects of their desire—“*ūman ribu*,” “*rezubian*,” and “*shōnen ai*.” In so doing, I show how the labels used by and about these spheres emerged from layered transnational processes, extensive in both time and scope, that call into question what it means for a word to be Japanese. The genealogies of these terms shed new light on the histories of the spheres themselves.

⁶⁴ And, indeed, a great deal of this history has already been written in one form or another. Of the three spheres, the most by far has been written about the *ribu* movement. The historiography in Japanese is far too extensive to begin to enumerate. Notable histories in English include Sandra Buckley, “A Short History of the Feminist Movement in Japan,” in *Women in Japan and Korea: Continuity and Change*, ed. Joyce Gelb and Marian Lief Palley (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), which discusses both *ribu* and the subsequent emergence of an explicitly *feminisuto* movement; chapters seven and eight in Vera Mackie, *Feminism in Modern Japan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); and Shigematsu, *The Women’s Liberation Movement in Japan*.

While there are numerous analyses of the *shōnen ai* genre and other queer *shōjo* manga, there are few academic histories in Japanese. One recent exception is Ishida, *Hisoyaka na kyōiku*. There are, however, numerous histories in the popular press, including Nishimura Mari, *Aniparo to yaoi* (Tokyo: Ōta Shuppan, 2002). A useful English-language history of male-male romance genres is Mizoguchi, “Male-Male Romance by and for Women in Japan.” For the development of female-female romance over the 1970s and 1980s, see James Welker, “Drawing Out Lesbians: Blurred Representations of Lesbian Desire in *Shōjo* Manga,” in *Lesbian Voices: Canada and the World: Theory, Literature, Cinema*, ed. Subhash Chandra (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 2006).

Recent histories of *rezubian feminisuto* in particular can be found in Sugiura, *Nihon no rezubian komyuniti*; Iino, *Rezubian de aru “watashitachi” no sutōrii*; and Anisu, “Komyuniti no rekishi.” English-language histories can be found in Sawabe Hitomi, “The Symbolic Tree of Lesbianism in Japan: An Overview of Lesbian Activist History and Literary Works,” trans. Kimberly Hughes, in *Sparking Rain and Other Fiction from Japan of Women Who Love Women*, ed. Barbara Summerhawk and Kimberly Hughes (Chicago: New Victoria Publishers, 2008); and James Welker, “Telling Her Story: Narrating a Japanese Lesbian Community,” *Japanstudien* 16 (2004).

Chapter four, “Translation,” considers acts and impacts of translation in these communities, including both direct translations and more radically transfigured texts, including early radical second-wave feminist writing from the US, as well as the pioneering feminist texts *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (1973) and *The Hite Report* (1976). Multiple editions of these books were directly translated in the 1970s and 1980s, inspiring local projects and activities, some bearing little resemblance to the “originals.” This chapter also looks at the sometimes oblique transfiguration of literary texts, such as works by Herman Hesse into *shōnen ai* narratives, as well as the use of more direct intertextual references in queer *shōjo* manga.

Chapter five, “Travel,” explores the role of real and vicarious voyages abroad in the construction of the project’s three focal communities, as well as individuals’ self-understanding. In contrast with other chapters, which are primarily based on textual analysis, this chapter focuses on personal narratives from interviews and published in biographies and travel narratives. It points out, among other things, the contradiction between the local focus of most community activism and the relatively high number of prominent figures in these communities who had formative experiences abroad.

Finally, the conclusion, reflects on the role transfiguration has played in the *ribu*, *rezubian* and queer *shōjo* manga spheres. Anyone looking for borrowing of the “foreign” within Japan is sure to find it nearly anywhere, and in abundance. But, as is often said, looks can be deceiving. By viewing the ostensibly “borrowed” through the lens of transfiguration I show that, ultimately, the Western turn among these women and girls was not a turn away from Japan. Rather, it was a fundamental part of being a modern woman *within* Japan. While some did indeed look to what they perceived to be an “advanced” West for solutions to or an escape from local problems they faced on account of their status as women, most women in Japan were

decidedly focused on the local, even as they selectively transfigured Western practices and ideas. As I show in the remainder of this dissertation, these processes of transfiguration and the results thereof led to fundamental changes in the meaning of the category women both within the *ribu*, *rezubian*, and queer *shōjo* manga spheres and in society at large.

CHAPTER TWO: TRAJECTORIES¹

We can, we can, we can, we can stage a revolution
If women change, men will change
If women change, the world will change
If women change, the world will change

Let's, let's, let's, let's stage a revolution
You can, you can, you can
Revolutionize yourself
Revolutionize yourself

—Dotekabo Ichiza²

Young women coming of age in Japan from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s were the first generation to grow up under *de jure* equality with men as a result of the 1947 Constitution. Whether considered to have been bearing gifts or punishment, the postwar Constitution was essentially imposed by the United States during the Occupation period (1945–1952). Still, while the articles guaranteeing equality of the sexes in public and private life were resisted as culturally “inappropriate” by the Japanese officials negotiating the draft with GHQ representatives,³ the ideas of sexual equality and women’s rights can hardly be considered an exotic American imposition. Suffrage for women, for instance, had been on the table at various times since early in the Meiji era (1868–1912). To be sure, the Meiji government’s changing policies regarding women, including the rights they would or would not be granted, initially involved debate over the applicability of foreign customs to Japanese society as part of Japan’s broader modernization project. And the seeking of explicit rights or *de facto* independence by women themselves from

¹ Brief sections of this chapter were previously included in “Telling Her Story: Narrating a Japanese Lesbian Community,” *Japanstudien* 16 (2004), and are reproduced with permission.

² From the lyrics to “Finaare” [Finale], in *Myūzokaru ‘Onna no kaihō’* (1975; Tokyo: Dotekabo Ichiza no Bideo Mitai Kai, 2005), by the *ribu* theater group Dotekabo Ichiza, reproduced in Dotekabo Ichiza no Bideo Mitai Kai, *Dotekabo Ichiza ‘Myūzokaru ‘Onna no kaihō’ 1975’ bideo/DVD kaisetsusho* (Tokyo: Dotekabo Ichiza no Bideo Mitai Kai, 2005), 16.

³ See Beate Sirota Gordon, *The Only Woman in the Room: A Memoir* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1997), 123; and Kyoko Inoue, *MacArthur’s Japanese Constitution: A Linguistic and Cultural Study of Its Making* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 221–22, 238–65.

the Meiji era through the war years was often explicitly linked to transnational feminist discourse on the women question.⁴ In the immediate aftermath of the Pacific War, prior to the promulgation of the new Constitution, women's rights were part of a larger human rights package proposed by the Socialist party—itsself a local manifestation of a global discourse, one that was at last again able to take part in public debate after years of government suppression.⁵ Thus, by the time the Constitution was ratified, varied threads positioning women's rights as a question to be addressed had been thoroughly woven into Japanese public discourse.

Beate Sirota, the Austrian-born young woman, fluent in Japanese, who drafted the clauses guaranteeing equality of the sexes, among other civil rights, was hardly a foreigner in Japan. Indeed, Sirota was very much at “home” in the country, where she had spent most of her childhood.⁶ Although it was a decision from far higher in the chain of GHQ command that led to the existence of sections addressing women's rights—with which Sirota had been charged on the basis of her sex—the specificity of the rights she inscribed into the articles she wrote, as well as the passion with which she fought to have all details she drafted included in the final version, were a response to her experience of having grown up in Japan, constantly aware of the

⁴ The two early twentieth century transnational categories most associated with feminism and women's independence are the “new woman” (*atarashii onna*) and the “modern girl” (*modan gaaru*, or *moga*). While “the Modern Girl was not on a Western trajectory,” as Miriam Silverberg points out in “The Modern Girl as Militant,” in *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600–1945*, ed. Gail Lee Bernstein (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 239, she was clearly part of a transnational phenomenon. See, e.g., Modern Girl Around the World Research Group, ed., *The Modern Girl Around the World: Consumption, Modernity, and Globalization* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2008). The women of Seitōsha [the Bluestocking Society] were more explicit in linking their understanding of being a new women with discourse in Europe in particular, though they too were very much focused on conditions for women living in Japan. See, e.g., Jan Bardsley, *The Bluestockings of Japan: New Woman Essays and Fiction from Seitō, 1911–16* (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, The University of Michigan, 2007). On the question of women's rights from the Meiji era through the war, much has been written. Notable studies include Sharon L. Sievers, *Flowers in Salt: The Beginnings of Feminist Consciousness in Japan* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1983); Vera Mackie, *Feminism in Modern Japan* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Barbara Molony, “The Quest for Women's Rights in Turn-of-the-Century Japan,” in *Gendering Modern Japanese History*, ed. Barbara Molony and Kathleen Uno (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005).

⁵ John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: Norton, 1999), 357.

⁶ Gordon, *The Only Woman*, 10. My thanks to Rio Otomo, who drew Sirota's experience to my attention.

injustices meted out to girls and women based on both law and social custom.⁷ And while the ultimate version agreed upon by GHQ and Japanese authorities did stipulate legal equality of women and men, this new Constitution—including the provisions regarding equality of the sexes, the definition of the family, and the status of the individual—was transfigured away from the intent of its drafters via translation and negotiations across “the ambiguities of cross-cultural and cross-linguistic communication” and, subsequently, via the interpretation and implementation of the ratified Japanese language text.⁸ As a result, while women in the postwar years could vote upon reaching the age of majority, women’s life course options remained severely limited.

Like the postwar Constitution, other customs, practices, and forms that entered Japan in the postwar years—whether as objects of curiosity, models to emulate, or something in between—were only novel and only foreign to a degree. They were always directly or indirectly building on decades of exchange, transfiguration, and local developments. This point is so obvious as to be trite and yet it is so easily forgotten in discussions of cultural borrowing and translation, both within the Japanese popular media, inclined toward hyperbolic treatment of “foreign” novelties as well as threats, and within academic discourse seeking difference. But the fact is that by the time of the emergence of the women’s spheres I discuss in this dissertation, there was a kind of cultural proximity between Japan and a loosely defined West such that, no matter how exotic or alien an “import” from the West was discursively framed, the ostensibly foreign was also often very familiar.

A case in point, Japan’s postwar democratic system itself, portrayed by some as a gift via this Constitution, “derives,” as Carol Gluck remarks, “from the past thrice over”—rooted in Japan’s modern traditions of political party politics and social protest, bitter memories of the

⁷ Ibid., 106–18 passim.

⁸ Inoue, MacArthur’s Japanese Constitution, 266.

suppression of political debate in conjunction with the intensification of the war in the 1930s, and, decades of postwar practice.⁹ The majority of women who in the 1970s were involved in the early stages of the *ribu* movement and the *rezubian* community, as well as those who revolutionized *shōjo* manga, were born between the mid-1940s and early 1950s—though some more prominent *ribu* leaders were born in the early 1940s. As girls, they may have witnessed—possibly on a new black and white television bought to view the imperial wedding the year before—what was perhaps “Japan’s most important postwar confrontation between democratic forces and traditional paternalism.”¹⁰ In 1959 and 1960, with war memories still weighing heavily on a majority of the population, millions of citizens—at some estimates upwards of sixteen million—participated in some way in protests against the 1960 renewal of the US-Japan Security Treaty, often referred to locally as “Anpo.” The treaty renewal and its eventual strong-armed passage were widely seen as symbolizing a fascist reversal of the democratic reforms of the Occupation, as well as increasing the potential for the remilitarization of Japan.¹¹ Tens of thousands surrounded the Diet building at one point, photographs and video footage of which have become iconic symbols of this era. As dramatic as that moment was, its failure to stop the treaty’s renewal has been associated with the weakening of the Communist and Socialist parties, concomitant with the fragmentation of political opposition into narrower interest-based groups, including Japan’s so-called New Left.¹²

At the end of the 1960s—near the culmination of over a decade of unprecedented economic growth and increasing prosperity supported by a new generation of stay-at-home wives

⁹ Carol Gluck, “Introduction,” in *Showa: The Japan of Hirohito*, ed. Carol Gluck and Stephen R. Graubard (New York: Norton, 1992), xlv. Gluck notes that “democracy in its postwar constitutional form had indeed come from on high” (ibid., xliv). John Dower describes some early postwar discourse depicting Japan’s postwar democracy as a gift from the heavens, a “revolution from above.” See chapter two in Dower, *Embracing Defeat*.

¹⁰ Wesley Makoto Sasaki-Uemura, *Organizing the Spontaneous: Citizen Protest in Postwar Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2001), 17.

¹¹ Ibid., 16, 23–26.

¹² Ibid., 17–18.

and mothers¹³—another round of protests came to a head. This time, in addition to the latest renewal of the US-Japan Security Treaty, protesters targeted the Vietnam War and the continued US military presence in Japan, which served as a staging ground for the war. These new protests are most strongly associated with Zenkyōtō, the All-Campus Joint Struggle Committee. The most tangible manifestation of the New Left, Zenkyōtō was formed in the late 1960s primarily from undergraduate and graduate students, including individuals who had participated in the earlier Anpo protests.¹⁴ And this round of protests involved many of those girls who once watched from their living rooms—now young women in their late teens and early twenties.

It is this involvement that is generally considered to have provided the impetus for the emergence of the *ūman ribu* movement in 1970.¹⁵ A few of the women who would adopt the *ribu* moniker were, several years later, to begin what they eventually called a “*rezubian-feminist*” movement. It was also in this context that Japan’s first *rezubian* organization, Wakakusa no Kai [Young Grass Club], was formed based on shared desires and experiences rather than an explicitly feminist agenda. Finally, this was the moment in which a small group of young women artists began to reinvent *shōjo* manga, in part through novel experimentation with gender and sexuality that called into question the heteronormative romance script—a development particularly striking due to the young age of the graphic narratives’ intended readers. In addition to this common background and the related goals of unsettling gender and sexual norms for women outlined in chapter one, the *ribu*, *rezubian*, and queer *shōjo* spheres had other sometimes

¹³ See Mary C. Brinton, *Women and the Economic Miracle: Gender and Work in Postwar Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

¹⁴ Sasaki-Uemura, *Organizing the Spontaneous*, 198–202. Sasaki-Uemura notes that the generation that came of age during the protests in 1959 and 1960 had a powerful influence on Zenkyōtō (ibid.).

¹⁵ See, for instance, the framing of the collection *From Zenkyōtō to ribu*, in which many key *ribu* leaders from the 1970s reflect back on the movement: Onnatachi no Ima o Tou Kai, ed., *Zenkyōtō kara ribu e* (Tokyo: Inpakuto Shuppankai, 1996). An English-language discussion of this connection can be found in Muto Ichiyo, “The Birth of the Women’s Liberation Movement in the 1970s,” in *The Other Japan: Conflict, Compromise, and Resistance Since 1945*, ed. Joe Moore (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1997), 148–49.

obvious, sometimes subtle points of overlap that will become more apparent as I trace their histories.

The Liberation of Eros and the Birth of *Ūman Ribu*

When I first met *ribu* activist Tanaka Mitsu (1943–) in September 2008 at a party celebrating the publication of a three-volume collection of reproduced fliers, pamphlets and *mini-komi* from Ribu Shinjuku Center (1972–1977), she told me that if I wanted to understand *ribu* I should watch the video taken of a performance of *Women’s Liberation: The Musical* (*Myūzukaru “onna no kaihō”*).¹⁶ This production created by a group calling itself Dotekabo Ichiza, with input from prominent avant-garde poet, playwright, and critic, Terayama Shūji (1935–1983), was first staged in January 1974 at Terayama’s theater.¹⁷ The video of the March 1, 1975 performance, clips of which were shown that September evening, encapsulates the social critiques waged by *ribu* as well as the spirit of the movement, in a combination of earnestness, determination, and mirth that is often lost in basic histories of the *ribu* movement. The name of the group—which for that performance included Tanaka, as well as Asakawa Mari, Doi Yumi, Sawabe Hitomi, Wakabayashi Naeko, and Yonezu Tomoko (all discussed below or in subsequent chapters)—involves a humorous play on words that roughly translates to “the good-for-nothing theater troupe.” Staged at a time when the movement was arguably reaching its peak, *Women’s Liberation: The Musical*, used humor to communicate the troupe’s messages about abortion, infanticide, Japan’s economic exploitation of Asia, prostitution tours to Asian

¹⁶ *Myūzukaru “Onna no kaihō” 1975*, DVD (Tokyo: Dotekabo Ichiza no Bideo Mitai Kai, 2005). While the members changed, Dotekabo Ichiza continued to stage performances at universities and other locations through 1980. See Ribu Shinjuku Sentaa Shiryō Hozon Kai, ed. *Ribu Shinjuku Sentaa shiryō shūsei: Kono michi hitosuji* (hereafter, RSSSHK, *Kono michi hitosuji*) (Tokyo: Inpakuto, 2008), iv. The publication being celebrated was Ribu Shinjuku Sentaa Shiryō Hozon Kai, ed. *Ribu Shinjuku Sentaa shiryō shūsei*, 3 vols. (Tokyo: Inpakuto, 2008).

¹⁷ Dotekabo Ichiza no Bideo Mitai Kai, *Dotekabo Ichiza “Myūzukaru ‘Onna no kaihō’ 1975”*, 1.

countries, and expectations about femininity.¹⁸ In a skit about flatulence, “No Holding Farts” (*Onara gaman hantai*), the narrator tells the audience that not only is restraining the release of gas unhealthy, it can kill: “Last year, as many as 13,787.3 women died...from holding their farts.”¹⁹ The use of toilet humor itself constitutes the occupation a discursive position women were expected not to assume, making it a particularly apt tool for the critique of social expectations of femininity (*onnarashisa*). Asakawa Mari (1950–) found both performing in these productions as well as watching them empowering because it helped her “laugh off” these serious issues.²⁰ The audience captured in the grainy black and white video of the 1975 performance was as boisterous about and supportive of the silly fart jokes as they were the revolutionary spirit of the concluding number, part of which appears as the epigraph to this chapter.

The early stages of *ribu* were not always as lighthearted, however. The innumerable personal histories that led women to the movement are filled with resentment, frustration, and anger related to contradictions that women and girls frequently confronted, and which for many came to a head in the increasingly prosperous Japan of the late 1960s. From a young age, Yonezu Tomoko (1948–) questioned the social norms that dictated both that women needed to marry in order to find happiness and that she herself would not “be chosen” by a man because she was partially handicapped in one leg. Her handicap placed her outside the bounds of normative femininity, which pushed her to question it. Deciding that she needed to support herself in an occupation open to women, she began to study design at Tama Art University at the end of the 1960s. And, like many other young students at the time, she got swept up in the

¹⁸ Ibid., 1.

¹⁹ Ibid., 15.

²⁰ *30-nen no shisutaafuddo: 70-nendai no ūman ribu no onnatachi* (documentary), DVD, directed by Yamagami Chieko and Seyama Noriko (Japan: Herstory Project, 2004).

excitement of the student movement. Within the movement she was struck by the discrepancy between the rhetoric calling students to arms and the rhetoric positioning female students not on the barricades but behind the scenes doing things like making rice balls and watching men's possessions so they could go demonstrate. This was an experience common to many other women who would become *ribu* activists, and one that resonates as well with issues faced by women activists in the US and France in the same period.²¹ In response to this issue specifically and the more general lack of concordance between “woman” (*onna*), “student,” and “designer,” she and three other students at the school formed the group Thought Collective S.E.X. (Shisō Shūdan Esu Ii Ekkusu) in April 1970 to problematize being a “woman.”²²

Tanaka, one of the most prominent *ribu* leaders in the first half of the 1970s, came to the *ribu* movement through questioning the meaning of “woman” in Japanese society. Tanaka got her start in activism more generally in the late 1960s via aid activities for the children of Vietnam, in part out of sympathy for their plight and in part as a catharsis for the things in her past that she felt had sullied her as a woman, including being the victim of sexual abuse as a young child, and contracting a sexually transmitted disease in her early 20s.²³ Realizing how

²¹ Mackie, *Feminism in Modern Japan*, 147. Akiyama Yōko opens her own autobiography by positioning *ribu* within the revolutions of the moment: Prague Spring, the May 1968 riots in Paris, China's Cultural Revolution, the US Civil Rights movement, and anti-Vietnam War demonstrations around the world. Conversely, some former *ribu* activists have drawn parallels with the grassroots struggles of women in Japan and the struggles of women elsewhere in Asia or the Third World. See Kitazawa Yōko, Matsui Yayori, and Yunomae Tomoko, “The Women's Movement: Progress and Obstacles,” in *Voices from the Japanese Women's Movement*, ed. AMPO: The Japan Asia Quarterly Review (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1996), 27. While I do not disagree that these parallels are there to be seen, I would argue the more salient struggles are those outlined by Akiyama, particularly those in the US, which was using Japan as a staging ground for its war in Vietnam and which had occupied the country less than two decades before.

²² Yonezu's personal history and the history of Thought Group S.E.X. are summarized from Yonezu Tomoko, interview with author, June 2009, “10/21 o keiki toshite Shisō Shūdan Esu Ii Ekkusu sōkatsu” (1970), in *Shiryō Nihon ūman ribu shi*, ed. Mizoguchi Akiyo, Saeki Yōko, and Miki Sōko (Kyoto: Shōkadō Shoten, 1992), vol. 1, 175, and “Mizukara no SEX o mokuteki ishikiteki ni hikiukeru naka kara 70-nendai o bokki saseyo!” (1970), in *Ribu Shinjuku Sentaa Shiryō Hozon Kai, Ribu Shinjuku Sentaa shiryō shūsei: bira hen* (hereafter RSSSHK, *Bira hen*) (Tokyo: Inpakuto, 2008), 2.

²³ See section three in Tanaka Mitsu, *Inochi no onnatachi e: torimidashi ūman ribu ron* (Tokyo: Tabata Shoten, 1972), and “Mirai o tsukanda onnatachi,” interview by Kitahara Minori and Ueno Chizuko, in *Sengo Nihon sutadiizu 2: 60, 70-nendai*, ed. Komori Yōichi et al. (Tokyo: Kinokuniya Shoten, 2009) 279–83.

Japan's economic growth—supported by US military demand for weapons and trucks—was being “paid for with the blood of Vietnamese children,” she quickly became involved in the anti-war movement and, though she had never gone to university, found herself in the middle of the student protests.²⁴ Through an encounter with a newly released translation of Wilhelm Reich's *Sexual Revolution*, she came to believe that “at the core of human consciousness is sex (*sei*),” a point which helped her understand why she had long been cutting herself down and which was to become the crux of her own theorizing about the marriage system, the family, and the meaning of “woman.”²⁵ By the middle of 1970, Tanaka was distributing fliers among demonstrators that called for women to join with her in her new struggle—for the liberation of eros. Contrary to media reports that would conflate the goals of *ribu* with sexual liberation or “free sex” (*furii sekkusu*), for Tanaka liberation of eros entailed undoing norms that positioned women as either mothers or receptacles for men's sexual desire. Free of such oppression women and men would be able to engage in truly open erotic communication with each other. The group Tanaka formed would by the fall of 1970 call themselves Group Fighting Women (Gurūpu Tatakau Onna). The early fliers, titled “Eros Liberation Manifesto” (*Erosu kaihō sengen*), specifically draw on Reich in linking the Vietnam War and the Anpo struggle as well as personal problems to the “oppression of sex” (*sei no yokuatsu*).²⁶ Tanaka expanded and refined her argument into an increasingly long declaration that would by August become her famous “Liberation from the Toilet” (*Benjo kara kaihō*), which at times bore the Group Fighting Woman name.²⁷ And it was under this name that they would organize a demonstration involving some

²⁴ Tanaka, *Inochi no onnatachi e*, 125–26.

²⁵ Tanaka, *Inochi no onnatachi e*, 141; Wilhelm Reich, *Sei to bunka no kakumei*, trans. Nakao Hajime (Tokyo Keisō Shobō, 1969).

²⁶ Two nearly identical versions of the single-page flier, one hand-written, one typed, are available as Tanaka Mitsu, “Erosu kaihō sengen,” 1970, reproduced in RSSHK, *Bira hen*.

²⁷ Multiple versions are reproduced in RSSHK, *Bira hen*, e.g., Tanaka Mitsu, “Benjo kara no kaihō” (1970), reproduced in *ibid.*, 20–26.

50 women in Tokyo's Ginza district on October 21, then marked in Japan as International Anti-War Day.²⁸ Through media coverage of this protest—the first public women's liberation protest in Japan—women like Yonezu learned about Tanaka's group and were able to contact it.²⁹

Akiyama Yōko (1942–) did not attend the first *ribu* rally in 1970 but she had already been interviewed about the nascent women's liberation movement in Japan for an article in the daily *Asahi shinbun* earlier that month, an article that would introduce the word “*ūman ribu*” and link the Japanese movement to its American counterpart.³⁰ A year earlier, Akiyama was a newlywed with a master's degree in Chinese literature and a new baby. Having found a part-time job teaching at a high school, she had no choice but to put her baby in an unlicensed daycare center because public facilities did not admit children that young. She had also become acquainted with Jan and Annie, a young American couple who had recently graduated from Berkeley and had come to Japan to protest the war, as well as, in the case of Jan, to evade the draft. Through English conversation classes given by the couple, she learned details about the new women's liberation movement in the US around the time it was first being ridiculed in the Japanese press. When the couple left to take haven in Sweden, which was providing visas to American draft dodgers, they left behind several pamphlets from the US movement, including a pamphlet version of an article by Marge Piercy critiquing sexism within the student movement in

²⁸ An article in the English-language Japanese New Left journal *AMPO* describes notes that on October 21, 1969, there were 832 rallies held around the country, including all of Japan's prefectures. The article boasts that 1,505 arrests were made that day throughout the country, most in Tokyo. Of the total, just 100 were women, indicating a clearly marginal position in the movement. See *AMPO*, “October 21, Japan's Mightiest Anti-War Day,” No. 1 (November 1969): 4.

²⁹ The biggest media coverage of the event may have been an article in the *Asahi shinbun*: “Yarimasu wa yo, ‘onna kaihō’: ūman ribu Ginza ni ‘otoko wa toridase’ kidōtai mo tajitaji,” October 22, 1970, morning ed., 3. For an overview of Group Fighting Women, see Saeki Yōko, “Gurūpu Tatakau Onna (Tōkyō),” in Mizoguchi, Saeki, and Miki, *Shiryō Nihon ūman ribu shi*, vol. 1; Yonezu, interview.

³⁰ *Asahi shinbun*, “Ūman ribu, ‘dansei tengoku’ ni jōriku,” October 4, 1970, morning ed., 24.

the US.³¹ Akiyama's Japanese rendering of this pamphlet was among the earliest translations of US radical second-wave feminist writing in circulation in Japan, and Akiyama would continue to play a key role in the translation of US feminist writing for the next several years.³²

Another of the earliest *ribu* translators was Ikegami Chizuko (1946–).³³ A voracious reader as a child, Ikegami was in the fourth grade when a boy in her class told her that she had no need to study hard since to get married—her presumed destiny and dream—she only had to be able to clean and to look cute. As Ikegami recalls it, the shock she received at hearing those words was the start of her feminist career, a course which would lead to her participation in the *ribu* movement in the early 1970s. Through the media, including American television shows like *Father Knows Best* in which women laughed boisterously and revealed how clever they were, she had gotten the impression that American women were really fortunate compared with women around her.³⁴ She decided to study American women's history at university, thinking there might be something useful to be learned that would help women in Japan. Upon beginning her studies at Tokyo University in 1965, she quickly discovered, however, that women in the US and those in Japan were confronting basically the same issues. She did find new feminist activism in the US, including the writing of Betty Friedan and the recent creation of the National Organization for Women, and she began translating short items for herself and to share with friends.³⁵ She was also among hundreds of women to take part in a seven-hour women-only

³¹ Akiyama Yōko, *Ribu shishi nōto: onnatachi no jidai kara* (Tōkyō: Inpakuto Shuppankai, 1993), 8, 16–18, 23.

³² Marge Piercy, “Idai na kūrī: josei,” trans. Akiyama Yōko, in *Josei kaihō undō shiryō 1: Amerika hen*, ed. Josei Kaihō Undō Junbi Kai (Tokyo: Josei Kaihō Undō Junbi Kai, 1970), 24–43.

³³ The following description is primarily based on an interview with Ikegami by the author, July 2009.

³⁴ See Ikegami Chizuko, *Amerika josei kaihō shi* (Tokyo: Aki Shobō, 1972), iv.

³⁵ Friedan's famous *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) was translated into Japanese the year Ikegami entered university: Betty Friedan, *Atarashii josei no sōzō*, trans. Miura Fumiko (Tokyo: Daiwa Shoten, 1965). Ikegami recalls getting information on American feminism at the “American Culture Center” (Amerika no Bunka Sentaa), which has either changed its name or ceased to exist, and at Agora, a women's resource center started in the mid-1960s. On Agora, see Mackie, *Feminism in Japan* 150–51.

debate titled “An Accusation of Sex Discrimination” (*Sei sabetsu e no kokuhatsu*) held on November 14. This debate was transcribed and released in a volume by the same name in 1971.³⁶ Ikegami would contribute several translations to the volume, and a year later was to publish a full-length book on American women’s history for the same publisher.³⁷

One day in mid-1971, Miki Sōko (1943–), living in the Kansai region (surrounding Osaka and Kyoto), found herself in tears on the train reading *An Accusation of Sex Discrimination*: finally she found other women who felt like her.³⁸ Miki had been struggling to reconcile her beliefs about equality in marriage with her own experiences and this book struck a nerve. Not long after that, Miki saw a tiny notice in the old-school feminist publication *Women’s Democratic Newspaper* (*Fujin minshu shinbun*, 1946–) about the first *ribu* retreat (*ribu gasshuku*) to be held that August in Nagano, and she thought, “This is it!”³⁹ Her first encounter with *ūman ribu* in the flesh was taking part in that gathering, which saw the participation of around 300 women ranging from their teens to their forties and a number of groups, including its organizers, Group Fighting Women and Thought Collective S.E.X. from the Tokyo area, as well as groups from more distant parts of the country, such as Ribu FUKUOKA, from southwest Japan.⁴⁰ The retreat’s plans called for a discussion questioning a shopping list of things often taken for granted: “the class struggle, sex (*sei*), family relationships, Marx, Freud, beauty, common sense, education, employment. . . . and being a woman (*onna de aru koto*).”⁴¹ More

³⁶ Aki Shobō Henshūbu, ed., *Sei sabetsu e no kokuhatsu: ūmanribu wa shuchō suru* (Tokyo: Aki Shobō, 1971).

³⁷ Ikegami, *Amerika josei kaihō shi*. This book was a revised version of Ikegami’s senior thesis, completed at Tokyo University. A discussion of Ikegami’s translations can be found in chapter four.

³⁸ Miki describes her initial encounter with *ribu* in *30-nen no shisutaafuddo*.

³⁹ *Women’s Democratic Newspaper* was begun by Women’s Democratic Club (Fujin Minshu Kurabu) in 1946, the year of the organization’s founding. The publication was renamed *Femin* in 1991.

⁴⁰ Miki Sōko, “Ribu gasshuku,” in Mizoguchi, Saeki, and Miki, *Shiryō Nihon ūman ribu shi*, vol. 1. Ribu FUKUOKA, which writes “*ribu*” in the phonetic *katakana* script and “Fukuoka,” its city of origin, in capital Roman letters, is discussed in chapter three.

⁴¹ This quote comes from a message from the retreat’s steering committee, cited in Miki, “Ribu gasshuku.”

importantly perhaps, the gathering gave women the chance to talk about their feelings and experiences—making food for others, abortion, discrimination, wounds—functioning as the kind of conscious raising necessary for personal liberation.⁴² Miki writes that this retreat also helped establish a “*ribu* network” and led to the birth of a *mini-komi* called *From Woman to Women* (*Onna kara onnatachi e* [Osaka], 1972–1988) and the first commercially published *ribu* magazine, *Woman Eros* (*Onna erosu*, 1973–1982), for both of which Miki would be a founding member.⁴³

Just over a year after the first *ribu* retreat, several *ribu* groups established Ribu Shinjuku Center, nicknamed Ribusen, in a small Tokyo apartment. Tanaka explains that the name of the center was chosen to emphasize that it was “just one of many *ribu* groups” that happened to be located near Shinjuku rather than it being “the” *ribu* center.⁴⁴ Given the centrality of Ribu Shinjuku Center and the prominence of Tanaka in the movement, however, the center did in fact function as a key node for *ribu* groups around Japan for the five years of its existence, and was often on the itinerary of foreign feminists passing through or living in the country. It was out of Ribu Shinjuku Center that *Ribu News: This Straight Path* (*Ribu nyūsu: kono michi hitosuji*, 1972–1976), a key *mini-komi*, was published and distributed nationwide.⁴⁵ In addition to providing living quarters for members of Group Fighting Women and Thought Collective S.E.X.—one of a number of experiments in collective living among *ribu* groups around

The ellipses are original.

⁴² *30-nen no shisutaafuddo*.

⁴³ Miki, “Ribū gasshuku.” Other retreats would later be held in Hokkaidō to the north and Kyūshū to the southwest, as well as Kansai and Shikinejima, an island off Shizuoka Prefecture, in central Japan. As many as 5000 copies of each of the first three issues of *Woman Eros* were in print by the end of 1974, and, as the copies I have examined demonstrate, at least some of them were reprinted through the late 1970s. Amano Michimi discusses the publication of *Women Eros* in “Women in Japan: Lucy Leu Interviews Michimi,” *The Second Wave* 3, no. 4 (Winter 1974): 41.

⁴⁴ Tanaka, “Mirai o tsukanda onnatachi,” 312.

⁴⁵ All sixteen issues are reproduced in their entirety, with minor edits to protect individuals’ privacy, in RSSHK, *Kono michi hitosuji*.

Japan—the center was the meeting place or founding location of over a dozen *ribu* groups working on a range of issues.⁴⁶ Among the groups founded here was a translation group that began in 1974 as a circle to read materials sent from feminist groups abroad, which would in 1975 make English-language materials for women to take with them to Mexico City to introduce the *ribu* movement at the first United Nations World Conference on Women in June 1975. A recent history of the center by women who once took part in activities at the center describes groups using the space as working on “prevention of the worsening of the Eugenics Protection Law, abolition of the anti-abortion law, rethinking infanticide, [fighting] the exclusion of baby strollers from public spaces and the economic invasion of Asia, protesting prostitution tours [by men], [addressing] the harmful effects of pollution and medicines, denouncing sex discrimination in the media, [attacking] violence by husbands, [and] abolition of the death penalty.”⁴⁷

Opposition to proposed revisions of the Eugenics Protection Law (*Yūsei hogo hō*) would be one of the most prominent of these issues, one which formed the topic of countless meetings as well as articles in *Ribu News* and many other *mini-komi*. Building on the voices of right-wing activists who had long favored prohibition of abortion on moral grounds, some members of the Diet began to make moves toward dramatically increasing restrictions on abortion, in part a reaction to an increasing demand for labor due to Japan’s rapid economic growth.⁴⁸ *Ribu* groups had begun to address this problem in the latter half of 1970, becoming some of the earliest civil opposition.⁴⁹ In May 1972 a bill was proposed that would remove the “economic reasons”

⁴⁶ A history of Ribu Shinjuku Center can be found in RSSHK, *Kono michi hitosuji*, ii–iv, and a listing of the groups that used the space in *ibid.*, iv–v.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, ii.

⁴⁸ Tiana Norgren, *Abortion Before Birth Control: The Politics of Reproduction in Postwar Japan* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001), 59–62.

⁴⁹ Fliers addressing this issue include Josei Kaihō Undō Junbi Kai, “Yūsei hogo hō kaiaku soshi e mukete no apiiru,” reproduced in Aki Shobō Henshūbu, *Sei sabetsu e no kokuhatsu*; Gurūpu Tatakau Onna, “Chūkin taisei

clause, which effectively allows any woman access to abortion. Equally or more troubling for many women was its replacement by a clause permitting selective abortion for fetuses with anomalies to allow, if not encourage, the prevention of handicapped babies from being born. Finally, the bill included a provision that would establish a system to counsel women on the best age for marriage and childbirth, this in response to an increase in the number of women seeking careers.⁵⁰ Writing at the time in the English-language New Left journal, *AMPO*, Nagano Yoshiko explains that, “Taken as a whole...the reform bill is aimed at prohibiting abortions ‘for economic reasons,’ encouraging abortions in cases of ‘handicapped’ embryos [*sic*], and finally, lowering the age at which women start childbearing, thus effectively controlling their entire life cycle.”⁵¹ Formal discussion of the bill was delayed several times due to other more pressing bills and opposition within the Diet, and it failed to come to a vote in 1972 or 1973.⁵² Many of those fighting the bill, including New Left groups, women’s groups, labor organizations, and groups for the physically and mentally handicapped, united in March 1973 to form the Committee to Prevent the Worsening of the Eugenics Protection Law (Yūsei Hogo Hō Kaiaku Soshi Jikkō Inukai), based at Ribu Shinjuku Center.⁵³ Ultimately, the bill met strong opposition from a number of fronts, including from the medical establishment, and failed when it finally came to a vote in May 1974.⁵⁴

Another group focused on the abortion issue was Chūpiren, which vigorously protested attempts to criminalize abortion and fought equally hard for legalization of the birth control pill, the latter a cause other *ribu* groups were generally reluctant to get behind out of health and other

to wa nani ka,” reproduced in *ibid.* See also Norgren, *Abortion Before Birth Control*, 65.

⁵⁰ Nagano Yoshiko, “Women Fight for Control: Abortion Struggle in Japan,” *AMPO* no. 17 (Summer 1973): 15–16.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁵² Norgren, *Abortion Before Birth Control*, 63.

⁵³ RSSHK, *Kono michi hitosuji*, v.

⁵⁴ Norgren, *Abortion Before Birth Control*, 63.

concerns.⁵⁵ The group was established in 1972 by Enoki Misako (1945–), whose involvement in *ribu* activism appears to have begun in Woolf Society, co-founded by Akiyama as a translation group.⁵⁶ While the Japanese medical establishment had criticized the pill as being unsafe, Enoki had managed to obtain the pill somewhere and members of Woolf Society experimented taking them. Ultimately the group’s members remained unconvinced that the pill was safe and were unwilling to advocate for it.⁵⁷ Enoki split from Woolf Society—and the mainstream of the *ribu* movement—after she was criticized for using Woolf’s name on pamphlets about the pill she was selling at a big *ribu* meeting in 1972.⁵⁸ Chūpiren’s colorful public antics, such as boisterous demonstrations in pink helmets, garnered a great deal of media attention, which in the mid-1970s tended to conflate Enoki and her group with the entire *ribu* movement. While writing by *ribu* activists looking back on the movement often mentions Chūpiren, the group has received little extended attention and has instead been positioned outside of the mainstream of the movement, likely a function of both the lack of strong ties between Enoki’s group and more central *ribu* groups, as well as the negative attention her group brought *ribu*.⁵⁹

For *ribu* activists, as for many women around the world, the 1975 United Nations First World Conference on Women was a pivotal moment, one that would see the participation of several prominent *ribu* activists alongside Japan’s official delegation. Among its impacts on

⁵⁵ Chūpiren stands for Chūzetsu Kinshi Hō ni Hantai shi Piru Kaikin o Yōkyū Suru Josei Kaihō Rengō [Women’s liberation collective opposing the prohibition of abortion and demanding the elimination of the prohibition on the (birth control) pill], with the “*chū*” standing for “abortion” (*chūzetsu*), the “*pi*” for the “pill” (*piru*) and “*ren*” for “collective” (*rengō*). See Norgren, *Abortion Before Birth Control*, 66; Akiyama, *Ribu shishi nōto*, 121–38.

⁵⁶ Woolf Society’s translation and other publication activities are discussed in chapter four.

⁵⁷ *30-nen no shisutaafuddo*; Akiyama Yōko, “Piru wa hontō ni yoi mono na no ka?,” *Onna kara onnatachi e* [Urufu no kai, Tokyo], no. 2 (Fall 1972).

⁵⁸ *30-nen no shisutaafuddo*.

⁵⁹ Akiyama, *Ribu shishi nōto*, 137–38. A roundtable discussion published in *Woman Eros* was held on the theme “Was Chūpiren [Part of] *Ribu*?: Ōtani Junko et al., “Zadankai: Chūpiren wa ribu datta no ka,” *Onna erosu* no. 10 (March 1978).

Enoki, like many women in *ribu*, seems to have run out of steam in the mid-1970s and the group disappeared around 1977. See Atsumi Ikuko, “Goals of Feminism in Modern Japan,” *Feminist International* [Japan], no. 2 (June 1980).

women in Japan, this conference, along with the subsequent Decade for Women (1976–1985) and related UN conventions, would drive the creation the Equal Employment Opportunity Law ((Danjo Koyō Kikai Kintō Hō) of 1985, a new, if ineffective, law for the protection of women’s equality in the labor force in Japan. For the *ribu* women, however, the 1975 meeting drew away key members and the movement’s already waning energy. In the end, the intensity of their involvement was too draining for many *ribu* activists and the conference provided a segue for them to withdraw. Several prominent activists who went to Mexico City to attend the conference stayed on in North America for an extended period, using it either as an opportunity to network and to learn firsthand about feminist movements in the US or to simply drop out. Those who stayed behind in Tokyo changed the organization of Ribu Shinjuku Center and stepped down their activism for various, sometimes personal reasons. After moving out of the center, Yonezu, for instance, got involved in a women-only printing collective with several other former center residents. When tensions within the group grew too much, she pulled out of feminist activities altogether until a new government move to revise the Eugenics Protection Law drew her back around 1982. Since then Yonezu has remained heavily involved in Soshiren, a group initially focused on again preventing the worsening of the law but which has moved onto focus on broader themes.⁶⁰ Around the same time Yonezu withdrew from the collective, one of her colleagues, Yumi Doi, left Japan altogether.

As the *ribu* movement was waning, a more intellectual form of feminism began to come to the fore, spearheaded by women of the same generation as *ribu* activists and some *ribu*

⁶⁰ Yonezu, interview. Soshiren, the name the group eventually adopted as its official name, is an abbreviation of “82 Yūsei Hogo Hō Kaiaku Soshi Renraku Kai” [Network to Prevent the Worsening of the Eugenics Protection Law (in) 1982]. While the group continues to advocate legal access to abortion as well as laws that do not encourage the use of abortion for eugenic purposes, it also focuses on other issues such as women’s health, and periodically organizes a retreat called “Because It’s Woman’s=My Body” (Onna=watashi no karada kara). See Soshiren’s website: <http://www.soshiren.org/>.

activists themselves. While these newly prominent feminists would focus on many of the same issues as *ribu* activists had been doing, the new feminists would, for the most part, not stage the same kinds of public protests or demonstrations or engage so vigorously in grass-roots activism. This new wave was represented most tangibly in books and magazines, sometimes devoted exclusively to feminist topics. One such magazine is the journal *Feminist* (*Feminisuto*, 1977–1980), founded by Atsumi Ikuko (1940–) and a small group of other women—and which made no attempts to conceal an internationalist vision of feminism. In its first year, the magazine prominently ran interviews with American feminists like Kate Millet and Erica Jong and Japan’s own international feminist par excellence, Yoko Ono. It also produced and distributed internationally several issues in English, the first in 1978, published “in the hope of bringing to readers of English accurate information about the situation of women in Asia.”⁶¹

The subsequent issue contains a special feature on the “dawn” of “women’s studies” (*joseigaku*), with articles introducing courses on women available at universities in Japan as well as women’s studies courses abroad.⁶² While the study of women in Japan itself is nothing new, as the editors of *Feminist* spell out in their introduction to the issue, with the advent of this new field, “women have begun to rewrite scholarship and history.”⁶³ Like the new wave of academic feminism, those involved in establishing women’s studies as a field in Japan make no qualms about pointing to learning about women’s studies courses in the US as a major impetus for moving to establish similar ones in Japan. Inoue Teruko (1942–) writes that she first heard about “women’s studies” from (female) *Asahi shinbun* journalist Matsui Yayori (1934–2002) at the

⁶¹ *Feminist International* [Japan], “A Brief History of ‘Feminist,’” no. 2. (June 1980): 104.

⁶² *Feminisuto*, “Joseigaku no akebono,” special feature, no. 5 (April 1978).

⁶³ *Feminisuto* Henshūbu, “Onna ga, gakumon ya rekishi o, kakikae hajimeta: joseigaku no akebono,” *Feminisuto* no. 5 (April 1978): 3.

ribu retreat in August 1971 and decided she wanted to see it for herself.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, writing about the field almost a decade later, she insists that, “It is important to build a [field of] women’s studies rooted in the history of women (*onna*) in Japan and that is not a mere import from America.”⁶⁵ When she and Kaya Emiko (1943–), who accompanied her on a 1973 tour to several US universities with women’s studies courses, later wrote about those courses, they coined the word “ *joseigaku*” to name the field. Like the choice within the *ribu* movement of “*josei*” and, especially, “*onna*” over “*fujin*” to name women and the women’s movement (discussed in chapter one), this naming was not without significance to Inoue. Inoue and Kaya ultimately chose a term that would suggest a field in which “women (*josei*) research women (*josei*).”⁶⁶ Though not spelled out in Inoue’s history of the field, the use of “*josei*” rather than “*onna*” does suggest a certain distance from the unrefined woman who was the focus of the *ribu* movement. Adopting this new term, the Women’s Studies Association of Japan (Nihon Joseigaku Kenkyūkai) was founded in Kyoto in the fall of 1977 and published its first *Annual Report of Women’s Studies (Joseigaku nenpō, 1980–)* three years later.⁶⁷

While Inoue had high hopes for the new field from the outset, some women within the *ribu* movement saw women’s studies, as well as the academic feminism with which it was associated, as draining the energy from *ribu* activism.⁶⁸ It is beyond the scope of my discussion here to evaluate this claim, but given the timing of *ribu*’s dissipation and the rise of women’s studies and this new feminist thinking, it is not a surprising correlation to see. Still, there is no definitive end point for the *ribu* movement and no one event or new movement (or field) dealt it

⁶⁴ Inoue Teruko, *Joseigaku to sono shūhen* (Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 1980), 230.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 231.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 230–31.

⁶⁷ Nihon Joseigaku Kenkyūkai “Purojekuto 20,” and “Anata e,” in their *Watashi kara feminizumu: Nihon Joseigaku Kenkyūkai 20-shūnen kinenshi* (Osaka: Nihon Joseigaku Kenkyūkai, 1998).

⁶⁸ See, for instance Miki Sōko’s critique of the then emerging field of women’s studies, which lacks the “*ribu* spirit” in Miki Sōko, “*Ribu tamashii no nai joseigaku nante,*” *Onna erosu* no. 11 (October 1978). Miki has been a very outspoken critic of mainstream *feminizumu* in Japan.

a fatal blow. Many of the women involved in the *ribu* movement continue to take part in activism, often related to women's issues, sometimes explicitly framed as "*feminisuto*" causes. When Yonezu began again to take part in activism with the members of Soshiren, which does not define itself as a "*ribu*" group, she was rejoining some women she knew from her *ribu* days.⁶⁹ The group of women in Nagoya who began publishing the *mini-komi Women's Revolt* (*Onna no hangyaku*, 1971–) at the opening of the decade are still going at it in 2010. While women like Miki still proudly fly the *ribu* banner, most do not. Yet, even if they no longer apply the term to their current identity, some women with whom I have spoken maintain a clear attachment to the term. That the *ūman ribu* movement lives on at least in spirit for many former activists, however, is quite evident in a 2004 documentary in which *ribu* women from Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya, and elsewhere come together to remember and to celebrate "30 years of sisterhood."⁷⁰ The fact that a version of this video was released with English subtitles and a 2006 film tour of US universities was arranged—with Miki and Doi as well as the filmmakers participating—makes it clear that, no matter how local in origin their movement, theirs is an experience that at least some former *ribu* activists and feminists from Japan continue to believe has more global importance.

Stringing Together a *Rezubian* Community

Lying in a corner of an adult bookstore near the south exit of Tokyo's Shinjuku Station was a notebook in which those into "*homo, rezu, swapping (suwappingu), or SM*" could leave messages for each other. It was December 1971 and a 21-year-old office worker who would later

⁶⁹ Yonezu, interview. Soshiren's history certainly places it in a trajectory coming in no small part from *ribu* but the group does not prominently use the term "*ribu*" about its activities. The demise of the terms "*ribu*" and "*ūman ribu*" are discussed in chapter three.

⁷⁰ *30-nen no shisutaafuddo*.

adopt the pseudonym Suzuki Michiko left a note containing the address of her newly created post office box, the telephone number of the boarding house where she was staying, and a message stating that she was making a group for those who “want to live as *rezu*.” As a consequence, the phone at her boarding house rang non-stop. But, to her great disappointment and frustration, the calls were all from curious men. After hanging up on one man after another, she talked to the husband of a woman who, he said, was “like that.” He asked Suzuki to meet his wife. Soon thereafter, Suzuki tracked down another woman who had left contact information in that notebook, and the three of them, with Suzuki as leader, became *Wakakusa no Kai*, considered to be Japan’s first *rezubian* organization.⁷¹

To reach out and provide support to women attracted to other women, Suzuki did what she could to promote the group. She was interviewed for magazines and on television, a particularly brave act for a young *rezubian* in the 1970s.⁷² She also put ads in adult manga magazines, the only magazines with rates she could afford that would allow her to advertise a “*rezubian*” group.⁷³ Many women evidently went to *Wakakusa no Kai*’s gatherings looking for partners rather than a community, and indeed, a defining feature of the group was the match-making registry maintained by Suzuki and in the personal ads in *Wakakusa* [Young grass] the group’s *mini-komi*. Yet, as Suzuki has described the group, a majority of participants at its meetings just wanted to engage in “completely ordinary” chat in a space where it was acceptable to be a *rezubian*, a space where a woman could withdraw, however briefly, from the heterosexual

⁷¹ Hirosawa Yumi [Sawabe Hitomi], “Nihon hatsu no rezubian saakuru: ‘Wakakusa no Kai’ sono jūgonen no rekishi to genzai,” in *Bessatsu Takarajima*, no. 64, *Onna o ai suru onnatachi no monogatari* (Tokyo: JICC Shuppankyoku, 1987), 111–12; *Shūkan bunshun*, “Jūshūnen o mukaeta rezu gurūpu hyakunin: sono na mo ‘Wakakusa no Kai,’” June 25, 1981, 41–42. Where there are discrepancies in the origin story between the narratives told by Hirosawa and that told by *Shūkan bunshun*, I have generally chosen to rely on Sawabe (Hirosawa) because of the evident amount of personal investment Sawabe had in telling the story with care rather than for the sake of titillating readers.

⁷² E.g., *Shūkan josei*, “Watashi wa ‘rezubian no kai’ (kaiin 80-nin) no kaichō-san,” November 24, 1973.

⁷³ *Ibid.*; Hirosawa, “Nihon hatsu no rezubian saakuru,” 112.

world and feel at ease.⁷⁴

By the mid-1970s, Wakakusa no Kai had over 80 members and was holding monthly social gatherings in Tokyo and bimonthly gatherings in Osaka, and it would eventually organize parties and trips.⁷⁵ In the mid-1980s, Suzuki estimated that the group had at least 500 members over the course of its existence.⁷⁶ In a 1983 article she wrote for *Fujin kōron*, Suzuki describes the group's membership as including "single people, people living with their girlfriends, married people (those accepted by their husbands; those keeping it secret)...ranging in age from high school students in their teens to married women in their 50s."⁷⁷ While the group was harshly criticized in the mid-1970s by *ribu*-oriented *rezubian* for being non-political, as early as 1975, in a note opening the spring issue of *Wakakusa*, Suzuki expresses a desire to "eliminate the deep-rooted prejudice" in Japanese society "against people attracted to the same sex," so any woman can lead a bright, carefree life with the woman she loves.⁷⁸ In response to *rezubian-feminisuto* critiques of the group, I would argue that, while not explicitly feminist or otherwise political, the mere existence of spaces like Wakakusa no Kai where women can find a respite from social expectations work to gradually unravel patriarchal norms by making individuals aware of alternatives. And, as is clear here, Suzuki's ultimate goal was to rent a hole in the normative fabric of Japanese society.

The experiences of *rezubian* within the *ribu* movement itself varied. Among open *rezubian* participating in *ribu* activities were women who felt attracted to females prior to joining

⁷⁴ Suzuki Michiko, "Rezubian no kai o shusai shite jūnen," *Fujin kōron* 68, no. 1 (January 1983): 340.

⁷⁵ Suzuki Michiko, "Go-aisatsu," *Wakakusa* (Spring 1975), and "Rezubian no Kai," 340.

⁷⁶ Hirosawa, "Nihon hatsu no rezubian saakuru," 113.

⁷⁷ Suzuki, "Rezubian no Kai," 340.

⁷⁸ Suzuki, "Go-aisatsu." Suzuki's statement complicates sharp distinctions drawn between Wakakusa no Kai and *rezubian feminizumu*. Sugiura Ikuko, for instance, writes that *rezubian feminisuto* differed from Wakakusa no Kai in the intention on the part of the former to "eliminate *rezubian*'s 'internalized homophobia,'" but, whether or not it is stated directly, the idea of creating social acceptance is premised on the idea of being worthy thereof. See Sugiura Ikuko, "Nihon ni okeru rezubian feminizumu no katsudō: 1970-nendai kōhan no reimeiki ni okeru," *Jendaa kenkyū* [Tōkai Jendaa Kenkyūsho] no. 11 (December 2008): 144.

the *ribu* movement, sometimes from a young age. Amano Michimi (1945–), who got involved in the *ribu* movement and Tanaka’s Group Fighting Women around 1972, was quite open about her sexuality, although she left the group in less than a year because she and Tanaka did not get along.⁷⁹ While Amano did not feel that she was treated poorly for being a *rezubian*, other women like Asakawa, also in Group Fighting Women, were made to feel unwelcome in the communal living environment of the organization. In addition, Asakawa, like a number of others, also had problems with Tanaka’s leadership style.⁸⁰

Between 1975 and 1976 four *rezubian* involved in *ribu*, including several with ties to Wakakusa no Kai, created several surveys to find out more about the *rezubian* they were certain were among them in the *ribu* movement. They circulated the surveys among *ribu* women at meetings and via *ribu* group membership lists and other channels. The first survey asked “female homosexuals” (*josei dōseiaisha*) about issues such as when they became aware of their desire for women; the other was a survey of those in the *ribu* movement in general as well as other interested women and men. The 57 responses they received to the *rezubian* survey led to the holding of three roundtable discussions between March and May 1976 and then the creation of the first—and ultimately only—issue of a *mini-komi*, called *Wonderful Women (Subarashii onnatachi)*, published in November of that year.⁸¹

It was at one of these roundtables that Izumo Marou (1951–), who was first attracted to

⁷⁹ Amano’s relationship with Tanaka is discussed further in chapter five.

⁸⁰ Asakawa Mari, “Ribusen de deatta ‘subarashii onnatachi,’” oral history taken by Sugiura Ikuko, in *Nihon no rezubian komyuniti: kōjutsu no undō shi* (Tokyo: privately printed, 2009), 5–6. Izumo Marou also recalls *rezubian* within *ribu* taking issue with Tanaka. See also Izumo Marou et al., “Nihon no rezubian mūvumento,” *Gendai shisō* 25, no. 6 (May 1997): 59–60

⁸¹ *Subarashii onnatachi*, “Zasshi no hakkan ni attate,” no. 1 (November 1976), and “Zadankai ‘rezubian ōi ni kataru,” no. 1 (November 1976): 6. A transcript of the second roundtable, held with 17 participants in April 1976, can be found in *Subarashii onnatachi*, “Zadankai ‘rezubian ōi ni kataru.” While Asakawa participated in the making of the surveys, due to her strong objections, the survey results were not included in the main magazine but printed separately as a supplement, prefaced with Asakawa’s objections to the survey and Kawahara Karido’s response and defense. See “‘Resubian ni kan suru ankeeto’ shūkei repōto,” *Subarashii onnatachi* no. 1. (November 1976), supplement, and Asakawa 6–8. See also Izumo et al., “Nihon no rezubian mūvumento,” 59–60; The *mini-komi* may have sold as many as 1,000 copies. See Anne Blasing, “The Lavender Kimono,” *Connexions* no. 3 (Winter 1982).

other girls as a middle school student, initially learned about the existence of Wakakusa no Kai, as well as about the criticism of the group by *ribu*-oriented *rezubian*.⁸² In addition to attacking the organization for not actively working to improve the rights of *rezubian*, noted above, *ribu*-oriented *rezubian* took issue with the group's perpetuation of the patriarchal paradigm through the expectation that, both in couples and within the group in general, *rezubian* take on either a female role (*onnayaku*) or male role (*otokoyaku*). This was codified on the match-making cards kept by Suzuki as well as within the discourse of the group's members.⁸³ In spite of this criticism and lack of support from *ribu* activists, Wakakusa no Kai provided an important space for many women for almost a decade and a half in total. The group continued to hold meetings through around 1985, before running out of steam—and out of money. Suzuki had taken out an enormous loan to privately publish “Japan's first *rezubian* magazine,” *Eve and Eve* (*Ibu ando ibu*) in 1982, and in spite of poor sales due to distribution issues, quickly produced another issue. She was ultimately forced to devote her time to working in order to pay off the loan rather than running the group itself. Suzuki eventually withdrew completely, and the group dissolved not long after.⁸⁴

Just as the *Wonderful Women* project was underway, Wakabayashi Naeko (1947–), arrived back in Japan after a year spent in Mexico and the US. Wakabayashi, who had joined Group Fighting Women after she saw an article in the *Asahi shinbun* following the first *ribu* protest on October 21, 1970, brought back with her a lesbian-feminist identity, the mere

⁸² Izumo et al., “Nihon no rezubian mūvumento,” 60; *Aniisu*, “Komyuniti no rekishi,” 55. This criticism is discussed in the roundtable itself: *Subarashii onnatachi*, “Zadankai ‘Rezubian ōi ni kataru,’” 15–16.

⁸³ The group was also criticized for a lack of openness about bookkeeping. See *Subarashii onnatachi*, “Zadankai ‘Rezubian ōi ni kataru,’” 15–16; Izumo et al. “Nihon no rezubian mūvumento,” 59; Hirosawa, “Nihon hatsu no rezubian saakuru,” 115-16.

⁸⁴ Suzuki Michiko, “Sōkan no kotoba,” *Ibu ando ibu* no. 1 (August 1982): 2. The publication date is not indicated in the magazine itself; it comes from Suzuki, “Rezubian no kai,” 344. On the financial difficulty leading to the group's demise, see Hirosawa, “Nihon hatsu no rezubian saakuru,” 117; note that Hirosawa erroneously lists the year of publication of the original issue as 1984.

possibility of which she was unaware of before her trip.⁸⁵ Her contribution to *Wonderful Women* was the translation of an article into Japanese by a foreign woman living in Japan.⁸⁶ In an oral history taken in 2007, she acknowledges that she is considered an “ideological lesbian” (*shisō-ha rezubian*), that is, someone who is a *rezubian* for “ideological” reasons. This, she knows, positions her differently from someone who grew up attracted to other women.⁸⁷

As Izumo recalls, those who were *rezubian* as a “political choice” (*seijiteki sentaku*)—which she links to the influence of US feminism—had not experienced the same kind of anxiety about or rejection for being *rezubian* and, consequently, were not adequately sympathetic toward the needs of those for whom being a *rezubian* was not experienced as a choice. These needs included speaking and writing about negative issues in order to address the wounds they had incurred from going against or feeling forced to comply with social norms. In a recent study of this period, Sugiura Ikuko draws a line between the women involved in *Wonderful Women* and those who made the political choice to be a *rezubian*.⁸⁸ Yet, in Izumo’s personal experience, those who chose a *rezubian* identity under the influence of US lesbian feminism—whether or not first translated and transfigured by other Japanese women—blurred with those *ribu*-oriented *rezubian* involved in the *Wonderful Women* project. Some women in this project harshly rejected ideas and experiences that contradicted the notion that lesbians are “wonderful women,” and Izumo was ridiculed and criticized for talking about her own struggles, leading to her withdrawal from the group.⁸⁹

In 1977 Sawabe Hitomi (1952–) and several women who had come to *Wonderful Women*

⁸⁵ Wakabayashi Naeko, “Onna no nettowaaku no naka de ikiru,” oral history taken by Sugiura Ikuko, in Sugiura, *Nihon no rezubian komyuniti*, 17, 21–25.

⁸⁶ Wakabayashi, “Onna no nettowaaku no naka de ikiru,” 25. The article she translated is probably Barbara Lee Barbara, “Rezubian, kono onnatachi wa nani mono da?” trans. Hazama Natsu [Wakabayashi Naeko], *Subarashii onnatachi* no. 1 (November 1976).

⁸⁷ Wakabayashi, “Onna no nettowaaku no naka de ikiru,” 31.

⁸⁸ Sugiura, “Nihon ni okeru rezubian feminizumu no katsudō,” 162–63.

⁸⁹ Izumo Marou, personal communication with author, July 2009.

from Wakakusa no Kai formed the group Everyday Dyke (Mainichi Daiku), which produced two issues of its own *mini-komi*, *The Dyke (Za daiku)*, 1978).⁹⁰ Differences of opinion led Sawabe to form another group, Shining Wheel (Hikari Guruma), which produced an eponymous *mini-komi*.⁹¹ In spite of their differences the groups continued to cooperate, however. Everyday Dyke, for instance, promoted the premier issue of *Shining Wheel* its own publication.⁹² While both groups positioned themselves as *rezubian feminisuto*, Sugiura points out that lesbianism as an explicitly political choice was central to neither.⁹³

In 1981, members from each group joined together to start Lesbian Feminist Center, which was, however, guided in part by the belief that lesbianism is a rational political choice for feminists.⁹⁴ Activities organized by the groups using the center included holding consciousness-raising workshops, throwing dance parties with an attendance of between 50 and 60 women, and providing support to *rezubian* from around the country who sent letters to its post office box. While the facility was repurposed into a Rape Crisis Center in 1983,⁹⁵ around the same time, several women organized Sisterhood Club (Shisutaafuddo no Kai) and began producing a *mini-komi* called *Lesbian Communication (Rezubian tsūshin)*. At a rented space near Waseda in Tokyo, the group presented a slideshow put together by lesbians in the US called “Women Loving Women.” Afterward, five of them, including Wakabayashi, Kagura Jamu

⁹⁰ The group’s Japanese name involves a play on words based on the fact that “dyke” rendered into Japanese is homophonous with the word for carpenter (*daiku*).

⁹¹ Sugiura, “Nihon ni okeru rezubian feminizumu no katsudō,” 162–63; Izumo et al, “Nihon no rezubian mūvumento,” 58–62; Sawabe Hitomi, “The Symbolic Tree of Lesbianism in Japan: An Overview of Lesbian Activist History and Literary Works,” trans. Kimberly Hughes, in *Sparkling Rain and Other Fiction from Japan of Women Who Love Women*, ed. Barbara Summerhawk and Kimberly Hughes (Chicago: New Victoria Publishers, 2008), 8–9.

⁹² The promotion can be found in *Za daiku*, “Hikari guruma sōkan-gō,” no. 2 (June 1978). A lengthier history of 1970s *rezubian feminizumu*, including an analysis of *The Dyke* and *Shining Wheel*, can be found in Sugiura, “Nihon ni okeru rezubian feminizumu no katsudō.”

⁹³ Sugiura, “Nihon ni okeru rezubian feminizumu no katsudō,” 163.

⁹⁴ Vera Mackie, “Kantō Women’s Groups,” *Feminist International* [Japan] no. 2 (June 1980): 108.

⁹⁵ Blasing, “The Lavender Kimono”; Sawabe, “The Symbolic Tree of Lesbianism,” 9; Mackie, “Kantō Women’s Groups,” 107–8.

(1952–), and Sawabe, the latter of whom had first learned about American lesbian feminists through participation in Ribu Shinjuku Center translation activities in the 1970s, set to work to produce a Japanese version of the slide show.⁹⁶ While they were unsuccessful in creating the show due to privacy concerns, these women did found a new *mini-komi*, *Regumi Communications* (*Regumi tsūshin*, 1985–); a new group, Regumi no Gomame; and, in 1987, a new *rezubian* space, Regumi Studio Tokyo.⁹⁷ The group’s original name combines an abbreviation for “*rezubian* group” (*rezubian* + *gumi* [group]) with an oblique reference to the idea that working together is powerful.⁹⁸ Today, however, this group continues on, with Wakabayashi still taking a prominent role, and is known simply as Regumi.⁹⁹

Inspired by a combination of American lesbian-feminist writing, attending an international lesbian conference in Switzerland in 1986, and the responses that came in from around the country to an article she wrote about the conference for *Fujin kōron*, Sawabe would go on to spearhead a new pair of surveys of *rezubian* in 1986.¹⁰⁰ The results formed half of *Stories of Women Who Love Women* (*Onna o ai suru onnatachi no monogatari*), a book she put together and for which she wrote the bulk of the chapters.¹⁰¹ Published in May 1987 as part of

⁹⁶ Sawabe Hitomi, “*Onna o ai suru onnatachi* o meguru hyōgen katsudō,” oral history taken by Sugiura Ikuko, in Sugiura, *Nihon no rezubian komyuniti*, 39–40; Hisada Megumi, “Genki jirushi no rezubian: ‘Regumi no Gomame’ tōjō!” in Bessatsu Takarajima, no. 64, *Onna o ai suru onnatachi no monogatari*, 122–23; Wakabayashi, “*Onna no nettowaaku*,” 27–28. A transcript of the slideshow narration is reproduced in Sugiura, *Nihon no rezubian komyuniti*, 85–97.

⁹⁷ Hisada, “Genki jirushi no rezubian.”

⁹⁸ See *ibid.*, 122.

⁹⁹ A history of Regumi drawing heavily on *Regumi Communications* can be found in Iino Yuriko, *Rezubian de aru “watashitachi” no sutōrii* (Tokyo: Seikatsu Shoin, 2008). This history has, however, been severely condemned by the group for its extensive use of their newsletter and reproduction of cover art without permission, and violation of the privacy of contributors. See the group’s open letter to Iino in Regumi Sutajio Tokyo, “Iino Yuriko-san chosho *Rezubian de aru ‘watashitachi’ no sutōrii* ni tsuite,” *Regumi tsūshin* no. 250 (September 2008).

¹⁰⁰ Hirosawa Yumi [Sawabe Hitomi], “Sekai rezubian kaigi ni sankā shite,” *Fujin kōron* 71, no. 7 (June 1986). The conference was the eighth International Lesbian Information Service Conference, held in March 1986. See Sawabe, “*Onna o ai suru onnatachi no monogatari*,” 52–54.

¹⁰¹ Bessatsu Takarajima, no. 64, *Onna o ai suru onnatachi no monogatari*. Sawabe was using the pseudonym Hirosawa Yumi at the time (personal communication, 2006). A majority of the articles appearing under other names in this volume were also penned by Sawabe, who was encouraged by the publisher to make the volume appear to be more of a collective project. Four chapters from this volume are available in English translation in

the popular Bessatsu Takarajima series, *Stories* was the first commercially produced book by—and, more or less, for—*rezubian*. This volume, available at bookstores around the country, has been described as a “bible” for a generation of *rezubian* and *baisekushuaru* [bisexual] women, for whom it was often the first, if not only, positive representation they saw of *rezubian* life.¹⁰² Many women say that reading this book was the first time they were aware of the extent of the *rezubian* community—and for some, its very existence.¹⁰³

Also in the 1980s, an “English-speaking lesbian community” came together, centered around Tokyo.¹⁰⁴ This was initially facilitated by International Feminists of Japan (IFJ), founded in 1979 by Anne Blasing, “to provide a support network among feminists in Japan’s international community and to provide a bridge between this feminist community and the many Japanese feminist organizations.”¹⁰⁵ In 1985, a lesbian session was included in the program of an international feminist conference jointly hosted by IFJ and a Japanese feminist group. The enthusiasm at that session led those in attendance to plan an overnight gathering in November, which was the first of what would often be called simply “Weekends” (*uikuendo*). Around 50 women attended the initial retreat, but for a while over 100 women were regularly coming to the

Mark McLelland, Katsuhiko Suganuma, and James Welker, eds., *Queer Voices from Japan: First-Person Narratives from Japan’s Sexual Minorities* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington, 2007).

¹⁰² Tenshin Ranran, “Media ga nakatta koro no baiburu,” in *Kuia sutadiizu ’96*, ed. Kuia Sutadiizu Henshū Inkaï (Tokyo: Nanatsumori Shokan, 1996).

¹⁰³ One woman recalls that, after moving from Okinawa to Tokyo she happened to find *Stories*, through which she contacted Regumi Studio; her subsequent social involvement helped her accept herself as a *rezubian*. See Wim Lunsing, *Beyond Common Sense: Sexuality and Gender in Contemporary Japan* (London: Kegan Paul, 2001), 232–33. I heard similar experiences from several of the women I interviewed.

¹⁰⁴ I borrow the expression “English-speaking lesbian community” from Linda Peterson, “English Language Journal in Japan,” *Lesbian News and Views* [Japan; also called *The DD*] no. 1 (May 1986): 1. Peterson’s label is more accurate than two other terms sometimes used: “foreign lesbian community,” which fails to incorporate the women from Japan who played (and play) a vital role, and “international lesbian community,” which fails to suggest that it does not include those women from abroad who do not speak English, including those who also do not speak Japanese and who are accordingly excluded from both the Japanese- and English-speaking communities.

¹⁰⁵ Anne Blasing, “International Feminists of Japan,” *Feminist International* [Japan] no. 2 (June 1980): 109; Audrey Lockwood, personal correspondence, April 2009; Linda M. Peterson, “Rezubian in Tokyo,” in *Finding the Lesbians: Personal Accounts from Around the World*, ed. Julia Penelope and Sarah Valentine (Freedom, Calif.: Crossing Press, 1990), 129–30; Anne Blasing, “The Lavender Kimono,” *Connexions* no. 3 (Winter 1982).

Weekends, which are still being held several times a year in various parts of the country.¹⁰⁶

While the early workshops at the Weekends were mostly in English, the events were in principle bilingual. Nevertheless, communication across language barriers was always an issue.¹⁰⁷ A woman using the name Joni van Dyke compiled a Japanese-English “dyketionary” in the mid-1980s to foster cross-cultural lesbian communication.¹⁰⁸ She sold this at the Weekends and by mail. When asked about the links between the English- and Japanese-speaking lesbian communities in general, Linda Peterson (1951–), an American lesbian living in Japan since 1979, recalls that they were bridged by binational couples in which one partner was Japanese, by enthusiastic learners of Japanese, and by Japanese women who had lived abroad at some point. She adds, however, that because of differences of language and interests, “It’s impossible to say that there was ever *one* community of any kind.”¹⁰⁹ Hara “Minata” Minako (1956–), who had spent significant time abroad before participating in some Weekends, adds that the relative economic advantages of foreigners teaching English in Japan as well as their short-term outlook—a majority planned to stay in Japan only a few years at most—contributed to the gap between the international and domestic lesbian communities.¹¹⁰

About the *rezubian* involved in the English-speaking community, Peterson recalls, “All the Japanese dykes who showed up were definitely political. Either lesbian political or feminist

¹⁰⁶ *Anisu*, “Komyuniti no rekishi, 1971-2001: nenpyō to intabyū de furikaeru,” (Summer 2001): 40; Linda M. Peterson, interview with author, April 2009; Izumo et al., “Nihon no rezubian mūvumento,” 63.

¹⁰⁷ Peterson, interview; Izumo et al., “Nihon no rezubian mūvumento,” 62.

¹⁰⁸ Joni van Dyke, *Dyketionary*, 2nd ed. (Tokyo: privately printed, ca. 1985).

¹⁰⁹ Peterson, interview. Peterson and her partner, Amanda Hayman, from the UK, founded an English-language newsletter called *The DD* in 1986, which members of the foreign lesbian community continued to produce usually three or four times per year and sometimes in abbreviated form during Weekends from 1986 through the early 1990s. Its production continued sporadically after that through 1996. It contained a mix of Japan-related information of interest to the international lesbian community and more global issues of interest to the newsletters’ producers and readers.

¹¹⁰ Hara Minako, interview with author, July 2009.

political...or groovy green political....”¹¹¹ Hara remembers that their politicization put undue pressure on some women to declare their sexuality, noting that in the beginning some women who called for information about the Weekends were asked outright, “Are you a lesbian?”¹¹² Such a direct question was doubtless jarring at best for women unsure of their sexuality or uncomfortable with the word “*rezubian*” and, at times, made the term a shibboleth for entrance into the retreats.

In addition to Weekends, the mid-1980s also saw the emergence of bars aimed specifically at *rezubian*, and in some cases, run by them. The first regular bar events aimed at *rezubian* were the women-only nights on Mondays beginning in 1982 at the *gei* bar, Matsuri [Festival]. Matsuri was run by Itō Bungaku (1932–), the (publicly heterosexual) editor of Japan’s first commercial *homo* magazine, *Barazoku* [Rose tribe] (1971-2008).¹¹³ Itō had long been supportive of *rezubian*, who, in the absence of a commercial *rezubian* publication, sometimes called him or sent letters to *Barazoku*. Against the objections of his editorial staff, who wanted to keep the focus on men, Itō occasionally included these letters and wrote about the phone calls in the magazine; he also repeatedly shared information about Wakakusa no Kai.¹¹⁴ For a while in the 1970s and 1980s, Itō attempted, sometimes in cooperation with Wakakusa no Kai, to arrange marriages between *homo* and *rezubian* who needed to make a show of heterosexuality to deal with familial and social pressure.¹¹⁵ His publishing company, Dai Ni Shobō, was also slated to publish Wakakusa no Kai’s *Eve & Eve*, but pulled out in the end, indirectly leading to the

¹¹¹ Peterson, interview.

¹¹² Izumo et al. “Nihon no rezubian mūvumento,” 63.

¹¹³ *Barazoku* was published bimonthly then monthly from 1971 to 2004, intermittently after that until 2008.

¹¹⁴ See James Welker, “Flower Tribes and Female Desire: Complicating Early Female Consumption of Male Homosexuality in *Shōjo* Manga,” *Mechademia* 6 (forthcoming).

¹¹⁵ See *ibid.*, and Wim Lunsing, “Japanese Gay Magazines and Marriage Advertisements,” in *Gays and Lesbians in the Pacific: Social and Human Services*, ed. Gerard Sullivan and Laurence Wai-Teng Long (New York and London: Harrington Park Press, 1995). I have found no indication that any arranged pairings were ultimately successful.

financial collapse of the group.¹¹⁶ Nonetheless, he promoted *Eve & Eve* in several of his columns.¹¹⁷

The women-only nights at Matsuri were run by a woman called Tomita Chinatsu. Three years after she began hosting those nights, Tomita started up Ribonne (Ribonnu), Japan's first women-only bar, located adjacent to the well-known neighborhood of *gei* bars in Tokyo's Ni-chōme district. Ribonne, named after a book illustrated by male artist Kaneko Kuniyoshi and whose painting of a girl adorned the bar's sign, was established with Itō's financial backing.¹¹⁸ Unlike existing bars with a significant *rezubian* clientele, drinks at Ribonne were reasonably priced and there was no service charge. Sunny (1948–), a *rezubian* who was running an ordinary, and thus expensive, snack bar called Sunny Ni-chōme, was a frequent customer of Ribonne. Seeing a viable model for a bar, Sunny copied Ribonne's approach when she opened Mar's Bar in Ni-chōme's *gei* bar district six months later. Mar's Bar lives on today as Japan's longest-lived *rezubian* bar.¹¹⁹ After Mar's Bar, similar bars began to open in Tokyo and other large cities around the country. Some of those early bars remain open, while many others have opened and closed over the years. Surveys of the community from over the past ten to fifteen years suggest that bars have continued to serve an important function for many in the community.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ Hirozawa, "Nihon hatsu no rezubian saakuru," 117.

¹¹⁷ E.g., Itō Bungaku, "Ibu & Ibu banzai!" *Barazoku* no. 113 (June 1982). Several other *homo* magazines attempted to reach out to the *rezubian* community, including *The Gay* (*Za gei*, 1981–?2005), published by early gay rights advocate Tōgō Ken (1932–), and which for several years in the early 1980s included a "Lesbian Square" (*Rezubian sukuea*) section in the back of the magazine.

¹¹⁸ Nawa Kaori, "Rezubian baa no yoru to yoru," in Bessatsu Takarajima, no. 64, *Onna o ai suru onnatachi no monogatari*, 102–3; Sawabe, "The Symbolic Tree of Lesbianism," 11–12. The book the bar was named after is Funazaki Yoshihiko, *Ribonnu*, with illustrations by Kaneko Kuniyoshi (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1979).

¹¹⁹ *Aniisu*, "Rezubian no rekishi," 44–45.

¹²⁰ One quarter of respondents in Sei Ishiki Chōsa Gurūpu, ed., *Sanbyakujū nin no sei ishiki: iseiaisha dewa nai onnatachi no ankeeto chōsa* (Tokyo, Nanatsumori Shokan, 1998), said they do or would look for a romantic partner at a lesbian bar, though only 8.5 percent reported bars as having been where they met their current partner, five percent their first female sexual partner, or 0.3 percent their first female love interest. See *ibid.*, 52–53, 57–58. However, over 23 percent of respondents in a survey included in a special feature on Japan's *rezubian* community in a 2001 issue of *Anise* reported lesbian bars being the first *rezubian* space they went to. See *Aniisu*, "Komyuniti no rekishi," 75.

In a recent history of the *rezubian* community, Sawabe describes the years from 1971 to 1980 as “the seeds,” from 1981 to 1990 as “the sprouts,” from 1991 to 2000 as “the flowering,” and from 2001 onward as “the fruit.”¹²¹ Reflecting back in the mid-1990s on the progress of the community, Hara wrote, “It has become easier for women to love women” in Japan “because self-identified lesbians and bisexual women have emerged to work on lesbian issues.”¹²² Groups like Regumi, in which Hara was involved at one time, continue on, and other *rezubian* groups and spaces, some short-lived, others more enduring, have been established in large metropolitan areas, producing any number of non-commercial publications. The 1986 meeting in Switzerland attended by Sawabe and Wakabayashi led to the creation of an Asian Lesbian Network, which held several gatherings, including one in Bangkok in 1990, and another in Tokyo in 1992. The continuing existence and success of these activities and activism from the 1990s onward accord with the narratives of Sawabe and Hara, who suggest their seeds were planted and tended by *rezubian* in the two decades prior.

The 1990s also saw commercial and popular successes in the *rezubian* as well as the *gei* and *rezubian* communities that owe some debt to 1990s “gay boom” (*gei būmu*) in the popular media, mentioned in the previous chapter, which, while focused on men, helped provide popular forums for *rezubian* discourse as well, no doubt attracting women who might otherwise been unaware of the community. New interest sparked by the boom also made some community productions at least appear commercially feasible. Commercial magazines aimed at *rezubian* readers have come and gone—*Phryné* (*Furiine*, 1995), *Anise* (*Aniisu*, 1996–1997, 2001–2003), *Carmilla* (*Kaamira*, 2002–2005)—now supplanted by the internet. Translation of lesbian-related essays, fiction, and academic writing has continued, often published by commercial presses, but

¹²¹ Sawabe, “The Symbolic Tree,” 6, 10, 17, 25.

¹²² Hara Minako, “Lesbians and Sexual Self-Determination,” in AMPO, *Voices from the Japanese Women’s Movement*, 129.

so has the local production of an ever-increasing number of books on being a *rezubian* in Japan, beginning, most famously with Kakefuda Hiroko's *On Being "Lesbian"* in 1992.¹²³

Collaboration with the *gei* community in Japan has become more common, and jointly sponsored events such as parades and film festivals have been held regularly in Tokyo, Osaka, Sapporo, Fukuoka, and elsewhere since the early 1990s, which in the case of the film festivals, has attracted large audiences of ostensibly heterosexual women. In addition to the bars, there have also been a series of women-only *rezubian*-run discos, often drawing large *rezubian* crowds. In 2005, after being elected to the Osaka Prefectural Assembly, Otsuji Kanako came out publicly as a *rezubian*, in part via an autobiography.¹²⁴ While she was unsuccessful in her 2007 bid as the first openly *rezubian* candidate for a national office when she vied for a seat in Japan's Upper House on the Democratic Party ticket, she has continued to play a visible role in the struggle for public acceptance and rights for LGBT people. She is among a number of activists advocating recognition of same-sex partnerships or marriage, having publicly held a marriage ceremony with her partner at the Nagoya Lesbian and Gay Revolution "pride event" (*puraido ibento*) in June 2007.

By the end of the twentieth century, the *rezubian* community had come to resemble lesbian counterparts in other industrialized countries. And, indeed, the histories of events since the 1990s like the lesbian and gay film festivals and parades and large-scale lesbian discos show that they were begun by individuals who had experienced something similar and wanted to do the same in Japan.¹²⁵ In 2001, Izumo reflected on the significance of the Tokyo Lesbian and Gay Parade, staged sporadically since 1994:

I've been doing the *rezubian* thing in Japan since the 1960s and I am enormously happy

¹²³ Kakefuda Hiroko, *"Rezubian" de aru to iu koto* (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1992).

¹²⁴ Otsuji Kanako, *Kamingu auto: jibunrashisa o mitsukeru tabi* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2005).

¹²⁵ See the histories of the events in *Aniisu*, "Komyuniti no rekishi."

that the parade has become a reality in my lifetime. No matter how wonderful the parades are in other countries, if I can't participate in them in the place I'm living, it's meaningless. ... If you look at this [parade] historically, it's amazing....¹²⁶

From the 1990s, the community has indeed developed in many directions. And, while the immediate inspirations for some of the developments of the past two decades have come rather obviously from abroad, the foundation for these events were laid in the Japan of the 1970s and 1980s. And like other seemingly imported aspects of Japanese culture, they have been transfigured to meet local needs and desires.

Queering *Shōjo* Manga

The generation of young women who revolutionized *shōjo* manga came to be called the “Fabulous Forty-Niners” on account of most of them having been born in or around 1949.¹²⁷ When these women were growing up, the *shōjo* manga they were reading were predominantly drawn by male artists, themselves heirs to an art form developed by men that can be traced most closely to the influence of European and American comic arts in the Meiji and Taishō eras, but which has been linked to centuries of humorous art in Japan.¹²⁸ While manga were included in magazines aimed at girl readers prior to the Pacific War, *shōjo* manga's emergence as a genre has been widely linked to “god of manga” Tezuka Osamu's (1928–1989) popular postwar story of the adventures of cross-dressing heroine Sapphire in *Princess Knight* (*Ribon no kishi*,

¹²⁶ Ibid., 57.

¹²⁷ In Japanese they are called “*hana no nijūyonen gumi*,” or the “fabulous 24 group,” reflecting their having been born in or around year 24 of the Shōwa era (1926–1989).

¹²⁸ Manga has been positioned by some scholars and critics as belonging to a 1,000-year-old tradition, but even they concede that the influence of Europeans and Americans in Japan was the impetus for the development of modern manga. See, e.g., Kinko Ito, “Manga in Japanese History,” in *Japanese Visual Culture: Explorations in the World of Manga and Anime*, ed. Mark Wheeler MacWilliams (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2008), 26–32; Brigitte Koyama-Richard, *One Thousand Years of Manga* (Paris: Flammarion, 2007), 99–138; and Frederik L. Schodt, *Manga! Manga! The World of Japanese Comics*, rev. ed. (1983; Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1986), 28–67.

1953–1955) as well as to the emergence of *shōjo* manga magazines in the 1960s.¹²⁹

Art scholar and curator Mizuki Takahashi, however, challenges this narrative, arguing that Tezuka’s influence of the development of *shōjo* manga was “secondary” to that of the *jojō-ga* [lyrical illustration] of the 1920s and 1930s, drawn by male artists such as Yumeji Takehisa (1884–1934) and Takabatake Kashō (1888–1966), and revived after the war by Nakahara Jun’ichi (1913–1983).¹³⁰ The girls depicted in this mid-century art style were lithe and delicate in form, with large sparkling eyes and an “empty, wandering gaze,” similar to their appearance in postwar *shōjo* manga. After the war these girls were set against flowery backgrounds, which “reflect[ed] their inner personality” and drew on images of the girl in prewar *shōjo* literature, which this style was used to illustrate earlier in the twentieth century.¹³¹ Such seemingly random cascades of flowers and eyes a-twinkle were standard fare in the *shōjo* manga of the 1970s. While, Mizuki concedes, Tezuka played a significant role in the development of complex plots, other artists building on the *jojō-ga* style, such as Takahashi Makoto (1934–), had already been creating manga that revealed the “inner psychology of the characters,” which was of little interest to Tezuka but a central element in the *shōjo* manga of the 1970s and beyond.¹³² Nevertheless, Tezuka’s astoundingly prolific and varied manga and anime works, *shōjo* or otherwise, had a profound impact on many, if not most, postwar manga artists, including star *shōjo* manga artists such as Hagio Moto (1949–) and Ikeda Riyoko (1947–).¹³³

¹²⁹ Tezuka Osamu, *Ribon no kishi* (1953–1955; Tokyo: Kōdansha Manga Bunko, 1999). For a typical history of the *shōjo* manga genre, see Schodt, *Manga! Manga!*, 95–97.

¹³⁰ Mizuki Takahashi, “Opening the Closed World of *Shōjo Manga*,” in MacWilliams, *Japanese Visual Culture*, 127.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 117, 118, 122.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 122, 128.

¹³³ See, for instance, Hagio Moto, interview with Fujimoto Yukari, in Fujimoto Yukari, *Shōjo manga damashii: ima o utsusu shōjo manga kanzen gaido & intabyū shū* (Tokyo: Hakusensha, 2000), 188–89; Hagio Moto, “The Moto Hagio Interview,” by Matt Thorn, *The Comics Journal* no. 269 (June/July 2005); Matsutani Takayuki et al., “Tezuka Osamu to Takarazuka Kageki: Myūjīkaru fōramu,” in *Tezuka Osamu no furusato*, ed. Kawauchi Atsurō (Kobe: Kobe Shinbun Sōgō Shuppan Sentaa, 1996), 18–19.

While Tezuka, under the sway of the all-female Takarazuka Revue and its cross-dressing performers, may have first popularized the gender-bending dandy beauties (*dansō no reijin*) in *shōjo* manga, it was the innovations of the Fabulous Forty-Niners that truly revolutionized the genre from the 1970s, turning it into a liminal space in which readers—and artists—could experiment with both gender and sexuality in ways theretofore unheard of.¹³⁴ One of the most salient innovations made by this new generation of artists was the introduction of male protagonists and same-sex romance and sexual relationships contained in narratives set in Western countries and aimed at readers barely in their teens.¹³⁵ Anything but marginal, the so-called *shōnen ai* [boys love] manga that followed were penned by a large number of professional female artists during this period and were, visual studies scholar Ishida Minori asserts, central to the radical transformation of *shōjo* manga in the 1970s.¹³⁶ Critics and scholars have long argued that the beautiful boy serves as a locus of identification for adolescent girl readers and that the use of male (rather than female) characters, as well as homo- (rather than hetero-) sexual relationships, placed in a foreign setting, provides female readers the means for vicarious circumvention of gender and sexual norms.¹³⁷ While many of the same artists who

¹³⁴ On the influence of the Takarazuka Revue on Tezuka, see Matsutani et al., “Tezuka Osamu to Takarazuka Kageki.” On Tezuka’s *Princess Knight* as originator of cross-dressing characters, see Fujimoto Yukari, *Watashi no ibasho wa doko ni aru no? Shōjo manga ga utsusu kokoro no katachi* (Tokyo: Gakuyō Shobō, 1998), 130.

¹³⁵ Narratively, however, male homoeroticism in fiction by women and the use of male protagonists in *shōjo* manga was not unprecedented. Novelist Mori Mari (1903–1987) had already penned several male homoerotic novellas almost a decade prior to this, beginning with *Koibitotachi no mori* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1961). And in the January 1969 issue of *Seventeen* (*Sebuntin*, 1968–), pioneering woman *shōjo* manga artist Mizuno Hideko (1939–) first began to serialize the manga *Fire!*, a *shōjo* manga narrative that replaced female with male protagonists. See Mizuno Hideko, *Faiyaa!* 4 vols. (Tokyo: Asahi Panorama, 1973). An article in *Takarajima* suggests it was the first step in linking rock music and “*homo*.” See Bishōnen-dan, “Ima, kiken na ai ni mezameru toki.....ka na?” *Takarajima*, December 1979, 67. The work does not figure in the histories the Fabulous Forty-Niners tell of the creation of *shōnen ai* manga, but it was pioneering in its depiction of male and female nudity and heterosexual sex for a teenage female audience.

¹³⁶ Ishida Minori, *Hisoyaka na kyōiku: “yaoi/bōizu rabu” zenshi* (Tokyo: Rakuoku Shuppan, 2008), 142–43.

¹³⁷ The scholarship and criticism making this case, supported by the words of the artists themselves, is extensive. Representative criticism in Japanese can be found in Fujimoto, *Watashi no ibasho wa doko ni aru no?*, particularly in the section, “Onna no ryōseiguyū, otoko no han’inyō,” 130–76. A general discussion of this genre in

drew *shōnen ai* texts also experimented with female-female romance, unlike *shōnen ai*, those often dark early works were not popular enough to inspire a boom.¹³⁸

The creation of the new *shōnen ai* genre is most closely associated with Hagio and Takemiya Keiko (1950–). In the December 1970 issue of *Bessatsu shōjo komikku* [Girls' comic extra], Takemiya published the short narrative “Snow and Stars and Angels...” (*Yuki to hoshi to tenshi to*), later reissued as “In the Sunroom” (*Sanrūmu nite*), a narrative generally considered to be the very first example of the new manga genre.¹³⁹ Hagio followed eleven months later in the same magazine with “November Gymnasium” (*Jūichigatsu no gimunajiumu*).¹⁴⁰ Both works feature schoolboys in romantic relationships with other schoolboys in historical European settings. Takemiya had published her first work while still a high school student in 1967 and Hagio in 1969. Their early manga were good enough to earn them the attention of editors and additional assignments, but the works themselves were not particularly memorable, nor were they groundbreaking. Neither set out to write about homosexuality and both would go on to draw many other kinds of narratives, including science fiction, mysteries, and romance narratives—a diversity of genres typical of the artists of their generation. But those first two *shōnen ai* narratives, as well as the pair's wildly popular later *shōnen ai* works, Hagio's *The Heart of Thomas* (*Tōma no shinzō*, 1974) and Takemiya's *The Song of the Wind and the Trees* (*Kaze to ki no uta*, 1976–1984), would help pave the way for a *shōnen ai* manga boom in the 1970s and

English can be found in Midori Matsui, “Little Girls Were Little Boys: Displaced Femininity in the Representation of Homosexuality in Japanese Girls' Comics,” in *Feminism and the Politics of Difference*, ed. Sneja Gunew and Anna Yeatman (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1993); and Tomoko Aoyama, “Male Homosexuality as Treated by Japanese Women Writers,” in *The Japanese Trajectory: Modernization and Beyond*, ed. Gavin McCormack and Yoshio Sugimoto (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

¹³⁸ For a history and analysis of these female-female romance narratives, see James Welker, “Drawing Out Lesbians: Blurred Representations of Lesbian Desire in *Shōjo* Manga,” in *Lesbian Voices: Canada and the World: Theory, Literature, Cinema*, ed. Subhash Chandra (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 2006).

¹³⁹ Takemiya Keiko, “Sanrūmu nite,” in her *Sanrūmu nite* (1970; Tokyo: San Komikkusu, 1976).

¹⁴⁰ Hagio Moto, “Jūichigatsu no gimunajiumu,” in her *Jūichigatsu no gimunajiumu* (1971; Tokyo: Shōgakukan Bunko, 1995).

beyond, as well as the emergence of other related genres.¹⁴¹

Hagio and Takemiya were roommates for several years, having moved in together right around the time Takemiya published “Snow and Stars and Angels...,” when Hagio came to help Takemiya meet a deadline on another project. They lived in a small apartment “surrounded by a cabbage patch” in Ōizumi, in Tokyo’s Nerima Ward. Their neighbor was Masuyama Norie (1950–), who was soon thereafter to become Takemiya’s producer, roommate, and muse—or, in Takemiya’s words, her “brain” (*bureen*).¹⁴² Masuyama introduced the pair to some of her favorite books and played a pivotal, though underappreciated role in the development of the *shōnen ai* genre, discussed in subsequent chapters. Under the supervision of Masuyama, Takemiya and Hagio’s apartment became the “Ōizumi Salon,” where up-and-coming *shōjo* manga artists, assistants (often aspiring artists themselves), and others would gather and work, eat, or chat—sometimes staying over for extended periods.¹⁴³

In December 1975, a year after Hagio’s *The Heart of Thomas* was published and while her popular *The Poe Clan* (*Pō no ichizoku*, 1972–1976)—featuring beautiful boy vampires named Edgar and Allan—was still being serialized, the first “Comic Market” was held at a public hall in Tora-no-mon in Tokyo’s Minato Ward.¹⁴⁴ In spite of a rather modest turnout—there were just some 30 circles and around 700 attendees in total—Comic Market grew rapidly and today is held over three days in both August and December, attracting tens of

¹⁴¹ Hagio Moto, *Tōma no shinzō* (1974; Tokyo: Shōgakukan Bunko, 1995); Takemiya Keiko, *Kaze to ki no uta*, 10 vols., (1976–1984; Tokyo: Hakusensha Bunko, 1995). The histories of the terms “BL”/“*bōizu rabu*” and “*yaoi*,” as well as the distinctions between these genres, are discussed in chapter three.

¹⁴² Takemiya Keiko, *Takemiya Keiko no manga kyōshitsu* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 2001), 244; *Josei seibun*, “Ima sugoi ninki no shōjo komikku sakka no karei-naru shi seikatsu,” December 3, 1975, 199; Masuyama Norie and Sano Megumi, “Kyabetsu batake no kakumeiteki shōjo mangakatachi,” in *Bessatsu Takarajima*, no. 288, *70-nendai manga daihyakka* (Tokyo: Takarajimasha, 1996).

¹⁴³ Masuyama and Sano, “Kyabetsu batake no kakumeiteki shōjo mangakatachi,” 169. Among those taking part were Sasaya Nanae (1950–), Yamada Mineko (1949–), and Yamagishi Ryōko (1948–), the latter of whom produced a number of male-male romances, albeit her protagonists were often older than in typical *shōnen ai* narratives. See *ibid.*, 166; Hagio, “The Moto Hagio Interview.”

¹⁴⁴ In Japanese, the event is referred to as “Komikku Maaketto,” “Komiketto,” and “Komike.”

thousands of registered circles (who must win a lottery to formally participate) and hundreds of thousands of regular attendees.¹⁴⁵ It was begun by male manga critic Yonezawa Yoshihiro and a handful of others to provide an inexpensive means of distribution and exchange of diverse, self-produced manga. Comic Market provided artists a space for creative expression outside the restrictions of the commercial publishing world—although the event was also used by commercial publishers to recruit new talent.¹⁴⁶ The Comic Market quickly became synonymous with the buying and selling of *dōjinshi* [coterie magazines] of wildly varying quality and content, generally including manga, fiction, and/or criticism. Demonstrating the enthusiasm of fans of the newest generation of *shōjo* manga, in the beginning, these adolescent girls accounted for the vast majority of attendees. Around 90 percent of the approximately 700 who attended the very first event were devotees of the genre, predominantly middle and high school students, enamored with Hagio's *Thomas* and *Poe* and works by Takemiya and Ōshima Yumiko (1947–) and others.¹⁴⁷ It also was around this time that a number of manga circles began to spring up on university campuses and began producing their own manga, which many would sell at Comic Market. Among these artists were those attracted to British glam rock, and who drew manga featuring beautiful rock stars and homosexuality, the beginning of a new style of homoerotic

¹⁴⁵ The catalog for Comic Market 76, held August 14–16, 2009 is nearly 1,400 pages long. According to the report it provides on the Comic Market held December 28–30, 2008, that event had 35,000 registered circles—who were among 49,000 who applied—and around 510,000 attendees. See *Komikku Maaketto 76 katarogu* (2009), 1192–93.

¹⁴⁶ Yonezawa Yoshihiro, “Manga/anime no kaihōku, komike tte nani?,” interview, in Bessatsu Takarajima, no. 358, *Watashi o komike ni tsuretette!: kyōdai komikku dōjinshi maaketto no subete* (Tokyo: Takarajimasha, 1998), 15–16; Ichikawa Kōichi. “Comiket,” interview with Patrick Galbraith, in Patrick Galbraith, *The Otaku Encyclopedia: An Insider's Guide to the Subculture of Cool Japan* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2009), 46; Yonezawa Yoshihiro, “Manga to dōjinshi no sasayaka no kyōen: komiketto no ataeta eikyō,” in Bessatsu Takarajima, no. 358, *Watashi o komike ni tsuretette!*, 42.

¹⁴⁷ Hagio Moto, *Pō no ichizoku*, 3 vols. (1972–1976; Tokyo: Shōgakukan Bunko, 1998). For early attendance figures, see Hattori Shin'ichirō, “Komikku maaketto katarogu de wakaruru saakuru, janru no henshen,” in Bessatsu Takarajima, no. 358, *Watashi o komike ni tsuretette!*, 30; and Nishimura Mari, *Aniparo to yaoi* (Tokyo: Ōta Shuppan, 2002), 18. Today over half of attendees are female and around 70 percent of registered circles are comprised of women. See Galbraith, *The Otaku Encyclopedia*, 45.

shōjo manga with older characters in more contemporary settings.¹⁴⁸

Riding on this wave of enthusiasm, in 1978 Sagawa Toshihiko (1954–), then working part time at San Shuppan, a publisher of magazines with erotic themes aimed at adults, including the *homo* magazine *Sabu* (1974–2002), convinced the company to produce a “mildly pornographic magazine aimed at females.”¹⁴⁹ At least at the time this is how he framed the project that became the first commercial *shōnen ai*-themed magazine, *June* (1978–1979, 1981–).¹⁵⁰ Reflecting on the magazine’s content three decades later, he explains, somewhat more equivocally, that what the Fabulous Forty-Niners produced was not “porno” but rather something in between literature and porno, with both being important aspects of the genre’s appeal.¹⁵¹ Sagawa was a young man who like many other men at the time was taken in by works by the Fabulous Forty-Niners, the artists he hoped would contribute to this new magazine. He was, however, certain that even if he was unable to get Takemiya and her cohort to draw for the magazine, he could get *dōjinshi* artists from the Comic Market to do so.¹⁵² *June*, called *Comic Jun* for the first two issues, became a mix of both.¹⁵³ Takemiya contributed immeasurably to both the content and the tone of the magazine in its early years. Another prolific contributor was Kurimoto Kaoru (1953–2009), a writer who contributed fiction under her own name and essays

¹⁴⁸ Yonezawa Yoshihiro, “Manga to dōjinshi no sasayaka no kyōen: komiketto no ataeta eikyō,” in Bessatsu Takarajima, no. 358, *Watashi o komike ni tsuretette!*, 41–42. Mizuno’s *Fire!* had, however, by 1969 already featured male rock star protagonists.

¹⁴⁹ The name “*Sabu*” is an abbreviation of “Saburō,” a masculine-sounding male name.

¹⁵⁰ Sagawa Toshihiko, “Bungaku to goraku no aida o ittari, kitari,” interview with Ishida Minori, in Ishida, *Hisoyaka na kyōiku*, 327. The name *June* is homophonous, and spelled the same in *katakana* script, as the Japanese pronunciation of the surname of infamously homosexual French author Jean Genet. While links between the writer’s name and the magazine name have been made frequently enough to establish an association, the magazine’s history (discussed below) shows it was not the original idea of the title.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² *Ibid.* 328.

¹⁵³ *June* was called *Comic Jun* for the first two issues, with both new and old versions spelled out in English/Roman letters on the cover. It was renamed to settle a copyright issue over the name “Jun,” which was the name of a clothing company. As the cover for the third issue was already laid out, the producers decided it was simplest just to add an “e” to the name. See *June*, “Editors’ Rest Room,” no. 4 (April 1979). A brief English-language history of the magazine can be found in Frederik L. Schodt, *Dreamland Japan: Writings on Modern Manga* (Berkeley, Calif.: Stonebridge Press), 120–23.

under the name Nakajima Azusa.¹⁵⁴ The combined presence of Kurimoto/Nakajima and Takemiya shaped the soul of the *June*, which Ishida describes as a “site of collaboration” between the two. Readers, largely ranging from adolescent girls in their late teens to young women in their early 20s, contributed a significant portion of the content in the form of letters and drawings as well as manga narratives and short stories, the latter of which could respectively be submitted to Takemiya and Kurimoto (as Nakajima) for critique.¹⁵⁵

When disappointing sales figures forced *June* to suspend publishing in 1979, the gap was quickly filled by Nanbara Shirō, working at Minori Shobō, publisher of *Out* (1977–1995), a magazine associated with anime and anime parody.¹⁵⁶ Nanbara founded *Allan* (*Aran*, 1980–1984), which was named after popular—and handsome—French actor Alain Delon, but for reasons of design, spelled on the cover in Roman letters like the middle name of American author Edgar Allan Poe and one of the beautiful boy protagonists in Hagio’s *The Poe Clan*.¹⁵⁷ While at first attempting to tap into the same interests as *June*, *Allan* was more textual and less graphically oriented than its predecessor and devoted far more page space to reader-contributed content. From its third year, *Allan* also ran a personal ad column “Lily Communications” (*Yuri tsūshin*) first “for lesbiens only [sic],” although the number of *rezubian*-identified advertisers is questionable.¹⁵⁸ Differences of opinion between Nanbara and his superiors at Minori Shobō led Nanbara to leave the company in 1984, taking with him the magazine, which he renamed *Gekkō* [Moonlight] (1984–2006), but nicknamed “Luna” (*Runa*). While *Gekkō* was similar in content and tone to *Allan* for the first year or so, it eventually became far more focused on the bizarre

¹⁵⁴ Ishida, *Hisoyaka na kyōiku*, 204.

¹⁵⁵ The information on the magazine’s readership comes from *ibid.*, 222.

¹⁵⁶ On *Out*, see Nishimura, *Aniparo to yaoi*, 20.

¹⁵⁷ See James Welker, “Lilies of the Margin: Beautiful Boys and Queer Female Identities in Japan,” in *AsiaPacifiQueer: Rethinking Gender and Sexuality*, ed. Fran Martin et al. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008) 50, 61 n25.

¹⁵⁸ For details on *Allan*’s content and an analysis of the personal ads in “Lily Communications,” see *ibid.*

and dark themes, in keeping with Nanbara's own taste.¹⁵⁹

Both *Allan* and *June*, which was revived in 1981, functioned as a bridge in the 1980s between commercial and non-commercial worlds of *shōnen ai* manga, and between artists and fans. While focused on beautiful males, both magazines reflected a broad range of tastes from the beautiful early teen boys in the works of Takemiya and Hagio and the innocent-looking members of the Vienna Boys Choir to glam and heavy metal rockers like David Bowie and Queen. The availability of magazines like this, sold in bookstores around the country, gave readers not just access to homoerotic narratives by professional manga artists, but also the opportunity to participate in the amateur production and consumption of such narratives—which would have otherwise been impossible outside of venues like Comic Market. Both ran ads from readers seeking others to join in their manga circles and help produce *dōjinshi* as well as promotions for the *dōjinshi* themselves, either as announcements or as advertisements, and *Allan* was even giving away selected issues of popular *dōjinshi* via a promotion in its premier issue.¹⁶⁰ Editorial content as well as contributions from readers also introduced and discussed foreign and domestic literature and films depicting (male) “homos” or gays and, particularly in *Allan*, lesbians. Linking fantasy to reality, the lives of actual gays and lesbians abroad, as well as *homo* and *rezubian* in Japan were also represented in letters and articles. The *rezubian* organization Wakakusa no Kai even placed several advertisements in *Allan* and *Gekkō* recruiting new members and promoting its own publications.¹⁶¹ Returning the favor, in 1987 *Gekkō* placed an ad in *Stories of Women Who Love Women*.¹⁶² In the mid-1980s, *June* created *Shōsetsu June*

¹⁵⁹ Nanbara Shirō, interview with author, June 2005.

¹⁶⁰ See the comment in the margin of *Aran*, “Ninki dōjinshi purezento,” October 1980, 139.

¹⁶¹ See, e.g., *Aran*, June 1983, 179.

¹⁶² See Bessatsu Takarajima, no. 64, *Onna o ai suru onnatachi no monogatari*, 109. As a “*mūku*”—a magazine/book—the volumes in the Bessatsu Takarajima series, like other *mūku* series, contained a limited number of ads.

[*June* fiction] (1983–2004), devoted to prose rather than graphic stories, and while the style and content have changed drastically, and in spite of publishing difficulties in the mid-1990s, *June* remains in print. *Gekkō* largely lost relevance to this readership by the late 1980s, though it lingered on under different titles until 2006.¹⁶³

Near the end of the 1970s, some circles at Comic Market comprised of females in their late teens and early twenties were selling manga parodying—and soon homoeroticizing—foreign glam and hard rock and other musicians, while others were creating and selling their own variations of manga by Takemiya and other *shōjo* manga artists, as well as the male homoerotic fiction of Mori Mari (1903–1987) dating to the early 1960s.¹⁶⁴ One woman who created *dōjinshi* centered around foreign hard rock musicians in the mid-1970s recalls that, at the time, she used Western rock stars in the manga she drew because Japanese musicians were just not cool to her.¹⁶⁵ Perhaps due to a realization that rock musicians are too old to be “*shōnen*” (boys), or perhaps just a reflection of the popularity and central role of *June*, but male homoerotic works quickly came to be called “*June-mono*,” or *June* things. And, as will be detailed in chapter three, the word “*yaoi*,” coined to teasingly criticize manga lacking a plot, point, or meaning, became linked with these works in 1979, and soon caught on.

Parodying existing manga and anime also began in the 1970s and took off in the 1980s, forming a broad generic category often called “*aniparo*,” short for “anime parody.”¹⁶⁶ While in theory anything could be parodied, among female artists buying and selling *dōjinshi* at Comic Market, *shōnen* manga [boys’ comics] were a major source of material.¹⁶⁷ Manga and other

¹⁶³ These names include *Bokka meron* [Pastoral melon] and *Lucky Horror Show* (in English). Several issues of a fiction version of the magazine were also published in the mid-1980s.

¹⁶⁴ Itō Gō, *Manga wa kawaru: “manga gatari” kara “manga ron” e* (Tokyo: Seidōsha, 2007), 215.

¹⁶⁵ Quoted in Itō, *Manga wa kawaru*, 216.

¹⁶⁶ Itō, *Manga wa kawaru*, 222–23; Nishimura, *Aniparo to yaoi*, 18ff.

¹⁶⁷ A parallel commonly drawn to this kind of homoerotic parody is with “slash fiction” in the US and the UK, created by homoerotically pairing characters like Captain Kirk and Spock. See Henry Jenkins, *Textual*

topics that were popular fuel for parodies became subgenres in their own right, around which various manga circles often created *dōjinshi*, with each volume sometimes containing multiple narratives on the same manga or anime. The mid-1980 saw an explosion of homoerotic parodies of Takahashi Yōichi's extremely popular *shōnen* manga and anime series *Captain Tsubasa* (*Kyaputen Tsubasa*, 1981–1988), depicting a Japanese boys school soccer team. The relationships between the boys on the team, captained by Ōzora Tsubasa, provided ample material for the parodists to work with, and this subgenre dominated the Comic Market for several years.¹⁶⁸ And the “Tsubasa” boom marked the beginning of what turned out to be the heyday of *aniparo* in general.¹⁶⁹

While the Tsubasa subgenre was not the first time for *shōnen ai* or male homoerotic *dōjinshi* to be set in Japan and feature Japanese characters, its incredible popularity as an object of homoerotic parody represents a noteworthy shift away from the dominance of foreign settings and characters in *shōjo* manga depicting male homoeroticism. In the *dōjinshi* world, these depictions included both parodies, such as of “Tsubasa,” as well as original texts. Over the 1980s such male homoerotic *dōjinshi* were increasingly referred to simply as *yaoi*, and from the 1990s onward “*bōizu rabu*” [boys love].¹⁷⁰ It is from the late 1980s and early 1990s as well that saw an increase in commercial magazines aimed at fans of the genre.¹⁷¹ For some, the *shōnen ai* created

Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture (New York: Routledge, 1992).

¹⁶⁸ Nishimura writes that in summer 1986, parodies of the Captain Tsubasa series constituted half of total sales at the event. See Nishimura, *Aniparo to yaoi*, 33.

¹⁶⁹ Itō, *Manga wa kawaru*, 227.

¹⁷⁰ For an ethnographic study of female circles and attendees at Comic Market in the 1990s, see Matthew Thorn, “Girls and Women Getting Out of Hand: The Pleasure and Politics of Japan’s Amateur Comics Community,” in *Fanning the Flames: Fans and Consumer Culture in Contemporary Japan*, ed. William W. Kelly (Albany: State University of New York Press); and for a discussion in English of recent parodies of J.K. Rowling’s Harry Potter series, see Sharalyn Orbaugh, “Girls Reading Harry Potter, Girls Writing Desire: Amateur Manga and *Shōjo* Reading Practices,” in *Girl Reading Girl in Japan*, ed. Tomoko Aoyama and Barbara Hartley (London: Routledge, 2010).

¹⁷¹ A list of over two dozen new commercial magazines dedicated to *yaoi/bōizu rabu* founded between 1990 and 1995 can be found in Yamamoto Fumiko and BL Sapōtaazu, *Yappari, bōizu rabu ga suki: kanzen BL komikku gaido* (Tokyo: Ōta Shuppan, 2005), 16–17.

by the Fabulous Forty-Niners remains a distinct genre in its own right—and the fact that many classic *shōnen ai* texts are still in print testifies to their lasting popularity. But, unsurprisingly given the mix of Takemiya-style manga and *dōjinshi* artists in venues like *June* and at Comic Market, for most people—including *June*'s own editor—*shōnen ai* has blurred with *yaoi/bōizu rabu*.¹⁷²

Conclusion

In the brief histories sketched out above, it is clear that the primary attention of most women and girls in the *ribu*, *rezubian*, and queer *shōjo* manga spheres was on what was happening in their own lives in Japan, or on activities that would change or distract them from those lives. In addition to their various efforts to redefine the possibilities of and for “women,” points of overlap between these spheres are suggested in their histories. Some of these obvious, such as the linking of the *ribu* and *rezubian* communities by early *rezubian feminisuto* activism, while others are more subtle, such as the multiple ways men in the *homo*, later *gei*, communities were useful to women in both the *rezubian* community and the queer *shōjo* manga sphere even though both were by and large situated at a remove from the queer male community.

Another significant point of overlap is how acts of transfiguration of appropriated cultural elements have shaped all three of these women and girls' communities and helped to reshape understandings of “women,” a point which I will draw out through the foci to which I turn next. As I laid out in the introduction, and as the histories of these spheres show, translation as well as travel, real or vicarious, played key roles in all three of these female spheres in the 1970s and 1980s. Chapters four and five will take up these threads and examine the ways both translating and traveling shaped these communities and the lives of individuals within them. Another point

¹⁷² See Sagawa, “Bungaku to goraku no aida.”

that the histories of these communities suggest is the significance of words and of choosing names. It is that topic, to which I turn next.

CHAPTER THREE: TERMINOLOGY

[T]he world of speech and desires has known invasions, struggles, plundering, disguises, ploys.

—Michel Foucault¹

What's in a name? Names—along the processes whereby they are chosen or coined—matter. This is certainly the case in the ways groups or communities choose names for themselves or are named—and, as I will show, this naming is not necessarily an either-or affair. As David Valentine observes, the ways “[p]eople...categorize themselves and others...is one of the most fundamental aspects of human language and meaningmaking.”² In this chapter, I slip, however, beyond categorization of just self and other in my examination of the etymologies, permutations, and offshoots of three key terms around which certain communities of women in Japan unified in the 1970s and with which they expressed identification: “*ūman ribu*,” “*rezubian*,” and “*shōnen ai*.” While the former two are ostensibly Japanese transliterations of “women’s lib” and “lesbian,” respectively, the history of these terms shows that their “borrowing” was no straightforward process.³ To dismiss these as mere loan words and, thus, imports *tout court* is to overlook the significant and extensive local histories that undergird and have shaped them. The third of these, “*shōnen ai*”—a Sino-Japanese term literally meaning “boy love,” with semantic roots that extend back many centuries into Japan’s past—did not directly function as a community or identity marker but rather as an early label certain artists and readers

¹ Michel Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon, in Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, and Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (1971; Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1977), 139.

² David Valentine, *Imagining Transgender: An Ethnography of a Category* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2007), 5.

³ Lydia Liu, for instance, argues that translation is the site of political and ideological struggles through which words and their meanings “are not so much ‘transformed’ when concepts pass from the guest language to the host language as invented within the local environment of the latter.” See Lydia H. Liu, *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity—China, 1900–1937* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1995), 26.

applied to a genre of manga [comics] first inked around 1970.⁴ The history of the encounter of this pair of words—which, unlike “*dōseiai*” and other variant translations of “homosexuality,” is not a calque—with modern understandings of sex, gender, and sexuality further calls into question what it means for a word to be “Japanese.”⁵

As my discussion of these various terms chronicles, the meaning of (seemingly) local coinages and loan words alike can, with the passage of time, easily become overdetermined. Rather than erase the imprint of historic usages (whether actual or anachronistically inferred), a term’s reinscription by layers of transnational intellectual and cultural flows may continue to invoke echoes of past meanings even as it transforms them. It is these layers that I set out in this chapter to peel apart. My task is, however, one of more than merely unearthing forgotten histories of words that were central to the women and adolescent girls who are the focus of my larger project. In a critique of the (largely American) lesbian and gay studies of the 1980s, Joan Scott cautions against the historical “project of making experience visible”—then typical of the field—as it “precludes critical examination of the workings of the ideological system itself”; it “exposes the existence of repressive mechanisms, but not their inner workings or logics.”⁶ Scott suggests that,

It ought to be possible for historians ... to ‘make visible the assignment of subject-positions,’ not in the sense of capturing the reality of the objects seen, but of trying to understand the operations of the

⁴ Asserting the presence of an identity category, *shōnen ai* manga fan and critic Mizuma Midory, however, has declared that some women in fact have a “preference for *shōnen ai*” (*shōnen ai shikō*). In her use of “*shikō*” [literally, taste], the same word often used to indicate “sexual preference” (*seiteki shikō*), Mizuma attempts to position this taste as in some ways equivalent to “homosexuality,” “heterosexuality,” and “bisexuality.” See Mizuma Midory, *In’yu toshite no shōnen ai: josei no shōnen ai shikō to iu genshō* (Tokyo: Sōgensha, 2005). I am unaware of others—fans, critics, or scholars—who use this term.

⁵ While I write “*dōseiai*,” literally same-sex (*dōsei*) love (*ai*) as a single word, I have chosen to write “*shōnen ai*” as two words to reflect the latter term’s relative lack of conceptual coherence. “*Shōnen ai*” has been used to refer to either pederastic or pedophilic desire of adult men for youths, in which case transcribing this erotic orientation as a single word (i.e., “*shōnen ai*”) seems reasonable. It could, however, also refer to love or erotic desire among youths, as it does in the *shōnen ai* manga genre, where it stands in for “boys’ love (for one another),” in which it refers less to an orientation than to the feelings of boys in an (ostensible) subject position for their schoolmates.

⁶ Joan W. Scott, “The Evidence of Experience,” *Critical Inquiry* 17, no. 4 (1991): 778, 779.

complex and changing discursive processes by which identities are ascribed, resisted, or embraced, and which processes themselves are unremarked and indeed achieve their effect because they are not noticed. To do this a change of object seems to be required, one that takes the emergence of concepts and identities as historical events in need of explanation.⁷

This is precisely what I aim to do in this chapter. As I suggest below, however, the “emergence” of even a single term might be not so much an “event...in need of explanation” as it is a congeries of histories which warrant mapping.

In his essay “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” Foucault declares that genealogy “opposes itself to the search for ‘origins’” and “rejects the metahistorical deployment of ideal significations and indefinite teleologies.”⁸ His rejection of origins, or, rather, Nietzsche’s, is a rejection of the “assum[ption of] the existence of immobile forms that precede the external world of accident and succession,” of the idea that there is some pure truth to be found at the moment of conception.⁹ While I concur that the social truth of a thing is not necessarily to be found in its origins and that meaning is unstable, I wager in this chapter, that on a small scale the tracing of the origins and evolution of words—even when not completely successful—can begin to get at the continuities and disjunctures that prefigure and refigure words, as well as the concepts they attempt to signify. I propose that in following the histories of words we can better understand how these particular words and not others came to be used within and about these communities, and, perhaps more importantly, we can get a better sense, at various moments, of the individuals and communities who used these words and about whom they were used.

Part and parcel of this project is an examination of the workings of power that have shaped these histories. While the dominant role of men in shaping discourse and the words with

⁷ Ibid., 792.

⁸ Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” 140. The grand genealogy of which Foucault writes here, it should be noted, is not one of words or even identity positions but of “morals, ideals, and metaphysical concepts” (ibid., 152) within an “endlessly repeated play of dominations” (ibid., 150), a system of rules violently installed (ibid., 151).

⁹ Ibid., 142.

which it is constructed means that men occupy a relatively large proportion of the histories told in this chapter, these histories also show how some women and girls have at times successfully hijacked both words and whole fields of discourse for their own purposes. One of the more fascinating, if unsurprising, points that the etymologies of these words casts in particular relief is the extent to which discourse is presumed to be male domain and, more remarkably, the almost ingenious way some men have managed to reframe even words whose meaning seems predicated on the centrality of women so that men themselves remain central, whether as subject or objectifier. The primacy of the male in erotic discourse is evident, for example, in two terms borrowed from Chinese and in common use in the Edo era and before: *nanshoku* (also pronounced *danshoku*)—male eros—which names the broad tradition and practice of male same-sex erotic relations, and *nyoshoku* (also pronounced *joshoku*)—female eros—which names not erotic interaction between two females but between a male and a female.¹⁰ Although this pair was evidently coined with the assumption of a male subject position, examples I share below from the modern and contemporary eras clearly demonstrate masculine semantic reinscription. Yet, the terminological histories below also illustrate that men’s roles in the (re)shaping of these key terms was sometimes positive in intent if not in effect. More importantly for my purposes here, they show that women have at times successfully reclaimed and redefined words, and, in the case of “*shōnen ai*,” recast females in the subject position of an ostensibly all-male sphere.

As I will demonstrate in the remainder of this chapter, it is productive to consider the coinage and adoption as well as denotative and connotative redefinition of these words in the *ūman ribu*, *rezubian* and *shōjo* manga [girls’ comics] spheres in terms of the concept of

¹⁰ While female-female erotic practices in early modern Japan have been documented, they were not codified on a par with *nanshoku*. See Gary P. Leupp, “‘The Floating World is Wide...’: Some Suggested Approaches to Researching Female Homosexuality in Tokugawa Japan (1603–1868),” *Thamyris* 5, no. 1 (1998); and Morishita Misako, “S izen no koto,” *Imago* 2, no. 2 (August 1991).

“transfiguration,” introduced in chapter one. To examine key words with an eye toward ways they have been transfigured invites us to look not just for a moment of coinage, import, or redefinition, or for the person(s) responsible, but for the multiplex processes over time factoring into what and how words come to mean in inherently and indelibly transnational contexts. It also draws our attention to the words’ reverberations in the lives of individuals and in communities, as well as in and beyond the culture at large.

Framed in this manner, it should be evident that the life of a word is often a complex one. In a project such as this, moreover, we must remain always cognizant that each person has her or his own idiolectic sense of a word and that words carry different valences in different social spheres, as well as that shifts in the meaning and usage of a word in one sphere do not necessarily have a significant effect on others. To begin to get at this complexity, this chapter is much broader in scope and draws upon an archive chronologically and materially more far-ranging than subsequent chapters on translation and travel. Specifically, I examine the usage reflected in dictionaries of new words; literature; sexological texts and sexological discourse of a somewhat less scientific bent; pornography; newspapers; popular magazines aimed at various populations; *shōjo* manga and related magazines; and non-commercial magazines, newsletters, and other ephemera from the *ribu*, *rezubian*, and gender-bending *shōjo* manga spheres. I also draw from interviews with individuals, female and male, in these spheres to clarify empirical details as well as to incorporate reflections on the personal significance of these words.

The “Arrival” of “*ūman ribu*”

The moniker “*ūman ribu*” is a Japanese transliteration of the “not quite”¹¹ English phrase “woman lib” and was coined not by women in the movement but by a male journalist writing for a mainstream broadsheet. He used this new term to indicate the “women’s lib(eration)” movement, upon what he understood as its “arrival” in Japan from the United States in 1970. The term’s invention and quick diffusion throughout popular discourse as well as its adoption by nascent groups of women formed to advance women’s social and sexual freedom in Japan appears relatively straightforward. Unraveling why and how this particular expression came to be used both as a term of derision within the popular press and in public discourse, as well as a mark of pride within the movement itself, however, begins to reveal some of the complexity of the processes and effects of cultural appropriation in the Japanese context, even for something as simple as an (ostensible) loan word. Moreover, the evolution and use of “*ūman ribu*,” like “*rezubian*” and “*shōnen ai*,” exemplifies the profoundly transnational nature of what it means to be a woman in Japan.

* * *

By all accounts, the first instance of “*ūman ribu*” in print was its use in the headline of an October 4, 1970, article in the Tokyo edition of a major national newspaper, the *Asahi shinbun*, written by male journalist Ninagawa Masao (1938–).¹² This was the initial article in a series introducing the movement which, Ninagawa tells readers in the headline, had “at last arrived” in the “male paradise” that was Japan and was already spreading around the country. Early *ribu* activist and translator Akiyama Yōko, who was herself interviewed for that article, concurs that Ninagawa most likely coined the term, and, regardless, it is clear that the article and those that

¹¹ I borrow this term from Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 122.

¹² *Asahi shinbun*, “*Ūman ribu*, ‘dansei tengoku’ ni jōriku,” October 4, 1970, morning ed., 24.

followed were pivotal in its popularization—a function, no doubt, of their prominent appearance in the Tokyo daily.¹³

The word “*ūman*” itself has long been a part of modern Japanese vernacular. Kadokawa Shoten’s *Dictionary of Loan Words* cites, for instance, the use of “*ūman*” as early as 1885, by male writer, translator, educator, and public intellectual, Tsubouchi Shōyō.¹⁴ Its currency a quarter of a century later is evidenced, for example, by its use in the title of the magazine *Ūman karento* [Women’s trends], founded in 1923. This particular usage of “*ūman*,” it might be noted, demonstrates the same disregard for the “need” for English grammatical inflections as is found in “*ūman ribu*”—that is, both the magazine title and the feminist movement moniker use not “women’s”/“*uimenzu*” but “woman”/“*ūman*.” While the latter was ultimately adopted, some *ribu* and, later, feminist writers did use the former locution, including prior to Ninagawa’s fateful series of articles.¹⁵ As these usages of “*ūman*” exemplify, the absence of a plural form in the Japanese language has meant that, like other grammatical inflections, the plural form of words from other languages is often altered or eliminated when words are adopted into Japanese. In the

¹³ My discussion here is based on an interview I conducted with Akiyama (March 2009), her own writing on this series of articles, and Saitō Masami’s analysis of these articles. See Akiyama Yōko, *Ribu shishi nōto: onnatachi no jidai kara* (Tōkyō: Inpakuto Shuppan Kai, 1993), 35–50; Saitō Masami, “‘Ūman ribu to media’ ‘ribu to joseigaku’ no dansetsu o saikō suru: 1970-nen aki *Asahi shinbun* tonai-ban no ribu hōdō o kiten toshite,” *Joseigaku nenpō* 24 (2003). While Akiyama relies on her memory to name Ninagawa as the likely coiner of the term, Saitō’s research, like mine, turns up no evidence of the use of “*ūman ribu*” prior to Ninagawa’s. See *ibid.*, 5.

While the series was printed in the Tokyo edition and not distributed nationwide, Tokyo is in many respects arguably the cultural, intellectual, and information capital of modern and contemporary Japan. Moreover, the *Asahi* was (and is) widely read by people with significant cultural influence, including journalists who would write about the movement as well as *ribu* activists in the Tokyo region.

¹⁴ *Gairaigo jiten* (ed., Arakawa Soobei), 1979, Kadokawa Shoten, s.v., “*ūman*.” We must, of course, remain aware that the *Gairaigo jiten*, like other dictionaries which offer word origins, cannot be regarded as indexing the definitive moment when a word entered the language or even the first time it was found in print. In the case of “*ūman*” as well as “*feminizumu*” and “*feminisuto*” it provides a close enough approximation of when the words entered Japanese and their meanings for my purposes. In the case of “*resubian*,” one of the two terms upon which I focus, its information is not precise enough. Specifically, it is off by nearly forty years in its suggestion that the first usage was in Morris Leopold Ernst and David Goldsmith Loth, *Amerika jin no sei seikatsu*, trans. Nakaoka Hirō (Akatsuki Shoten, 1949).

¹⁵ See, e.g., Charlotte Bunch-Weeks, interview with Kurita Reiko, in *Josei kaihō undō shiryō 1: Amerika hen*, ed. Josei Kaihō Undō Junbi Kai (hereafter JKUJK) (Tokyo: Josei Kaihō Undō Junbi Kai, 1970), 42; and *Feminisuto* no. 2, “Josei bunka no fukurami o!” (October 1977).

postwar decades leading up to 1970, “*ūman*” remained current enough to appear with some frequency in the media as a stand-alone word and in Japanized English phrases. Moreover, of course, anyone young enough to have received at least some English language instruction in school, thus a majority of the population, would have by 1970 no doubt been familiar with a word as basic as “woman”/“*ūman*.”¹⁶

The term “*ribu*,” however, indeed seems to have “arrived” in 1970, initially finding its way into print around six months prior to “*ūman ribu*.” Its first use in the *Asahi shinbun*, for example, may have been in a March 28 article, not two months, incidentally, after the phrase “women’s lib” first appeared in the pages of the *New York Times*.¹⁷ The *Asahi* article explains that “*ribu*”—which it first writes in capital Roman letters, i.e., “LIB”—is short for “LIBERATION” and has been making daily appearances in the mass media in the United States. The American liberation movement, it tells readers, splintered off from the student civil rights group Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and, based in part on an anti-capitalist philosophy, the “braless” “redstockings” in the US “lib movement” intend to “crush ‘male society.’”¹⁸ A month later, under the heading “Lib, not love!” in its “New words ’70” column, the daily *Yomiuri shinbun* regales its readers with details about the US women’s liberation movement, recounting how “braless” lib activists have been protesting at beauty pageants and

¹⁶ English was compulsory at middle schools by the early decades of the twentieth century for both boys and—with the exception of 1941–1945—girls; and made compulsory at the high school and university levels in 1947. See Robert M. McKenzie, “The Complex and Rapidly Changing Sociolinguistic Position of the English Language in Japan: A Summary of English Language Contact and Use,” *Japan Forum* 20, no. 2 (2008): 271.

¹⁷ *Asahi shinbun*, “Bu’tsubuse ‘dansei shakai’: bei de LIB undō,” March 28, 1970, evening ed., 10. Marilyn Bender, “The Women Who’d Trade in Their Pedestal for Total Equality,” *New York Times* February 4, 1970, Family Style: 30. I found no earlier examples of “*ribu*” and “women’s lib,” respectively, in a search of the full-text electronic archives of the *Asahi shinbun*, the *Yomiuri shinbun* or the *New York Times*.

¹⁸ Founded in 1969 by Shulamith Firestone, among others, the Redstockings were a radical feminist organization, whose name represents a reclaiming of “bluestocking,” a term sometimes disparagingly applied to feminist intellectuals many decades earlier and which was transfigured into the name of an early twentieth century Japanese feminist group Seitōsha [the Bluestocking society] and their journal, *Seitō* [Bluestocking] (1911–1916). The American group lives on to the present and maintains a website, *Redstockings* (<http://www.redstockings.org/>), which archives their writings and documents past and recent activism.

the offices of *Playboy* and *Ladies' Home Journal*.¹⁹ While the former article makes a legitimate attempt to explain the rationale behind “lib” philosophy, each draws attention both to the women’s libbers’ choice to go braless, thus painting them as crude or hysterical, and to the apparent threat these women represent to men. Noting that lib is spreading in Europe, the author of the latter article wonders when a spark from the lib flame will reach Japan’s shores.

In the pages of the July issue of the venerable women’s monthly *Fujin kōron* [Women’s debate] (1916–), a venue more sympathetic toward the idea of raising women’s social status, yet another male writer uses “*ribu*,” this time in an article in which he describes the US women’s liberation movement as potentially edifying for Zenkyōtō, which had coordinated the student uprisings that began on university campuses around Japan in the late 1960s.²⁰ This article also links the initial use of the word “lib”—presumably, but not explained as, “liberation”—to SDS.²¹ The writer of this article, Suzuki Tadashi, a student at the prestigious Kyoto University and involved in the Japanese student movement, had established direct ties to SDS. Suzuki reports that SDS members in San Francisco bombarded him with questions about what he called in his article “*Nihon no ribu*” [Japanese lib]—perhaps the first time the Japanese movement was labeled as such in the commercial press. While Suzuki was unable to adequately answer the questions posed to him by SDS members, he was himself interested in increasing the number of women in the Japanese student movement. This curiosity about the “secret” of women’s liberation—and perhaps a lack of awareness that many women were leaving SDS because of its institutionalized sexism—moved him to ask “Mary,” a lib activist.²² She explained that it was not just about middleclass women liberated by free sex and reproductive planning, perhaps all

¹⁹ Akazuka Yukio, “Shin go ’70: rabu yori ribu o!” *Yomiuri shinbun* April 19, 1970, morning ed., 23.

²⁰ Suzuki Tadashi, “Zenkyōtō wa ‘ribu’ ni manabu,” *Fujin kōron* 55, no. 7 (July 1970).

²¹ *Ibid.* 184.

²² On institutionalized sexism within SDS, see Kathy McAfee and Myrna Wood, “Bread and Roses,” *Leviathan* 1, no. 3 (1969).

Suzuki learned from this encounter.²³ Regardless of what Suzuki was able to take away, however, it was certainly too late, if not too little, as, by the time the article hit the newsstands, women were already beginning to break away from the Zenkyōtō-led student movement and the student movement itself was beginning to collapse.

Outside of the commercial press, “*ribu*” was also in use at least by mid-1970 within the movement that would by year’s end be widely referred to by that term. Its early use, however, seems to derive from (male-authored) Japanese media accounts, such as those just noted, rather than direct contact.²⁴ In May of 1970, a handful of women in Fukuoka city formed a group they called “Ribū FUKUOKA” (writing “*ribu*” in the *katakana* script and their location in capital Roman letters); this was probably the first group to use “*ribu*” in its name.²⁵ Group member “S.F.” later wrote that they chose the name “*ribu*” based on the fragmented and sensational bits of information they got from the media about the American women’s liberation movement, and while the use of “*ribu*” in their name “gave the impression that we were directly influenced by [that] lib movement, we hardly knew anything about the actual lib movement. It was just that, now, this new women’s movement was springing up globally and we drew strength from a sense of connection to it.”²⁶ By August prominent activist Tanaka Mitsu was using “*ribu undō*” [lib movement] in early versions of her influential “Liberation from the Toilet” (*Benjo kara kaihō*) pamphlet to refer specifically to the American movement—about which, she too makes clear,

²³ Suzuki, “Zenkyōtō wa ribu ni manabu,” 185.

²⁴ Some feminist-minded American anti-war protestors had entered Japan by 1969 and were quickly sharing information about the nascent American women’s liberation movement and, while it seems quite plausible that the word “*ribu*” may have entered Japanese through them, I have yet found no evidence thereof. Akiyama, interview; Larry Taub, interview with author, April 2009; Akiyama, *Ribu shishi nōto*, 15–24, 139–53 *passim*; see also *Asahi shinbun*, “Ūman ribu, ‘dansei tengoku’ ni jōriku.”

²⁵ See “Memo,” in *Shiryō Nihon ūman ribu shi*, 3 vols., ed. Mizoguchi Akiyo, Saeki Junko, and Miki Sōko (Kyoto: Shokadō Shoten, 1992–1994), vol. 1, 272. On the masthead of its *mini-komi* (newsletter/zine), the group wrote “*ribu*” in the *katakana* script (used to indicate loan words) and the place name “Fukuoka” in all capital Roman letters. See the illustration of the *mini-komi* in *ibid.*, vol. 1, 273. See also *Onna kara onnatachi e* [Osaka], “Gurūpu dayori,” no. 1 (March 1972): 5.

²⁶ S.F., “Ribū FUKUOKA no koto” (1985), in Mizoguchi, Saeki, and Miki, *Shiryō Nihon ūman ribu shi*, vol. 1, 290.

she has learned what little she knows from the Japanese press.²⁷ In the distinction she deliberately draws in these early writings between the Japanese “*onna kaihō undō*” or “*josei kaihō undō*” [both, women’s liberation movement] and the American “*ribu undō*,” we can see a point that she and other prominent *ribu* leaders were quite vocal about: that, in spite of the media’s insinuation or insistence to the contrary, the Japanese women’s liberation movement that emerged in 1970 was local women’s organic response to conditions for women in Japan.²⁸ An additional instance of “*ribu*” in the non-commercial media prior to Ninagawa’s article can be found in a Japanese-language pamphlet on the US women’s liberation movement that served as a reference to Ninagawa.²⁹ As we shall see, this particular instance may have played a significant role in the coinage of “*ūman ribu*.”

So now we have established the presence of both “*ūman*” and “*ribu*” and the emergence of a new movement of women activists. Remaining to sort out is how these came together—and, later, apart.

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²⁷ Tanaka Mitsu, interview with author, July 2009. Multiple versions of this pamphlet were published: Tanaka Mitsu, “Josei kaihō e no kojinteki shiten” (August 1970), reproduced in *Ribu Shinjuku Sentaa Shiryō Hozon Kai* (hereafter, RSSSHK), *Ribu Shinjuku Sentaa shiryō shūsei: bira hen*, 5; Tanaka Mitsu, “Benjo kara no kaihō” (August 1970), reproduced in *ibid.*, 4.

While the pamphlet “*Josei kaihō e no kojinteki shiten*” [A personal perspective on women’s liberation], published before “Benjo kara no kaihō,” has a different title and differs somewhat in content, Tanaka already begins to use the concept of women as *benjo* [toilets] and the section on the American lib movement is substantially unchanged (see *ibid.*, 14), and thus I consider it an early draft of the *Benjo* pamphlet.

²⁸ See, e.g., Inoue et al., “Henshū ni attate,” in their *Nihon no feminizumu 1: Ribu to feminizumu* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1994).

Within the *ribu* movement, both “*josei kaihō undō*” and “*onna kaihō undō*” were used relatively interchangeably. While both mean “women’s liberation movement” “*josei*” is more neutral than “*onna*,” which has a more direct and, particularly at the time, a more vulgar nuance to it. As noted in chapter one, it is the power of the latter term that many members of the *ribu* movement hoped to harness in their adoption there of. In an interview with me, however, Tanaka Mitsu corrected my use of “*josei kaihō undō*,” explaining that to her it was always “*onna kaihō undō*.” Her own handwritten words in pamphlets she created in 1970 to recruit women to join her in the fight for women’s liberation demonstrate the unreliability of memory when it comes to subtle shifts in word choice, however. See, e.g., Tanaka, “Josei kaihō e”.

²⁹ JKUJK, *Josei kaihō undō shiryō 1*.

Since, as is clear in his initial article, on October 4, Ninagawa saw Japan's new women's movement as emanating from the US, his application of "*ribu*" is a logical extension of the new word, which was until that point tied strongly to the American movement. His—or his editors'—decision to conspicuously write out "women's liberation" in English as a caption—or a decorative heading—for no fewer than five of the dozen or so articles that appeared in the *Asahi* between 4 October and 4 November reinforced the casting of this movement in a foreign light.³⁰ Ninagawa's own understanding of the connection was no doubt reinforced for him by the fact that he interviewed not Tanaka, whose knowledge of the US women's liberation movement was very limited, but Akiyama, who was herself interested in the US movement and who, with a small group of others, had already informally released a pamphlet on the US women's liberation movement in order to provide accurate information about the American movement and counter the ridicule it was receiving in the Japanese media.³¹ The pamphlet contain two articles translated from English and an interview with American activist Charlotte Bunch (1944–).³² Ninagawa, in fact, mentions in the first article that this pamphlet served as a reference to him.³³ In both translated articles in the fifty-page pamphlet the original English "women's liberation"—rather than "women's lib"—is rendered "*josei kaihō*" [women's liberation]. In Kurita Reiko's interview with Bunch, conducted during a visit by Bunch to Japan, Kurita uses "*ribu*" throughout. While we can speculate that Ninagawa's interest in the topic if not his work as a journalist would have brought him into contact with at least one of the few earlier articles in

³⁰ Even in advertisements, English words were seldom used in the newspapers of the early 1970s I examined, and I never encountered other examples of English words serving as a caption for a newspaper article.

³¹ JKUJK, *Josei kaihō undō shiryō*, 48.

³² These articles are Kathy McAfee and Myrna Wood, "Bread and Roses," *Leviathan* 1, no. 3 (1969), published in Japanese as "Pan to bara," in JKUJK, *Josei kaihō undō shiryō I*; Marge Piercy, "The Grand Coolie Dam," *Leviathan* 1, no. 6 (1969), published in Japanese as "Idai na kūrī: josei," trans. Akiyama Yōko, in *ibid.*; and Charlotte Bunch-Weeks, interview with Kurita Reiko, in *ibid.* Bunch was using the surname Bunch-Weeks at the time.

³³ *Asahi shinbun*, "Ūman ribu, 'dansei tengoku' ni jōriku."

the popular press which “*ribu*” is used, it seems likely that the word’s use in this pamphlet as well as, perhaps, by Akiyama, either led him to use the term when writing about this new Japanese movement, or at least supported his choice to do so. Most curious, however, is that in the opening of the Bunch interview, handwritten, as is the whole pamphlet, Kurita writes out “*josei kaihō*,” providing it a full superscript gloss of “*uimenzuribu* [*sic*]” [women’s lib], after which she abbreviated it to “*ribu*.”³⁴ Whether Ninagawa did not notice this transliterated gloss or did not find it striking enough for his purposes, the fact is that before Ninagawa coined “*ūman ribu*” a more accurate transliteration was in circulation within the nascent *ribu* community—of which Ninagawa may have been aware. And yet, it was a term coined by this male journalist rather than the transliteration drafted by a *ribu* activist-cum-translator which became the name for the new movement.

Regardless of the choice, oversight, or indifference leading Ninagawa to use “*ūman*” over “*uimenzu*” to introduce this new movement, it is clear that he needed a term that would sound novel to the mass reading public or at least distinguish these activists from their forefathers. Drawing from an interview she conducted with Ninagawa, sociolinguist Saitō Masami suggests that it would have been difficult for Ninagawa to be allowed to run articles about the movement under the banner of “*josei kaihō undō*” or “*onna kaihō undō*” [both, women’s liberation movement], the two terms most widely used in early movement writings, or *fujin kaihō undō* [women’s, or ladies’, liberation movement], a more old-fashion sounding term, as none of these

³⁴ Bunch-Weeks, interview, 42. *Notes from the Second Year*, it merits observing, favored “women’s liberation” and “feminism”/“feminist.” Whether *uimenzuribu*/women’s lib came from the interview itself or it was added by Kurita is unclear.

existing terms would convey a sense of something new or newsworthy.³⁵ Moreover, in headlines certainly “*ūman ribu*” in bold *katakana* script was bound to attract more attention.

Rather than coining this new term, however, there are several transliterated loan word alternatives Ninagawa might have chosen that would have reflected his understanding of the movement as having come from abroad, words that were also used within and about the new American women’s movement: “*feminizumu*” [feminism] and “*feminisuto*” [feminist]. Both words were introduced into Japanese by at least the Taishō era (1912–1926). Kadokawa’s *Dictionary of Loan Words* offers writer Nagai Kafū’s novel *Shōtaku* [The mistress’s home] (1912) as an early use of “*feminizumu*” with the meaning, belief in women’s rights (*joken shugi*).³⁶ It also provides Kikuchi Kan’s *Tomo to tomo no aida* [Between friends] (1922) as an early use of “*feminisuto*” with the meaning, a believer in the praising of women (*josei sanbi shugi*). While the second usage the dictionary lists for “*feminisuto*,” with the meaning, a believer in women’s rights (*joken shugi sha*), also comes from Kikuchi (*Teisō mondō* [Dialogue on virtue], 1935), it was something closer to the earlier meaning that was to quickly crystallize and would predominate through at least the 1970s. A perusal of dozens of dictionaries of new words and jargon from the 1920s and 1930s, finds some ten volumes which have an entry for “*feminizumu*,” all of which indicate it means advocating women’s rights.³⁷ “*Feminisuto*” only appears in two of those same volumes. In both cases, while the entries make links to *feminizumu*,

³⁵ Saitō Masami, “*Ūman ribu to media*,” 7. Widely used throughout much of the modern era to indicate an adult, presumably married female, “*fujin*” was by the 1970s showing signs of age, and had a rather old-fashioned ring to it, much like the English word “lady.” While through the 1960s and even beyond, there are many instances in which “woman” would be a more appropriate translation, I use “lady” here to draw attention to the word’s antiquated tone.

³⁶ *Gairaigo jiten* (ed., Arakawa Soobei), 1979, Kadokawa Shoten, s.v., “*feminizumu*,” “*feminisuto*.” This story can be found in his collection *Shinbashi yawa* [Evening tales of Shinbashi] (1912), which was published in November, several months into the Taisho era (1912-1926). While I have not yet been able to locate the original, the story is likely to have first appeared serialized in a periodical prior to this. The dictionary offers no initial publication date.

³⁷ Matsui Shigekazu, Sone Hiroyoshi, and Ōya Yukiyo, eds., *Kindai yōgo no jiten shūsei*, 42 vols. (Tokyo: Ōzora Sha, 1994–1996), vols. 10, 12, 23, 28, 29, 30, 32, 34, 35, s.v., “*feminizumu*.”

they also make it clear that—in a stark deviation from English—the primary meaning associated with “*feminisuto*” is that of a man who praises and or treats women well, suggesting that this latter meaning was already firmly established by the 1930s.³⁸ Although I was able to find occasional instances in the popular press of *feminisuto* used to indicate a person or people who believe in feminism/*feminizumu*, these cases were either translations from another language or referring to *feminisuto* in another country, occasionally glossed to explain the intended meaning.³⁹ Ultimately, while neither of these words was widely used in the middle of the twentieth century, based on their occasional use in print media, we can surmise that “*feminizumu*” would have been somewhat familiar at least to educated readers and consequently might have lacked the immediacy that Ninagawa wanted to convey. Moreover, if “*feminisuto*” would have given most readers entirely the wrong impression, the similarity of “*feminizumu*” to “*feminisuto*” might also have been cause for confusion.⁴⁰

There was one other ostensible loan word new to Japanese that Ninagawa might have considered, and which might have influenced his coinage of “*ūman ribu*”—namely, “*ūman pawaa*,” a transliteration of the “English” expression “woman power.” This term was introduced to readers of the *Asahi* in October 1968 in an article on women in the work force by female

³⁸ Of the two volumes with entries for “*feminisuto*,” one, the *Modan jiten* [Modern dictionary], published in 1930, gives “*josei raisan sha*” [a praiser of women] as the primary definition and “*joken shugi sha*” [a believer in women’s rights] as the secondary. See Matsui, Sone, and Ōya, *Kindai yōgo no jiten shūsei*, vol. 12, s.v. “*feminisuto*.” The 1933 *Shinbun shingo jiten* [Dictionary of new newspaper vocabulary] explains that a “*feminisuto*” may be an advocate of women’s rights or an adherent of *feminizumu*; to this it adds, however, that, “in general, a person who respects women and treats them kindly is called a *feminisuto*.” See Matsui, Sone, and Ōya, *Kindai yōgo no jiten shūsei*, vol. 36, s.v. “*feminisuto*.”

³⁹ Akiyama notes that “*feminizumu*” was “not generally used” in 1970. See Akiyama, *Ribu shishi nōto*, 58. Most of the several dozen instances I was able to find of “*feminisuto*” in the *Asahi* and the *Yomiuri* prior to the late 1970s use the Japan-specific meaning, with the exception of translated articles and articles specifically about women’s activism abroad. One article in the *Yomiuri* in late 1977 spells out that the understanding of a feminist as an adherent of the principle of “ladies first” is a Japanese invention. See *Yomiuri shinbun*, “Mi no mawari katakana no kotoba: feminisuto,” August 31, morning ed. 1977: 12.

⁴⁰ The lack of currency of “*feminizumu*” and the lack of correspondence of “*feminisuto*” to “feminist” made translating these terms a challenge for the translators of Shulamith Firestone and Anne Koedt, ed., *Notes from the Second Year* (New York: Radical Feminists, 1970), a collection of radical second-wave feminist writing from the US. See Akiyama, *Ribu shishi nōto*, 58–59.

social critic Kageyama Yūko (1932–2005) and then garnered additional attention in both the *Asahi* and the *Yomiuri* surrounding the “National meeting on the development and utilization of woman power” held in Tokyo in June 1969, for which Kageyama was acting as a spokesperson and, again, which focused on women’s labor issues.⁴¹ An article in the *Yomiuri* makes a link between *ūman pawaa* and black power (*buraku pawaa*) and student power (*suchūdentō pawaa*) yet defines the term as “*fujin rōdōryoku*” [women’s/ladies’ labor power] rather than something related to activist claims for broad civil and social rights.⁴² The meaning of *ūman pawaa* would very quickly blur in newspaper articles with *ūman ribu*, and examples can be found of its use in reference to the US with a meaning akin to “women’s liberation” even before Ninagawa coined “*ūman ribu*.” Yet, perhaps the expression’s association in the *Asahi* specifically with women in the work force—an association which is decidedly more old-school liberal feminist than the issues of immediate concern to this new movement—rendered “*ūman pawaa*” inappropriate for his introduction of this new wave of women’s activism.⁴³ Given Ninagawa’s interest in and awareness of women’s issues, however, it is easy to see how, whether consciously or not, he might have been mimicking the grammar of this expression when he coined “*ūman ribu*.”

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⁴¹ Kageyama Yūko, “*Ūman pawaa: ryō kara shitsu e no tankan, hogo kitei mo o-nimotsu ni*,” *Asahi shinbun* October 31, 1968, evening ed., 7. In Japanese the meeting was called “*Ūman pawaa no kaiatsu to katsuyō zenkoku taikai*.”

⁴² *Yomiuri shinbun*, “*Saidoraito: ūman pawaa*,” June 17, 1969, evening ed., 1.

⁴³ Already on October 22, “*ūman pawaa*” was used in the caption of a photograph in the *Asahi* of *ribu* activists struggling with security forces in Ginza, Tokyo. See *Asahi shinbun*, “*Yarimasu wa yo, ‘onna kaihō’: ūman ribu Ginza ni ‘otoko wa toridase’ kidōtai mo tajitaji*,” October 22, 1970, morning ed., 3. And as early as November 15, 1970, an article in the *Yomiuri* used “*ūman power*” to describe a meeting organized by several *ribu* groups, including Tanaka’s Group Fighting Women: *Yomiuri shinbun*, “*Kobushi, kyōsei roku jikan, ūman pawaa sōkesshū*,” November 15, 1970, morning ed., 13. Tanaka herself uses it in reference to the American lib movement in a 1970 pamphlet: Tanaka, “*Josei kaihō e no kojinteki shiten*,” 5. An example from the popular press of its usage in association with women’s liberation in the US prior to the use of “*ūman ribu*” can be found in the September 14 issue of *Shūkan bunshun*, “*Zenbei ūman pawaa no shidōsha wa Nihonjin no tsuma: josei kaihō no ‘Mō goroku’ o kaita Keeto Yoshimura*,” September 14, 1970. Almost twenty years later, journalist and activist Matsui Yayori was using the term to describe the Philippines’ Corazon Aquino. See Matsui Yayori, *Onna-tachi no Ajia* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1987), 11–38.

Like the emergence of the movement itself, the adoption of the terms “*ūman ribu*” and “*ribu*” by the women in the movement seems organic rather than planned and occurred in the face of several factors that might have forestalled it. The simplest of these factors to explain is the question of why the words were used in spite of their negative association in the media. In popular and academic writing on the treatment of the *ribu* movement in the media, as well as the words of several dozen women in and outside the movement I have interviewed since 2006, the standard narrative is that male-run mass media establishment ridiculed *ūman ribu*, accusing its adherents of being hysterical women engaged in irrational antics, and at times, of being unattractive and unable to get a man, or, alternatively, of being obsessed with sex. The image of the “*ūman ribu*” activists as objects of (and, to some, worthy of) widespread mocking and scorn lingers to this day. Yet, as Saitō reminds us, some of the initial treatment of the *ūman ribu* movement, particularly Ninagawa’s series in the *Asahi*, was largely positive and sympathetic and attempted to give *ribu* activists a voice in the media.⁴⁴ While not exactly denying this point, in a recent interview with me Tanaka disagreed. She explained that regardless of Ninagawa’s sympathy, the way the women were portrayed even in those early articles left them open to ridicule in public discourse.⁴⁵ Yet, even if we allow that the word was first used ambivalently at best, rather than simply as a mark of derision, “*ūman ribu*” could at the very least be seen to symbolize establishment acknowledgement of the cause of these activists, despite the positive and the negative accounts and consistent misrepresentation of *ribu* as an import from the US.

This mistaken association with the US movement is the other major issue that might have forestalled the adoption of “*ribu*” and “*ūman ribu*” in the community: namely, that to choose

⁴⁴ While seems is fair to say that when *ribu* activists and scholars look back on media coverage, they tend to concentrate on the ridicule *ūman ribu* was subjected to, Saitō overgeneralizes academic writing on the subject. Inoue Teruko, for instance, is far more nuanced in her assessment of media coverage in her *Joseigaku to sono shūhen* (Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 1980) than Saitō gives her credit for. See Saitō, “*Ūman ribu to media*,” 1.

⁴⁵ Tanaka, interview.

these terms supported the idea that the movement was imported even as many of the women directly involved understood it as local in origin. As noted above, the members of Ribu FUKUOKA appropriated the word “*ribu*” out of a sense of connection with their US counterparts, but with little knowledge of what was actually going on in the US. The members of Radical Ribu Group (Radikaru Ribu Gurūpu), which formed in November 1970, a month or so after the word “*ūman ribu*” hit the newsstands—espoused the new term as it symbolized something completely different from the old-fashioned image of the *fujin undō* [“ladies’ movement] and acknowledged that “*ribu*” was “born in America and . . . is spreading globally.” Yet, at the same time, they argue that the idea promulgated in the mass media that Japan’s “*ribu undō*” was simply imported from the US—and, by implication, out of place in Japan—is “meaningless criticism.” This criticism, they suggest, likely stems from the fact that the same issues the American lib activists are criticizing resonate in Japan. And, they speculate, perhaps the men who criticize them are afraid of the fact that the grudges women bear in Japan are even stronger than those among women in the US.⁴⁶ Also by November, “*ūman ribu*” was appearing in materials put out by Tanaka’s Group Fighting Women (Gurūpu Tatakau Onna), and, in spite of her misgivings both about its use in the media and the sense of importedness it carried, she herself ultimately adopted it to name her own theory of women’s liberation, articulated in her influential book, *To Women with Spirit: A Disorderly Theory of Ūman Ribu*.⁴⁷

Miki Sōko, prominent in the Kansai *ribu* movement, explains that, to her, “*ūman ribu*” didn’t have the baggage of existing Japanese words and thus appealed to activists in the new

⁴⁶ *Radikaru Ribu Gurūpu tsūshin*, “Dai-san no sei” (November 29, 1970), in Mizoguchi, Saeki, and Miki, *Shiryō Nihon ūman ribu shi*, vol. 1, 111.

⁴⁷ Tanaka, interview; Tanaka Mitsu, *Inochi no onnatachi e: torimidashi ūman ribu ron* (Tokyo: Tabata Shoten, 1972). I borrow the term “disorderly” in my translation of this title from Setsu Shigematsu (personal correspondence). “*Ūman ribu*” appears glossed as “*onna kaihō*” [women’s liberation], for instance, in a pamphlet dated November 3, 1970, and produced by Tanaka’s Gurūpu Tatakau Onna (reproduced in Tanaka, *Inochi no onnatachi e*, 310–13).

movement.⁴⁸ The fact is, however, that “*ūman ribu*” functioned merely as the most attention-grabbing name (and, for some, epithet) for a movement of loosely knit groups around the country which continued to describe themselves as working toward *onna kaihō* or *josei kaihō* [both, women’s liberation]. Miki, wont to claim “*ribu*” as specifically and uniquely Japanese, forgets or overlooks the fact that from the term’s coinage it was often used as a universal label for the second wave of activist feminism both within and outside of Japan and in some cases applied anachronistically, such as in the title of an *Asahi* article about Ichikawa Fusae, a prewar women’s suffrage activist and postwar outspoken feminist politician, and in the translation of the title of Trevor Lloyd’s *Suffragettes International* as “One hundred years of *ūman ribu*.”⁴⁹

Miki’s suggestion that the term was relatively neutral when introduced to Japanese helps to emphasize a critical point I have already touched on, however. When this new expression was adopted as the de facto moniker of the movement, most activists knew very little about “women’s lib” in the United States. As discussed in chapter four, Akiyama and the others engaged in translating early radical feminist writing from the US began to do so precisely because there was virtually no information about the American liberation movement available in Japanese. To be sure, to Ninagawa and much of the mass media establishment, his term “*ūman ribu*” pointed specifically to an imported women’s movement. Yet, to a majority of women engaged in this new activist movement in Japan, it represented, at most, a sense of solidarity with an American or more global women’s liberation movement. Thus, to these activist women, it was able to function in effect as a not quite empty signifier, open to inscription with their own meanings which to them bore little evidence of being imported or derived from abroad. The result was a transfigured notion of *onna kaihō* or *josei kaihō* and a transfigured term, “*ūman*

⁴⁸ Miki Sōko, interview with author, July 2006.

⁴⁹ *Asahi shinbun*, “*Ūman ribu*,” November 5, 1970, morning ed., 23; Trevor Owen Lloyd, *Ūman ribu no hyaku nen: “jūjun na” josei kara “tatakau josei” e*, trans. Tashiro Yasuko (1970; Tokyo: Tsuru Shoten, 1972).

ribu” that, while bearing denotative and connotative similarities to “women’s lib,” was clearly not the same, particularly to members of the *ribu* community.

* * *

Ultimately, however, in the sphere of public discourse, the *ribu* women were unable to control the meaning or image of “*ūman ribu*.” Among the public at large today, “*ribu*” is now more closely associated with the flamboyant protests ridiculed on the evening news and talk shows, and in the press, such as the antics of the pink-helmeted pro-birth control pill, pro-abortion rights group Chūpiren group led by Enoki Misako than the radical philosophy behind Tanaka’s activism.⁵⁰ Nakanishi Toyoko, founder of Japan’s first women’s bookstore, Shōkadō, in Kyoto, recalls that the negative valence and images associated with the term made it impossible at the beginning of the 1990s to find an existing commercial publisher to put out a compendium of *ribu mini-komi*, pamphlets, and other ephemera from the movement.⁵¹

The fossilization of the term’s meaning can also be attributed to the weakening of the *ribu* movement itself and the emergence of new visible manifestations of feminist activism and scholarship. As noted in chapter two, the *ribu* movement began to lose steam when, among other things, Tanaka, decided not to return from Mexico City, where she had gone, in part, to attend the first United Nations World Conference on Women in 1975. Soon thereafter, inspired in part by the *ribu* women as well as by American feminist activism and scholarship, the field of women’s studies (*joseigaku*) began to emerge at Japanese universities and a new more intellectual and less activist Japanese feminism began to develop, reviving the word

⁵⁰ Chūpiren is discussed in chapter two. On Tanaka’s theory of *ūman ribu*, see Setsu Shigematsu, “Tanaka Mitsu and the Women’s Liberation Movement in Japan: Towards a Radical Feminist Ontology” (PhD diss. Cornell University, 2003), and *The Women’s Liberation Movement in Japan* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, forthcoming); and Tanaka Mitsu, *Inochi no onnatachi e*.

⁵¹ Nakanishi Toyoko, *Onna no hon’ya (uimenzu bukkusutoa) no monogatari* (Tokyo: Domesu Shuppan, 2006), 161. This was resolved by Nakanishi’s bookstore publishing it: Mizoguchi, Saeki, and Miki, *Shiryō Nihon ūman ribu shi*.

“*feminizumu*” and reclaiming the word “*feminisuto*.”⁵² Thinking back, writer and actress Nakayama Chinatsu (1948–), who was involved in *ribu* in the 1970s, believes that the word “died” around 1975, but as of the late 1980s, she “was still calling [herself] *ribu* in her heart.”⁵³

The editors of the new journal *Feminisuto* [Feminist]—so titled as part of an effort to redefine and, thus, reclaim the term—saw “*feminizumu*” as more cultural than “*uimenzu ribareeshon*” [women’s liberation]—probably pointing here to the movement in the US as well as in Japan.⁵⁴ Whether the editors would themselves frame it as such, based on the contents and tone of the magazine, it seems clear that “cultural” implied a certain cosmopolitan elitism these women did not see in the US women’s liberation movement or in *ribu*.⁵⁵ When *Feminisuto* was first published, the association with the traditional meaning of a “*feminisuto*”—a man who sweet-talks women—remained strong enough that apparently at some bookstores the magazine was at first mistakenly shelved with the men’s magazines.⁵⁶ Evidence of feminists’ ultimate success in redefining the term can be found with younger people inside and outside my larger project’s three focal communities with whom I have spoken, who are, for the most part, unaware of the earlier meaning of the word.⁵⁷ This does not, however, mean that women whose ideas and

⁵² Atsumi et al., “Hachi nin no feminisuto ni yoru nyū feminisuto sengen: josei no gawa kara ningen kaihō shugi (*feminizumu*) o teigen,” *Feminisuto* no. 8 (November 1978). On the emergence of women’s studies in Japan, see Inoue Teruko, *Joseigaku to sono shūhen* (Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 1980).

⁵³ Nakayama Chinatsu, *Gendai Nihon josei no kibun* (Tokyo: Mainichi Shinbun Sha, 1987), 15.

⁵⁴ *Feminisuto*, “Josei bunka no fukurami o!”; see also Vera Mackie, *Feminism in Modern Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 161.

⁵⁵ Early issues included interviews with figures such as Erica Jong and Yoko Ono and articles about women’s studies at US universities, e.g., Atsumi Ikuko, “Erika Jongu no tetsugaku: yūmorasu na shikyūteki uchūkan,” *Feminisuto* no. 2 (October 1977); Matsumoto Michiko, “Ono Yōko no tetsugaku” *Feminisuto* no. 1 (August 1977); and Mizuta Noriko, “Joseigaku kōza (*uimenzu sutadiizu*) wa gendai no gakumon taikai no kakumei de aru: ‘joseigaku’ no taishitsu to Minami Kariforunia Daigaku no rei,” *Feminisuto* no. 1 (August 1977). The magazine also attempted to produce semi-regular English editions, both to share information about Japanese feminism with the rest of the world and, as indicated by Japanese abstracts accompanying the articles, to serve as at the very least English reading practice for women in Japan, e.g., *Feminisuto Japan*, special issue of *Feminisuto* no. 4. (April 1978).

⁵⁶ *Feminisuto* no. 7, “Josei no sōzō to *feminizumu*” (September 1978).

⁵⁷ There are, of course, exceptions. One friend of mine of around 30 years in age who is extremely fluent in English recently (2009) told me she was not aware until I told her that there was the newer meaning and that this meaning had supplanted the older meaning.

activism resonate with a broadly defined notion of feminism consider themselves to be *feminisuto*, however. As Laura Dales shows, in the first decade of the twenty-first century, some such women feel that “a feminist is one who is aware of inequality or of the difficulty of being a woman, and this awareness has grown from a tangible, personal experience of hardship.” Thus, the term could not possibly apply, for instance, to housewives.⁵⁸ In a conversation over dinner with four women in their forties to sixties who regularly meet to discuss English-language texts (often on feminist themes), my own querying as to whether these women identify as “feminists” led to an unresolved definitional discussion in which one of the four rejected the label even as she espoused views that clearly fell under the definition she herself agreed to, namely being an advocate of equality of social opportunity for women and men.⁵⁹

While women such as Miki continue to publicly identify themselves as *ribu* rather than *feminisuto*—except in English, in which she calls herself a “feminist”—by and large the term remains only to name a specific sphere of 1970s feminist activism in Japan (and abroad)—that the general public believes to have faded away long ago.⁶⁰ This is likely a function of a handful of factors, not the least of these being the media’s use of the term as a mark of derision. The shift in the locus of the discourse on women’s social status from activists engaged on the ground, to academics more heavily invested in intellectual dialogue with American and other feminists, certainly contributed. If “women’s lib” had remained a popular term in the US, transnationally engaged Japanese feminists may well have worked to hold on to rather than replace it—their

⁵⁸ Laura Dales, *Feminist Movements in Contemporary Japan* (London: Routledge, 2009) 59, 60.

⁵⁹ Dales proposes that in Japan, “feminist identification is discouraged by the cultural and linguistic interpretations of the word. . . . [And] that there are many women who do not identify as feminist yet whose activities can be seen as feminist under a certain definition.” See Dales, *Feminist Movements*, 62.

⁶⁰ Miki’s identification as a “feminist” in English but as “*ribu*” in Japanese bears an uncanny resemblance to the many individuals like Indonesian “gay” activist Dédé Oetomo, who explains that he is “gay when speaking . . . English,” demonstrating a certain linguistic specificity to identity labels. See Dédé Oetomo, “‘I’m Gay When I’m Speaking English’: Sexuality and Sexual Identity in Indonesia: An Interview with Dédé Oetomo,” by Adam Carr, in the conference newspaper for the 6th International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific, Melbourne, Australia, 5–10 October 2001 (October 8, 2001).

relative success at redefining “*feminisuto*” suggests this might have been possible. Nevertheless, even if the increasing predominance of the term “feminism” over “women’s lib” in the American public was the final nail in the coffin for “*ūman ribu*,” the roots of the term’s demise lay in shifts in local discourse and practice.

On the Possibility of a “*rezubian*” Continuum

A decade into the American women’s liberation movement, lesbian-feminist Adrienne Rich provocatively declared the presence of a “lesbian continuum,” by which she meant “a range—through each woman’s life and throughout history—of woman-identified experience,” somewhere along which any woman might be located regardless of whether she consciously desires a sexual relationship with another woman.⁶¹ While her claim may be bolder than most, Rich is but one of many self-identified lesbian-feminists around the world who have attempted to reclaim and redefine the term “lesbian.” Observing the very personal process of identification with the term, lesbian-feminist writer Nicole Brossard has declared that “A lesbian who does not reinvent the word is a lesbian in the process of disappearing.”⁶² For their part, *rezubian feminisuto* in Japan have themselves repeatedly responded to their own perceived need to cast “*rezubian*” in and on their own terms.⁶³

One possible approach to the history of female gender and sexual practices in postwar Japan would be to attempt the delineation of a different kind of continuum from that of Rich, one that seeks not to redefine the term but that traces its history and offers at least a humble

⁶¹ Adrienne Rich, “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence,” in her *Blood, Bread, and Poetry* (New York, Norton: 1986), 51.

⁶² Nicole Brossard, *The Arial Letter*, trans. Marlene Wildeman (Toronto: Women’s Press, 1988), 122.

⁶³ See the discussions of what it means to be a “*rezu*” or a “*rezubian*” in, e.g., *Ribu n̄yusu: kono michi hitosuji* no. 14, “Resubian” (1974), reprinted in RSSHK, *Kono michi hitosuji: Ribu Shinjuku Sentai shiryō shūsei* (Tokyo: Inpakuto Shuppan Kai, 2008); *Subarashii onnatachi* no. 1 (1976); and Kakefuda Hiroko, “*Rezubian*” *de aru to iu koto* (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1992).

genealogy not necessarily of even something as complex as what it means to identify as a “lesbian”—or in the case of contemporary Japan, a “*rezubian*”—but to even begin “to identify the accidents, the minute deviations—or conversely, the complete reversals—the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations”⁶⁴ whereby the word has come to take its current form and meaning, and how some women have come to claim it as their own. Even a brief history of “*rezubian*” makes clear that there is, in fact, no clear continuum, no figurative baton toss stretching from the introduction of variant formulations of the word “lesbian” from Latin, German, English, and French, and, more than half a century later, extending to the popularization of the word “*rezubian*” from the 1970s onward as, for some women, a locus of identification and a banner of pride in and celebration of their love and sexual desire for other women.

* * *

“Homosexuality”—hereafter in this section I use the English term in “scare quotes” to emphasize both its fluidity and the multiple calques and transliterations used to represent it through much of modern Japanese history—is a modern concept, one whose introduction in Japan as early as an 1894 translation of early sexologist Richard von Krafft-Ebing’s *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886) ultimately led to a revolution in the conceptualization of and a pathologization of same-sex sexual behavior as well as non-normative gender practices.⁶⁵ Among the more dramatic changes it brought about, this novel approach to same-sex eroticism drew new attention to same-sex affection and sexual activities between females, which were for the first time placed conceptually on a par with those among males, even if widely considered

⁶⁴ Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” 146.

⁶⁵ As Jim Reichert illustrates in his examination of Meiji era literature, *In the Company of Men: Representations of Male-Male Sexuality in Meiji Literature* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2006), this transition was by no means smooth. The use of traditional terms such as *nanshoku*, also pronounced *danshoku* [male-male eroticism], and *chigo* [the youthful male object of an older male’s attention] were used to connote more modern, if historically tinged, understandings of “homosexuality” as late as the 1950s. See, e.g., Kondō Takashi, “Danshoku henreki: aru sodomia no shuki,” *Fūzoku kurabu*, May 1954.

qualitatively distinct.⁶⁶ While it took several decades to settle on “*dōseiai*” [literally, “same-sex love”] as the translation of “homosexuality” among the half dozen or so calques in circulation, the current form of “*rezubian*” was not settled upon until the mid-1970s.⁶⁷ Its ultimate form and meaning reflect the efforts of some women to take control of the discourse on female same-sex desire as well as men’s continued dominance of that discourse in mainstream culture. As I will show, the presence of the word “*rezubian*”—in its multiple contemporary permutations and meanings—in Japanese is not the result of a simple one-time import, but rather dozens of transnational exchanges, as well as domestic discussion and debate over much of the twentieth century—a stretch of time when the meaning of “lesbian” was similarly unstable in the West.⁶⁸ In Japan, it should be noted, until as late as the 1960s, this discourse rarely included the women whose affectional and sexual practices the word now purports to name.⁶⁹

In her groundbreaking article on same-sex love and suicide among women in modern Japan, Jennifer Robertson describes “lesbian (*rezubian*)” as already a “household word” in early 1900s Japan.⁷⁰ The truth of the matter, however, is complex and depends on what is implied by both “household word” and “lesbian (*rezubian*).” To be sure, in the early 1910s the “female

⁶⁶ See Hiruma Yukiko, “Kindai Nihon ni okeru josei dōseiai no ‘hakken,’” *Kaihō shakaigaku kenkyū* 17 (2003); and Gregory M. Pflugfelder, *Cartographies of Desire: Male-Male Sexuality in Japanese Discourse, 1600–1950* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), and “‘S’ Is for Sister: Schoolgirl Intimacy and ‘Same-Sex Love’ in Early Twentieth-Century Japan,” in *Gendering Modern Japanese History*, ed. Barbara Molony and Kathleen Uno (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2005).

⁶⁷ On the history of translations of “homosexuality,” see Pflugfelder *Cartographies of Desire*, 175, 248; Furukawa Makoto, “Dōsei ‘ai’ no kō,” *Imago* 6, no. 12 (November 1995), and “Sekushuariti no kindai no hen’yō: kindai Nihon no dōseiai o meguru mitsu no kōdo,” *Nichibei josei jaanaru* 17 (1994).

⁶⁸ See David M. Halperin, *How to Do the History of Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 48–53.

⁶⁹ To be sure, women were involved early on in the discourse on “homosexuality,” but with rare exception, women were not a part of discourse in which the word “lesbian” was used. Such exceptions include Havelock Ellis, “Joseikan no dōsei ren’ ai,” trans. Yabo, *Seitō* 4, no. 4 (February 1914), reprint (Tokyo: Ryūkei Shosha, 1980); Kamichika Ichiko, “Aishiau koto domo,” *Shin shōsetsu*, October 1921; and Yoshiya Nobuko, “Dōsei ren’ ai no tokushitsu,” *Shin shōsetsu*, October 1921.

⁷⁰ Jennifer Robertson, “Dying to Tell: Sexuality and Suicide in Imperial Japan,” *Signs* 25, no. 1 (1999): 9.

homosexual” was “discovered and quickly problematized” in the media.⁷¹ Press accounts of double-suicides of school girls, actresses, and female factory workers repeatedly drew the public’s attention and caused anxiety about “homosexuality” among females. Yet, prior to the war, transliterations of the word “lesbian” from any language were rare in popular magazines and newspapers, virtually nonexistent in reference to women in Japan, about whom variant calques of “homosexual” were applied.⁷² Transliterated forms of “lesbian,” as well as the related terms “Lesbos,” “Sappho,” and “tribade,” were in use, but were largely limited to a few specialized discourse spheres dominated by men—sexology and translated literature depicting Sappho and the isle of Lesbos, as well as specialized dictionaries of new words referencing usages from both genres of writing. The extent to which the public at large was familiar with and used these terms is questionable. As in European languages, while these various related terms would continue to have limited currency for much of the twentieth century, “lesbian” would ultimately prevail in Japan, almost certainly a function of on-going exchange and the strongly citational nature of pre- and postwar discourse on female “homosexuality” in Japan—including discourse that was literary, sexological, and, eventually, activist.

From its introduction into Japanese, “lesbian” has always been a thoroughly transnational term. Among the earliest transliterations of “lesbian” upon the initial boom in discourse on female “homosexuality” beginning around 1911 can be found in the 1913 translation of Krafft-Ebing’s *Psychopathia Sexualis*, in which the term “*amōru resubikusu*,” a transliteration of

⁷¹ Hiruma, “Kindai Nihon ni okeru josei dōseiai no ‘hakken,’” 9–10.

⁷² Robertson’s own use of “lesbian” encompasses various Japanese expressions for female “homosexuality” rather than the use of any variant of the word (or concept) “lesbian.” For instance, when she translates direct quotes about the Saijō-Masuda double suicide attempt, she renders “*onna dōshi no dōseiai*” [homosexuality between women] as “lesbian” and even just “*dōseiai*” [homosexuality] as “lesbian love.” Compare Robertson, “Dying to Tell,” 13, 16, with Yasuda Tokutarō, “Dōseiai no rekishikan,” *Chūō kōron* March 1935, 150, and Saijō Eriko, “Dansō no reijin, Masuda Fumiko no shioerabu made,” *Fujin kōron* 20, no. 3 (March 1935): 170. The translations of article titles Robertson provides in her bibliography further illustrates her tendency to read “*dōseiai*” as “lesbian” whenever it clearly indicates females.

the Latin “*amor lesbicus*” and glossed as “*fujin kan no ren'ai*” [love between women], appears a handful of times, along with the German-based “*resubishu*” [lesbisch].⁷³ While *amōru resubikusu* would ultimately not have much staying power, variations on the phrase “lesbian love” would remain the primary usage of “lesbian” through the 1960s.⁷⁴ In this early text “*amōru resubikusu*” is used not as a universal term for female “homosexuality” but rather refers to non-congenital “homosexuality” among adult females. The specificity of this usage, however, like its Latin name, would ultimately not endure.⁷⁵ Although references to Sappho did not make their way into this particular translated text,⁷⁶ “Sappho” and “Lesbos” make frequent appearances in pre- (and post-) war texts by Japanese scholars, often in the context of offering a global, primarily Western, history of female “homosexuality”⁷⁷ and occasionally explained with the mistaken assertion that “homosexuality” among women in Japan—in contrast with men—is simply absent from the historical record.⁷⁸ In its section on Sappho, a 1928 translation of

⁷³ Richard von Krafft-Ebing, *Hentai seiyoku shinri*, trans. Kurosawa Yoshitami (Tokyo: Dai Nihon Bunmei Kyōkai, 1913), 462–64, 469, reprinted in *Senzen dōseiai kanren bunken shūsei*, 3 vols., ed. Furukawa Makoto and Akaeda Kanako (Tokyo: Fuji Shuppan, 2006).

The observation that the discourse on “homosexuality” among females saw something of a boom in 1911 comes from Hiruma, “Kindai Nihon ni okeru josei dōseiai no ‘hakken.’”

By way of contrast to Kurosawa’s choice to transliterate and provide a Japanese gloss for “*amor lesbicus*,” translator of the 12th edition into English, F.J. Rebman maintains Krafft-Ebing’s original term only in several instances and in Krafft-Ebing’s section on “*amor lesbicus*,” he translates it into the English “lesbian love” in spite of the fact that medically trained readers at whom the text was ostensibly aimed would presumably be able to read the Latin terms. See Richard von Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis: With Especial Reference to the Antipathic Sexual Instinct: A Medico-Forensic Study*, trans. F.J. Rebman (New York: Rebman, 1906), 321, 396, 607–11.

A year after this translation of Krafft-Ebing, a translation of Havelock Ellis’s writing on female “homosexuality” from his *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* (1897-1928) was published in the feminist journal *Seitō* [Bluestocking] (1911-1916), the word “Lesbianism”—unlike all other loan words in the text—appears but it is left in English rather than being translated or transliterated. See Ellis, “Joseikan no dōsei ren'ai,” 4, 10; see also Pflugfelder, “‘S’ Is for Sister,” 167–68.

⁷⁴ It can also be found lingering in other languages. There is, for instance, an entry for “lesbian love” in *Stedman’s Medical Dictionary* in the volumes I examined from the 1910s through the 1940s.

⁷⁵ While, for instance, Satō maintained the use of “*amōru resubikusu*” alongside its German counterpart, in its application he made no distinction between congenital and non-congenital female “homosexuality.” See Satō Kōka, *Sekai seiyokugaku jiten* (Tokyo: Kōbunsha, 1929), 45, 194–95.

⁷⁶ Cf. Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis*, 396, 607n.

⁷⁷ Sawada Junjirō, *Shinpi-naru dōseiai*, 2 vols. (Tokyo: Kyōekisha Shuppanbu, 1923), vol. 1, 58–59, reprinted in Furukawa and Akaeda, *Senzen dōseiai kanren bunken shūsei*, vol. 1.

⁷⁸ For instance, Yasuda makes this claim in his “Dōseiai no rekishikan,” 147; Leupp, “‘The Floating World is Wide...’,” and Morishita, “S izen no koto.”

Havelock Ellis's *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* (1897–1928) contains an early stand-alone use of “*resubian*”—without “*ravu*”—to describe the poet from Lesbos, but this form would not become popularized until the 1960s.⁷⁹

Of the several dozen dictionaries of new words and slang published between the 1910s and 1930s I examined, almost a third had references to female “homosexuality” (*dōseiai*) and/or schoolgirl romance.⁸⁰ Most commonly included were modern native terms to describe passionate friendships between schoolgirls, such as “*ome(-san)*,” “*(o-)netsu*,” and “*S*” or “*esu*”—with the former two composed of Japanese roots and the latter a modern Japanese transfiguration of the notion of a “sister.”⁸¹ While only “*esu*” draws directly on a “foreign” word, it must be remembered that the girlhood that rendered such passionate schoolgirl friendships possible was itself a product of Japan’s transfigured modernity. Also sometimes noted in these dictionaries was “*to ichi ha ichi*” [tribadism], a term which dates at least back to the Edo era (1603–1868).⁸² Eight of these dictionaries contained the words “*resubian ravu*,” “*resubian*

⁷⁹ This early use of *resubian* can be found in Havelock Ellis, *Sei no shinri*, trans. Masuda Ichirō, 20 vols. (Tokyo: Nichigetsusha, 1927–1929), vol. 6, 8.

⁸⁰ Specifically, for the prewar era, I examined dictionaries reprinted in Matsui Shigekazu, Sone Hiroyoshi, and Ōya Yukiyo, eds., *Kindai yōgo no jiten shūsei*, 42 vols. (Tokyo: Ōzora Sha, 1994–1996); Matsui Shigekazu, and Watanabe Tomosuke, *Ingo jiten shūsei*, 23 vols. (Tokyo: Ōzora Sha, 1996–1997); as well as the dictionaries serialized in the journal *Hentai shinri* (1926–1928) and Satō, *Sekai seiyokugaku jiten*.

On schoolgirl romance see Pflugfelder 2005, “‘S’ Is for Sister”; Honda Masuko, “‘S’: Ta ai naku, shikamo kongenteki na ai no katachi.” *Imago* 2, no. 8 (August 1991).

⁸¹ While, as Pflugfelder observes, “*o-netsu*” and “*go-shin’yū*” are roughly equivalent to now out of fashion English terms such as “smash” and “pash,” “*S*” (pronounced “*esu*”), uses the first letter of “sister” or possibly “sex” to indicate the closeness of female-female relationships. Such relationships were considered to be largely platonic. “*Omesan*” might derive from a combination of “*osu*” [male] and “*mesu*” [female], which would suggest the kinds of masculine-feminine pairings that were pathologized in pre-war discourse on female “homosexuality.” Pflugfelder, who offers an extensive discussion of these terms did not find such pathologization among the women with whom he spoke who went to a school at which it was popular. Pflugfelder notes that different modern terms appeared to have emerged or at least become popular in different schools by the close of the Meiji era. See Pflugfelder, “‘S’ Is for Sister,” 134–40. On the etymology of “*omesan*,” see Matsui, Sone, and Ōya, *Kindai yōgo no jiten shūsei*, vol. 39 (1922), 111.

⁸² Referring to the appearance of the phonetic *katakana* letters “*to*” (ト) and “*ha*” (ハ), the term “*to ichi ha ichi*” is a graphic indication that female-female sex there is one (*ichi*) inserter (*to*) and one insertee (*ha*).

ravu,” “*amōru resubikusu*,” and/or, from German, “*resubisshu riibe*” [lesbische Liebe].⁸³ Earlier dictionaries tended toward transliterations from German and later ones from English, indicating a gradual shift in the locus of sexological discourse. The heavily German inflected dictionaries of Satō Kōka (pseud. Tamio Satow; 1891–?)—a collaborator of Slavonian-Austrian folklorist Friedrich S. Krauss—were first serialized in *Hentai shiryō* [Perverse materials] (1926–1928) and then in his *Global Sexuality Dictionary*, given a German title on the cover: *Universell Sexual Lexikon*.⁸⁴ These texts contain entries for both the German and Latin terms, along with “*saffisumus*” [Sapphismus] and “*toribaade*” [Tribade], with a comment under “*resubisshu riibe*” in both dictionaries that female “homosexuality” (*josei dōseiai*) is also colloquially called “*Resubosu no ai*” (Lesbos love), a novel term combining Lesbos with the “lesbian love” pattern, and which would have much currency in the “perverse press” in the 1950s and 1960s.⁸⁵ While none of these dictionaries explained these terms as unrelated to women in Japan, neither did they support drawing such a connection. The illustration of two young women gazing into each other’s eyes that accompanies the definition of “*dōseiai*” in a 1931 “illustrated dictionary of modern words” is ambiguous but may represent Japanese schoolgirls in sailor suits, the modern and then still novel school uniform.⁸⁶ “*Resubian ravu*,” on the other hand, is represented by two women in evening gowns running off together, hands interlocked, which, when juxtaposed with

⁸³ For various examples, see the dictionaries reprinted in Matsui, Sone, and Ōya, *Kindai yōgo no jiten shūsei*, vols. 19(1931), 653; 23(1933):1171; 34(1932), 340; 36(1933): 376; and 37(1933): 358. See also Katō Koyume, “Sekaiteki hentai seiyoku gafu (3),” *Hentai shiryō* 3, no. 2 (1928): 73, reprint (Tokyo: Yumani Shobō, 2006); Satō Kōka, “Seiyokugaku goi,” part 1, *Hentai shiryō* 1 no. 3 (1926): 19, 95–96, reprint (Tokyo: Yumani Shobō, 2006); Satō, *Sekai seiyokugaku jiten*, 45, 194–95.

⁸⁴ Satō, *Sekai seiyokugaku jiten*.

⁸⁵ For a discussion of this discourse within the “perverse press,” see Mark McLelland, “From Sailor Suits to Sadists: ‘Lesbos Love’ as Reflected in Japan’s Postwar ‘Perverse Press,’” *U.S.-Japan Women’s Journal* 27 (2004), and chapter two in *Queer Japan from the Pacific War to the Internet Age* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005). Examples in contemporary dictionaries can be found in Satō, “Seiyokugaku goi,” part 1, 19, 95–96; and Satō, *Sekai seiyokugaku jiten*, 45, 194–95, 261, 290.

⁸⁶ Sailor suits replaced the traditional *hakama* as uniforms for schoolgirls during the Taishō era (1912–1926). See Ōtsuka Eiji, *Shōjo minzokugaku: sekimatsu no shinwa o tsumugu “miko no matsuei”* (Tokyo: Kōbunsha, 1989), 45.

the kimono-clad women in the illustrations on the opposite page, makes them appear particularly Western—or at least Westernized.⁸⁷

A male-dominated literary discourse on “lesbians” ran alongside this scientific writing on female “homosexuality,” albeit scientific discourse too drew from literary texts, including mythic accounts of the life of Sappho, as noted above. Unsurprisingly, Sappho and the isle of Lesbos were at the center of “lesbian” literary representation in Japan for most of the first half of the twentieth century, often but not always via translations of texts by European writers such as Franz Grillparzer, Charles Baudelaire, Alphonse Daudet, and Pierre Louÿs, as well as poems by or reputed to be by Sappho herself and those of or about other women of Lesbos.⁸⁸ The European writings were translated and retranslated—in some cases, such as Daudet’s *Sappho* (1884), dozens of times—and regularly serialized in magazines and published as independent volumes from the early twentieth century onward—with some works repeatedly retranslated and republished decades into in the postwar era as well.⁸⁹

It must be noted, however, that “lesbianism” in much of nineteenth century European writing “served to represent heightened sensuality in woman” in general and was—as in what we know of the actual life of Sappho as well as the fictional lives represented in Louÿs’s *Les chansons de Bilitis* (*The Songs of Bilitis*) (1894)—neither considered to be engaged in to the exclusion of relationships with men, nor was it pathologized in those texts in the way emblematic

⁸⁷ Matsui, Sone, and Ōya, *Kindai yōgo no jiten shūsei*, vol. 19(1931), 361, 653.

⁸⁸ E.g., Sakai Kiyoshi, “Resubiennu,” *Gurotesuku* 1, no. 2 (December 1928).

⁸⁹ Grillparzer’s *Sappho: Trauerspiel in fünf Aufzüge* (*Sappho: A Tragedy in Five Acts*, 1818) was a topic of discussion in the press even before the close of the Meiji era. See Kawashima Fūkotsu, “Guriruparutsueru no hen’ei,” *Yomiuri shinbun* May 9, 1909, supplement: 2. Two separate translations of the work were published in 1922 alone. Other early translations include Daudet’s *Sappho* (1884), translations of which were published as early as 1913 and 1914; Baudelaire’s *Les fleurs du mal* (*The Flowers of Evil*, 1857), published in translation by 1919; and Louÿs’s *Les chansons de Bilitis* (*The Songs of Bilitis*, 1894), published in Japanese in 1924 and 1926. Continuing interest in these literary representations are evidenced by translations of Baudelaire’s banned poems from *Les fleurs du mal*, “Lesbos” and “Les femmes damnées” [Damned women] being published in the literary journal *Mita bungaku* [Mita literature] (1910–1925, 1926–1976, 1985–) just over a year after the end of the war. See Alphonse Baudelaire, “Resubosu,” trans. Satō Saku, *Mita bungaku* 20, no. 7 (September 1946).

of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scientific understandings of “inversion.”⁹⁰ David Halperin observes that as late as the 1920s “a cultivated social observer,” such as Aldous Huxley, “could portray a party at which the term ‘Lesbian’ gets thrown about in civilized banter and applied” as a geographic reference “not only to heterosexual”—rather than homosexual—“love affairs but to the male participant in them without causing the slightest puzzlement or consternation.”⁹¹ Similarly, the two female and two male members of singing group in the late 1920s, the Resubian Bōkaru Fōa [Lesbian vocal four], were likely unaware of or at least indifferent to any “homosexual” implication of the term—perhaps using the name simply to reference to the lyrical nature of the island’s most famous resident.⁹² Moreover, focused as they were on European or “Oriental,” i.e., Greek, women, within Japan early translated and transfigured “lesbian texts,” whatever their implications, were a world apart from the discourse on “homosexuality” among Japanese women.

This is not to discount the possible influence of these texts on Japanese writers, such as influential and very cosmopolitan novelist Tanizaki Jun’ichirō, who depicts in a Japanese setting a male-female-female love triangle ending in suicide in his novel *Manji* (1959, first serialized 1928–1930).⁹³ Such a relationship might suggest at least a tangential link between European literary “lesbians” and Japanese women. To be sure, the well-read author would certainly have been familiar with at least some of the literary depictions of female-female erotic relationships noted above and aware of the existence of Sappho and current variants on the word “lesbian”

⁹⁰ Anna Balakian, “Those Stigmatized Poems of Baudelaire,” *The French Review* 31, no. 4 (1958): 276. I thank Mark McLelland for introducing this article to me.

⁹¹ Halperin, *How to Do the History of Homosexuality*, 49.

⁹² The *Asahi shinbun* article that describes the group is focused on the difficulties of one member, who had left his ill mother behind for the sake of the group and gives no suggestion that the name or nature of the band was in any way scandalous. See *Asahi shinbun*, “Byōbo o ato ni gakudan e: Uchida-san no seibetsu aiwa,” May 7, 1928, morning ed., 4.

⁹³ Tanizaki Jun’ichirō, “Manji,” 1928–1930, in his *Tanizaki Jun’ichirō zenshū*, vol. 17 (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1959).

from reading of literature if not from sexology texts. Yet, when Tanizaki makes direct reference to female-female relationships in the novel, while “*dōseiai*” [homosexuality] appears at least once, the author primarily describes the relationship between the two women merely as being between persons of the “same sex” (*dōsei*) as opposed to between members of the “opposite sex” (*isei*).⁹⁴ And, in contrast post-war discussions of the text, including those in which he was involved, Tanizaki did not use the word “lesbian” in the original text.⁹⁵ To date, in my surveys of prewar writing, I have not encountered in any context, presented as fact or fiction, connections being made between real women in Japan and literary representations of “lesbians.”

* * *

In the immediate postwar era, in addition to the on-going literary depiction of “lesbians,” sexological texts continued to be produced locally as well as translated into Japanese. In the earliest works that discussed “homosexuality” among females, references to Sappho and Lesbos were frequent as were references to “lesbian love,” yet their use was by no means universal, nor was their form consistent. Among the first of the new translations was of Morris Ernst and David Loth’s *American Sexual Behavior and the Kinsey Report* published in English in 1948 and in Japanese translation in 1949, demonstrating the rise in global prominence of American sexology

⁹⁴ “*Dōseiai*” appears at least once (ibid., 108), the author primarily describes the relationship between the two women merely as being between persons of the “same sex” (*dōsei*) (ibid., 37, 83, 91, 94) as opposed to between members of the “opposite sex” (*isei*) (ibid., 91, 94, 106).

⁹⁵ Examples of “*resubian*” used in reference to the text can be found in, e.g., Kabiya Kazuhiko, “Homo no hondana: Tanizaki Jun’ichirō cho *Manji*,” *Fūzoku kitan*, October 1964; and Tanizaki Jun’ichirō, Wakao Ayako, and Kishida Kyōko, “Zadankai: Manji no konbi no onna no himitsu o kataru,” *Fujin kōron* 49, no. 9 (September 1964).

Demonstrating the fluidity of both language and ascribed identity in the context of linguistic, cultural, and temporal translation, his English translator inscribed “lesbians” in Tanizaki’s writing where they did not exist, describing the women’s relationship and female-female relationships in general as “lesbian,” and the character Mitsuko as preferring to be thought of “as a lesbian.” For the former compare the English translation, Tanizaki Jun’ichirō, *Quicksand*, trans. Howard Hibbett (New York: Knopf, 1993), 116, 121, with Tanizaki’s “*Manji*,” 91, 94; and for the latter compare *Quicksand*, 147 and “*Manji*,” 147.

as well as, perhaps, a prurient interest in Japan's occupiers.⁹⁶ Suggesting that the prewar form "lesbian love" was lingering in Japanese sexological discourse, however, where Ernst and Loth make a passing reference to the historical association of the Greek isle of Lesbos with female homosexuality, their translator notes parenthetically that Lesbos is in the Aegean Sea and the birthplace of Sappho, so "Lesbos love means female homosexuality."⁹⁷ However, with the exception of introducing this alternative way to indicate "josei no dōseiai" [female homosexuality], the term is not used elsewhere in this volume.

Interest in the work of groundbreaking American sexologist Alfred Kinsey was strong enough that his pioneering studies on the sexual behavior of men and of women were published in Japanese translation within a year or two of their publication in English.⁹⁸ For Kinsey, who saw "homosexual" as a description of behavior rather than as a name for a kind of person,⁹⁹ it is unsurprising that again, Sappho-related terms for homosexuality are mentioned only in passing as terms Kinsey recommends avoiding in scientific discourse. In the translation of this fleeting reference, however, rather than render "lesbian" into the existing Japanese "*resubian ravu*," as had the translator of the Ernst and Loth volume, the translator of *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* simply transliterates it as "*resubian*," providing an early postwar example of a stand-alone use of the term, a usage which may have made its way into the "perverse press" (discussed below).¹⁰⁰ It is also worth noting that the translation of Kinsey's discussion of his

⁹⁶ Ernst, Morris Leopold, and David Goldsmith Loth, *American Sexual Behavior and the Kinsey Report* (New York: Greystone Press, 1948), translated into Japanese as *Amerika jin no sei seikatsu*, trans. Nakaoka Hirō (Akatsuki Shoten, 1949).

⁹⁷ Ernst and Loth, *Amerika jin no sei seikatsu*, 19; cf. Ernst and Loth, *American Sexual Behavior*, 13.

⁹⁸ Alfred C. Kinsey and the Institute for Sex Research, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders, 1948), translated into Japanese as *Ningen ni okeru dansei no sei kōi*, 2 vols., translated by Nagai Hisomu and Andō Kakuichi (Tokyo: Kosumoporitan Sha, 1950); and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders, 1953), translated into Japanese as *Ningen jousei ni okeru sei kōdō*, 2 vols., trans. Asayama Shin'ichi, Ishida Shūzō, Tsuge Hideomi, and Minami Hiroshi (Tokyo: Kosumoporitan Sha, 1954).

⁹⁹ Alfred C. Kinsey, *Ningen jousei ni okeru sei kōdō*, 15.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

discomfort with the term “homosexual” is the only time that the word is transliterated (“*homosekushuaru*”) rather than translated (“*dōseiai*”).¹⁰¹ This suggests that at the time “*dōseiai*” sounded more scientific or legitimate—or perhaps more neutral—to the translator than loan transliterations of “homosexuality” in general, a sense reflected in popular press accounts of “homosexuality” (in terms of “*dōseiai*”) in most of the twentieth century.

Outside the scientific and literary discussion and representation of female “homosexuality,” an increasingly graphic discourse on female-female sexual practices within Japan’s semi-underground postwar “perverse press” ran alongside similar discussion of male-male sexual practices and any number of sexual behaviors between opposite-sex partners. While clearly designed to titillate an ostensibly male readership and largely written by men, as Mark McLelland shows, there were also voices that can with some certainty be considered from same-sex desiring females.¹⁰² In 1954, the year the Japanese translation of Kinsey’s *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* saw print, an article titled “Chitchat on lesbianism” appeared in *Fūzoku kagaku* [Sexual customs science] (1953–1955), one of the earliest of the postwar perverse magazines.¹⁰³ Penned by an individual using the female name Miyagawa Yoshiko, this article links Japanese female homoerotic experiences to the terms “*resubianizumu*,” “*resubian rabu*,” “*safizumu*” [Sapphism], and “*toribaado*” [tribade], terms she explains via a lengthy discussion of Sappho and Lesbos, as well as, in the case of tribadism, “*to ichi ha ichi*,” a Japanese synonym. Miyagawa also makes extensive reference to Krafft-Ebing, the most likely source of the introduction of “lesbian” into Japanese decades earlier. This usage of “*resubianizumu*” apparently did not take hold even within that magazine. Occasionally, such as in a 1955 roundtable discussion including both Japanese women and male “experts” in *Fūzoku*

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 15.

¹⁰² See McLelland, “From Sailor Suits to Sadists”; McLelland *Queer Japan*.

¹⁰³ Miyagawa Yoshiko, “*Resubianizumu zatsuwa*,” *Fūzoku kagaku*, February 1954.

kagaku, for instance, women-loving women were referred to and referred to themselves as “*josei no homo*” [female homos], positioning them as the female counterpart to the (male) *homo*, who were discussed in this sphere with greater frequency during this period and who were and continue to be the primary referent of “*homo*.”¹⁰⁴ With the exception of “*dōseiai*,” perhaps the most frequently used term during this same period, was “*Resubosu ai*” [Lesbos love] or simply “*Resubosu*” [here, lesbian(ism)], the former of which resembles the “*amōru resubikusu*” pattern dating back to translations of Krafft-Ebing. While noted, for example, in dictionaries by Satō Kōka several decades prior, the terms had not taken root in the discourse until this point.¹⁰⁵

A significant number of writers in the 1950s perverse press might better be described as scholars of literature than of science, yet they derived a certain scientific authority from “extensive reading about Japanese and foreign ... ‘sexual customs’” including “psychoanalytic and sexological works such as [by] Kinsey...as well as anthropological, historical and literary treatises,”¹⁰⁶ and their writing echoes the blurring between scientific and literary discourse in the prewar era. Whether or not the use of “*Resubosu ai*” in this sphere originated with these more literary-minded contributors to the magazines, in retaining the name of Sappho’s mythic Aegean home, “*Resubosu ai*” points toward the literary roots of the term and of that particular strand of interest in female “homosexuality.”

By the late 1950s, “*resubian*” began occasionally to stand on its own in the perverse press, used both as an adjective and as a noun, indicating a female subject, increasingly a Japanese woman, whose primary affectional and sexual desire was directed at other women. Perhaps this

¹⁰⁴ Saijō Michio et al., “Zadankai: josei no homo makari tōru,” *Fūzoku kagaku*, March 1955. Other examples of the usage of “*josei no homo*” include Narabayashi Yasushi, *Rezubian rabu* (Tokyo: Kodama Puresu, 1967), 9; Takahashi Tetsu, *Abu rabu: ijō ai ripōto* (Tokyo: Seyūsha, 1966), 61; *Ura mado*, “Resubosu no aru rajio dorama,” May 1963, 141; and Nishina Junzō, “Sei kunren ni miru josei no homo,” *Fūzoku kagaku*, January 1954, 72. On the use of “*homo*” in this period see McLelland, *Queer Japan*.

¹⁰⁵ Satō, “Seiyokugaku goi,” and *Sekai seiyokugaku jiten*.

¹⁰⁶ McLelland, *Queer Japan*, 69.

terminological transition reflects the influence of postwar sexological texts, which, as noted above, had already begun to shift toward this “English” form. One early article to use this form discusses “*resubian kurabu*” [lesbian clubs] that existed in the late nineteenth century in the “lesbian paradise” (*resubosu no tengoku*) of France. While the article positions the existence of these clubs as a product of a specific time and place akin to the *gei bōi* [gay boy] culture that emerged in the context postwar Japan, it makes no reference to “lesbian” culture in Japan.¹⁰⁷

The earliest instance in this sphere I have encountered in which “*resubian*” is used specifically in reference to women in Japan was an August 1960 feature in *Fūzoku kitan* [Strange talk about (sexual) customs] (1960–1974) on “*resubian no seitai*,” which might be translated as “the life (or ecology) of lesbians” or “lesbian life (ecology).” While “*resubian*” is prominently used in the title, the term by no means supplants alternative words in the remainder of feature—nor would it for several years in the discourse at large. In fact, only two of the four articles contained therein frame their discussion as being about “*resubian*.” The most substantial of these is an article on “love techniques of *resubian* east and west” by Kabiya Kazuhiko, a prolific writer on “homosexuality” and frequent contributor to perverse magazines beginning in the 1950s. In this piece, using a mix of terms and combining discourse on relationships between women in Japan and elsewhere, Kabiya describes relatively “*puratonikku*” [platonic] relationships among high school girls alongside titillating details about female-female sex practices, perhaps between women who go to “*otokogata [sic]*” [male role player] bars.¹⁰⁸ While

¹⁰⁷ Higuchi Isuma, “Pari no resubiantachi: resubian kurabu,” *Ura mado*, February 1959. On *gei bōi* culture, see chapter three in McLelland, *Queer Japan*; and Ishida Hitoshi, “Dansei dōseiai to joseisei: gee bōi būmu in mire sai/jōhō/shintai,” in *Shintai to aidentiti toraburu: jendaa/sekkusu no nigenron o koete*, ed. Kanai Yoshiko (Tokyo: Akeshi Shoten, 2008).

¹⁰⁸ Kabiya Kazuhiko, “Tōzai resubian no ai no gihō: joshi dōseiaisha wa donna fū ni ai shiau ka,” *Fūzoku kagaku*, August 1960, 45. “*Otokogata*,” perhaps an invention by Kabiya, is an interesting term—it is a logical counterpart of “*onnagata*” [female form], the term used to describe males who play female roles in the kabuki theater. The choice of “*otokogata*” is intriguing because the term “*otokoyaku*” [male role] was well established to refer to females playing male roles in the all-female Takarazuka and Shōchiku musical revues and appears to have

primarily relying on the calque “*dōseiai*” and the transliteration “*resubian*,” Kabiya also makes reference to the “local” constructs, noted above, such as “*S*”/“*esu*,” “*o-netsu*,” “*ome-san*,” and “*toichi haichi*.”¹⁰⁹ Kabiya indicates the equivalence of “*resubian*” and “*josei dōseiaisha*” [female homosexual] by using the former as a superscript over the latter.¹¹⁰ Later in the article, by way of an explanation of why “*josei no dōseiai*” [female homosexuality] is referred to as “*resubian rabu*” [lesbian love] or “*Resubosu*” [Lesbos], he offers the familiar story of Sappho.¹¹¹ Both of the articles that did not use “*resubian*” go further into that same mythic history. One offers a “invitation to *Resubosu*” via French literature.¹¹² The other, entitled simply “*Resubiennu*”—a transliteration from French—is ostensibly a Japanese translation from French of a dialogue between two women, the original translation of which, from ancient Greek, is attributed to a “Pieru Robizu” (?Pierre Robise)—a doubly misspelled/mispronounced attempt to (perhaps falsely) credit Pierre Louÿs.¹¹³ The article is plagiarized, no less, from a magazine dating to Japan’s interwar “erotic grotesque nonsense” boom.¹¹⁴ Even decades later “*Resubosu*”

been used in regard to the *dansō no reijin* [dandy beauty] bartenders at such bars, often called *dansō no reijin* bars, which emerged in the early 1960s. On the history of this bar scene, see Toyama Hitomi, “*Dansō no reijin no jidai*,” in her *Miss dandi: otoko toshite ikiru joseitachi* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1999), and Shiba Fumiko, “*Shōwa rokujū [sic] nendai rezubian būmu*,” in *Tanbi shōsetsu, gei bungaku bukkugaido*, ed. Kakinuma Eiko and Kurihara Chiyo (Tokyo: Byakuya Shobō, 1993). A roundtable in *Fūzoku kagaku* offers evidence that the beginnings of this sphere may date back to the 1950s. See Saijō et al., “*Zadankai*.”

¹⁰⁹ Kabiya, “*Tōzai resubian no ai no gihō*,” 44, 49–50

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 44. In Japanese, superscript is commonly used to indicate the pronunciation of a word in Chinese characters. It has been used as well to assign a specific meaning to a term or to introduce a new word by pairing a known and novel word, the latter of which was particularly common in the Meiji era, which saw a massive influx of new words and concepts. See Douglas R. Howland, *Translating the West: Language and Political Reason in Nineteenth-Century Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2002).

¹¹¹ Kabiya, “*Tōzai resubian no ai no gihō*,” 49.

¹¹² Kawashima Hayato, “*Resubosu no sasoi*,” *Fūzoku kitan*, August 1960.

¹¹³ Pieru Robizu [*sic*, Pierre Louÿs], “*Resubiennu*,” *Fūzoku kitan*, August 1960. In the Japanese katakana script, spelling and pronunciation are in effect identical.

¹¹⁴ A comparison shows that the latter of the two is reprinted without attribution from a 1928 issue of *Grotesque (Gurotesuku)*: Sakai Kiyoshi, “*Resubiennu*,” *Gurotesuku* 1, no. 2 (December 1928). The “original” is presented as a translation by Sakai Kiyoshi of a French translation purportedly by a man whose name, spelled in Roman letters rather than *katakana*, is “Pierre Lovijs [*sic*].” In addition to transliterating the misspelling of the author’s name (as “Robizu”), *Fūzoku kitan*’s editors reinserted or invented parts of the dialogue that were censored with X’s—perhaps both as a response to then stricter media censorship codes and to tease the reader (and censors) with an overt declaration of the wish to flout the restrictions. While both attempt to credit Louÿs, the dialogue being

had not completely disappeared: as late as the mid-1990s there was a “magazine/book” (*mūku*) under the name *Resubosu kurabu* [Lesbos club]. While the 1997 issue I examined—lent to me by a *rezubian*-identified woman I interviewed—had articles that appeared to be about actual *rezubian*-identified women, the overall salacious tone of the editorial content makes the text appear to be aimed primarily at male readers, making it clear that the androcentricity of “*Resubosu*” lingers as well.¹¹⁵

Discussion of “homosexuality”—among females or males—during this period and through much of the 1960s was far less complicated in the mainstream press, which in general continued to refer to it simply as “*dōseiai*.”¹¹⁶ Exceptions included weeklies catering primarily to male readers—such as *Heibon panchi* [Ordinary punch] (1964–1988), *Shūkan taishū* [Weekly masses] (1958–) and *Weekly pureibōi* [Weekly playboy] (1966–)—as well as in a few of the baser magazines aimed at women—such as *Josei jishin* [Woman herself] (1958–). In these magazines interest in “*resubian*” was primarily prurient, echoing interest expressed in this sphere

reproduced does not appear in Louÿs’s *Les chansons de Bilitis*, which had by then been translated into Japanese several times, nor, in fact does Sakai actually claim that text as its origin. Although a limited number of dialogues appear in the original *Bilitis*, none are as long, nor do the names of the interlocutors appear prior to each statement in a style akin to a play script, as they do in Sakai’s text (cf. Pierre Louÿs, *Les Chansons de Bilitis: Traduites du Grec*, Paris, 1894). As noted above, several translations of *Les chansons de Bilitis* were published in the 1920s and might have simply inspired Sakai to generate his own “translation” from the ancient Greek, via French, relying on Louÿs’s name to lend an air of legitimacy to his text, or to suggest to readers in the know that this text too was simply a literary invention.

On the erotic grotesque—or *ero guro*—phenomenon, see Miriam Rom Silverberg, *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense: The Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006). On media censorship and the use of X’s, see Gregory J. Kasza, *The State and the Mass Media in Japan, 1918–1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 38.

¹¹⁵ *Resubosu kurabu*, no. 6 (Tokyo: Sanwa Shuppan, 1997).

¹¹⁶ E.g., *Yomiuri shinbun*, “Dōseiai kara shinjū,” January 6, 1948, morning ed., 2; Mochizuki Mamoru, “Dōseiai: shakai genshō toshite,” *Fujin kōron* 35, no. 3 (March 1950); “Futari tomo muki, dōseiai satsujin kettei,” March 18, 1955, evening ed., 3. In an article in the staid women’s magazine *Fujin kōron*, to give an example from the mid-1960s, Setouchi Harumi discusses “*dōseiai no onna*” [homosexual women], using the modern “native” term, yet contrasts them with “*gei bōi*” [literally, “gay boys”], effeminate men associated with bar tending and entertainment, rather than “*dōseiai no otoko*” [homosexual men]. See Setouchi Harumi, “Dōseiai no onna,” *Fujin kōron* 49, no. 11 (November 1964).

The word “*resubian*” is not entirely absent from this discourse, however. Also in *Fujin kōron*, just two issues after Setouchi’s article, while “*dōseiai*” is the primary term used to discuss the female protagonists’ relationship and female “homosexuality” in general in a roundtable discussion on the 1964 film version of Tanizaki’s novel *Manji* (1928–1930), actress Wakao Ayako mentions that in the case of women, they are called “*resubian*.” See Tanizaki, Wakao, and Kishida, “Zadankai,” 200).

in gender ambiguous *gei bōi* and, perhaps, evidencing the influence of the “perverse press,” a possible, if not likely, source of information for reporters charged with writing articles on the topic.¹¹⁷ In newspapers and more conservative magazines in general, however, “*dōseiai*” maintained its dominance throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s.

The final transition in the term, that from “*resubian*” to “*rezubian*,” is marked by several clear and significant signposts and, in part, evidences women’s effort to take control of the discourse at a moment when more women were claiming the right to their own sexuality—at the same time that it indexes several new points of transnational exchange.¹¹⁸ In January 1967, Narabayashi Yasushi (1919–2002), a man trained in obstetrics and gynecology who later became a marriage counselor, published a book called *Rezubian rabu* [Lesbian love].¹¹⁹ This title echoes the prewar expressions “*resubiyān ravu*” and “*resubian ravu*”—carried on into the postwar era, as noted above, in sexological writing and the perverse press—as well as the postwar “*Resubosu ai*,” yet differs in his deliberate switch from “*su*” to “*zu*.” In spite of “*resubian*” being the generally used pronunciation, Narabayashi explains on the opening page of his book, “*rezubian*”

¹¹⁷ E.g., Akazuka Yukio, “Oshaberi jiten,” *Yomiuri shinbun* January 21, 1968, morning ed., 23; *Shūkan taishū*, “Otoko no tame no resubian-gaku nyūmon,” June 20, 1968; *Shūkan manga sandee*, “Fukaku shizuka ni ryūkō suru ‘resubian’: onna ga onna o ai suru gendai no ijō na sei fūzoku,” November 23, 1966.

¹¹⁸ A search of the online database for the Fūzoku Shiryō Kan [Sexual customs materials archive] (<http://pl-fs.kir.jp/pc/>) turns up several instances of “*rezubian*” and “*rezubianizumu*” prior to the 1967 date I discuss below. McLelland also reports an instance of “*rezubian*” as early as 1960. See “From Sailor Suits to Sadists,” 23 n70. In cases where I have been able to examine the original, the actual spelling has always been with “*su*” rather than “*zu*,” with the latter apparently an error of transcription. Regardless of whether there are instances of the “*zu*” spelling prior to Narabayashi’s book, the vast majority of pre-1967 references to “lesbians” use the form “*resubian*” or the earlier “*Resubosu (no) ai*” rather than “*rezubian*,” and as suggested by Narabayashi, “*resubian*” was the standard pronunciation into the late 1960s. See Narabayashi, *Rezubian rabu*, 1967, 3. Moreover, earlier instances of “*rezubian*” may indicate other points of the kind of direct contact I discuss below.

For reasons I have yet to determine, even before “*rezubian*” came to predominate (discussed below), “*rezu*” was used as the shortened form of “*resubian*” with rare exception, e.g., Karōseru Maki, “Homo to resu ni kawari tsutsu aru watashi,” *Shōri*, November 1968. While this may be related to the influence of imported materials, a definitive explanation remains unclear to me.

¹¹⁹ Narabayashi, *Rezubian rabu*.

is “correct” (*tadashii*).¹²⁰ Ironically perhaps, even in insisting that his readers switch to this and English-based—and thus, to Narabayashi, correct—pronunciation of “lesbian,” he has himself “incorrectly” transcribed “love” not as “*ravu*” but as “*rabu*.” Like “*resubian*,” “*rabu*” was the established Japanese pronunciation for a word whose English “original” could, if a speaker desired, be more closely approximated in Japanese.¹²¹ Narabayashi had previously spent a year (1964–1965) in New York City, working as a marriage counselor and while there became acquainted with a “collective” of male and female homosexuals, the latter of whom provided the material for part of the book. Although he does not state this directly, he presumably adopted the English pronunciation of “lesbian” while in the US.

One month after the publication of this volume, an interview with Narabayashi introducing his book and his research appeared in the men’s magazine *Heibon panchi*, and an editorial comment in the opening paragraphs informs readers that “*rezubian*” is the “correct” pronunciation.¹²² This is to become the pronunciation used in all subsequent articles on “lesbians” in the magazine. In late February an article in the women’s magazine *Josei jishin* also discusses “*rezubian rabu*” in great detail, giving a number of examples from the book.¹²³ Another article on “*rezubian*” office workers appears in *Shūkan gendai* that same week, also referencing Narabayashi’s text.¹²⁴ In other magazines, however, “*resubian*” would persist as a pronunciation through the end of the decade, and in some cases far into the 1970s—with some

¹²⁰ Ibid., 3. While Narabayashi does not cite his sources, it seems likely that as a scholar he would have been familiar with both the prewar “*resubiyān ravu*” and the postwar “*Resubosu (no) ai*,” making it difficult to determine which, if any, he was drawing from in the title of his book.

¹²¹ Japanese has no native sound approximating the English “v” sound, but it is possible to indicate it graphically with a diacritic mark on the “u” sound, creating a spelling that is pronounced like a “b” sound followed immediately by a “w” sound.

¹²² *Heibon panchi*, “Kindan no ai o motomeru rezubian no jittai,” February 6, 1967, 36.

¹²³ *Josei jishin*, “Yuganda sei no jidai o ikiru joseitachi: dōseiai, jinkō jusei, rankō o jissen suru joseitachi wa ‘ai’ o dō kangaeteiru ka?” February 27, 1967.

¹²⁴ *Shūkan gendai*, “BG no aida ni dōseiai ga kyūzō shiteiru!” February 23, 1967.

magazines switching back and forth between pronunciations from issue to issue.¹²⁵ Around the same time as Narabayashi's introduction of the apparently novel pronunciation, the abbreviations "resu" and "rezu" began to gain currency in the press. The latter of these remains in use to the present primarily as a slur or a sexually objectifying term outside the "lesbian" community, and also, if not without irony, as an identity marker within it. Given the tendency in Japanese to abbreviate words, without evidence—which I have not encountered—there is no reason to believe that this necessarily reflects a separate introduction of the English form "lez," which at least in American English had less currency at the time than terms such as "lezzie" and "lesbo." As for Narabayashi, whatever his motivations, in addition to furthering interest in "lesbians" in the popular press, his book, perhaps drawing on his authority as a doctor, was at least part of the impetus behind this seemingly insignificant yet revealing change in how "lesbians" are referred to and how they refer to themselves.

When "lesbians" were discussed at all within the *ribu* community, as in popular discourse at large, the spelling was inconsistent through the first half of the 1970s. The newer pronunciation was common in translated works and writing about the US but not universal.¹²⁶ Akiyama Yōko, discussed above, who participated in the translation of both *Our Bodies*

¹²⁵ An article in a June issue of *Shūkan taishū*, for instance refers to a newly released book which itself uses the older pronunciation, Akiyama Masami, *Resubian tekunikku: onna to onna no sei seikatsu* (Tokyo: Daini Shobō, 1968), rather than Narabayashi, and unsurprisingly sticks with the "resubian" pronunciation. See *Shūkan taishū*, "Otoko no tame no resubian-gaku nyūmon," June 20, 1968.

Other examples of the "resubian" pronunciation relatively soon after the introduction of the new pronunciation in 1967 include Gotō Ben, "Joshi kōkōsei no seijutsu shita sei chishiki to taiken: furii sekkusu jidai no Nihon josei," *Shūkan taishū*, August 17, 1967; Ishii Mimi, "Jū-dai no onna no ko ni 'Saffo-zoku' ga kyūzō!: Blue Sex to iu saike na ai no kōi," *Weekly pureibōi*, March 5, 1968; and Aien, "Taiyō no shita no resubian," October 1969. Examples from the late 1970s include *Fujin kōron*, "Kaigai josei jaanaru," *Fujin kōron* 63, no. 4 (April 1978); *Feminisuto*, "Nihon no josei no media: onna no mini-media kara onnatachi e no messeiji," no. 7 (September 1978).

¹²⁶ The new pronunciation can be found in Shulamith Firestone and Anne Koedt, eds., *Onna kara onnatachi e: Amerika josei kaihō undō repōto*, trans. and commentary by Urufu no Kai (Tokyo: Gōdō Shuppan, 1971), *passim*; Boston Women's Health Book Collective (hereafter BWHBC), *Onna no karada: sei to ai no shinjitsu*, trans. Akiyama Yōko, Kuwahara Kazuyo, and Yamada Mitsuko (Tokyo: Gōdō Shuppan, 1974), 345. And the old pronunciation is used in Aki Shobō Henshūbu, ed., *Sei sabetsu e no kokuhatsu; ūmanribu wa shuchō suru* (Tokyo: Aki Shobō, 1971), 207.

Ourselves and *Notes from the Second Year* (discussed in chapter four) herself had a handful of American friends who both introduced American lib materials to her and assisted her and her fellow translators in their translation, and she does not recall when she picked up the newer pronunciation.¹²⁷ By contrast, rare passing references to “lesbians” in books focused on Japan were more likely to use the old pronunciation.¹²⁸ Articles in the commercially published *ribu* journal *Woman Eros* (*Onna erosu*), during the first several years generally used the older pronunciation in reference to Japan and the new one in reference to the US.¹²⁹ A note at the end of an article in the first issue on the American lib movement explains that the newer pronunciation is English and the older French.¹³⁰ Amano Michimi, who spent half a year living in New York and who translated the chapter “In Amerika They Call Us Dykes” from *Our Bodies Ourselves* for the journal recounts that she vacillated over how to translate “lesbian” and “dyke.”¹³¹ Her understanding of the latter term as a pejorative, gained while in the US, accorded with the existing nuance of “*rezu*,” which she used in the title of the article. For the translation of “lesbian,” she rejected “(onna no) *dōseiaisha*” [(woman) homosexual] as too serious or stiff (*katai*). And, while she associated “*resubian*” with French culture when she first heard it, the word was too strongly linked in her mind with the image of “*resubian baa*” [lesbian bars] and sex in general for it to be appropriate in an affirmative article on “lesbian” life in the US. The word “*rezubian*,” which she does not recall as being in wide use at the time, seemed in her mind to indicate women who “try to live lives in which they take their homosexuality earnestly,”

¹²⁷ Akiyama, interview, and *Ribu shishi nōto*; and Taub, interview.

¹²⁸ E.g., Tanaka, *Inochi no onnatachi e*, 311.

¹²⁹ E.g., Funamoto Emi, “Shikijōteki ni, geijutsuteki ni: han-kekkon no erosu,” *Onna erosu* no. 1 (November 1973); Yoshihiro Kiyoko, “Amerika no ribu no atarashii nami,” *Onna erosu* no. 1 (November 1973); BWHBC, “Rezu to yobarete,” pts. 1 and 2, trans. Amano Michimi, *Onna erosu* no. 2 (April 1974), no. 3 (September 1974).

¹³⁰ Yoshihiro Kiyoko, “Amerika no ribu,” 111.

¹³¹ BWHBC, “Rezu to yobarete.” This translation is discussed in chapter four.

hence her choice to use the term.¹³² While the switch from “*su*” to “*zu*” indexes a new awareness of the (American) English pronunciation, contrary to the earlier comment in *Woman Eros*, as we have seen, the original “*su*” of lesbian can be traced back not to French influence, but the initial transliteration from Latin near the beginning of the century. Within the “lesbian” community, a 1975 issue of the *mini-komi* (zine) *Wakakusa* [Young grass], produced by Wakakusa no Kai, favors the earlier pronunciation. By contrast, in the sole issue of the non-commercial magazine *Wonderful Women* (*Subarashii onnatachi*, 1976), the first overtly *rezubian feminisuto* publication in Japan, “*resubian*” is used in the table of contents while “*rezubian*” is used in most of the articles, albeit inconsistently even within individual pieces.

On the one hand, as the ease with which the producers of *Wonderful Women* seem to have switched between pronunciations demonstrates, such a minor change as this was, to many, insignificant. Indeed, most of the dozens of women and men in and outside the *rezubian* community I have spoken with about this over the past several years did not even recall until pressed that there had been another pronunciation. A few these women who identify as *rezubian* now, including some who were attracted to other women in the late 1960s and early 1970s, do recall the two pronunciations, but most do not recall it as being significant. “Fujisaki Rie,” however, remembers that when she was struggling with understanding her own attraction to women at the end of the 1960s, she wondered which word—that is, which of the two pronunciations—applied to her.¹³³

As late as the 1990s, the older pronunciation lingered in community discourse. Vocabulary lists in the first commercial *rezubian* magazine *Phryné*, for example, offer

¹³² Amano Michimi, interview with author, March 2009.

¹³³ “Fujisaki Rie,” interview with author, September 2008.

“*resubian*” as an alternative pronunciation.¹³⁴ Further, Hara “Minata” Minako chose “*resubian*” over “*rezubian*” in translations of works by activist Pat Califia and, with fellow translator Tomioka Akemi (1951–), by scholar Lillian Faderman to honor the term’s Sapphic roots—even though both books were written by Americans about women in US.¹³⁵ In her daily life, however, Hara uses “*rezubian*.” Reflecting on the distinction, Hara explains that to her—like “*S*”/“*esu*,” which, as she points out, resonates with the “*su*” of the older pronunciation—“*resubian*” seems too strongly associated with “two women together” (*onna dōshi*) and doesn’t contain the sexuality or gender difference between partners that is part of her own “*rezubian*” experience. This desire to point to a difference of gender—as opposed to biological sex—between partners makes Hara also unable to identify with the term “*dōseiai*,” which literally means “same-*sei* love,” with the word “*sei*” generally translated into English as sex but which could also be translated as “gender.”¹³⁶

While in the intervening years since the 1990s, when Hara penned her translations, and since the 1970s, when Amano penned hers, there is of course a chance that the passage of time may have distorted each of these women’s recollections of their motivations to choose “*rezubian*” over “*resubian*” and vice versa. Two points stand out, however. One is that the association with the then currently favored pronunciation in (male-dominated) public discourse—“*resubian*” for Amano, “*rezubian*” for Hara—foregrounded the sexual aspect of

¹³⁴ Hagiwara Mami, “Furiine Key Words,” *Furiine* no. 1 (June 1995): 174; *Furiine*, “Phryné Key Words,” no. 2 (November 1995): 83.

¹³⁵ Hara Minako, “Yakusha atogaki,” in Pat Califia, *Safisutorii: resubian sekushariti no tebiki*, trans. by Hara Minako (Tokyo: Taiyōsha, 1993), 226; Tomioka Akemi and Hara Minako, “Yakusha kaisetsu,” in Lillian Faderman, *Resubian no rekishi*, trans. Tomioka Akemi and Hara Minako (1991; Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1996), 392.

¹³⁶ Hara Minako, interview with author, July 2009.

“*Sei*” can index biological sex, gender, or merely the characteristics of something. The lack of word that corresponds clearly to the word “gender” has led to the introduction of the transliteration “*jendaa*.” (The transliteration “*sekkusu*” predominantly refers to sexual acts.) When “*sei*” is juxtaposed with “*jendaa*” it is best translated as “sex,” but otherwise could reference either or both, depending on the context.

“lesbian” experience. The other is that, for both of these women, the choice to use one or the other in reference to their own lives as well as the lives of other women in Japan and abroad was and is clearly related to the politics of being a “lesbian.”

This association with sex over all other aspects of “lesbian” experience is arguably a function of men’s desire to objectify women’s sexuality and the androcentricity of public discourse in Japan. That is, discourse assumes the centrality of men to the extent that, as noted above, even “*feminisuto*” was quickly transfigured in Japanese into a referent for a man who was kind to women in order that he might more easily entreat her to meet his wishes. With this in mind, it might be somewhat less surprising that even “lesbian” was reconfigured in some spheres to include (biologically) male subjects. Arguably, the subject of the term “lesbian” in much of twentieth century Japan was not women but the men who were gazing upon these real and fictive women, whether in scientific, literary, or pornographic contexts. But men were not simply voyeuristic subjects of “lesbian.” In the 1960s, in a column in *Fūzoku kitan* dedicated to male-to-female crossdressers “*Resubosu no purei*” [Lesbos play] was used suggest relations between two crossdressers.¹³⁷ Two decades later, while “*rezu purei*” [lez play] and variant terms (e.g., “*rezubian no purei*” and “*rezubian gokko*”) were used in personal ads in the crossdresser magazine *Queen* (*Kuiin*, 1980–?), starting with the first ad in the first issue.¹³⁸ Given the sexual implications of “lesbian” in Japanese discourse, it can be safely assumed that this “play” was itself at least in part erotic. Reintroducing women into the equation, if, again, primarily as objects, a 1992 article in the men’s weekly *Shūkan taishū* titillates (male) readers with the “*rezu purei*” offered at certain SM (sodomasochist) clubs, where women might, for a price, experiment

¹³⁷ E.g. *Fūzoku kitan*, “*Josō aikō heya*,” May 1961, 152.

¹³⁸ *Kuiin*, “*Josōsha kyūyū messeeji*,” no. 1 (1980): 71.

sexually with female staff, sometimes with the women's husbands watching.¹³⁹ And at least one club described in the article, the “*rezu purei*” entailed men donning women's clothes and make-up and having sex with “other” women. This androcentric gender-bending notion of “*Resubosu*” seems to have real holding power in at least limited circles. For instance, the 1997 issue of *Resubosu kurabu*, noted above, which describes itself on its cover in both Japanese and English as “*rezubian purei senmonshi*” [lesbian play specialist magazine] and “The Lesbian Play Magazine,” features a pornographic pictorial of a biological woman and a “*nyū haafu*” [literally, new half], a male-to-female transsexual. While, to be sure, the earliest of these uses of “*Resubosu no purei*” and “*rezu purei*” could arguably be interpreted as members of a marginalized group repurposing language to reflect their own desires and experiences, they are nonetheless biological males whose privileged status, even in this marginal discourse was manifest in the regular column in *Fūzoku kitan* in the 1960s and a bi-monthly glossy magazine in the 1980s, neither of which was available to “lesbians” at the time.¹⁴⁰

Kakefuda Hiroko, a *rezubian* activist prominent in the early to mid-1990s and best known for writing the first *rezubian* “coming out” book in Japanese, *On Being a “Lesbian”* (1992), has expressed ambivalent, sometimes conflicting, opinions about the use of Western concepts and terms such as “lesbian.”¹⁴¹ In her book she describes her unease and eventual embracing of the term.¹⁴² Part of this discomfort stemmed from the long association between “*rezubian*” and “*rezu*” and pornography aimed at men. While two years after she put out her book, though not

¹³⁹ *Shūkan taishū*, “*Onna ga onna o kau: otokotachi wa josō-rezu ga dai kōryū!*” February 10, 1992.

¹⁴⁰ As noted in chapter two, while there were *rezubian* newsletters in very limited circulation from the mid-1970s onward, they would not have been readily accessible to most women, who would likely have been unaware of their existence. Indeed, while there was a discourse on “lesbians” within the perverse press from the early postwar years, in addition to questions about the extent to which this discourse was written by, much less for, actual same-sex desiring women, these were not magazines which most women would likely have been comfortable perusing in bookstore or purchasing. In any case, it did not offer the same sort of dialogue available to “*homo*” and crossdressers in this sphere.

¹⁴¹ Kakefuda, “*Rezubian de aru to iu koto*.”

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 214–38.

denying the “*rezubian*” identities of herself or other Japanese lesbians, she comes to question the applicability of imported concepts such as “lesbian” and “heterosexual,” given that they come from the West, which is “completely different” from Japan.¹⁴³ Other women working with Kakefuda made their own efforts to reclaim the word “*rezubian*,” not simply by using it affirmatively, but by changing the abbreviation from “*rezu*” to “*bian*,” which is homophonous with the Japanese transliteration of the French “*bien*” [good] and which allowed them to “put the *bian* back into lezu [*sic*] !”¹⁴⁴

Today “*rezubian*” is the primary term used in the public sphere, including the mass media, to refer to female “homosexuals.” The sense of connection felt by women in Japan with women abroad from the earliest days of the *ribu* movement has meant that, while the history of “lesbian” in English in other languages and “*rezubian*” are not the same, the general sense in the community today is that, even if there are cultural differences, “*rezubian*” and “lesbian”—as well as “Lesben,” “lesbienne,” and other linguistic variants—are effectively the same word. That said, while “lesbian” in the US, for instance, has its own complex history in which men have often been the subjects—not infrequently of a pornographic gaze—it is not the same history. Thus, the discomfort that some women in Japan have continued to feel with “*rezubian*,” as well as the sense of solidarity and pride stemming from participation in the *rezubian* community, come from women’s relationships with Japanese cultural representations of female desire and with other women in Japan, as well as women’s own (in)ability to, as Brossard remarks, “reinvent the word” in their own context.¹⁴⁵ Ultimately, then, in spite of a sense of equivalence between the foreign and transfigured terms, while “radio” and “*rajio*” can be said to point to the

¹⁴³ Kakefuda Hiroko, “Rezubian wa mainoriti ka?” *Joseigaku nenpō* 15 (1994): 32.

¹⁴⁴ Izumo Marou and Claire Maree, *Love Upon the Chopping Board* (North Melbourne, Australia: Spinifex, 2000), 108.

¹⁴⁵ Brossard, *The Arial Letter*, 122. On the discomfort that some women in Japan have continued to feel with “*rezubian*,” see Sharon Chalmers, *Emerging Lesbian Voices from Japan* (Richmond, U.K.: Curzon, 2002), 39.

same object, “lesbian” and “*rezubian*” do not necessarily point to the same subject.

***Shōnen ai*: Love of Boys from Pederasty to Pedophilia and Beyond**

One of the difficulties of writing about *shōjo* manga in English is mapping the multiple and significantly distinct types of comic narratives created by and for women and adolescent girls depicting male-male romance and, at times, graphic sex. The long existence of prose, animated, and, more recently, game and related merchandise manifestations of this cultural-textual phenomenon further complicates matters. While these various texts have attracted enough academic and popular attention in recent years that their very existence is not necessarily surprising to those familiar with Japanese popular culture or its increasingly global presence, the business of actually naming the genre(s), in English or in Japanese, is a tricky one. And as we shall see, the actual business of publishing has played a significant role in the naming and renaming of this genre, broadly defined. In their own choice to create, consume, and discuss these various texts, however, artists and readers/consumers, have the ultimate say in a sphere of textual and image consumption that has for decades straddled commercial and non-commercial domains.

The earliest generic name with substantial holding power was “*shōnen ai*,” [boys love]—a term which represents a significant claim by women of discursive and erotic subjecthood and a dramatic transfiguration of the very idea of the (homo)eroticized youth, theretofore almost exclusively the domain of adult male subjects. These works have had a number of other names by which these works have been classified, most recently “*bōizu rabu*” [boys love] or “BL” (pronounced *bii eru*), and “*yaoi*,” to which I will return later in this section. As some fans and artists use these various terms to delineate specific subgenres with different

origins and intended audiences, which I will also discuss at greater length below, translating “*shōnen ai*” as “boys love” runs the risk of conflating genres (or subgenres, depending on how one chooses to categorize them) that are historically and narratively different. Moreover, while there is a clear link between the histories of these terms, it is one which might seem counterintuitive for a number of reasons. First, the “transliterated” term “*bōizu rabu*” preceded its English “original”—although the words “BOY’S LOVE [*sic*]” may have appeared in print prior to their transliteration into the *katakana* script. Further, while discourse flows on sex and sexuality between Japan and the West have resulted in a number of calques and transliterated terms in Japanese stemming from European languages, such as “*dōseiai*” [homosexuality] and “*rezubian*,” the generic label “boys love” in English is, in effect, a calque of “*shōnen ai*.” Clearly, it is not only electronics and pop culture that are flowing out of Japan but novel ways of envisioning and naming eros. Finally, a historically sensitive discussion will use “*shōnen ai*” to designate the earliest commercially published texts which generally depicted adolescent European boys, and the not quite loan word “*bōizu rabu*” to name their post-1990 counterparts, though these texts quite frequently feature Japanese settings. As the etymology of these terms demonstrates, however, even the early *shōnen ai* manga narratives set in France, Germany, the United States, and other Western locales remained discursively tinged with the echoes of historic Japanese erotic customs—albeit, like “lesbian,” heavily mediated by European and American sexological and literary discourse.

* * *

The practice of adult males erotically objectifying and having sexual relations with male youths in pre- and early modern Japan was institutionalized on a par with the Greek tradition of pederasty—a point long noted or implied in numerous modern historiographical and sexological

writing on Edo era sexual customs.¹⁴⁶ The terms *wakashudō* and, more frequently, its shortened form, *shudō* [way of the (male) youth] have carried on into the contemporary era as the most common referents, after *nanshoku* [male eros], for male homoerotic practices in Japan occurring prior to the modern era. While in the title of his explication of pre- and early modern poetry, Kita Tadashi ascribes the words “*shōnen ai*” to ninth to seventeenth century verse written by adult men about beautiful “*shōnen*” [youths] or “*chigo*” [young male temple acolytes], he seems to be using a modern understanding of this term.¹⁴⁷ To be sure, as explained in the comprehensive dictionary *Nihon kokugo dai jiten*, during the Edo era (and likely before this) “*shōnen*” sometimes indicated the younger, passive partner in male-male erotic relations.¹⁴⁸ While this has never been the primary meaning of “*shōnen*,” the form “*bishōnen*” [beautiful youth], prefixed with the character “*bi*” [beautiful], renders all the more salient the youth’s positioning as the potential object of aesthetic admiration or erotic desire.¹⁴⁹ Given that well into the modern era public discourse on the erotic has been almost exclusively male domain, until even recent decades this desire for beautiful boys has presumed an adult male subject.

A notable example of how the polyvalence of “*shōnen*” has carried on into the modern era can be found in *Vita Sexualis (Wita sekushuarisu)*, a somewhat scandalous 1909 novel about a youth’s sexual awakening—or, more accurately, relative lack thereof—by writer, translator,

¹⁴⁶ E.g., Kita Tadashi, *Shōnen ai no renga haikai shi: Sugawara Michizane kara Matsuo Bashō made* (Tokyo: Chūsekisha, 1997), 55–56; *Sei fūzoku*, 3 vols. (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 1959), vol. 3, 318–20; Satō, *Sekai seiyokugaku jiten*, 235–37. Ancient Greek pederasty is by no means the only example with which Japanese *shudō* and *nanshoku* have been compared in such writing, but it is the most common. Given the prevalence of references to ancient Greece for antecedent examples of male-male and female-female eroticism in European sexological texts, it is unsurprising that this correlation would be noted by Japanese scholars and cultural critics.

¹⁴⁷ Kita Tadashi, *Shōnen ai no renga haikai shi*. Matsuda Osamu (1988) goes a step further, placing this same pre- and early modern history as well as the writing of Mishima Yukio and Shibusawa Tatsuhiko under the rubric of *shōnen ai*. See Matsuda Osamu, *Hana moji no shisō: Nihon ni okeru shōnen ai no seishinshi* (Tokyo: Peyotoru Kōbō, 1988).

¹⁴⁸ See *Nihon kokugo dai jiten*, 2nd ed., s.v., “*shōnen*.”

¹⁴⁹ Pflugfelder describes this beautiful boy as assuming the position of object of the erotic (male) gaze occupied in the Edo era by the *wakashu*, or the youth who was the passive partner in a *nanshoku* relationship. See Pflugfelder, *Cartographies of Desire*, 225.

and physician Mori Ōgai.¹⁵⁰ Ōgai uses “*shōnen*” dozens of times, and occasionally “*bishōnen*,” but only in limited instances is male homoeroticism being directly referred to or implied. While, from his introduction to the concept at age eleven, the narrator makes occasional reference to male-male sexual relations among “*kōha*” [roughnecks], and their attempts to seduce, if not rape, *bishōnen*, he describes these practices as “*nanshoku*” or “Urning” (in German, untranscribed into Japanese), not “*shōnen ai*.”¹⁵¹

While I can offer no evidence that the expression “*shōnen ai*” was never used prior to the modern era, the “*ai*” [love] part of the equation has shifted enough in meaning during Japan’s early and rapid modernization in the Meiji era (1868–1912) that—even as “*shōnen ai*” draws on this Edo history for some of its historico-erotic cachet—such a term would not have had the same valence to Ōgai and his readers as it might have had a century prior.¹⁵² As Takayuki Yokota-Murakami observes, the contemporary meaning of “*ai*” came to approximate the English word “love” in Meiji Japan through a problem of translation: namely, the lack in Japanese of a referent for a relationship of friendship and mutual respect between opposite-sex partners found

¹⁵⁰ Mori Ōgai, “Wita sekushuarisu,” in *Mori Ōgai zenshū* vol. 1 (1909; Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1995).

¹⁵¹ Ōgai, “Wita sekushuarisu,” 240. “Urning” is a term coined by early campaigner for the rights of those attracted to members of the same sex, Karl Heinrich Ulrichs. It can be found with relative frequency in Japanese language sexological discourse from early in the twentieth century through the 1950s.

See chapter seven in Reichert, *In the Company of Men*, for an in-depth discussion of this work in the context of changing valences in the Meiji era (1868–1912) of the “historical trope of *nanshoku*” (ibid., 2). I would note that one disappointment I have with Reichert’s impressive mapping of the shifting valence of *nanshoku* throughout this period is his lack of attention to a perhaps seemingly insignificant shift in pronunciation from “*nanshoku*” to “*danshoku*,” which, as my discussion of the shift from “*resubian*” to “*rezubian*” attests, can index significant shifts in cultural understandings of a topic. See my discussion of this text in James Welker, review of Jim Reichert, *In the Company of Men: Representations of Male-Male Sexuality in Meiji Literature*, *Ronsō kuia* 1 (2008): 241. Pflugfelder proposes that this shift is “a reflection not only of broader phonetic and orthographic changes but also of the growing obsolescence of Edo-period erotic culture,” a suggestion which in and of itself is quite relevant to Reichert’s thesis. See Pflugfelder, *Cartographies of Desire*, 184 n114. The version of *Wita sekushuarisu* I consulted does not indicate (via superscript) the pronunciation of the characters for *nanshoku/danshoku* (Mori, “Wita sekushuarisu” 240), making it difficult to ascertain which pronunciation the author had in mind as he wrote.

¹⁵² An absence is, of course, more difficult to prove than a presence. Nonetheless, if we rely on the admirably rich and extensive study of the discourse on male-male eroticism from 1600–1950, in Pflugfelder, *Cartographies of Desire*, it should be safe to assume that prior to the 1920s, “*shōnen ai*” had little to no currency. Note also the term’s absence from the list of *nanshoku*-related slang covering the Edo through Taisho eras in Hiratsuka Ryōsen, *Nihon ni okeru nanshoku no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Ningen no Kagaku Sha, 1983), 32–35.

in the Western literatures with which Japanese intellectuals were coming into contact and attempting to render in Japanese. The transfiguration of “love” into modernizing Japanese gave rise to a reconceptualized “*ai*” through which “[a] friend and a (heterosexual) lover came to stand in a paradigmatic relationship with each other in the Japanese language system for the first time in history.”¹⁵³ “Dismantling . . . contempt for women,” Saeki Junko remarks, “was a primary goal of those who propounded *ai*” to name this new sense of “love.”¹⁵⁴ Beginning in the late nineteenth century, the lack of a corresponding term led some translators and writers to use transliterations of the English word. Yet—echoing *ribu* activist Miki’s explanation, above, of the appeal to her of “*ūman ribu*” over existing native terms—the meaning, like the spelling, of this new signifier was unclear and unstable, if not empty, “denot[ing] hardly anything, having, instead, a good deal of connotations.”¹⁵⁵ I should point out here that while both Yokota-Murakami and Saeki make note of multiple transliterations of “love”—e.g., “*rabu*,” “*raabu*,” and “*rabbu*”—neither mentions the use of “*ravu*,” which also had a degree of currency by the early decades of the twentieth century, finding its way, for instance, into the term “*resubian ravu*,” discussed above, by the 1920s.¹⁵⁶ Whether the shifting between “*rabu*” and “*ravu*” was simply orthographic experimentation or indexes a more significant discursive shift—as does the shift from “*resubian*” to “*rezubian*”—remains to be investigated. Nonetheless, what both scholars make clear is that the result is a modern understanding of “*ai*” premised in

¹⁵³ Takayuki Yokota-Murakami, *Don Juan East/West: On the Problematics of Comparative Literature* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 37.

¹⁵⁴ Saeki Junko, “From *Iro* (Eros) to *Ai=Love*: The Case of Tsubouchi Shōyō,” trans. Indra Levy, *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 20 (2008): 79.

¹⁵⁵ Yokota-Murakami, *Don Juan East/West*, 42–43.

¹⁵⁶ In the original Japanese, Saeki does indicate in a footnote that Shōyō used “*rabu*” rather than “*ravu*,” which, she erroneously states, is used today. See Saeki Junko, “*Iro*” to “*ai*” *no hikaku bunka shi* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1998), 352 n2. The footnote, which was eliminated in Indra Levy’s translation (Saeki, Saeki Junko, “From *Iro* (Eros) to *Ai=Love*), is problematic for several reasons. Not the least of these is that, while both pronunciations/spellings are possible today, it is “*rabu*” which is prevalent, found, for instance, in the term “*bōizu rabu*” discussed below. Moreover, the predominance of “*ravu*” in dictionaries of the 1920s and 1930s suggests that early on this was the pronunciation preferred by intellectuals.

principle on an affective equality of the sexes. The question that remains, however, is the extent to which it is this “*ai*” which finds its way into the term “*shōnen ai*” as used in the twentieth century. When paired with “*shōnen*,” “*ai*” clearly remains tinged with the asymmetrical Edo era eroticism that modern intellectuals sought to attenuate. Yet it simultaneously seems to connote a certain avuncular affection and a sense of responsibility on the part of the man for the youth. And while it is composed of Sino-Japanese roots, “*shōnen ai*”—the various modern understandings of which date back to the early decades of the twentieth century—is a transnational term.

Unlike “lesbian,” which first entered Japanese at a specific moment in time, almost certainly as a transliterated term within a translation, and unlike “*ūman ribu*,” whose coinage can with some certainty be linked to a specific journalist and a specific newspaper article, the “original” usage of “*shōnen ai*” seems impossible to pinpoint definitively, but its initial modern use may date to as late as the 1920s. During this period multiple combinations of “*shōnen*” and “*ai*” were used to name adult male desire and affection for adolescent males, but there is no evidence suggesting that “*shōnen ai*” was ever the primary term during the prewar and wartime eras. At the beginning of the 1920s, Sawada Junjirō offers a book-length explication of *Mysterious Homosexuality*, one which draws heavily on Western sexology and history.¹⁵⁷ In a section that sets out to define the terms “*sodomii*” (Sodomy), which he ascribes as religious, and “*pederasuchii* (Pederasty),” which he ascribes as literary, Sawada explains that “*pederasuchii*” comes from the Greek, and means “*shōnen no ai*” [love of/for youths], using the genitive particle “*no*” to link “boy” and “love.”¹⁵⁸ In a chapter on the meaning of “homosexuality” (*dōseiai*) in a 1931 book on the topic, Morita Yūshū combines “*shōnen*” and “*ai*” with the object marker “*o*” and the auxiliary verb *suru* [do]: “*shōnen o ai suru*,” a phrasing which literally means “to love a

¹⁵⁷ Sawada Junjirō, *Shinpi naru dōseiai*.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 119–20.

boy.”¹⁵⁹

Several years prior, however, in a heavily German-influenced article on ancient Greek practices in the journal *Hentai shinri* [Perverse psychology] (1917–1926) Tanaka Kōgai (pseud. Tanaka Yūkichi) offers a typology of “homosexualities” which pairs “*onowarabe ai*” [lit., male child love] with “*Knabenliebe*” [boy love] and “*shōnen ai*” with “*Fünlingsliebe* [*sic*]” (*Jünlingsliebe* [lit., adolescent love]).¹⁶⁰ While “*onowarabe ai*” does not appear in other pre- (or post-) war texts that I have consulted and may be Tanaka’s own coinage, “*shōnen ai*” is a reasonable collocation which nominalizes other phrasal combinations of “*shōnen*” and “*ai*” into a concept. Just a few years after Tanaka’s article, however, the entries in Satō Kōka’s polyglottal sexual lexicons for “Päderastie” (earlier transliterated as *pederasuchii*, later *pederasuti*) define it as “*keikan*” [anal intercourse]—a Sino-Japanese term associated with its brief prohibition in the 1870s and 1880s—and as *nanshoku*.¹⁶¹ Satō indicates that “pederasty” derives from Greek roots meaning “*jidō*” [juvenile] and “*ren’ai*” [love], but that it has come to mean “*sodomii* (Sodomie),” the Biblical origin and sinfulness of which he does not fail to note.¹⁶² His 1929 encyclopedic lexicon has a separate entry for “*pedofiria erotika* (Paedophilia erotica),” but this is defined as “*shikijōsei shōni shikō*” [erotic taste for small children], rather than Tanaka’s “*onowarabe ai*”¹⁶³; and in neither of these dictionaries does he use “*shōnen ai*” in his discussion of ancient Greek

¹⁵⁹ Morita Yūshū, *Dōseiai no kenkyū* (Chiba: Jinsei Sōzō Sha, 1931), 8, reprinted in Furukawa and Akaeda, vol. 2.

¹⁶⁰ Tanaka Kōgai, “Dōseiai no bunrui to kasei isesai,” *Hentai shinri* 16, no. 5 (November 1925): 98.

¹⁶¹ Satō, “Seiyokugaku goi,” pt. 2, 30, and *Sekai seiyokugaku jiten*, 235. In the earlier entry, “*pederasuchii*” is defined as “*keikan*,” in turn explained as “*nanshoku* (Urning),” or the use of a male’s (*danshi*) anus as a substitute for a female’s (*joshi*) vagina (Satō “Seiyokugaku goi,” pt. 2, 30). *Keikan* was prohibited for nearly beginning in 1873. For a discussion of this legal change, see Pflugfelder, *Cartographies of Desire*, 158–68, and for a history of “*keikan*” placing its origins within this Meiji-era Japan discourse of prohibition, see Inoue Shōichi and Kansai Seiyoku Kenkyūkai, *Sei yōgoshū* (Tokyo: Kodansha Gendai Shinsho, 2004), 344–49.

¹⁶² See Satō, “Seiyokugaku goi,” pt. 2, 30, and *Sekai seiyokugaku jiten*, 235.

¹⁶³ Satō, *Sekai seiyokugaku jiten*, 237.

pederasty or Japanese *nanshoku* customs.¹⁶⁴ A few years later, “*shōnen ai*” is used in a book offering *A History of Human Sex Lives* in a section of the chapter on “homosexuality” (*dōseiai*) discussing same-sex relations between teacher and pupil in ancient Greece and Iberia.¹⁶⁵ This time the word stands alone. It is not glossed with or used as a gloss for any loan word, with its meaning either assumed known by readers or easy enough to surmise from both the characters and context in which it was written.

Prolific writer Inagaki Taruho, whose own use of “*shōnen ai*” would lead to its reinvention as a label for the genre of male homoerotic manga narratives first penned by and for women in the 1970s, employed the term as early as 1930, in an essay originally published in *Grotesque* (*Gurotesuku*, 1928–1930), the namesake journal of the interwar erotic grotesque nonsense boom, mentioned above.¹⁶⁶ In this article, as in many of his later musings that sought to develop a modern homoerotic aesthetics of beautiful boys, Taruho draws extensively on Japanese and European history and literature as well as philosophical and sexological texts, including the writing of Krafft-Ebing and early “homosexual” rights advocate Edward Carpenter, with the result being a hybrid aesthetics of boy loving that is heavily intertextual, transhistorical, and transnational, like the *shōnen ai* manga created by female artists forty years later.¹⁶⁷ If Taruho’s attempt to develop a modern aesthetics of the adolescent male was unique and

¹⁶⁴ While the 1927 entry is largely focused on Japanese *nanshoku* customs, it is followed for some reason by a list of terms used in “English erotic books,” such as “Sodomies [*sic*]... Catamites... Bum-Fuckers... Pederasts... [and] Sod [*sic*],” all transliterated into the *katakana* script with the original English provided parenthetically. See Satō, “Seiyokugaku goi,” pt. 2, 34. Conversely, at the end of his entry for “*ūruningu* (Urning),” which he explains in largely in non-culture specific terms as “*danshi dōsei shikijō*” [male same-sex sexual desire] (*ibid.*, 91), he provides a list of terms used to name “*ūruningu*” in China, Japan, and Korea, yet here the list names not male same-sex desire but the objects thereof. While he does include “*mei shao nian*” [*bishōnen*, beautiful youth] in the Chinese list of *ūruningu* (*ibid.*, 92), nowhere in either definition does he use “*shōnen ai*.”

¹⁶⁵ Tomooka Nobusuke, *Jinrui sei seikatsu shi* (Kyoto: Jinbun Shoin, 1932), 160

¹⁶⁶ Inagaki Taruho, “Shōnen tokuhon,” *Gurotesuku* 3, no. 1 (January 1930): 248. I thank Jeffrey Angles for obtaining a copy of this article for me.

¹⁶⁷ For a lengthier discussion of Taruho’s aesthetics in his early fiction, see Jeffrey Angles, *Writing the Love of Boys: Desire between Men in Early Twentieth-Century Japanese Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, forthcoming); see also Pflugfelder, *Cartographies of Desire*, 305–7.

impressively erudite, it must be noted that the intertextual nature of his approach was not significantly distinct from contemporary sexological writing on “homosexuality.” And while he neither coined the term “*shōnen ai*” nor is he responsible for its association with the tradition of *nanshoku*, it is Taruho’s writing, more than anything else, that imbued its eroticized object with the characteristics of, at once, a prewar European schoolboy in uniform and of a beautiful Edo era *wakashu* [youth] with unshaven forelocks—thus folding *Knabenliebe* and *shudō* [the way of the youth] into one another. The apex of this imagery is inscribed in his *Aesthetics of Boy Loving* (*Shōnen ai no bigaku*, 1968), which included revised versions of his earlier writing, including that 1930 article. Evidencing the lack of a serious taboo about the topic, the volume was awarded the prestigious Grand Prize for Japanese Literature (Nihon Bungaku Taishō).¹⁶⁸ That the title on the cover box and cover of the original work was written in German “*Ästhetik der Knabenliebe*” rather than Japanese, which was used just on the “*obi*”—the promotional sash—only reinforces the transnational nature of Taruho’s *shōnen ai* aesthetic and the rough semantic equivalence between *shōnen ai* and *Knabenliebe*.

While it would take until well into the postwar era before this term approached anything close to household word status, Taruho’s “*shōnen ai*” was occasionally used in popular, if not mainstream, discourse. For instance, in a 1954 article on five types of “*sodomii*,” prolific perverse press writer on “homosexuality,” Kabiya Kazuhiko, glosses “*seiteki shōni aikōkyō*” [lit., sexual infant/child love mania] in English as “erotic pedophilia,” but, when discussing literary representation thereof, brings up the “*shōnen ai*” in Taruho’s works.¹⁶⁹ While the word is then absent from Kabiya’s discussion of Taruho in the “*homo sekushuaru*” literature chapter of his

¹⁶⁸ Inagaki Taruho, *Shōnen ai no bigaku* (Tokyo: Tokuma Shoten, 1968). On the use of the title of Taruho’s book in the naming of the *shōjo* manga genre of *shōnen ai*, see Ishida Minori, *Hisoyaka na kyōiku: “yaoi/bōizu rabu” zenshi* (Tokyo: Rakuhoku Shuppan, 2008), 88, 89 n65. This connection is discussed in greater detail in chapter four.

¹⁶⁹ Kabiya Kazuhiko, “Sodomii itsutsu no koikei,” *Fūzoku kagaku*, January 1954, 43.

Heretics of the Night (1958), Kabiya uses it again in the title of a 1960 article on “pederasts”: “People who are *shōnen ai*,” in which he writes “*kunaaben riibe*” [*Knabenliebe*] in superscript over “*shōnen ai*.”¹⁷⁰ These two terms are again linked in a 1962 section of the regular “*Homo window*” column in *Fūzoku kitan*.¹⁷¹ While “*shōnen ai*” is absent from the “*homo*” vocabulary list in the 1968 book *The World of Homosexuality*, which uses “*kunaaben riibe*” as the definition for the slang term “*shōnika*” [pediatrician], it can be found in another book published that same year on the *Homo Techniques*, in a chapter on “ancient Greek ideals of beauty and *shōnen ai*.”¹⁷² But it is not to be found in a discussion of how to seduce adolescents in *An Introduction to Homology*, a 1972 book by *homo/gei* rights activist Minami Teishirō (1931–).¹⁷³ Clearly, while it was soon to become an established term within several limited discourse spheres, “*shōnen ai*” had not even by the early 1970s become the standard term to name either pederasty or pedophilia.

Over the course of the 1970s, however, “*shōnen ai*” would gain currency as a label for adult male desire for adolescents in this rapidly expanding commercial *homo* publication sphere, which in 1971 saw its first commercial magazine *Barazoku* [Rose tribe], put out by Dai Ni Shobō, the publisher of *Homo Techniques* and *An Introduction to Homology*. *Barazoku* made no effort in the early years to restrict expression of “*shōnen ai*” desire for even prepubescent boys. Perhaps this was a function of the lingering memory of the *nanshoku* tradition modernized in the writing of Taruho among others—who were discussed on occasion in both reader-contributed and editorial content¹⁷⁴—as well as a relative lack of legal prohibition at the time. While Itō

¹⁷⁰ Kabiya Kazuhiko, *Yoru no itansha* (Tokyo: Nanōsha, 1958), and “Shōnen ai (kunaaben riibe) no hitobito,” *Fūzoku kitan* (November 1960).

¹⁷¹ *Fūzoku kitan*, “Homo no mado,” October 1962, 100.

¹⁷² Hirano Toshizō, *Dōseiai no sekai* (Tokyo: Shinpū Shuppansha, 1968), 252; Akiyama Masami, *Homo tekunikku: otoko to otoko no sei seikatsu* (Tokyo: Daini Shobō, 1968), 24–26.

¹⁷³ Minami Teishirō, *Homorojii nyūmon* (Tokyo: Dai Ni Shobō, 1972) 72–78.

¹⁷⁴ E.g., Takeda Hajime, “Taruho no shōmetsu no hi ni,” *Barazoku* no. 60 (January 1978).

Bungaku, the magazine's chief editor, would not directly facilitate through the magazine's personal ad section and, later, the "*Shōnen no heya*" [Boys' room] column correspondence between those over and under 18 years of age, he has repeatedly expressed support for adult men who are sexually attracted to youths, seeing it as just another kind of desire.¹⁷⁵ In the personal ads in *Barazoku* as well as *Sabu* (1974–2002), while "*shōnen ai*" was used by adult males to indicate their desire for—and to appeal to—adolescents, this was alternated with other terms in popular use, "*yangu*" [young] and "*hai tiin*" [high teen], used to name the advertiser or the object of his interest. Terms marking age-based hierarchical roles, including *onii-san* and *aniki* [both, older brother] and *otōto* [younger brother] could also, in effect, be used to name this desire, depending on the age of the "younger brother."

* * *

Men, however, were not the only ones homoerotically objectifying *bishōnen* [beautiful boys] in the 1970s. As noted in chapter two, female artists who were taking over the production of *shōjo* manga began to incorporate homoerotic romances between beautiful boys into their works beginning in late 1970. The new genre of which Takemiya's *In the Sunroom* represented the initial salvo was to be called "*shōnen ai* manga."¹⁷⁶ This appellation would predominate for most of the 1970s, competing with the term "*bishōnen* manga" until the 1978 debut of the magazine *June*, the title of which would itself be used as a label for the genre in the form "*June mono*," that is, "*June* things." While "*bishōnen*" merely denotes a beautiful youth, as observed above, it is a term linked closely to *shōnen ai* manga imagery and drawing on the same history of the homoerotic objectification of male youths. What makes this usage of both terms quite remarkable is that women are the subjects of the repurposing of male terms and that males

¹⁷⁵ Itō Bungaku, interview with author, June 2005.

¹⁷⁶ Takemiya Keiko, "Sanrūmu nite," in her *Sanrūmu nite* (1970; Tokyo: San Komikkusu, 1976).

remained the objects.

Inspired by the relationships among schoolboys depicted in some of Herman Hesse's novels and the writing of Taruho, Masuyama Norie took upon herself the role of muse and encouraged Takemiya and Hagio Moto to give life to her ideas.¹⁷⁷ Taruho's concept of *shōnen ai*, elaborated in his *Aesthetics of Boy Loving*, which Takemiya had just read when she conceived of *The Song of the Wind and the Trees*, was almost certainly borrowed directly as the name of the new genre.¹⁷⁸ The ambiguity of the term *shōnen ai* served the new genre well, as it can simultaneously indicate the boys as the subject (*shōnen ga ai suru*) or object (*shōnen o ai suru*) of affection.¹⁷⁹ Masuyama recalls that, in fact, they first used the term “*kunaaben riibe*,” suggesting a degree of carryover of the literary-sexological discourse of the perverse press, one that perhaps comes—like the label for, as well as some of the aesthetic sense evident in the new genre—via Taruho.¹⁸⁰

While Masuyama and *shōnen ai* artists claim to have conceived of *shōnen ai* in *shōjo* manga as well as Taruho's writing as quite distinct from the “homosexuality” depicted in the works of authors such as Mishima Yukio (1925–1970) and Shibusawa Tatsuhiko (1928–1987),¹⁸¹ these intentions on the part of the new genre's progenitors did not forestall interest among some *shōjo* manga readers in the *homo* sphere, nor the conflation of the fictive *shōnen ai* of *shōjo* manga and of Taruho with both the “homosexuality” and *shōnen ai* (*qua* pederasty/pedophilia) in magazines like *Barazoku*. Letters from adolescent female readers printed in the pages of *Barazoku* and other *homo* magazines in the 1970s and 1980s make that

¹⁷⁷ This is discussed in greater depth in chapter four.

¹⁷⁸ Ishida, *Hisoyaka na kyōiku*, 88. Takemiya Keiko, *Kaze to ki no uta*, 10 vols. (1976–1984; Tokyo: Hakusensha Bunko, 1995).

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 85.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 85–92, 296. As the primary term used within Taruho's *Shōnen ai no bigaku* was “*shōnen ai*” itself, perhaps “*kunaaben riibe*” was borrowed from the cover.

¹⁸¹ Masuyama Norie, quoted in Ishida, *Hisoyaka na kyōiku*, 99–100; cf. Matsuda, *Hana moji no shisō*.

quite clear. The large number of letters from female readers of *Barazoku*, in fact, led to the creation of column for them in November 1976.¹⁸² While some of these letter writers suggest they were devoted readers of the magazine, I have personally encountered only one woman who described herself as a regular reader of *Barazoku*—a then university student-aged *rezubian* who bought the magazine frequently in the mid-1980s for the handful of personal ads from other *rezubian*.¹⁸³ Many of the several dozen women I interviewed who were avid readers of *shōnen ai* manga during this period, however, did tell me that they had perused at least a copy or two, sometimes as it was passed around at middle or high school. However limited in number these female *Barazoku* readers were, they shared their opinions not only in the pages of *homo* magazines but also in *June* and two other magazines connected with *shōnen ai* manga and female erotic consumption of beautiful boys, *Allan (Aran)*, and *Gekkō* [Moonlight/Luna]. Editorial content in these magazines also sometimes explicitly made such linkages and drew readers' attention to "gay" cultures in Japan and abroad.¹⁸⁴ Moreover, artists such as Kimura Ben (1947–2003) and Naito Rune (1932–2007) drew illustrations of beautiful youths for both magazine genres, and *June* itself was published by San Shuppan, the same publisher that produced *Sabu*. Both this kind of editorial content and reader submissions helped spread the vocabulary and symbolism as well as cultural information from the *homo* sphere among the broader *shōnen ai* manga fandom, perhaps helping them decode or re-encode the symbolism found in *shōnen ai* manga texts.¹⁸⁵

Some female readers of *Barazoku* indicated in letters published in the magazine that they

¹⁸² James Welker, "Flower Tribes and Female Desire: Complicating Early Female Consumption of Male Homosexuality in *Shōjo* Manga," *Mechademia* 6 (forthcoming).

¹⁸³ "Sano Rie," interview with author, March 2009.

¹⁸⁴ See, e.g., Kitazumi Izumi, "Homo-shi 'go-sanke' o kanzen dokuha," *Aran*, February 1983; "Shinjuku ni-chōme," August 1983; Kakinuma Eiko, "Senmonshi de shiru igai na chomeijin, jinsei sōdan, kojīn kōkoku, gei-do chekku," *June* no. 39 (March 1988).

¹⁸⁵ See James Welker, "Beautiful, Borrowed, and Bent: Boys' Love as Girls' Love in *Shōjo* Manga," *Signs* 31, no. 3 (2006).

started reading it after first becoming fans of *shōnen ai* manga. Such readers occasionally explained that they learned about “*homo*” from this manga, often noting directly or by implication that reading these works gave them a special sympathy for and/or interest in *homo* men. “Sylvie,” for instance, who incidentally “want[ed] to marry a *homo*,” wrote manga and “homosexual novels” about boys which she hoped to publish in *Barazoku*.¹⁸⁶ She also recommended to male readers a handful of *shōnen ai* manga titles, including Takemiya’s *The Song of the Wind and the Trees* (1976–1984) and Hagio Moto’s *The Heart of Thomas* (1974), as well as films such as *Death in Venice* (1971).¹⁸⁷ In addressing the magazine’s readers with “*shōnen ai no mina-san*” [dear boy lovers] but clearly indicating *homo* men, Sylvie conflates the *homo* of *Barazoku* and the beautiful boys of *shōnen ai* manga, as well as pedophiles, for whom the term *shōnen ai* had (and has) a different meaning.¹⁸⁸

The “*shōnen ai*” label as used in the *shōjo* manga sphere was to eventually find its way into the popular press, both in the pages of magazines partially or entirely devoted to the representation of *shōnen ai* for female consumption such as those noted above and in occasional articles about the genre in high- and lowbrow periodicals, sometimes compiled into books.¹⁸⁹ Based on my perusal of hundreds of magazines from the 1950s to the 1990s aimed a wide variety of readerships on women’s issues and on “homosexuality” as well as database searches of major

¹⁸⁶ *Barazoku*, “Homo no hito to kekkon shitai,” No. 46 (November 1976).

¹⁸⁷ Hagio Moto, *Tōma no shinzō* (1974; Tokyo: Shōgakusan Bunko, 1995); Takemiya, *Kaze to ki no uta; Death in Venice*, directed by Luchino Visconti (Italy: Alfa Cinematografica, 1971).

¹⁸⁸ *Barazoku*, “Homo no hito to kekkon shitai.” A more extensive discussion of the female readership of *Barazoku* can be found in Welker, “Flower Tribes.”

¹⁸⁹ For a discussion in English of magazines aimed at female fans of *shōnen ai* manga, see James Welker, “Lilies of the Margin: Beautiful Boys and Queer Female Identities in Japan,” in *AsiaPacifiQueer*, ed. Fran Martin, et al. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008). Examples from low- and highbrow publications include *Weekly pureibōi*, “Shōjo manga dai kenkyū de jitōtto ‘nurie-chikku’ kōsaihō’ oseemasu,” September 9, 1986; Nakano Osamu, “Shōjo manga no kōzō bunseki,” *Yuriika* 13, no. 9 (July 1981); and Nakajima Azusa [Kurimoto Kaoru], “Onna no ko o miryō suru shōnen dōshi no ai,” *Fujin kōron* 63, no. 7 (July 1978). Compilations of such essays can be found in, e.g., Fujimoto Yukari, *Watashi no ibasho wa doko ni aru no? Shōjo manga ga utsusu kokoro no katachi* (Tokyo: Gakuyō Shobō, 1998); and Nakajima Azusa [Kurimoto Kaoru], *Bishōnengaku nyūmon*, rev. ed. (1984; Tokyo: Chikuma Bunko, 1998).

newspapers, however, I do not believe the term “*shōnen ai*” was in wide use in print as a label either for gender-bending manga or for male-male pederastic (or pedophilic) desire outside these specific discourse spheres. When used in the context of a discussion of either these *shōjo* manga or adult male erotic appreciation of beautiful youth, I would suggest that even for those not familiar with the manga genre or Taruho’s writing, the historic association of *shōnen*, particularly *bishōnen*, with male homoeroticism would render the term’s meaning easy to infer. The term’s sole appearance in the 1960s and 1970s newspaper articles that I was able to find was, in fact, in reference to Taruho’s book. While some fans of the *shōnen ai* genre in the 1970s and 1980s with whom I have spoken still use the term, either of their own volition or at my prompting, it is the pederastic meaning that has lingered in the present day, evident, for instance, in its use to name the subject of a book on contemporary pederasty and pedophilia, *Boy Lovers: Searching for Their Reality, Concealed by Myth and Taboo*, and, more prominently, in a lengthy Japanese Wikipedia entry, only a small section of which describes *shōnen ai* in the context of *shōjo* manga.¹⁹⁰

Similar to “*ūman ribu*,” while the term’s users ultimately lost control of the specific word, women and girls did not lose control of the broader liberatory discourse. As laid out in chapter two, while the comic depiction of male homoeroticism by and for a female audience first emerged in the commercial publishing sphere, by the latter half of the 1970s, female fans-cum-artists were parodying *shōnen* manga [boys’ comics], homoeroticizing the male-male relationships therein, compiling these narratives into *dōjinshi* [self-published magazines], and the selling them at the then annual Comic Market and through magazines like *Allan*. It is in this sphere that “*yaoi*,” one of the two current terms to label this broad generic sphere emerged.

¹⁹⁰ Taniguchi Rei, *Shōnen ai sha: shinwa to tabū ni tsutsumareta karera no hontō no suguta o saguru* (Tokyo: Tsuge Shobō Shinsha, 2003). The Japanese Wikipedia entry is available at <http://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/少年愛>, last accessed 6 October 2009.

By the early 1980s, “*yaoi*”—in recent years a truly global label for male homoerotic manga and anime—was widely used in this amateur comics sphere to name these amateur homoerotic parodies. The word is an acronym for “*yama nashi, ochi nashi, imi nashi,*” or “no climax, no conclusion, no meaning,” which was readily applicable to the relatively plotless parodies replete with male-on-male sex. Its coinage had little specifically to do with the genre, however. As explained much later in the pages of *June* by manga artist Hatsu Akiko (1959–), once a frequent guest at Takemiya and Hagio’s “Ōizumi Salon,” the term emerged organically at the end of the 1970s among the members of the popular Ravuri [?Lovely] manga circle as a general, often self-ridiculing assessment of all types of *dōjinshi*.¹⁹¹ Playing on the new term, Ravuri member Maru Mikiko created a male homoerotic manga which she titled “*Yaoi*,” writing the term in *kanji* characters meaning “chasing the night.” Hatsu explains, at the time she felt that, “It’s true that this manga has no climax, no conclusion, and no meaning. But there’s something—what’s going on between these guys?” So, in December 1979, she, Maru and a small group of others collectively compiled a *dōjinshi* full of male homoerotic narratives based on the concept that, “Even if there’s no climax, no conclusion, and no meaning, there’s eros.” This *dōjinshi*, titled *Rappori: Special Yaoi Issue (Rappori: yaoi tokushū gō)*, in effect narrowed the definition of the term, which has subsequently been given alternative readings within the community including “*yamete, oshiri ga itai,*” that is, “stop, my ass hurts,” and “*yaru, okasu, ikaseru,*” or “fuck [him], rape [him], make [him] cum.”¹⁹² A number of other terms were in use in the 1980s, some emerging at first to name parodies of a specific text, the most prominent of

¹⁹¹ A description of Ravuri’s *dōjinshi* in the premier issue of *Allan* describes the publication as “semi-pro.” As of *Allan*’s publication, they had already produced 10 issues. See *Aran*, “Ninki *dōjinshi* purezento,” October 1980, 138. On Hatsu’s participation in the Ōizumi Salon (discussed in chapter two), see Hagio Moto, “The Moto Hagio Interview,” by Matt Thorn, *The Comics Journal* no. 269 (June/July 2005).

¹⁹² *Rappori* is discussed in Hatsu Akiko, “*Yaoi no moto wa ‘share’ deshita: hatsu kōkai: yaoi no tanjō,*” *June* no. 73 (November 1993). On the various interpretations of the acronym, see Nishimura Mari, *Aniparo to yaoi* (Tokyo: Ōta Shuppan, 2002), 12 n3).

which was “Tsubasa” (a male given name), first used to name parodies of the soccer-themed *shōnen* manga *Captain Tsubasa* (*Kyaputen Tsubasa*). “*June-mono*,” mentioned above, and “*tanbi*” [aesthete], associated both with *June* and with male homoerotic literature were also in frequent use.¹⁹³

“*Shōnen ai*” as a genre marker has, however, had a perhaps surprising afterlife stemming from the vagaries of the publishing world and Japanese and global fandoms. For those sensitive to chronologic and generic distinctions, “*shōnen ai*” continues to be used to name the early works, particularly the popular commercially produced texts by the Fabulous Forty-Niners, including artists such as Takemiya and Hagio. In the early 1990s, a number of new commercial magazines began to be published to take advantage of the ever increasing desire to consume male homoerotic manga evidenced at the Comic Market and beyond. Such magazines often printed a catch phrase on the cover, generally in Japanese. In the 1970s, *June*’s was “now, opening our eyes to dangerous love,” while by the 1990s, this was altered to “now, transcending dangerous love.” *Allan* labeled itself “an aesthete magazine for girls.” Among the slogans appearing on magazines first published at the opening of the 1990s were “YAOI♥COMIC” (in capital Roman letters) and “a comic for bad girls.” And on the cover of the 1991 debut of *Image* (*Imaaju*, 1991-?) was “BOY’S LOVE♥COMIC [*sic*],” a title I read as a transfiguration of “*shōnen ai* manga.”¹⁹⁴ While “English” is often used for little more than ornamentation on the covers of magazines, in advertising, and on consumer goods, this particular decorative turn of phrase caught on: Soon after *Image*’s debut, *Manga jōhōshi pafu* [Manga information magazine

¹⁹³ Within the pages of *June*, the term “*tanbi*” [aesthete] was applied both to this genre and to literature by authors as diverse as André Gide, Oscar Wilde, Taruho, and Mishima Yukio, known both for their own “homosexuality” and for works that depicted it. “*Tanbi*” has appeared most often in the phrases “*tanbi bungaku*” [aesthetic literature], “*tanbi shōsetsu*” [aesthetic fiction], and “*tanbi zasshi*” [aesthetic magazines], the latter of which was applied to *June*, *Aran*, and *Gekkō*. The term can also occasionally be found in andro-centric pornography, used to indicate eroticism even as it tries to paint the material as refined.

¹⁹⁴ Yamamoto Fumiko and BL Sapōtaazu, *Yappari, bōizu rabu ga suki: kanzen BL komikku gaido* (Tokyo: Ōta Shuppan, 2005), 14.

puff] used “BOY’S LOVE [*sic*]” as the title of a special feature on “*June*-type” works and artists, and the term gained currency as a generic marker, often abbreviated as BL or spelled out phonetically as “*bōizu rabu*.” The “English” form of the term—not quite a calque—caught on and is used globally alongside *yaoi* and local transliterations and translations to name male homoerotic manga, anime, and novels, as well as related video games. While the presence of an English translation of “*shōnen ai*” is not itself remarkable, the fact that “boys love”—also written “boys’ love” and “boy’s love” on fan and commercial websites—was first coined in Japan as a “Japanese” translation renders the already unclear current of cultural and linguistic flows still murkier.

Today, in both English and Japanese, many people use “*yaoi*” and “boys love”/“BL” as relatively interchangeable, but for some “*yaoi*” marks amateur and “BL” commercial works.¹⁹⁵ The fact that amateur works are often more sexual and less plot-driven than commercially published texts has meant that some in this sphere classify them in roughly the same way but based on content rather than form. Critic and fan of the genre, Mizoguchi Akiko (1962–), writes that “*yaoi*” makes a fitting overarching label for these texts dating back to the male homoerotic fiction penned by the woman novelist Mori Mari, but I believe that this obfuscates important historic and generic specificity.¹⁹⁶ While the distinction made by individuals between terms in the present day is indeed largely idiosyncratic, the unique and complicated origins of these overlapping labels reveals differences that made a difference in the history of this sphere.

¹⁹⁵ Patrick W. Galbraith, *The Otaku Encyclopedia: An Insider’s Guide to the Subculture of Cool Japan* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2009), 38, 238–39.

¹⁹⁶ Mizoguchi Akiko, “Male-Male Romance by and for Women in Japan: A History and the Subgenres of *Yaoi* Fictions,” *U.S.-Japan Women’s Journal* 25 (2003): 51.

Conclusion

To be sure, my treatment of the histories of “*ūman ribu*,” “*rezubian*,” and “*shōnen ai*” has been by no means comprehensive. While I may have been able to pinpoint within a day, or a week, or a month, the originary moment of “*ūman ribu*,” as I hope my discussions of the other two terms has demonstrated, this is less important than the inevitably partial elaboration “of the myriad events through which—thanks to which, against which—they were formed”¹⁹⁷ and have come, again and again, to mean—events that, from the 1970s onward at least, have reflected the agency of the women and girls who used them. My aim in this chapter has not been to contribute to the construction of a misleadingly linear genealogy of “*ūman ribu*,” “*rezubian*,” and “*shōnen ai*,” but to begin to unravel and complicate—rather than merely uncover—individual and collective struggles over meaning. For women and girls in the *ribu*, *rezubian*, and gender-bending *shōjo* manga spheres, this grappling is with the meaning of desire as well as the meaning of specific terms to name it. And, as Kath Weston reminds us, “no one has a greater stake in the outcome of conflicts over terminology than the people who constitute themselves through and counter to available cultural categories.”¹⁹⁸

In recent years, in contemporary queer activist communities in Asia, there has been substantial debate over the applicability of “imported” terms such as “lesbian,” “gay,” and, more recently, “queer.”¹⁹⁹ Some of the debate centers on whether these terms and the meanings with which they are laden are being imposed from the outside and thus fail to reflect local—and individual—understandings of self, and of gender and sexuality. As I have shown, in the case of Japan, the history of the terms “*ūman ribu*” and “*rezubian*” demonstrate that they were neither

¹⁹⁷ Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” 146.

¹⁹⁸ Weston, Kath Weston, “Lesbian/Gay Studies in the House of Anthropology,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 22 (1993): 349–51.

¹⁹⁹ James Welker and Lucetta Kam, “Introduction: Of Queer Import(s) in Asia,” *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific* 14 (November 2006).

imposed from the outside nor are they the result of a one-time importation. Nor do “native” terms, such as “*shōnen ai*,” remain uninflected by transnational cultural and intellectual flows. Rather, for these three terms, their transfiguration into and within Japanese is the culmination of many decades of local discourse on women’s rights and gender and sexual expression, a discourse repeatedly incorporating transnational exchange of ideas, and, increasingly, the voices of women and girls.

If the “*ūman ribu*” movement has been misunderstood as a simple import from the US, this is as much a function of insufficient attention to the sometimes complex way “loan words” come to be and to mean within a language as it is to the history of the movement itself. And while “*rezubian*” has, roughly, come to converge in meaning and in pronunciation with the English “lesbian,” to assume that “*rezubian*” was simply imported into Japanese along with the (unstable) concept of what constitutes a lesbian, belies nearly a century of evolving understandings of “homosexuality” (in both Japan and elsewhere) along with the transnational exchange that has gone into it. The history of “*shōnen ai*” goes back centuries further, and yet, much like the meaning and valences of its components “*shōnen*” and “*ai*,” it was transfigured in modern Japan as notions of boyhood, girlhood, eros, and affection were reconsidered and reconfigured in no small part in response to the introduction of novel ideas from beyond the confines of Japan. And like “*rezubian*,” while residue from past meanings continue to adhere to it, the term’s meaning has remained unfixed. Its afterlife in the 1990s term “*bōizu rabu*” demonstrates both the creative power of Japanese and the nativeness of “foreign” terms within the language. As I remarked at the opening of this chapter, words do matter. And as I have tried to show here with my micro-focus on “*ūman ribu*,” “*rezubian*,” and “*shōnen ai*,” so do their histories.

CHAPTER FOUR: TRANSLATION¹

Modern Japan is a culture of translation. . . . the idea seems so self-evident as to require no further comment, and yet we have only begun to unravel its manifold implications.

—Indra Levy²

According to literary scholar Mizuta Noriko, the translator assumes her authorial power “as a transmitter, a transvestite, a trans/gender/lator who blurs the boundaries between self and other and transgresses into different cultures and across gender distinctions.”³ In the case of Japan, for more than a century translation has been central to individual and collective efforts by modern women to explain and, to varying degrees, to liberate female gender and sexuality from restrictive norms. While the work of some of the earliest women translators such as Senuma Kayō, Koganei Kimiko, and Wakamatsu Shizuko may not be regarded as overtly feminist, their introduction of foreign literature did contribute to the broader discourse on what it means to be a woman in Japan.⁴ From the early twentieth century other modern women, however, were more actively and overtly deploying translation and translated texts in order to question, resist, or subvert attempts to control female sexual and gender expression. Prominent among feminist translation activities in the 1910s were members of Seitōsha [the Bluestocking Society] and their journal, *Seitō* [Bluestocking], founded and bankrolled by well-known feminist Hiratsuka Raichō. As evidenced by both original translations and critical essays found in the pages of *Seitō*, these

¹ Portions of this chapter previously appeared in James Welker, “From *The Cherry Orchard* to *Sakura no sono*: Translation and the Transfiguration of Gender and Sexuality in *Shōjo* Manga,” in *Girl Reading Girl in Japan*, ed. Tomoko Aoyama and Barbara Hartley (London: Routledge, 2010), and are reproduced with permission.

² Indra Levy, “Introduction: Modern Japan and the Triangles of Translation,” in “The Culture of Translation in Modern Japan,” ed. Indra Levy, special issue, *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 20 (2008):1.

³ Mizuta Noriko, “Translation and Gender: Trans/gender/lator,” trans. Judy Wakabayashi, in *Woman Critiqued: Translated Essays on Japanese Women’s Writing*, ed. Rebecca L. Copeland (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2006), 164.

⁴ The role of Wakamatsu Shizuko’s translations of children’s literature in rethinking gender in the Meiji era, for instance, is examined in Melek Ortabasi, “Brave Dogs and Little Lords: Some Thoughts on Translation, Gender, and the Debate on Childhood in Mid Meiji,” in Levy, “The Culture of Translation.”

Japanese bluestockings looked toward the writings of figures such as Swedish feminist Ellen Key and British sexologist Havelock Ellis to help elucidate certain desires for social and sexual autonomy—and sometimes for each other. They also turned a critical eye to many of the same literary texts that drew the attention of the (male) Japanese literati of the time, such as works by Anton Chekhov, Henrik Ibsen, and Edgar Allan Poe—authors who have continued to resonate with both women and girl readers and writers many decades later.⁵ While the specific texts have naturally varied over the course of the twentieth century, this combination of literature, social criticism, and empirical studies in translation would remain of great import to women seeking to rethink the meaning of the category “women” and its implied gender and sexual possibilities. This chapter specifically takes up such translation practices in the 1970s and 1980s within and around the *ūman ribu*, *rezubian*, and queer *shōjo* manga spheres.

In her introduction to a recent special issue of *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* on “The Culture of Translation in Modern Japan,” Indra Levy writes that a focus on translation in the Japanese context “mobilizes a set of heuristic tools that take us far beyond the often vague and slippery trope of ‘influence.’” Levy observes, moreover, that within Japan studies translators as well as their audiences are beginning to be seen as agents of translation, through which they contribute to the reshaping of the culture at large,⁶ a point long taken for granted in the field of translation studies. In Japan, beginning around 1970 translation became a key tool through which women in the *ribu* movement and the *rezubian* community, as well as artists and readers of queer *shōjo* manga directly and indirectly acted as agents of cultural change. This they accomplished via their creative use of ideas and imagery from abroad, primarily the United States and Europe.

⁵ Further discussion on translation among the women of *Seitōsha* and in *Seitō* can be found in Jan Bardsley, “The New Woman of Japan and the Intimate Bonds of Translation,” in Levy, “The Culture of Translation”; and Mizusaki Noriko, “Gaikoku bungaku no juyō to hyōka: hon’yaku,” in *Seitō o yomu*, ed. Shin Feminizumu Hihiyō no Kai (Tokyo: Gakugei Shorin, 1998).

⁶ Levy, “Introduction,” 4.

John Milton and Paul Bandia have recently called for giving more attention to the existence of other agents of translation: namely, anyone along the route from the selection of a text to translate to the distribution of the translated text to readers, all of whom play a role in the sometimes far-reaching changes effected through translation.⁷ Within informal circles of women and girls in the purview of this project, reading, writing, and translating by and for themselves, these agents were predominantly female. In the world of commercial publishing, however, men too have been agents of translation in the *ribu*, *rezubian*, and queer *shōjo* manga spheres—acting most often as editors or publishers, positions which were rarely occupied by women in at commercial presses at the time.

Unsurprisingly, given their dominance of publishing as well as academia and other areas of the public sphere, men have also been the translators of feminist texts. Some key second-wave feminist texts of the 1970s, were—like the 1953 translation of Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* (1949) two decades earlier—translated by men.⁸ These men did not necessarily have expertise or interests related to the topics of these works, which has sometimes resulted in misunderstandings and omissions.⁹ As a male who is, in the broadest sense, also acting here as a translator of women’s words and experience myself, I will not claim that a male translator would

⁷ John Milton and Paul Bandia, “Introduction: Agents of Translation and Translation Studies,” in their *Agents of Translation* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2009), 1–2.

⁸ Simone de Beauvoir, *Le deuxième sexe: Les faits et les mythes* and *Le deuxième sexe: L’expérience vécue* (Paris: Gallimard, 1949), first published in Japanese as *Dai ni no sei*, 5 vols., trans. Ikushima Ryōichi (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1953–1955).

⁹ In 1997, two women, Inoue Takako and Kimura Nobuko, published a new translation, citing a need arising from a number of significant errors in the translation done by Ikushima Ryōichi, a scholar and translator of French literature. Inoue and Kimura suggest the problems with the text were primarily caused by it having been “translated from the perspective of a man at that point in time.” See Inoue Takako and Kimura Nobuko, “Yakusha atogaki” [Translators’ afterword], in Simone de Beauvoir, *Dai san no sei*, definitive edition, 2 vols., trans. Inoue Takako and Kimura Nobuko (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1997), n.p. I thank Julia Bullock for sharing this with me. The original English translation of *Le deuxième sexe* has also been roundly criticized, with critics suggesting that much of the problem lies with the male translator’s lack of understanding of issues of importance to women. See Margaret Simons, “The Silencing of Simone de Beauvoir: Guess What’s Missing from *The Second Sex*,” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 6, no. 5 (1983); and Toril Moi, “While We Wait: The English Translation of *The Second Sex*,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 27, no. 4 (2002).

be unable to successfully convey the nuances, valences, and affect of feminist texts in Japanese. Yet we cannot deny that, regardless of her or his skill, a translator's knowledge and experiences function as resources upon which she or he draws when translating. Translating feminist texts into Japanese in the 1970s and 1980s would have demanded a greater degree of awareness of women's experiences and openness to women's concerns than might have been expected of most male translators at the time—in Japan or elsewhere.¹⁰

Nevertheless, even a poor translation can be better than none at all. Indeed, whatever its shortcomings, the 1953 translation of Beauvoir's work became a feminist touchstone for many women in Japan in the latter half of the twentieth century.¹¹ And, as with the coinage of the terms discussed in chapter three, we should recognize that men at times played a significant role in the translation of feminist ideas into Japanese. That this role has been almost completely unacknowledged speaks at least as much to the fact that these men were, by and large, not otherwise participating in the movement or in the field of women's studies that was to emerge in the late 1970s as it does to the general condition of what Lawrence Venuti describes as the "translator's invisibility."¹² We should also recognize that, even if this role was not wholly

¹⁰ This is, of course, not to say that the mere experience of being a woman is, in and of itself, an essential qualification that can make up for a lack of aptitude in language and the subject matter at hand—if accuracy, stylistic consistency, and other common measures of "good translation" are at issue. While many early *ribu* translators worked toward accuracy, for instance having the most linguistically talented among them check their translations, the most important task of these mostly untrained translators was sharing as best they could the ideas and words that excited and inspired them.

¹¹ See Inoue and Kimura, "Yakusha atogaki." In the course of my own research, a number of women I interviewed who were affiliated with *ribu* in the 1970s mentioned Beauvoir's text. Julia Bullock notes that, while many women in 1950s–1960s Japan found inspiration in this work, they were circumspect about its applicability to their own lives. See Julia C. Bullock, "Fantasy as Methodology: Simone de Beauvoir and Postwar Japanese Feminism," *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal* 36 (2009).

¹² Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*, 2nd ed. (1995; London: Routledge, 2008). Venuti explains that a translation is judged to be good if it "reads fluently" and is seen as essentially unchanged from the original—thus, when the translator's presence is least visible. While Venuti is discussing literary translation into English, his thesis largely holds in this context. While the common inclusion in translated texts of a "translator's afterword" running from a few paragraphs to a few pages does mitigate the translator's invisibility somewhat. As explanatory or interpretive notes (*kaisetsu*) are also often included in the back of both literary and critical works, however, the translator's afterword might be easily overwhelmed by a longer

positive—resulting, for instance, in a distorted message—the aggregate effect of their work was certainly not negative for *ribu* women and other feminists: however inspired or indifferent to feminist ideas and ideology they may have been, male translators did help to convey it.

In the case of the literature read and transfigured by artists and readers of queer *shōjo* manga, the sex of the translator appears not to have been as relevant, particularly since the texts themselves were often initially penned by male authors and depict male experience. I show below, however, that the sex—and sexuality—of the translator of a text can, if subtly, add meaning to the text’s transfiguration into *shōjo* manga.

* * *

I now return in this chapter to the notion of transfiguration to help make sense of the various roles of translators, acts of translation, and translated texts within and surrounding these three communities. As I note in chapter one, Dilip Gaonkar and Elizabeth Povinelli propose that focusing on “circulation and transfiguration, rather than meaning and translation,” might be a more productive way to think about the transformational nature of border crossing.¹³ They specifically suggest that the focus on meaning—and its transformation, often via translation—has run its course.¹⁴ While, as they point out, there are indeed “countless socially informed studies of the conditions of possibility for various forms of translation and countless

critical commentary or be regarded as mere additional commentary without drawing significant attention to the translator(s).

¹³ Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar and Elizabeth A. Povinelli, “Technologies of Public Forms: Circulation, Transfiguration, Recognition,” *Public Culture* 15, no. 3 (2003), 387.

¹⁴ They never suggest dispensing with translation studies altogether, yet neither do they acknowledge how a contextualized focus on translation, including but not limited to an examination of meaning, might further their own larger goal of making sense of transfiguration. The diversity of recent scholarship on translation belies the narrow focus they ascribe to the field. A useful historical overview of the field can be found in Maria Tymoczko, *Enlarging Translation, Empowering Translators* (Manchester, U.K.: St. Jerome Publishing, 2007). For examples of work in the field, both historical and contemporary, see the collections Lawrence Venuti, *The Translation Studies Reader* (London: Routledge, 2000); Sandra Bermann and Michael Wood, *Nation, Language, and the Ethics of Translation* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005); and Mona Baker, *Critical Readings in Translation Studies* (London: Routledge, 2010).

studies of the profoundly political nature of translation,”¹⁵ I see translation as one of a myriad modes of transfiguration, and, consequently, one of an array of foci through which to elucidate transfiguration as processes of change through circulation in a given site or sites. As I explain in chapter one, my own use of transfiguration does not end there, however, but rather insists that we look as well at the effects of these processes, be they—in the case of translation—new texts or new subjectivities. By following the history of translation *in situ* and tracing it forward and backward, we can get a better sense of translation as a practice that transfigures not only ideas and texts but also people and the communities and societies which they inhabit.

Although translation theorists such as Maria Tymoczko make a strong case for an expansive notion of translation that encompasses diverse processes and products across cultures and time,¹⁶ for the purposes of this chapter I find it productive to delimit translation to its more common definition of conveying in one language, however successfully, an utterance from another.¹⁷ While all translation is creative—André Lefevere, for instance, describes translation as “rewriting”—it is important to distinguish attempts to directly transmit textual meaning or affect from attempts to transform it.¹⁸ This distinction speaks to both agency and intention, and can have profound implications on the resulting texts as well as, consequently, the effects of those texts. By positioning translation as a mode of transfiguration, we can expand our purview to include acts and products related to translation without losing this specificity.

I turn now to the translation and more radical transfiguration of texts within the *ribu*, *rezubian*, and queer *shōjo* manga spheres. I used the previous chapter’s focus on the etymology

¹⁵ Gaonkar and Povinelli, “Technologies of Public Forms,” 393.

¹⁶ Tymoczko, *Enlarging Translation*, 97.

¹⁷ I will forego rehearsing here the extensive discourse on the (im)possibility of translation, either in terms of conveying meaning or artistic effect that has been a central issue of translation studies and can be found in any number of monographs in the field as well as the collections cited above.

¹⁸ André Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (London: Routledge, 1992). By textual meaning and affect, I am referring to the widespread idea that a translation can either be literal—conveying meaning—or beautiful—conveying affect—but not both.

of “*ūman ribu*,” “*rezubian*,” and “*shōnen ai*” [boys love] to begin to get at how these three pivotal terms, among others, were shaped by manifold acts and flukes at the junctures and disjunctures of global and local discourse. To incorporate the long histories undergirding these terms—histories that include many layers of translation—the gaze of that chapter spans from the beginning of the twentieth century to the 1990s. In this chapter, I narrow my chronological purview and simultaneously widen my focus beyond individual words. I turn specifically to the *ribu*, *rezubian*, and queer *shōjo* manga spheres in the 1970s and 1980s and the overlooked role that both translated texts and acts of translation played in shaping these spheres and the individuals who inhabited them.¹⁹ The production and reverberations of these numerous and varied translations and more radical transfigurations exemplify the web of connections and coincidences that not infrequently accompany translation, as well as the random, spontaneous, and amorphous nature of these three spheres.

To cover this vast and uneven terrain, I selectively examine diverse translated critical, empirical, and literary texts that allow me to at once trace the broader history of translation among these women and girls and to highlight various ways translation functioned as both an act and a product within these communities, shaping both the communities themselves and individuals within them. The texts I have chosen to look at here also at times call particular attention to the intertwined nature of the *ribu* and *rezubian* spheres, in spite of the degree to

¹⁹ The still nascent state of scholarship on translation within the field of Japan studies notwithstanding, I suspect that the lack of significant scholarship to date on translation in these communities stems from a combination of factors. In the case of *ūman ribu*, a rejection of the possibility that the movement might have been somehow imported makes the exploration of the role of translation potentially unsettling to the dominant narrative of the movement’s history among *ribu* women as well as contemporary feminists. Compounding a similar anxiety surrounding the *rezubian* community is the dearth of work done on the history of *rezubian*-identified women in Japan. Moreover, within both communities, with few exceptions, translators of second-wave and lesbian writing were not translating *qua* “translators.” Rather, in many cases, they were merely helping make texts accessible in Japanese. By contrast, in the queer *shōjo* manga sphere, it was not direct translation but rather the further transfiguration of already translated texts that makes translation significant, but also easily overlooked. The significance of translated foreign literature among artists and fans of queer *shōjo* manga has not been highlighted in a body of scholarship more concerned with the sociological examination of readers or the explication of texts.

which *rezubian* women felt ignored or ostracized within the *ribu* community. First, I scrutinize direct translations within the *ribu* and *rezubian* spheres, with an emphasis on the many kinds of choices made in their translation, from the choice of words to the choice of texts. I then take up the translations and the multiple transfigurations of *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, a germinal book on women's health intended from its conception to have a global impact, and *The Hite Report*, a pioneering study designed to reveal the many realities of women's sexuality in the US. Both texts inspired local transfigurations sometimes so dramatically different from the originals as to be almost unrecognizable. Finally, I look at ways literature in translation has been transfigured as well as transfiguring in the realm of queer *shōjo* manga, engendering the creation of a new genre of *shōjo* manga as well as an awareness in readers of other gendered and sexual possibilities.

Re-Presenting Radical Feminist Writing from the US

Each in its own way, the three key terms discussed in the previous chapter—"ūman ribu", "rezubian," and "shōnen ai"—are products of translation. In the case of "ūman ribu," Ninagawa Masao, the male journalist who coined the term, came across translations of American second-wave feminist writing while conducting research that would go into the first of his series of *Asahi* newspaper articles that introduced the *ribu* movement to the Tokyo reading public. These translations and Ninagawa's interview with Akiyama Yōko, a translator of some of that American feminist writing, perhaps reinforced, perhaps gave rise to Ninagawa's false impression that the Japanese movement was, like the translated articles themselves, imported from the US. While *ribu* was clearly not an import, an examination of translation within the *ribu* movement and the ripples it set in motion demonstrates, however, that "we cannot ignore the influence of the American women's liberation movement" on the nascent Japanese movement. As Akiyama

observes in relation to the translation of materials from the US movement, information and ideas from the US helped to inform, even ignite “the smoldering resentment among Japanese women and to put that resentment into words.”²⁰

This influence was, of course, nowhere stronger than among translators, whose work entailed a relatively high level of interest in and intimacy with their American counterparts, who were, accordingly, less “foreign” to the translators. The earliest *ribu* translators were not, however, typical of *ribu* activists in the early 1970s. While most *ribu* activists were of university age, if not university students, and many of the early activists had first participated in the student and anti-war movements of the late 1960s, most of the first translators were slightly older and already in the workforce, as well as somewhat less likely to have devoted much time to the most recent wave of social protests, which flared back up after they graduated from university. Many of the translators were in their late 20s or early 30s, some older—and, as evidenced by their engaging in translation, they were more likely to be both relatively proficient in written, if not spoken, English and in contact with foreigners able to pass on new feminist writing. As a consequence of this imbalance of information, while the earliest translation of radical second-wave feminist materials from English was coincident with the organizing that is widely seen as the beginning of the movement, the information that most women’s liberation activists in Japan *initially* had about their counterparts abroad came from the limited and distorted images available in the mass media, rather than from personal experience or from translation. Deliberate distortion, it should be noted, is itself a kind of transfiguration, which, as these mass media images attest, is not always positive in intent or effect.

It was this combination of slant and silence in the mass media that Akiyama’s own co-translation project aimed to correct. This is spelled out in the project’s afterword: “Not a word

²⁰ Akiyama Yōko, *Ribu shishi nōto: Onnatachi no jidai kara* (Tōkyō: Inpakuto shuppan kai, 1993), 52.

is written [in male-produced media accounts] about why these American women—who appeared more liberated than us—have risen up.”²¹ In response to this situation, in mid-1970, shortly after the founding of small student feminist groups like Thought Collective S.E.X. (Shisō Dan Esu Ii Ekkusu) and around the same time activist Tanaka Mitsu was drafting her revolutionary manifesto, “Liberation from the Toilet” (*Benjō kara kaihō*), Akiyama and a handful of others were assembling in a 50-page, handwritten and mimeographed pamphlet what may have been the first translations of radical second-wave feminist writing.²² The pamphlet, *Women’s Liberation Movement Materials 1: American Edition (Josei kaihō undō shiryō 1: Amerika hen)* contained two translated articles from members of the US liberation movement and an interview with an American activist.²³ This pamphlet represents the *ribu* movement’s earliest “engaged translation,” a term Tymoczko uses to describe translations intended to “rouse, inspire, witness, mobilize, and incite to rebellion,” and which are created by “engaged translators,” who themselves “have political agendas and use translation as one means to achieve those agendas.”²⁴ And yet, it was made by a group which came together by happenstance, did not set out to be or identify as “translators,” and was not even entirely comprised of feminist women.

Akiyama recalls that the group, which named itself Women’s Liberation Movement

²¹ Josei Kaihō Undō Junbi Kai (hereafter JKUJK), “Hitokoto,” in their *Josei kaihō undō shiryō 1: Amerika hen* (Tokyo: Josei Kaihō Undō Junbi Kai, 1970).

²² If earlier translations were produced, it seems unlikely that they were widely circulated. I have encountered no such translations and no references to them either in interviews or in *ribu*-related publications.

Thought Collective S.E.X. was founded in April 1970, by Yonezu Tomoko and other students at Tama Art University, near Tokyo. See Yonezu Tomoko, “Mizukara no SEX o mokuteki ishikiteki ni hikiukeru naka kara 70-nendai o bokki saseyo!!” in *Ribu Shinjuku Sentaa Shiryō Hozon Kai, Ribu Shinjuku Sentaa shiryō shūsei: bira hen* (hereafter RSSHK, *Bira hen*) (Tokyo: Inpakuto, 2008), 2. See also chapter two.

As noted in chapter two, Tanaka was distributing her “Erotic liberation declaration” and attempting to recruit other women to her cause by June of 1970. See “Erosu kaihō sengen” (1970) reproduced in RSSHK, *Bira hen*. Tanaka began distributing pamphlets that would be shaped into “Liberation from the Toilet” (1970) by August: “Josei kaihō e no kojinteki shiten,” 1970, in *ibid.*; “Benjo kara no kaihō,” 1970, in *ibid.*

²³ JKUJK, *Josei kaihō undō shiryō*. Two versions of this pamphlet were produced, the original during the summer of 1970 (Akiyama, *Ribu shishi nōto*, 25). The latter, which Akiyama believes was released less than a year later, containing minor corrections and a table of contents—absent in the original version—on its cover (Akiyama Yōko, personal correspondence, June 20, 2009).

²⁴ Maria Tymoczko, *Enlarging Translation*, 213.

Preparation Group (Josei Kaihō Undō Junbi Kai)—hereafter Preparation Group—was “very ordinary,” just one among “numerous gatherings of [female] co-workers, fellow students, and friends who came together to study women’s issues and history” at that time, groups that helped plant the seeds that grew into the *ribu* movement. In fact, Preparation Group was formed from members of two different reading groups in the Tokyo area. One was a group of professional women working at Nippon Television (NTV) who, groping for a way to understand their own experiences, were reading classics of women’s history.²⁵ Akiyama was invited to take part in the group’s discussions through a friend working at the station. The other group was comprised of women who were former members of the Haiyūza Theatre Company (Gekidan Haiyūza), editors, teachers, students, and so forth. Several members of the latter group were also working part time at the TV station, which is how members of the two groups became acquainted with each other.²⁶

The two translated articles in *Women’s Liberation Movement Materials*, Marge Piercy’s “The Grand Coolie Dam,” and Kathy McAfee and Myrna Wood’s “Bread and Roses,” were originally published in 1969 in the American New Left magazine *Leviathan* (1969–1970) and were quickly circulated as pamphlets, which is the form in which they reached Japan and their translators.²⁷ Both articles discuss institutionalized sexism and the exploitation of women within the American anti-establishment New Left movement, an issue which resonated with the experiences of women in Japan involved in leftist groups. Akiyama was motivated by her own interest in the topic to translate Piercy’s article, which for Akiyama really spoke to how the

²⁵ Akiyama, *Ribu shishi nōto*, 31. Akiyama names Inoue Kiyoshi’s influential *Nihon josei shi* [Japanese women’s history] (orig. Tokyo: San’ichi Shobō, 1949), but does not mention whether the other histories were also about women in Japan.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 31–32.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 26. Kathy McAfee and Myrna Wood, “Bread and Roses,” *Leviathan* 1(3) (1969), and, in Japanese, “Pan to bara,” in JKUJK, *Josei kaihō undō shiryō*; Marge Piercy, “The Grand Coolie Dam,” *Leviathan* 1(6) (1969); and, in Japanese, “Idai na kūrī: josei,” trans. Akiyama Yōko, in JKUJK, *Josei kaihō undō shiryō*. Akiyama indicates that she received Piercy’s “Grand Coolie Dam” from an American couple who introduced her to the women’s liberation movement in 1969. See Akiyama, *Ribu shishi nōto*, 23–24

personal is political in its narration of the resentment that in the US drove the women to break from the New Left and begin the women's movement.²⁸ This lends a certain irony to the fact that "Bread and Roses" was, in fact, translated by a Japanese man who had come into contact with the leftist movement while living in Berkeley in the late 1960s. While unsigned, the article was translated by the then up-and-coming actor Nakamura Tetsuo (1940–). Though never actually a member of Preparation Group or the two reading groups, Nakamura had become acquainted with several members of the latter reading group who, like him, belonged to the Haiyūza Theatre Company. He was asked to translate McAfee and Wood's text for these women at around the same time that Akiyama was working on Piercy's.²⁹

The draft translations were circulated among both reading groups, and some members of both groups ended up cooperating to put these translations together and more widely distribute them, forming a third group, Preparation Group, for that purpose.³⁰ In back of these translations, appears an interview with American feminist activist Charlotte Bunch (1944–) conducted by Kurita Reiko, a woman unaffiliated with Preparation Group but who was very familiar with the US and felt a strong sense of connection to the women's liberation movement.³¹ One of a number of American activists who were either transiting through or sojourning in Japan briefly

²⁸ Akiyama, *Ribu shishi nōto*, 28, 30, 32.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 28.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 32–33.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 30. At the time, Bunch was using the surname Bunch-Weeks. The interview can be found in JKUJK, *Josei kaihō undō shiryō*, 42–47. Bunch maintained at least limited ties with feminists in Japan and would eventually write the foreword for AMPO: The Japan Asia Quarterly Review, ed., *Voices from the Japanese Women's Movement* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1996). In this she writes of her experience in Japan in 1970 that she felt a "thrill when I 'discovered' a small feminist cell discussing women's liberation and planning a women's collective in Tokyo. For years after that, I received numerous circulars from women's groups in Japan, and the English language newsletter *Asian Women's Liberation* published there in the late 1970s and early 1980s was my major source of feminist information on women in the region at the time" (*ibid.*, xiii).

In addition to the articles and interviews, James Oppenheim's 1911 poem "Bread and Roses," associated with a 1912 strike by women textile workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts, which appears at the head of McAfee and Wood's original article, is reproduced on the first page of the pamphlet.

during this period, Bunch was interviewed while en route back to the US from Hanoi.³² In her conversation with Kurita, Bunch describes issues similar to those covered in the two translated articles. While the interview is largely a matter of Bunch sharing information about the movement and the current situation for women in the US, it ends with a discussion of the merits and safety of the birth control pill, then unavailable in Japan, and abortion, then largely unavailable in the US.³³ This brief exchange shows that even at the early stages of the movement in Japan, the *ribu* women were both learning from and actively engaging with their American counterparts—surely among the first such exchanges between second wave feminists in Japan and the US to be recorded.

In 1971, there were more translations of American second-wave writing, some of it published commercially, alongside *ribu* writing. Chance helped Preparation Group's pamphlet play a role in the introduction of the *ribu* movement to the nation, and it is safe to assume that few other *ribu* pamphlets in limited circulation had such an impact.³⁴ While, to be sure, other non-commercially produced and distributed translations had the potential to provoke thought and actions within the *ribu* movement that would ultimately have wider repercussions, the relative accessibility of commercial books gave them greater and more immediate reach and make them of particular interest here.

March of 1971 saw what may be the first commercially published translations of American second-wave feminist writing, appearing in the back of a book largely focused on Japanese second-wave feminism. Published by the left-leaning Aki Shobō, this volume, *An Accusation of Sex Discrimination: The Demands of Women's Lib (Sei sabetsu e no kokuhatsu:*

³² Akiyama, *Ribu shishi nōto*, 28, 30, 32.

³³ Charlotte Bunch-Weeks, interview by Kurita Reiko, in JKUJK, *Josei kaihō undō shiryō*, 46–47. At the time, access to abortion in Japan was relatively unfettered, but there were concerns among women in Japan that this open access would not continue. See chapter two.

³⁴ One notable exception is Tanaka Mitsu's "Benjō kara kaihō."

ūmanribu wa shuchō suru), was also the first commercially published book on *ribu* and the first with “*ūman ribu*” in its title.³⁵ While foregrounding Japanese women and the Japanese movement, interest in and a sense of connection to women’s activism abroad is evidenced by both the fact that nearly a third of this volume is devoted to the American movement and the fact that even the two thirds of the materials in the book focused on Japan directly and indirectly point to the US movement or is written in generic language universalizing women’s oppression.

The volume is divided into three sections, the first of which, “A Debate for Liberation” (*Kaihō no tame no tōron*), is a transcript of a groundbreaking “teach-in” (*tiichi in*) held in a large public facility in Tokyo’s Sendagaya neighborhood on November 14, 1970, and involving hundreds of women.³⁶ Perhaps half of the participants were in their early twenties, but many were in their thirties or older, with some women in their sixties.³⁷ Some of these women were or had been involved in the current or older waves of pre- and postwar women’s activism, and included members of Preparation Group and Tanaka’s Group Fighting Women (Gurūpu Tatakau Onna). These women were of diverse backgrounds in terms of career and life course. Most participants are identified not by name but simply as “activist” (with or without mention of their affiliation), “consumer activist,” “researcher,” “participant,” “high school student,” “university instructor,” “student,” “housewife,” “worker,” “older housewife,” or “instructor”; at least one of the participants was a non-Japanese speaking American activist.³⁸ These women’s discussion

³⁵ Aki Shobō Henshūbu, ed., *Sei sabetsu e no kokuhatsu: ūmanribu wa shuchō suru* (Tokyo: Aki Shobō, 1971). N.B.: both the year and month of publication are listed in most books published in Japan. Current editor-in-chief of Aki Shobō, Kimura Takashi characterizes the press, founded in 1968, as originally producing leftist publications, adding that in recent years it has become merely left-leaning (personal correspondence, March 17, 2010). By 1971, Aki Shobō had already published books on topics including the student movement in Japan and on a global scale, the peace movement, and Marxism.

³⁶ See Inoue Teruko, *Joseigaku to sono shūhen* (Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 1980), 176–78, for a personal recollection of the event.

³⁷ My description here draws largely on the description of the event as well as the words of the participants themselves. My estimate of the relative number of women in their early twenties comes from *ibid.*, 176.

³⁸ At one point, a woman identified as “activist (USA)” speaks (Aki Shobō Henshūbu, *Sei sabetsu e no*

includes differences between the new and previous movements; sex discrimination at the workplace, home, school, and within social movements; and the historical origins of and what to do about this discrimination.³⁹

After proclaiming her excitement about being “able to take part in this profoundly moving meeting,”⁴⁰ an American participant introduced as Diana Connolly shares information about the movement in the US. Like Bunch in her interview with Kurita, Connolly observes, among other things, the importance of the abortion issue in that country.⁴¹ She also describes the movement’s troubled relationship with the mass media, which she felt was using the movement and providing distorted coverage thereof⁴²—a sentiment very similar to *ribu* discourse on the Japanese media’s treatment of *ribu*, and evincing a resonance that made the American experience relevant to women in Japan. While she contributes little more than words of support and information that was already in circulation, Connolly’s participation in the discussion and its reproduction in the first commercial “*ūman ribu*” publication, like the interview with Bunch, draws our attention to early personal ties between the *ribu* movement and foreign activists (discussed in greater depth in chapter five).

The rendering of her words into Japanese also illustrates the imperfect nature of communication, specifically to the potential of translation to (mis)shape the message it attempts to convey, sometimes in subtle ways. While I have no original against which to compare the Japanese version, translation’s effect on the nuance of Connolly’s words is most evident in her (translator’s) reference to the new US women’s liberation movement as “*fujin kaihō undō*”

kokuhatsu, 70–72) and shortly thereafter, a woman specifically introduced as Diana Connolly from America speaks (ibid., 81, 82ff.). It is unclear if these are the same individual.

³⁹ Aki Shobō Henshūbu, *Sei sabetsu e no kokuhatsu*, 4–5.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 82.

⁴¹ Ibid., 85, 87–89.

⁴² Ibid., 86.

[women's liberation movement], a dated term generally used to refer to earlier generations of women's activism in Japan and abroad.⁴³ The labeling of US radical second-wave feminism as a movement of *fujin*, an increasingly old-fashioned word meaning “woman”/“women,” rather than *josei* or *onna*, the then preferred terms among *ribu* women, casts it as more old school than revolutionary.⁴⁴ It is likely that Connolly's words were interpreted during the roundtable by an older woman more accustomed to the old-fashioned—and more deferential—term and not consciously distinguishing between *fujin* on the one hand, and *josei* and *onna* on the other. This awkward anachronism aside, the ultimate impact of this choice of words was probably minimal in this particular case—the context and content makes it clear that Connolly is speaking of a radical new movement—but it reminds us we need to pay attention not only to what is being translated, but how and by whom, and that even female translators were (and are) not always attuned to linguistic nuances of feminist import.

The second section of this book, “Materials, Japanese Edition” (*Shiryō Nihon hen*)—a title which echoes Preparation Group's “American Edition” pamphlet—attempts to offer a representative sample of the text of fliers and short pamphlets produced by various *ribu* groups.⁴⁵ The very first of these, in fact, is a Preparation Group flier which introduces their pamphlet of translations. The flier also notes the group's plan—which was never realized—to release a “Japanese edition” (*Nihon hen*) as well. This suggests that the title of this section of the book is not a coincidence, but rather a choice that cannot be pulled apart from the information flowing in from the US, however limited in scope.⁴⁶ A number of fliers released by “Women's Liberation

⁴³ E.g., *ibid.*, 82.

⁴⁴ Japanese nouns are generally not inflected to distinguish singular and plural. Thus “*fujin*,” “*josei*,” and “*onna*” could all mean “woman” or “women.” The distinction between these three terms and their significance for the *ribu* movement is discussed in chapter one.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 127–80.

⁴⁶ JKUJK, “Josei Kaihō Undō Junbi Kai apiiru!” in Aki Shobō Henshūbu, *Sei sabetsu e no kokuhatsu*, 130. No date is given for the release of the flier, but it introduces the American edition as forthcoming in July (1970), so

Network (Preparation Group)” (Josei Kaihō Renraku Kai [Junbi Kai]—unrelated to the original Preparation Group), Group Fighting Women, and other groups and individuals are also reproduced in the remainder of this section. While some of them refer to the specifics of the situation of women in Japan, including announcements for upcoming meetings and events, much of the content of these pamphlets speaks in very general terms about women’s oppression, and the complex relationship between women, imperialism and capitalism (sometimes overtly based on Marxist philosophy), with little direct reference to women in Japan. The discourse on imperialism and capitalism is, of course, strongly connected to Japan’s student and anti-war movements, which, in turn, are part of a more global discourse with deep roots in Japan.⁴⁷ This reinforces the point that, however rooted in local experience, the discourse on women’s liberation in Japan was also from the very beginning impossible to pull apart from global discourses on many topics aside from women, discourses long circulating in Japan.

The final section of the book directly attempts to offer a more global perspective on women and includes some of the earliest commercially published translations of writing on US second-wave feminism. This section, “The History and Current State of the American Women’s Liberation Movement: Materials, American Edition” (*Amerika josei kaihō undō no rekishi to genjō: shiryō Amerika hen*), contains a lengthy introduction to the US movement as well as two articles on the movement from the US left-wing literary and social magazine *Ramparts* and the very mainstream magazine *Time*.⁴⁸ It also has a three-page appendix with brief lists of local and national women’s liberation groups in the US and Canada, and of American feminist periodicals.

it presumably was created in or before June of 1970 (ibid.).

⁴⁷ Muto Ichiyo, “The Birth of the Women’s Liberation Movement in the 1970s,” in *The Other Japan: Conflict, Compromise, and Resistance Since 1945*, ed. Joe Moore for the Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1997), 147–49.

⁴⁸ Aki Shobō Henshūbu, *Sei sabetsu e no kokuhatsu*, 181–263. The translated articles are Marlene Dixon, “Naze ribu ga okiru no kaa,” in ibid., 226–51 (originally published as “Why Women’s Liberation?” *Ramparts* December 1969, 57–63); and Gloria Steinem, “Kanzen byōdō no yūtopia: ribu kakumei ga umidasu shakai,” in ibid., 252–61 (originally published as “What It Would Be Like if Women Win,” *Time* August 31, 1970, 22, 25).

This section was written and, in the case of the articles on the US, translated by Ikegami Chizuko. Reflecting back in an interview with me, Ikegami explained that she translated those articles, as well as researched and wrote about American feminism, because she wanted to share information that would help stimulate women in Japan.⁴⁹ This stands in contrast with the goal of simply providing information and correcting mass media accounts, given by Akiyama and Preparation Group as the purpose of their translation project and introduction of American second-wave ideas to women in Japan.

* * *

Also in 1971, just three months after *An Accusation of Sex Discrimination* was released, Japanese translations of two pioneering collections of American second-wave writing, *Women's Liberation: Blueprint for the Future* and *Notes from the Second Year*, were published by commercial presses.⁵⁰ That both appeared in Japanese the year after their publication in the US and that the earliest of these was published less than six months after Japan's *ribu* movement began to attract the media's attention indicates a clear measure of interest in and awareness of the American movement—and the belief by publishers that such materials would sell.⁵¹ While, similar to *Women's Liberation Movement Materials*, both of these collections were translated by groups of women who were somewhat older than typical *ribu* activists, the choices made in these

⁴⁹ Ikegami, interview.

⁵⁰ Sookie Stambler, comp., *Women's Liberation: Blueprint for the Future* (New York: Ace Books, 1970), translated as Kate Millett et al., *Ūman ribu: josei wa nani o kangae, nani o motomeru ka*, trans. Takano Fumi et al. (Tokyo: Hayakawa Shobō, 1971); and Shulamith Firestone and Anne Koedt, eds., *Notes from the Second year: Women's Liberation; Major Writings of the Radical Feminists* (New York: Radical Feminism, 1970), published in Japanese as *Onna kara onna-tachi e: Amerika josei kaihō undō repōto*, trans. and commentary, Urufu no Kai (Tokyo: Gōdō shuppan, 1971). Bell hooks notes that this Stambler's *Women's Liberation* was one of a handful of anthologies from the early 1970s containing articles that attempted to reach audiences beyond educated white middle class women, efforts that were not sustained. See bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, 2nd ed. (London: Pluto Books, 2000), 7.

⁵¹ The left-leaning social orientation of books coming from Gōdō Shuppan, the publisher of the translated *Notes*, may explain the motivation for its support for the translation project. On the other hand, Hayakawa Shobō, the mainstream publisher of the Japanese version of *Women's Liberation*, was (and is) better known as a publisher of translated mysteries and science fiction, suggesting editors thought the volume would turn a profit, or at least not lose money.

two translation projects, including the framing of the finished products and the degree to which they were transfigured by their translators (and, possibly, editors), represent two different approaches to translation and two different ideas about the potential uses of information from the US movement. These differences appear to stem at least in part from the translators' degree of connectedness to second-wave feminism in Japan and in the US.

Women's Liberation was the first collection of American second-wave writing to be translated into Japanese, yet its translators give little indication in their translation that they felt a personal connection to the women's movement in either the US or Japan. Consequently, in spite of the activist message of the original text, the Japanese version does not appear to be an "engaged translation." To be sure, the copy on the outer *obi* [sash] and the dust jacket, as well as the commentary in the back of the book—part of what Keith Harvey calls the "bindings," which contextualize, contribute to, and construct the discourse—suggest the content of the book has relevance for women in Japan.⁵² Yet, it is far from clear whether the translation is intended to provide a "blueprint for the[ir] future." In the translated version, this original subtitle, which presents the text to readers as a plan for action, if not a call to arms, becomes a pair of tepid questions: "What are women thinking? What are they seeking?" Covering the bottom quarter of the dust jacket, the *obi* positions the book as a "groundbreaking anthology" which responds to the current "darkness" (for women) and as a successor to *The Second Sex* and Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, while the copy inside the dust jacket positions the contents of the book as part of the discourse of "the storm of women's lib, which is now blowing in America, Japan,

⁵² Keith Harvey, *Intercultural Movements: American Gay in French Translation* (Manchester, U.K.: St. Jerome Publishing, 2003). Harvey defines bindings as the "paratextual material that 'surrounds' the text," including what is on the images and copy on front and back covers, as well as reviews and even related criticism. In sum, "these diverse textual rewritings themselves partake in—and indeed contribute to—the intercultural traffic" of translated discourse, holding—or "binding"—texts and discourses to one another (ibid., 177).

and other countries.”⁵³ Of course, it is unclear to what extent these promotional blurbs are an editorial intervention and to what extent they are a product of the translators.

The six women who translated *Women's Liberation* were established academics in their late 30s to mid-50s, four of whom were then assistant or full professors at the prestigious and conservative women's school, Tsuda College, while the remaining two were assistant professors elsewhere.⁵⁴ All did research on English-language literature, English-speaking countries, or the English language itself, and most had already undertaken or would later undertake translation projects related to their research, not uncommon in Japanese academia. Although none of these women were at the time working in the yet to be established field of women's studies (*joseigaku*), their research demonstrates an on-going interest in women's issues. All but one had previously or were to publish research on either women's literature or women's labor issues in Britain or the US.⁵⁵ In 1976, scholar of American literature, Itabashi Yoshie (1931–) would, however, go on to translate Marabel Morgan's *The Total Woman*, a conservative bestseller advocating women's subservience to their husbands to create strong marriages. That, in her afterword to the translation, Itabashi describes Morgan's method to attain marital bliss as “extremely effective in Japan as well” demonstrates either a lack of actual commitment to the sexual and social autonomy of women advocated by second-wave feminists or, possibly, a personal change of heart.⁵⁶

The primary translator of *Women's Liberation*, Takano Fumi (1914–), a full professor with an M.A. from Radcliffe College and a former Fulbright scholar, wrote the “commentary”

⁵³ Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: Norton, 1963), first translated into Japanese as *Atarashii josei no sōzō*, trans. Miura Fumiko (Tokyo: Daiwa Shoten, 1965).

⁵⁴ See the list of translators in Millett et al., *Ūman ribu*, 303.

⁵⁵ The sixth translator was a specialist of English language pedagogy.

⁵⁶ Itabashi Yoshie, “*Tōtaru ūman atogaki*,” in Marabel Morgan's *Tōtaru ūman: shiawase na kekkon o kizuku himitsu*, trans. Itabashi Yoshie (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1976), 258.

(*kaisetsu*) at the back of the translation, contextualizing it with a historical overview of the struggle for women's rights in the US.⁵⁷ While Takano makes no attempt to relate the content of the book to Japan, toward the beginning of her commentary, she does offer a parenthetical aside implying that "those who insist that Japan's movement is independent, is not an imitation of America's [movement], and has no connection to it" are mistaken.⁵⁸ However accurate her assessment, this comment suggests she is not in accord with *ribu* leaders, who routinely made (and make) the claims she refutes. Commentaries, which are commonly included in both fiction and nonfiction texts, are sometimes brief introductory or explanatory comments, while other times they are quite long and offer a very detailed explication of or response to a text. In translated works, the translators sometimes include a "translator's afterword" (*yakusha atogaki*) or "translator's foreword" (*yakusha maegaki*) that variously offers background information, interpretation, and/or an explanation of at least some of the choices made in translation.⁵⁹ This is sometimes provided in addition to a commentary. That Takano's comments are included *qua* commentary, rather than as a translator's note, positions her as a scholar-cum-critic, not a translator. And her offering readers no discussion of the process of translation draws attention away from the fact that the translation of the text involved a number of significant choices made by Takano and her fellow translators, and, further, supports the false impression that the translated text is unchanged from the original.⁶⁰

In fact, the translators made significant changes in the framing, structure, and content of the book without giving readers any indication that they had done so, much less an explanation.

⁵⁷ Takano Fumi, "Kaisetsu," in Millett et al., *Ūman ribu*.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 299.

⁵⁹ Examples of such afterwords will be discussed below.

⁶⁰ Takano's only comment on language choice is a parenthetical aside in the opening sentence that "*ūman ribu*" is actually "*uimenzu ribu*" (*ibid.*, 299), a comment that functions to assert her position as an expert rather than to draw attention to the significance of language choice.

Two of these changes can be found without even opening the cover: first, the choice of a less activist subtitle, noted above, and, second, the replacement of the name of Sookie Stambler, the compiler of the original volume, with “Kate Millett et al.” as authors. Millett was, in fact, merely one of several dozen contributors, albeit of by far the longest chapter. The translators or the publisher of the Japanese version of *Women’s Liberation* seem to be banking on the new star power of this activist, who had already drawn attention in the mainstream Japanese press as the author of the “Mao’s little red book,” or, alternatively, the bible, of women’s liberation, namely Millett’s 1970 magnum opus, *Sexual Politics*.⁶¹ Translated excerpts from this work had already appeared by that same November in the feminist-leaning women’s magazine *Fujin kōron* [Women’s debate] (1916–), and were included in this translation of *Women’s Liberation*.⁶²

The most substantial change made by the translators was inside the cover: their excision of approximately a quarter of the book, including seven articles of various lengths, a one-act play, a short story, and two poems. Given that four of the six translators were scholars of literature, it is ironic that all four literary pieces were removed. A second irony is the translators’ choice to reorder the first and second of the seven sections in the original volume so that “Women on Men” precedes “Women on Women,” reversing the order of the original and—in contrast with the Japanese stereotype about gender norms in the US—putting men first. Moreover, while there is no simple direct translation for “on” in these titles, the Japanese section titles—“*Dansei tai*

⁶¹ Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (New York: Ballentine, 1970), later translated into Japanese as *Sei no seijigaku* [Sexual politics], trans. Fujieda Mioko (Tokyo: Jiyūsha, 1973). Millett was introduced in September 1970 in mainstream weekly *Shūkan bunshun* as a leader of the American “women power” movement and the author of the “Mao’s little red book” of women’s liberation—an idea probably borrowed from *Time* magazine, which just two weeks earlier called her “the Mao Tse-tung of Women’s Liberation.” And in *Fujin kōron*, which included a translated excerpt in their November 1970 issue, she was acknowledged as the author of “the bible of women’s liberation.” See *Shūkan bunshun*, “Zenbei ūman pawaa no shidōsha wa Nihonjin no tsuma: josei kaihō no ‘Mō goroku’ o kaita Keeto Yoshimura,” 12, no. 36 (September 14, 1970); “Who’s Come a Long Way, Baby?” *Time*, August 31, 1970: 16; Kate Millett, “Josei kaihō no baiburu: sei no seijigaku,” *Fujin kōron* 55, no. 11 (November 1970).

⁶² Millett, “Josei kaihō no baiburu”; Millett, “Sei no seijigaku,” trans., Takano Fumi, in Millett et al., *Ūman ribu*.

josei” [men “*tai*” women] and “*Josei tai josei*” [women “*tai*” women], respectively—replaces “on” with the oppositional “*tai*” [against, versus, to] rather than a more neutral alternative. This allows for a reading of conflict that is not present in the originals and (re)sets the tone for the translated articles.⁶³ Further, section four, “Women on Sex and Sex Roles,” was cut completely, eliminating three chapters, one of which was the single chapter in the original text on lesbians.⁶⁴ (This would not be the last time discourse by and on lesbians was to be omitted or at least severely truncated in feminist translation projects in the early 1970s.) Finally, in the section, “Women on Liberation,” a chapter on Black women’s liberation was kept, while a chapter on consciousness raising groups was eliminated.⁶⁵ In spite of the latter’s exclusion here, however, the group discussion practice of “*konshasunesu reijingu*” was soon to be adopted by some women within the Japanese movement in order for women to “develop [a]...clear self-identity [and] to lay bare their own ‘inner feminine-consciousness.’”⁶⁶ As with Takano’s offhand comment about the influence of the US lib movement, the translators’ choice to omit this chapter suggests they were not in touch with issues that were of most immediate concern and relevance to women in the *ribu* movement.

⁶³ A possible more neutral translation is “*josei ga kataru josei/dansei*” [women speaking (about) women].

⁶⁴ Martha Shelley, “Lesbianism and the Women’s Liberation Movement,” in Stambler, *Women’s Liberation*, 123–29.

⁶⁵ June Arnold, “Consciousness-Raising,” in *ibid.*; Maryanne Weathers, “An Argument for Black Women’s Liberation,” in *ibid.* While Black feminism might seem irrelevant to the women’s movement in an ostensibly homogeneous Japan, particularly as minority women in Japan had not yet drawn attention in the *ribu* movement, the topic it was not infrequently referenced in discussions of feminism in the US. I would argue that in certain circles in Japan at the time (and now) showing awareness of and the ability to discuss racial and class issues vis-à-vis US society then was used to indicate a certain cosmopolitan sophistication on the part of a speaker or writer.

⁶⁶ Tanaka Kazuko, *A Short History of the Women’s Movement in Modern Japan*, 3rd ed. (1975; Tokyo: Femintern Press, 1977), 47. See, also, e.g., Funamoto Emi’s comment in *Onna erosu*, “Henshū kōki,” no. 2 (April 1974): 213. The translation of *Notes from the Second Year* would, in fact, include Kathie Sarachild’s article outlining how to run a consciousness-raising group (“A Program for Feminist ‘Consciousness Raising,’” in Firestone and Koedt, *Notes from the Second Year*, 78–80), although they favored “consciousness revolution” (*ishiki no kakumei*) over the direct transliteration, which was to catch on later. See Kathie Sarachild, “Josei kaihō no puroguramu: ishiki no kakumei,” in Firestone and Koedt, *Onna kara onnatachi e*, 217–24; and “Kaisetsu to shōkai,” in *ibid.*, 150.

By contrast, the Japanese version of *Notes from the Second Year* is clearly the work of “engaged translators.” These women were both directly involved in the *ribu* movement and very forward about the interventions they made in their translation to create a text of direct relevance to women in Japan, and, ultimately, to help bring about social change. In spite of crediting Shulamith Firestone and Anne Koedt as the editors of the volume and themselves as merely the translators, the Wo(o)lf Society (Urufu no Kai) substantially and openly transfigured the text, translating, in full or in part, just 16 of the original 34 chapters that seemed most meaningful, then reorganizing them, and inserting their own voices to frame them.⁶⁷ The cover, an abstract rendering of badges such as worn by women in the American movement, was designed by Asakura Setsu (1922–), a woman artist who had just been to the US and had come into contact with the women’s liberation movement there.⁶⁸ Woolf Society members give the collection an entirely new title, *From Woman to Women: A Report from the American Women’s Liberation Movement* (*Onna kara onnatachi e: Amerika josei kaihō undō repōto*), positioning the text as a message from American women’s liberation activists to women in Japan.⁶⁹ And in lieu of burying their comments on the text in an afterword, as is common in Japan, the translators include a translators’ foreword at the front of the book and in the back insert an extended roundtable in which the text and the movement are discussed by the translators, who relate all of

⁶⁷ The group’s name comes from the impassioned suggestion of one its members, who was a fan of Virginia Woolf. That “Woolf” and “wolf” are both homophonous and spelled the same when transliterated into Japanese made this naming all the more “cool” to group members. Afterward, someone decided the name also worked an acronym for “Women’s Liberation Front,” which is how the name is explained in the translation itself. See Akiyama, *Ribu shishi nōto*, 60–61; and Urufu no Kai, “Yakusha maegaki,” in Firestone and Koedt, *Onna kara onnatachi e*, 4–5. Hereafter, I will write “Woolf” in reference to the initial inspiration that was transfigured into the group’s name.

⁶⁸ Akiyama, *Ribu shishi nōto*, 61.

⁶⁹ The translation “from woman to women” is my own. Japanese does not normally inflect nouns to indicate plural, so “*onna*” can mean either “woman” or “women.” “*Onnatachi*” is, however, inflected with “*tachi*” used to emphasize that there are multiple people. Akiyama says Woolf Society members vacillated between “*onna*” and “*onnatachi*.” They believed their final choice did not translate neatly into English (*ibid.*, 60), though I disagree.

this to their own life experiences.⁷⁰

Akiyama, formerly involved in Preparation Group, which dissolved around the end of 1970, played a key role in the translation activities of the Woolf Society, which itself first came together as a reading group under circumstances and with a composition of members similar to that of Preparation Group.⁷¹ As before, it was Akiyama who got her hands on a copy of the just published *Notes from the Second Year*, which she shared with the reading group. These “brave, bold” self-proclaimed radical feminists writing about sex, housework, and internal self-awareness had “put words to [feelings] that had been smoldering in our hearts, that now finally made sense,” and the nine members of the group set about to translate it “because we wanted as many women as possible to read it.”⁷²

The chapters they selected to share include Jo Freeman’s well-known “Bitch Manifesto,” Anne Koedt’s “Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm” (first published in *Fujin kōron*), Ti-Grace Atkinson’s “Institution of Sexual Intercourse,” and the “Redstockings Manifesto,” as well as writing by Shulamith Firestone and Kate Millett, and on topics including abortion, consciousness raising, capitalism and the oppression of women, and feminism and social revolution.⁷³ They divide the essays into three sections: “Women’s Experience,” “Love and Sex,” and “Women’s Struggle,” and preface each with a brief commentary on the essays contained therein, as well as information about the authors. Omitted from the translation were chapters that overlap significantly with the ones that were selected, and chapters on specific organizations, as well as

⁷⁰ Ibid., and Urufu no Kai, “Onna kara onnatachi e: zadankai: yakusha no atogaki ni kaete,” in Firestone and Koedt, *Onna kara onnatachi e*, 225–56.

⁷¹ Ibid., 33–34, 56.

⁷² Ibid., 56–57; Urufu no Kai, “Yakusha maegaki,” 3. Journalist Matsui Yayori, one of Woolf Society’s founding members, similarly recalls that the group gathered materials about the US movement because they wanted both an unmediated look at their struggle, and then translated them because they wanted to let women in Japan know about it too. See Matsui Yayori, *Josei kaihō to wa nani ka? Onnatachi no danketsu wa chikarazuyoku, kokkyō o koeru* (Tokyo: Miraisha, 1975), 40.

⁷³ Anne Koedt, “Wagina ōgazumu kara no kaihō,” trans. Mitsumoto Yasuko, *Fujin kōron* 56, no. 5 (May 1971).

chapters on drug addiction, classism within the women's movement, and feminist theater. In their foreword, the translators indicate that they cut around one third of the total text, and concentrated on translating the longer, richer essays.⁷⁴ While the foreword gives no further indication of why they chose the articles they did, in the roundtable in the back, the translators discuss their reaction to various essays and it is clear that they translated those that most closely spoke to and helped them reevaluate their own experiences with regard to the themes commonly discussed in feminist writing, including marriage, housework, sex, childbirth and childrearing, and work and discrimination.

Akiyama later recalled that, "We felt that by talking about how we all came to this book [in the roundtable], we could play a role in connecting the American writers and Japanese readers."⁷⁵ In the foreword, however, Woolf Society members express a certain ambivalence about the project as a whole. While they greatly wanted other women to read this text, they had wondered whether it would be better to spend their time writing something themselves, or engaging in more direct activism. They realized, however, that they could not leave the job to a professional male translator: even though he would be able to do the job much faster, they doubted a man—not torn as they were between work and home—would be able to translate it accurately.⁷⁶ They were further encouraged in this regard by Anne Koedt's positive response to their request for permission to translate the text, telling them that the text was written by women and should be translated by women.⁷⁷

The responses the translators received from the translation's readers were also

⁷⁴ They do not, however, directly indicate that they abridged articles in the course of translation, such as Meredith Tax's "Woman and Her Mind: The Story of Everyday Life," only a third of which was translated as "Onna no shinjō."

⁷⁵ Akiyama, *Ribu shishi nōto*, 59.

⁷⁶ Urufu no Kai, "Yakusha maegaki," 3.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

overwhelmingly positive and encouraging, reassuring the translators that their choice to translate the *Notes from the Second Year* was a good one. The transfigured text was clearly as inspirational to the readers of the upwards of 5,000 copies sold as the original was to its translators.⁷⁸ In spite of an absence of significant advertising or reviews, readers around the country found copies of the book, and sent Woolf Society dozens of letters full of passion, desperately seeking information about *ribu* and solidarity with other women. A third of these they compiled in a booklet, *Letters to From Woman to Women*.⁷⁹ The translators spoke to readers in many different ways. One female student from Tokyo wrote,

I just finished reading 'The Bitch Manifesto' and I'm so excited my hands are still trembling. I feel like saying 'The Bitch Manifesto' is truly 'My Human Manifesto' [It] made some things very clear for me. ... 'Activism' like in "Bitch Manifesto" isn't possible for me right now but I hope to carry on with an awareness of what's inside me.⁸⁰

A woman from Kyoto said the volume helped her think deeply about the meaning of “woman” (*onna*), as well as the status of minorities in Japan, while another woman from Tokyo read the roundtable at the back and realized that the “woman problem” is not just an “intellectual woman problem.”⁸¹ And a 32-year-old housewife from Nagoya, in central Japan, was thrilled to find that what she had always believed about sex was true.⁸² Women critical of the volume were also motivated to write the group, including one who was “completely disappointed” that the members of the roundtable “just expressed admiration and agreement with American lib activists’ opinions, and not a word of criticism or opposition.”⁸³ They also received a number of

⁷⁸ Akiyama notes that around 5,000 copies were printed over three print runs and that the book was no longer available by the 1980s. See her *Ribu shishi nōto*, 61.

⁷⁹ See *ibid.*, 74; and Urufu no kai, “Maegaki: 14-nin no onnatachi kara,” *Onna kara onnatachi e* [Urufu no kai, Tokyo], no. 1 (1972):1. In September 1971, this translation, along with the translation of *Women’s Liberation*, were, however, mentioned in the *Asahi shinbun* as two of a number of “reports on the American women’s liberation movement being published one after another” in Japan. See “Ūman ribu no ichinen: Amerika to Nihon,” *Asahi shinbun* September 22, 1971, morning ed., 17.

⁸⁰ Quoted in Akiyama, *Ribu shishi nōto*, 70.

⁸¹ Cited in *ibid.*, 70–71.

⁸² Cited in *ibid.*, 73.

⁸³ Cited in *ibid.*, 75.

letters like one from a university student in Kodaira, near Tokyo, who put together a small group and had begun to “raise their [as yet] naïve voices.” What they need more than anything, she writes, is information, and asks Woolf Society to let her know if group puts out their own publication.⁸⁴ This, they very quickly decided to do, and in the spring of 1972, they produced the first of what was to be three issues of *From Woman to Women* published over the following two years. This new publication focused some of the same issues as *Notes from the Second Year* but was written from the perspective of women in Japan and tailored more specifically to their concerns.⁸⁵ With the first issue the Woolf Society included the booklet of letters as a supplement, creating a sense of dialogue between readers and translators, as well as readers and readers over the meaning of the text.⁸⁶ And like this text, other translations of key American second-wave feminist texts also sparked dialogues on issues such as women’s bodies, sexuality, and reproductive health.

From Translation to Transfiguration and Back: *Our Bodies, Ourselves*

Our Bodies, Ourselves was made to be translated. When the small group of Boston women who put together the open-ended “course” that became *Our Bodies, Ourselves* were negotiating with the publishing house Simon and Schuster to produce the first commercial edition, they fought for and won a contract clause calling for the book to be released simultaneously in Spanish for US distribution.⁸⁷ Although the Spanish version was ultimately

⁸⁴ Cited in *ibid.*, 73–74.

⁸⁵ Another *mini-komi*, this one based in Osaka, also adopted the *From Woman to Women* name.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁸⁷ The first edition was Boston Women’s Health Collective (later, Boston Women’s Health Book Collective), *Women and their Bodies: A Course* (Boston: Boston Women’s Health Collective and New England Free Press, 1970). The title was changed to *Our Bodies, Ourselves* with the printing of a new edition by the same press in 1971. Combined, these two editions sold over 250,000 copies. The first commercial edition was Boston Women’s Health Book Collective—hereafter BWHBC—*Our Bodies, Ourselves: A Book By and For Women* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973). See Kathy Davis, *The Making of Our Bodies, Ourselves: How Feminism Travels Across Borders* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2007), 22, 24.

delayed by several years, as a result of a combination of coincidence and fortuitous personal ties, both within Japan and transnationally, three Japanese women came to produce one of the first translations of this landmark in the transnational movement for women to take ownership of their own bodies and sexuality.⁸⁸ With its emphasis on female sexuality and reproduction—including chapters on sexual anatomy, sexuality, rape, venereal disease, birth control, abortion, and childbirth—the book resonated as well with major issues of concerns of *ribu* activists. And the conditions that prompted its compilation by the Boston Women’s Health Book Collective were equally true for women in Japan: namely, the frustration engendered by the need to entrust medical issues—particularly those surrounding sexual and reproductive health—to pre-dominantly male, “paternal, judgmental and non-informative doctors” because of a lack of knowledge about one’s own body.⁸⁹ In fact, in the fall of 1972, at the suggestion of a couple of Americans then in Japan to protest the Vietnam War, the Woolf Society had already published an issue of *From Woman to Women* focused on women and sex/sexuality (*sei*), divided into sections on abortion and birth control, pregnancy, and infertility, as well as sex/sexuality and the female body⁹⁰—many of the issues addressed in more depth by the women in Boston. That these issues were of interest to a broad spectrum of women in Japan is evidenced by the fact that, in addition to circulating through informal *ribu* networks, part of this issue was reprinted in *Fujin kōron* in spring 1973.⁹¹

⁸⁸ The US Spanish-language edition was not actually published until 1977. See Davis, *The Making of Our Bodies, Ourselves*, 64–66.

⁸⁹ BWHBC, *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (1973), 1.

⁹⁰ “Hajime ni,” *Onna kara onnatachi e* [Urufu no kai, Tokyo], no. 2 (Fall 1972), 1.

⁹¹ Urufu no Kai, “Taiken kiroku: wa ga sei no jikken: *Onna kara onnatachi e no hōkoku*,” *Fujin kōron* 58, no. 4 (April 1973). The three issues of *From Woman to Women* are undated; I have confirmed the publication dates with Akiyama Yōko (personal communication, June 21, 2009). Copies of *mini-komi* produced by any given *ribu* group were frequently sent to other groups, which sometimes excerpted from them or promoted them in their *mini-komi* or otherwise made them available to activists in their region. A synopsis of the content of this issue of *Onna kara onnatachi e* appeared, for instance, in a Nagoya-based *mini-komi*: *Onna no hangyaku*, “Urufu no kai ‘Onna kara onnatachi e’ dai-ni gō,” no. 6 (December 1972): 53–54; and lists of *mini-komi* available at Ribu

Yamada Mitsuko (1945–), one of the three translators of the volume into Japanese, received a copy of an early version of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* from an American friend around 1972 and found it “just wonderful.” Around the same time, she also got her hands on a copy of the “sex/sexuality for women” issue of *From Woman to Women*, which is how she learned about the Woolf Society and came to send a letter to them, enclosing *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. Yamada explained that she had been asked to translate the book by an American woman living in Kōchi, on the rural island of Shikoku, and had been looking for co-translators for a while. When Akiyama received the letter and the book, which did a much more thorough job than the Woolf Society had managed thus far, she knew she wanted to help introduce this book to women in Japan. Yamada had just moved to Matsuyama, also on Shikoku, which is where she met Kuwahara Kazuyo (1942–), an English teacher previously unconnected to *ribu*, who became the third translator.⁹²

Although they wanted to translate the whole book, the three translators realized they needed to abridge it if it was to be cheap enough for ordinary women to afford. The new Simon and Schuster version, which had just reached them, was greatly expanded from the version they first read and it included new chapters on nutrition, exercise, lesbians, aging, and medicine and society. Using the structure of the older version as a guide, they decided to concentrate on the “topics of greatest urgency”: the body itself, birth control, pregnancy, and childbirth. In addition, they were committed to supplementing the information with information specific to Japan.⁹³ Ten months after an excerpt from *Our Bodies, Ourselves* on the birth control pill was published in *Fujin kōron* in November 1973, the Japanese translation was released, and sold well enough that

Shinjuku Center were printed in the center’s *Ribu News*.

⁹² See Akiyama Yōko, Kuwahara Kazuyo, and Yamada Mitsuko, “Yakusha atogaki,” in BWHBC, *Onna no karada: sei to ai no shinjitsu*, trans. Akiyama Yōko, Kuwahara Kazuyo, and Yamada Mitsuko (Tokyo: Gōdō Shuppan, 1974), 343–44; Akiyama, *Ribu shishi nōto*, 154–55, 158.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 158–59; Akiyama, Kuwahara, and Yamada, “Yakusha atogaki,” 345.

it was reprinted several times.⁹⁴ It was one of the first two foreign-language editions to be published, with the other published in 1974 being in Italian. In the decade after the first Simon and Schuster edition was published, with Japan among the first of twelve country-specific versions released in various languages, nine in European countries, it is clear that Japanese *ribu* activists were very much in the transnational feminist loop.⁹⁵

The Japanese version credits both the Boston Women's Health Book Collective and the three Japanese translators prominently on the cover of the book, retitled *Women's Bodies: The Truth about Sex and Love* (*Onna no karada: sei to ai no shinjitsu*)—a title chosen to more readily convey the contents of the book than would a direct translation of the English original.⁹⁶ *Women's Bodies* opens with a letter from members of the Boston group expressing great pleasure that the book is being published in Japanese and the hope that it will be useful. They also emphasize that the book, which they say could only have come to be as the fruit of a collective project, is just a “beginning” step toward the improvement of women's understanding of their own bodies and lives.⁹⁷ The very engaged translators make their presence visible throughout, from the “Foreword to the Japanese edition,” which follows the collective's letter, to the brief annotations and supplementary information inserted throughout in dark brackets, to the two distinct afterwords they include at the back.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ BWHBC, “Taikenteki piru no subete (jikken hōkoku),” *Fujin kōron* 58, no. 11 (November 1973). Akiyama says its sales made it a bestseller among *ribu*-related books. See Akiyama, *Ribu shishi nōto*, 164.

⁹⁵ After Japan and Italy in 1974—and in addition to the 1977 Spanish-language version for the US market—the other countries were, in chronological order, Denmark (1975), Taiwan (1976, unauthorized), France (1977), the UK (1978), Germany (1980), Sweden (1980), Greece (1981), the Netherlands (1981), Israel (1982), and Spain (1982). See Davis, *The Making of Our Bodies, Ourselves*, 52–53, 64–66. Davis downplays the first Japanese and Taiwanese versions in her narrative about the global spread of the book, perhaps because it runs against the standard narrative of second-wave feminist discourse spreading from the US to Europe to the rest of the world. See *ibid.*, 60–61.

⁹⁶ Akiyama recalls not being satisfied with this title, but the group decided that for such a pioneering book, they need a title that was easy to understand, something they did not believe more direct translations of the original title would have been. See Akiyama, *Ribu shishi nōto*, 165.

⁹⁷ BWHBC, “Nihon no mina-san e.”

⁹⁸ Akiyama Yōko, Kuwahara Kazuyo, and Yamada Mitsuko, “Nihongo-ban maegaki,” “Iryō to

In their foreword, the translators summarize the history of and impetus for the American original version and, like the letter from the Boston women's group, situate *Women's Bodies* as a collective project.⁹⁹ While the translators are clearly reaching out to individual women across Japan, their emphasis on the collective nature of the book's production is very much in keeping with the spirit of *ribu*; and, to the translators, *Women's Bodies*—the product of this collective effort—“symbolizes” what the women involved on both sides of the Pacific hope is “a new expansion and intensification of the movement.”¹⁰⁰ In the remainder of the foreword, the translators turn to Japan, which they explain has “completely the same” circumstances that drove women in the US to develop the book: in Japan, as in the US, the medical system has deprived women of both their feelings about and accurate information on their own bodies. But, as the Boston group says, “knowledge is power,” and the translators hope, through this project, to empower women in Japan. Finally, they provide a nuts-and-bolts explanation of how, among other things, their own additions of Japan-specific information are indicated in the text.¹⁰¹ Following up on this, the first afterword explains that, while there are many points in common between the medical systems in Japan and the US, there are also many differences. It exhorts women to take steps, such as paying attention to their own bodies and asking questions of doctors, to get the best medical treatment possible.¹⁰²

In their “Translators’ Afterword,” Akiyama, Kuwahara, and Yamada describe their own encounter with this book as taking place “in the middle of the expansive flows of the women’s liberation movement which links the United States and Japan.” This is exemplified by their

watashitachi: yakusha gurūpu,” “Yakusha atogaki”

⁹⁹ Akiyama, Kuwahara, and Yamada, “Nihongo-ban maegaki”; the history is provided in the English version: BWHBC, “Preface,” *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (1973).

¹⁰⁰ Akiyama, Kuwahara, and Yamada, “Nihongo-ban maegaki,” 3.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁰² Akiyama, Kuwahara, and Yamada, “Iryō to watashitachi.”

narration of the translation's history, including the circumstances whereby Yamada came to be asked to translate the earlier version and found the other two translators, as well as the international group of women and men who assisted with the project.¹⁰³ The translators then position the book as a "Japanese language version" (*Nihongo ban*) rather than a "translation" (*hon'yaku ban*).¹⁰⁴ This, they explain, is because of the restructuring of the book they carried out—in consultation with their editor, the American authors, and others—in order, as noted above, to keep the cost down and make it available to as many women as possible. This, they believe, is in keeping with the intention of the original authors.¹⁰⁵ The final product is divided into ten chapters, including the preface: "Our Changing Selves," "Anatomy and Physiology," "On Sexuality," "Birth Control," "Abortion," "Pregnancy," "Childbirth," "Postpartum," "Venereal Disease," and "Illness and Sanitation," a breakdown which, as the editors explain, uses the skeleton of the older version with the meat of the new.¹⁰⁶

Although the translators retain a few pages in the sexuality chapter on homosexuality (*dōseiai*)—nestled between sections on rape and living alone—they did not include the Simon and Schuster version's groundbreaking chapter on lesbians, "In Amerika They Call Us Dykes."¹⁰⁷ While "unfortunate," they explain by way of a justification for its omission, this chapter was written by a lesbian group not otherwise connected to the Boston Women's Health Collective. They direct "those who are interested" to the translation already published in the commercial *ribu*-run magazine *Woman Eros (Onna erosu)*.¹⁰⁸ Although she had no connection

¹⁰³ Akiyama, Kuwahara, and Yamada, "Yakusha atogaki," 343.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 344–45.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 345.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 345.

¹⁰⁷ See BWHBC, *Onna no karada*, 101–6. "[F]ar and away the most controversial chapter," Kathy Davis writes, the lesbian chapter "became a landmark publication on sexuality and relationships between women, providing encouragement to countless women to 'come out' as women loving women." It was also eye-opening for many members of the Boston women's collective. See Davis, *The Making of Our Bodies, Ourselves*, 9.

¹⁰⁸ Akiyama, Kuwahara, and Yamada, "Yakusha atogaki," 345. In fact, only the first half had been

to any lesbian groups in Japan at the time, Akiyama recalls being concerned about leaving the chapter out, but satisfied that it was introduced to a lesbian group to translate.¹⁰⁹

The “lesbian group” turned out to be the singular Amano Michimi. Amano had become involved in Tanaka’s Group Fighting Women and the activities of Ribu Shinjuku Center while acting as a go-between for several individuals who, ironically, wanted to translate Tanaka’s influential *For Women with Spirit* into English.¹¹⁰ Though Tanaka had unceremoniously booted her out six months later, Amano had maintained ties with other *ribu* activists. Funamoto Emi, a *ribu* activist who was one of the founding editors of *Woman Eros*, invited Amano to help produce the journal, and specifically asked her to translate the lesbian chapter for the magazine, which Funamoto thought would be a shame not to put into Japanese. Amano accepted, thinking that it would be a good chance to work on her English and might lead to something else.¹¹¹ Amano’s translation, which was to appear over two issues of *Woman Eros*, in April and September of 1974, was most likely the first commercially published translation by a self-identified *rezubian* of lesbian-authored writing into Japanese.¹¹² Kagura Jamu, who was strongly attracted to women but had no one with whom she could discuss it, recalled years later what a shock it was to read that article in a copy of the journal at her neighbor’s: “one look at the word ‘lesbian’ gave me a start, and I slammed the magazine shut.” Kagura would later become a founding member of the group Regumi no Gomame.¹¹³

published at that point, while the second half was published the same month that the Japanese version of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* was published. See BWHBC, “Rezu to yobarete,” pts. 1 and 2, *Onna erosu* no. 2 (April 1974), no. 3 (September 1974).

¹⁰⁹ Akiyama Yōko, interview with author, March 4, 2009.

¹¹⁰ Tanaka Mitsu, *Inochi no onna-tachi e: torimidashi ūman ribu ron* (Tokyo: Tabata Shoten, 1972).

¹¹¹ Amano Michimi, interview with author, April 2, 2009.

¹¹² The omission of this chapter from the original translation and its publication in *Onna erosu* was significant enough to be remembered twenty years later in a comment on the two volumes in a lesbian book guide produced by the Osaka-based *rezubian* group Kansai YLP. See Kansai YLP, *Rezubian no tame no dokusho annai* (Osaka: Kansai YLP, 1994), 4.

¹¹³ Hisada Megumi, “Genki jirushi no rezubian: ‘Regumi no Gomame’ tōjō!” in Bessatsu Takarajima, no.

While issues of specific concern to women romantically and sexually attracted to other women were, in the end, very much downplayed in *Women's Bodies*, the core of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* resonated with many issues of great concern to women in the *ribu* movement, as noted above. And, building on this immediate relevance, within the *ribu* movement the transfigured text became a springboard for further discussions about women “stealing back their bodies” from gynecologists and obstetricians.¹¹⁴ In a roundtable discussion printed in *Woman Eros* in March 1975, co-translator Yamada and three others talk about the lessons the book has for women in Japan. One of the three, *Woman Eros* editor Saeki Yōko (1940–) does, however, open the roundtable by commenting that, while such a book “will be written by women’s hands for women in Japan as well,” at the moment, using *Women's Bodies* as a starting point, she would like to discuss the theme of “me and women’s bodies.”¹¹⁵ The discussion took off from there, in the form of study groups and teach-ins at, for instance, Ribu Shinjuku Center and the women’s space Hōkiboshi.¹¹⁶ At Ribu Shinjuku Center, the first of a series of “women’s bodies” teach-ins was held in the fall of 1976, which would continue on at other locations from the close of the center in May 1977 through 1982. Using a slide show produced by one of the Feminist Women’s Health Centers in the US and methods used in the US to better acquaint women with their own bodies, participants were encouraged to talk and learn about their own bodies, sexuality, and reproductive health. For instance, women at the teach-ins were invited to use speculums to view their cervixes and taught how to do breast self examinations to detect cancer at an early stage.¹¹⁷

64, *Onna o ai suru onnatachi no monogatari* (Tokyo: JICC Shuppanyoku, 1987), 123.

¹¹⁴ Wakabayashi Naeko, “Onna no karada renzoku tiichi in,” *Onna erosu* no. 8 (March 1977): 161.

¹¹⁵ Nagai Reiko et al., “Onna no karada,” *Onna erosu* no. 4 (March 1975): 114. *Women's Bodies* also heads the list of books on learning about the body printed in the subsequent volume. See *Onna erosu*, “Onnatachi no hon seizoroi,” no. 5 (September 1975): 166.

¹¹⁶ Hōkiboshi [Comet] was a women’s space which was run in Tokyo’s Shinjuku district for about four years in the late 1970s.

¹¹⁷ See Ribu Shinjuku Sentaa Shiryō Hozon Kai, ed. *Kono michi hitosuji: Ribu Shinjuku Sentaa shiryō shūsei*—hereafter RSSHK, *Kono michi hitosuji*—(Tokyo: Inpakuto, 2008), v; Wakabayashi, “Onna no karada

Wakabayashi Naeko, who had worked at the Feminist Women’s Health Center in Oakland, California, during a year spent in North America, 1975–1976, subtitles her *Onna erosu* article on the teach-ins “toward the establishment of a clinic for women,” clearly indicating the direction at least some of the women involved in the teach-ins were looking.¹¹⁸ When, almost a decade later, the Woman’s Health Center (Ūmanzu Herusu Sentaa) opened in Osaka, one of its founders described the need for women to learn more about their own bodies and thereby taking control of their reproductive health¹¹⁹—the same language used in *Women’s Bodies*. While it would be overly simplistic to situate such clinics in a direct line of descent from *Our Bodies, Ourselves* or as a simple imitation of the women’s health centers in the US with which women in Japan such as Wakabayashi had connections, we cannot deny that these ties and these translations and other transfigurations are a significant part of the context in which they emerged.

Outside the *ribu* movement, *Women’s Bodies* quickly reached even more readers in its further transfiguration in two volumes of the popular Bessatsu Takarajima series (1976–), *Women’s Dictionary (Onna no jiten)* and *Women’s Bodies (Onna no karada)* in 1977 and 1978.¹²⁰ On the cover of both of these books is the English subtitle, “The New Women’s Survival Guide Book.” The volumes offer a more expansive lifestyle guide than the Woolf Society’s translation, but openly draw on *Our Bodies, Ourselves/Women’s Bodies*. The opening section of *Women’s Dictionary* is focused specifically on women’s bodies and is given a title that is literal translation of “our bodies, ourselves” (*watashitachi no karada, watashitachi jishin*),

renzoku tiichi in”; *Onna hangyaku*, “Onna no karada renzoku tiichi in: onna no tame no kurinikku setsuritsu ni mukete,” 16 (March 1977), 38.

¹¹⁸ On the teach-ins, see Wakabayashi, “*Onna no karada renzoku tiichi in*”; Wakabayashi Naeko, “Onna no nettowaaku no naka de ikiru,” oral history taken by Sugiura Ikuko, in Sugiura Ikuko, *Nihon no rezubian komyuniti: kōjutsu no undō shi* (Tokyo: privately printed, 2009), 22; “Komyuniti no rekishi: nenpyō to intabyū de furikaeru,” *Aniisu* (summer 2001): 40. The study groups at Hōkiboshi are mentioned in Nakayama Chinatsu, *Gendai Nihon josei no kibun* (Tokyo: Mainichi Shinbun Sha, 1987), 15–16.

¹¹⁹ *Shin chihei*, “Motto shintai aisou yo: Ūmanzu Herusu Sentaa,” no. 131 (November 1985).

¹²⁰ Bessatsu Takarajima, no. 4 *Onna no jiten* (Tokyo: JICC Shuppanyoku, 1977); Bessatsu Takarajima, no. 9, *Onna no karada* (Tokyo: JICC Shuppanyoku, 1978).

words also included in English on the cover, the table of contents, and the first page of the section. That section also contains illustrations by Nina Reimer found in both the original *Our Bodies, Ourselves* and its Japanese translation, as well as a brief section on “homosexuality” (not lesbians), this time penned, not translated, by Amano.¹²¹

While Amano writes somewhat equivocally about this volume in *Onna erosu*, these new transfigurations as well as the original translation are recommend in and served as references for a hand-written, mimeographed guide to birth control methods first produced in 1983 by Students to Prevent the Worsening of the Eugenics Protection Law (Yūsei Hogo Hō Kaiaku o Soshi Suru Gakusei no Kai), formed as part of a larger response to new proposed revisions to the law.¹²² The pamphlet, which immediately sold out of its initial print run of 200, was given a title that could be read as *Women’s Bodies* or *My Body*.¹²³ The group writes “I” (*watashi*) in superscript over the character for “woman”/“women” (*onna*) to link the self to women’s bodies, thereby echoing the titles of both the translated and English versions.

A year later the Boston Women’s Health Collective released *The New Our Bodies, Ourselves*, the first major revision of the book in a decade.¹²⁴ The project to translate this version into Japanese began with a suggestion by outspoken feminist scholar Ueno Chizuko (1948–) in 1986, which along with the timing, position it as a post-*ribu* feminist project.¹²⁵ And yet, the project involved women who had been active in the *ribu* movement and was supervised by Fujieda Mioko, who had assisted with the 1974 translation of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* around

¹²¹ Amano Michimi, “Dōseiai,” in Bessatsu Takarajima, no. 4, *Onna no jiten*.

¹²² See Amano’s comment in *Onna erosu* “Henshū kōki,” no. 8 (March 1977): 190. Yūsei Hogo Hō Kaiaku o Soshi Suru Gakusei no Kai, ed., *Onna (watashi) no karada: hinin o kangaeru*, rev. ed. (Tokyo: Yūsei Hogo Hō Kaiaku o Soshi Suru Gakusei no Kai, ca. 1984), 4, 18, 39. The student group was formed within the group Soshiren in January 1983. See Masae Kato, *Women’s Rights? The Politics of Abortion in Modern Japan* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009), 129.

¹²³ Yūsei Hogo Hō Kaiaku o Soshi Suru Gakusei no Kai, ed., *Onna (watashi) no karada*, 1.

¹²⁴ BWHBC, *The New Our Bodies, Ourselves: A Book By and For Women* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984).

¹²⁵ Nakanishi Toyoko, *Onna no hon’ya no monogatari* (Tokyo: Domesu Shuppan, 2006), 90–91.

the same time she was translating Millett's *Sexual Politics*.¹²⁶ This clearly positions the new translation in the same complex trajectory as earlier *ribu* discourse on women's health in which the original translation played such a key role.

While the translators of the 1974 version made significant abridgements of the American text to keep the cost affordable, the Boston Women's Health Book Collective encouraged the translators of *The New Our Bodies, Ourselves* to translate the whole volume, and, preferably, to publish it at the hands of women.¹²⁷ A decade earlier, finding a woman-run publisher would have been a tall order—even the Boston Women's Health Book Collective continues to this day to publish its books through Simon and Schuster—but for the new Japanese translation this call was answered by Nakanishi Toyoko (1930–). In 1982, Nakanishi founded the Kyoto-based Shōkadō, Japan's first women's bookstore, which became the new translation's publisher. And, unlike the first translation, which was the work of three women with the assistance of others, some 50 women are credited as translators or editors of the new volume, making it more obviously the kind of collective project these women were trying to render into Japanese. And like the book upon which it was based, the translation included a page full of photos of these women, personalizing the translators and editors in the same way as the original had done for its contributors.¹²⁸

This time, they followed the wishes of the Boston collective and attempted to faithfully translate nearly the entire volume.¹²⁹ One unfortunate result of this was the price tag of 5,000 yen (then around US\$38), which made the oversized 600-page book less affordable than the

¹²⁶ See Akiyama, Kuwahara, and Yamada, "Yakusha atogaki," 344; Millett, *Sei no seijigaku*.

¹²⁷ Nakanishi, *Onna no hon'ya no monogatari*, 90. Davis notes that, over time, the Boston women became less interventionist about the content of what was translated, and were more concerned that the translation and localization projects in various countries help bring about collective discussions on women's bodies, sexuality and health. See Davis, *Translating Our Bodies, Ourselves*, 79.

¹²⁸ See BWHBC, *The New Our Bodies, Ourselves*, xii; BWHBC, *Karada, watashitachi jishin*, 6; Nakanishi, *Onna no hon'ya no monogatari*, 94.

¹²⁹ Ogino Miho, "Nihon-ban ni tsuite," in BWHBC, *Karada, watashitachi jishin*, 8.

earlier edition had been. While the translators aimed for a more literal translation of this book, to which they assigned the more literally translated title *Bodies, Ourselves* (*Karada, watashitachi jishin*), it was nonetheless a very engaged translation. Like its predecessor over a decade earlier, the translators and editors assert their presence throughout, beginning with a three-part foreword penned by the three women in charge of translation and editing.¹³⁰ While they continue to use physiognomical illustrations from the original, according to the editors, most photographs have been replaced with photos taken in Japan, to make it easier for readers to relate—although this might have been a positive spin put on an editorial problem.¹³¹ Like the 1974 translation, the translators and editors insert up-to-date local information in dark brackets throughout. They also add longer sidebars with local information and, in several cases, lengthier sections, such as the two-page section on Japanese lesbians added to the end of the lesbian chapter.¹³² Finally, at the end they add a 30-page listing of information on available obtaining gynecologic and obstetric care around the country, including details on fees, services available, and what kind of information can be provided to whom at various clinics.¹³³ Such a list both provides readers with invaluable information and suggests to them what is important in making choices about reproductive and sexual health care.

When the translation of *The New Our Bodies, Ourselves* was finally published in 1988, as

¹³⁰ Kawano Miyoko, “Onna kara onna e no messeiji,” in BWHBC, *Karada, watashitachi jishin*, 7–8, available in English translation in Sandra Buckley, *Broken Silence: Voices of English Translation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 199–202; Ogino Miho, “Nihon-ban ni tsuite,” available in English translation in Buckley, *Broken Silence*, 202–12; Fujieda Mioko, “‘Onna to kenkō’ undō to *Karada, watashitachi jishin*,” in BWHBC, *Karada, watashitachi jishin*. Kawano and Ogino are officially listed as in charge of proofreading (*kōetsu*), but as they were supervising the “Japanese editing group” (Nihongo-ban Henshū Gurūpu), for the sake of simplicity, I refer to them as editors.

¹³¹ Ogino, “Nihon-ban ni tsuite,” 9. Nakanishi complicates Ogino’s claim, however. As she recalls, it would have been too difficult and expensive to obtain permission to reproduce the photographs from the originals since there were so many different copyright holders. See Nakanishi, *Onna no hon’ya monogatari*, 100–101.

¹³² BWHBC, *Karada, watashitachi jishin*, 146–48; a partial English translation can be found in Buckley, *Broken Silence*, 213–16.

¹³³ BWHBC, *Karada, watashitachi jishin*, 567–95; a partial English translation can be found in Buckley, *Broken Silence*, 204–5.

major and impressive an undertaking as it was, the oversized and not very portable volume probably did not have the impact of the less substantial translation published fourteen years earlier had had on elevating awareness on women's health issues. To begin with, the earlier translation played a vital role in the formative years of the women's health movement in Japan, while by 1988, even if many doctors remained largely unwilling to cede control of women's bodies and health to women themselves, information was by far more readily available in numerous other books, at women's centers, and through various women's organizations around the country. Moreover, even with inflation, the new translation was an expensive book, priced out of range of women with a limited budget, whatever their age or stage in life.

There is, however, a very significant intervention this new translation made in public discourse and that is on the Japanese language itself. The Sino-Japanese compounds long used to refer to most sexual organs contain the character for shame (*chi*) or for negative (*in*), creating a strong negative or shameful association with the parts of women's bodies associated with sex and reproduction. The translators replaced these negative characters with the more neutral character for sex (*sei*), generating new words to talk about things like the vulva, the labia, pubic hair, and so forth. They also replaced the then standard word to describe menstruation (*seiri*), the primary meaning of which is "physiological" with a new term meaning "monthly occurrence" (*gekkei*). In so doing, the translators hoped to remove both the shame and euphemism that might prevent women from speaking openly about their bodies. Finally, the translators replaced the standard term for nurse (*kangofu*), a term meaning "a woman who takes care of" with a somewhat more unisex term (*kangoshi*) for "a person who takes care of."¹³⁴ While all of the older terms remain in use over twenty years later, the terms the translators introduced in this translation have become increasingly standard in public discourse, as evidenced by their

¹³⁴ Ogino, "Nihon-ban ni tsuite," 8.

presence in dictionaries.¹³⁵

Giving Voice to *rezubian*, Transfiguring *The Hite Report*

Three years after *Our Bodies, Ourselves* was first published commercially in the US, extending the women's health movement to the mainstream, Shere Hite's trailblazing *The Hite Report* (1976) revealed the results of a survey of over three thousand women across the US on their sexual feelings, experiences, and opinions on to masturbation, intercourse, clitoral stimulation, lesbianism, women's subservient role in sex (with a man), the "sexual revolution," older women's sexuality, and the changing nature of sex itself.¹³⁶ What made this book meaningful to women in the US was arguably not the statistics Hite tabulated but respondents' often very intimate, sometime moving responses to Hite's questions. Ranging from brief sentences to lengthy paragraphs and collectively occupying the bulk of the book, these real and diverse women's voices showed the women reading the book both that they were not alone in their experiences and that there were other sexual possibilities that might be open to them.

An ostensibly complete Japanese translation was published the following year by Ishikawa Hiroyoshi (1933–2009), a male sociologist who had already published and translated prolifically on diverse topics that included sexuality but nothing specifically focused on women or written from a feminist perspective.¹³⁷ While analyzing Ishikawa's ability to translate intimate details of women's sexual lives is beyond the scope of my discussion here, I only encountered one article critiquing having a man translate the text, this in an unsigned article in

¹³⁵ One exception is the word they use for nurse, which includes the character *shi* (士) meaning person, man, or samurai, and which has been used to indicate a specifically male nurse. In contemporary Japanese, the official term for nurse is now also pronounced *kangoshi*, but written using a more gender neutral character meaning teacher (師).

¹³⁶ Shere Hite, *The Hite Report: A Nationwide Study of Female Sexuality* (New York: Dell).

¹³⁷ Shere Hite, *Haito ripōto: atarashii josei no ai to sei no shōgen*, 2 vols., trans. Ishikawa Hiroyoshi (Tokyo: Pashifika, 1977).

rezubian-feminist group Shining Wheel's *mini-komi* discussing the issue of translations by men in the other of the ten countries that had, to date, seen translations. The article makes no specific comments on Ishikawa's translation.¹³⁸ Perhaps this general lack of attention to Ishikawa's role as a translator simply reflects the translator's relative invisibility in Japan, or perhaps women readers' acceptance of the ubiquity of male translators. It merits noting, however, that at the end of his translator's preface in the first volume, Ishikawa thanks three women and one man whose assistance he solicited "because women's sexual behavior and sexual sensations (*sei kankaku*) are the main theme" of the book, implying not so subtly that, as a man, he could not have as readily translated this content into Japanese without their input.¹³⁹ Ishikawa also penned an article introducing *The Hite Report* to the readers of the new and trendy women's magazine *Croissant* (*Kurowassan*, 1977–), timed to appear the same month as the first volume of his translation came out.¹⁴⁰

This translation gave rise to significant public interest and similar local projects. For instance, *The Hite Report* was clearly the direct inspiration for *More* magazine (*Moa*, 1977–) to run a survey of its readers on "women's lives and sex" in 1980, which it released as the *More Report* in a thick hardcover volume in 1983 and then an abridged paperback form in 1985.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ *Hikari guruma*, "Sekai kara no kaze, *Haito repōto* no hon'yaku o megutte," no. 1 (April 1978), reprinted in Mizoguchi Akiyo, Saeki Yōko, and Miki Sōko, eds. *Shiryō Nihon ūman ribu shi* (Kyoto: Shōkadō Shoten, 1995), vol. 3.

¹³⁹ Ishikawa Hiroyoshi, "Yakusha maegaki," in Hite, *Haito ripōto*, 8. While his foreword offers background and analysis to contextualize the text, Ishikawa also provides a commentary at the end of second volume, allowing him to assert his scholarly expertise: Ishikawa Hiroyoshi, "Kaisetsu," in Hite, *Haito ripōto*.

¹⁴⁰ Ishikawa Hiroyoshi, "Haito ripōto o megutte," *Kurowassan*, June 1977. Ishikawa ended up writing a series of articles on female sexuality for the magazine, discussed in Takeuchi Keiko, "The Complexity of Sexuality and *Kurowassan*," in *Gender and Modernity: Rereading Japanese Women's Magazines*, ed. Ulrike Wöhr, Barbara Hamill Satō, and Suzuki Sadami (Kyoto: International Research Center for Japanese Studies, 2000), 163–64.

¹⁴¹ The initial survey appeared in the July 1980 issue of *More*, "Ankeeto: The More Report: onna no sei to sei," *More* (July 1980), introduced by an article explaining the purpose of the survey, "The More Report: onna no sei to sei," *More*, July 1980. The report was issued three years later, with "The MORE Report on Female Sexuality," in English on the cover: *Moa Ripōto-han*, *Moa ripōto* (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 1983). The abridged version, *Moa Ripōto-han*, ed., *Moa ripōto: onnatachi no sei to sei* (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 1985), was in its fourth printing by 1987. In the preface to the initial release of the *More Report*, the editors note that while there are reports by Kinsey and

Also in 1983, Linda Wolfe's *Cosmo Report*, itself following in the footsteps of Hite's work, was translated into Japanese. This volume was, like Hite's work, translated by a man.¹⁴² Following Hite's 1981 report on male sexuality—translated the next year into Japanese, ironically, by a woman in 1982—*More* released its own report on male sexuality in 1984.¹⁴³ And thus, through a new series of translations and transfigurations of *The Hite Report* beginning in the late 1970s—and in the context of multiple translations and transfigurations of *Our Bodies, Ourselves*—Japan saw a flowering of frank public discussion on female (and male) sexuality, wherein women were able to share anxieties as well as desires and to find a measure of affirmation and comfort. This was an exchange of ideas and experiences surrounding sexuality very much akin to what had been taking place within and advocated by the *ribu* community since the early 1970s.

Unsurprisingly then, *The Hite Report* in translation was also well received in the *ribu* community itself. The spring 1978 issue of the Osaka-based *mini-komi From Woman to Women*, for example, devoted over three full pages to responses from activists. The first of these, by Watanabe Emi, begins, “This is an excellent book. In the six months since I first started living with my new lover (*koibito*), I've been worried and confused about sex, but I feel like at last [through this book] I've encountered opinions that give me strength.”¹⁴⁴ Later in her response Watanabe notes that reading this book was the first time for her to encounter the voices of lesbians in any detail. Miki Sōko observes that the androcentric equation of sex with

Masters and Johnson, as well as more recently *The Hite Reports* on female and male sexuality in the US, there is nothing of the sort for women in contemporary Japan (ibid., 3), obviously positioning this new report as the Japanese version of *The Hite Report*.

¹⁴² It is worth noting that the subtitle assigned to this translation bears a strong resemblance to the subtitles given to the translations of the Hite reports on women and men. Linda Wolfe, *Kosumo ripōto: 10-man 6-sen nin no josei ga kattata shinjitsu no ai to sei*, trans. Hagitani Ryō (1981; Tokyo: Bunka Shuppankyoku, 1983).

¹⁴³ Shere Hite, *The Hite Report on Male Sexuality* (New York: Knopf, 1981), translated into Japanese as *Haito ripōto: dansei ban*, trans. Nakao Chizu (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Sha, 1982); Moa Ripōto-han, ed., *Moa ripōto 2: kondo wa, dansei no gawa kara hajimete katarareta, sei to sei no shinjitsu* (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 1984).

¹⁴⁴ *Onna kara onnatachi e* [Osaka], “*Haito ripōto o yonde*,” no. 26 (Spring 1978), 3.

(hetero)sexual intercourse for the sake of reproduction and giving men pleasure is called into question by Hite's attention to masturbation and lesbianism, to each of which is a full chapter is devoted.¹⁴⁵ The comments in *Shining Wheel* about the text itself were also positive.¹⁴⁶

I believe it is this prominent attention to the voices and experiences of lesbians that gave this book special meaning to some women in the *rezubian* community and, ultimately, led to its transfiguration into a project that would lead to *Stories of Women Who Love Women (Onna o ai suru onnatachi no monogatari)*, the first commercial publication produced by and for members of the *rezubian* community—and whose reach would extend far beyond, with over 30,000 copies available at bookstores around the country.¹⁴⁷ *Stories* demonstrates how far from the original a transfiguration might extend in time and form and yet still bear some indication of where its roots reach. Published in 1987 as part of the Bessatsu Takarajima series, the project that became *Stories* began as a pair of surveys conducted in late 1986 that drew in subtle and not-so-subtle ways on *The Hite Report* and its transfigurations.¹⁴⁸ The *More Report* surveys also contained questions about homosexuality (*dōseiai*), specifically among women in Japan, which suggests it might have been better suited as a direct model for the *Stories* surveys.¹⁴⁹ However, the length

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 3, 5.

¹⁴⁶ Hikari guruma, "Sekai kara no kaze."

¹⁴⁷ Bessatsu Takarajima, no. 64, *Onna o ai suru onnatachi no monogatari*. The figure for the print run comes from a note on the bottom of a photocopy of the cover included in an issue of the *rezubian mini-komi Regumi tsūshin* no. 2 (April 1987), 8. The book remained in print for several years. I have seen several copies listing reprint dates from the early 1990s.

¹⁴⁸ The surveys were published as Hirosawa Yumi [Sawabe Hitomi] and *Rezubian Ripōto-han*, "Rezubian ripōto: Nihon de hajimete! 234-nin no rezubian ni yoru shōgen," in Bessatsu Takarajima, no. 64, *Onna o ai suru onnatachi no monogatari*. The introduction to this survey indicates that the surveys were conducted in 1981, but this is an error. See Sawabe Hitomi, "Onna o ai suru onnatachi no monogatari o meguru hyōgen katsudō," oral history taken by Sugiura Ikuko, in Sugiura, *Nihon no rezubian komyuniti*, 53–56. English-language synopses of this report can be found in Appendix I in Barbara Summerhawk, Cheiron McMahill, and Darren McDonald, eds., *Queer Japan: Personal Stories of Japanese Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, and Transsexuals* (Norwich, Vt.: New Victoria, 1998), 188–99, and Kittredge Cherry, "Japanese Lesbian Life," in *Oceanic Homosexualities*, ed. Stephen O. Murray (New York: Garland, 1992).

¹⁴⁹ Moa Ripōto-han, *Moa ripōto*, 770–71, 786, 788–9. While Hite's own first of three questionnaires assume heterosexual experience—i.e., that the respondent's sexual partners have been male—the second and third surveys are phrased to avoid this implication. See Hite, *The Hite Report*, 573–90.

and organization of this book makes it very difficult to find references to homosexual experience and identity interspersed among the respondents' answers. *The Hite Report's* chapter "Lesbianism" in translation is titled simply "*Rezubian*," a politically infused identity category for some women in Japan. This chapter ends, moreover, with a section under a heading that declares "Lesbianism can have political significance," a sentiment that resonated with the ideology of *rezubian feminisuto*, some of whom were to create *Stories*. Consequently, the translation elaborating on American women's lives seems to have been more meaningful than the locally produced text for women in Japan wishing to read about other women's experiences in order to make sense of their own same-sex desire. And thus, while the *More Report* was a significant part of the larger mainstream domain of women's discourse on their own sexuality, *The Hite Report* was a more immediate model for the surveys that were to be compiled into a section of stories called the "*Rezubian Report*."

Sawabe Hitomi, a self-identified *rezubian feminisuto* who was the architect of and driving force behind *Stories*, situates its genesis at the nexus of events in her own life, including reading lesbian feminist Marilyn Frye's *The Politics of Reality* with a small group of women considering translating it into Japanese, attending an international lesbian conference in Geneva, and receiving around 100 letters in response to an article about the conference that she published under a pseudonym in *Fujin kōron*.¹⁵⁰ Her existing wish to become a reportage writer, on top of the letters in particular—overwhelmingly earnest in their various expression of loneliness and regret, as well as encouragement and excitement—instilled in Sawabe the desire to produce a

¹⁵⁰ Marilyn Frye, *The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory* (Trumansburg, N.Y.: Crossing Press, 1983); Hirose Yumi [Sawabe Hitomi], "Sekai rezubian kaigi ni sankā shite," *Fujin kōron* 71, no. 7 (June 1986). The conference was the eighth International Lesbian Information Service Conference, held in March 1986. See Sawabe, "Onna o ai suru onnatachi no monogatari," 52–54.

book.¹⁵¹ Thus, while thinking and talking about American lesbian-feminist theory with other Japanese *rezubian feminisuto* and her attendance at the Geneva lesbian conference formed a significant part of the context, the most forceful impetus for *Stories* was Sawabe's visceral reaction to the personal accounts of the experiences of women in Japan.

In a recent oral history of her experiences in the *rezubian* community since the early 1970s, Sawabe makes no mention of *The Hite Report* when she narrates the history of *Stories*.¹⁵² There are, however, several reasons I position it in a fuzzy line of descent from Hite's initial study and its earlier transfigurations. The most salient of these is in its naming. The title of the section of the book containing the survey responses, "Rezubian Report: A First for Japan! The Testimony of 234 Rezubian" (*Rezubian ripōto: Nihon de hajimete! 234 nin no rezubian ni yoru shōgen*), almost certainly draws directly from the titles and subtitles of the volumes by both Hite and *More*. In Japanese, *The Hite Report* is assigned the subtitle "Testimony of new women on love and sex" (*Atarashii josei no ai to sei no shōgen*), while the first *More Report* is given the lengthier "For the first time, Japanese women talked about sex in their own words" (*Nihon no joseitachi ga, hajimete jibuntachi no kotoba de sei o katatta*). To be sure, this titling—paraphrased slightly and placed in eye-catching type on the cover of *Stories* for promotional purposes—could be an editorial intervention from the publisher. The fact that *More* released a new or reformatted report each of the four years leading up to the publication of *Stories* certainly indicates an on-going level of public interest in these kinds of reports that publishers would be keen to tap into.

Yet, it is clear that Sawabe had *The Hite Report* in mind when working on the survey. To begin, *Shining Wheel*, which, as noted above, discussed the appropriateness of assigning a man

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 52, 53.

¹⁵² Ibid.

to translate the book, was produced by a *rezubian feminisuto* group Sawabe herself founded, so it is obvious that Hite's text had her attention soon after its publication in Japan. More saliently, when she sent out the questionnaires for the "Rezubian Report," Sawabe enclosed copies from *The Hite Report* for use as a reference, clearly showing potential respondents the kind of responses she had in mind.¹⁵³ Finally, while each of the three "reports" frames the responses differently via categorization into chapters, they all rely on the same kinds of testimony about personal experiences and feelings. The testimony in "Rezubian Report" of a twenty-five-year-old office worker specifically links the *Hite Report* and *Stories*:

...when I first read *The Hite Report* I was moved in a way I couldn't put into words. ... If this kind of book were published in Japan, it would be a big step for Japan's *rezubian*. ... Until now, the only way to touch the heart of "lesbianism," politically, culturally, socially, has been through information from abroad. ... Hearing about [lesbians] abroad was very moving, but to hear directly from Japan's countless *rezubian*—for all women who are like that—it would provide them support.¹⁵⁴

That, looking back more than twenty years later, Sawabe did not indicate *The Hite Report* was part of the inspiration for *Stories* tells us that did not read its lesbian chapter and immediately set to work producing a Japanese version focused on *rezubian*. Nevertheless, I would argue that the circumstances surrounding its production, as well as, at least in some cases, its reception, position *Stories* as a greatly transfigured version of *The Hite Report*.

Hite conducted the nationwide survey that became *The Hite Report* in order to find out how "[American] women themselves ... feel, what they like, and what they think of sex," so that—through this sharing—women would be able to "see our personal lives more clearly, thus redefining our sexuality and strengthening our identities as women." A secondary goal of the book was "to stimulate a public discussion and reevaluation of sexuality."¹⁵⁵ As we have just seen, Hite's study clearly provided some of the inspiration and the context, as well as a

¹⁵³ Hirosawa and Rezubian Ripōto-han, "Rezubian ripōto," 152. While the introduction to the report does not specify this, presumably the copies were from the chapter on lesbianism.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 243–44.

¹⁵⁵ Hite, *The Hite Report*, xi.

productive model for Sawabe and the women who worked with her, yet they transfigured her approach—reshaping her model to make it meaningful to the lives of *rezubian* in Japan.

In her preface to the results of the *rezubian* survey, Sawabe explains that she created the survey to, first,

convey, as it is, the existence of *rezubian* living in Japan ... [because] we ourselves need to know the truth ... about our current situation. It's true that in America and in the countries of Europe, the lesbian feminism born out of the feminist movement has developed a great deal of power. We have a lot to learn to learn from those lesbians, but I would like to begin with an understanding of our own current situation.¹⁵⁶

Sawabe's second goal was to represent *rezubian* in all their diversity, which bears out in the great variety of individual and collective experiences represented in the book, both in the *rezubian* report itself and in the remainder of the volume. Sawabe carefully explains the procedures by which the surveys were distributed and tallied, lending an air of scientific validity to the project akin to Hite's. Yet, in the preface to the report Sawabe rejects the idea that this was a formal *rezubian* study, “academic research,” or any other sort of “objective ‘research’ [or] ‘survey.’” Instead, it was created “in order to shed light our real selves, and to reconsider and come to a new understanding of the lives of [those of us who] have continued to love women in the midst of the extreme pressure of [our] heterosexual society, which only permits love between men and women.”¹⁵⁷

Another goal that seems to underlie the project—and which later surveys and personal narratives would show was successful—was to create a book that affirms the presence of a community of “*rezubian*” in Japan, a community with a real history and a bright (*akarui*) future. While *mini-komi* and other community-produced materials arguably had already been serving the same function since the mid-1970s, they reached an extremely limited number of women. The

¹⁵⁶ Hirosawa and *Rezubian Ripōto-han*, “*Rezubian ripōto*,” 151–52

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 152.

fact that *Stories* was a widely available commercial publication rendered it a proud public declaration of its creators' and the community's existence, well before the use of the term "pride" (*puraido*) in Japanese queer contexts—a declaration capable of reaching out to women with same-sex desire who may or may not identify as *rezubian* and who might otherwise be unaware of the *rezubian* community.

The results contained in this section come from two surveys distributed in lesbian bars, groups and magazines in October and December 1981, the former eliciting 202 responses and the latter 122, of whom 90 had responded to the first survey. Thus the responses represent the experiences of 234 individuals. The survey asked women about their realization they were attracted to women and how they first met other *rezubian*, their marital history, their work and educational history, their love and sexual experiences, and their experiences within "heterosexual society" (*iseiai shakai*) including their own families and friends.¹⁵⁸ The second survey was much shorter and was designed to be more "fun," asking women questions such as about the sex appeal of their favorite singer or actress, their opinion about butch (*tachi*, *bucchi*)/femme (*neko*, *femu*) role-playing, and whether—since it is said that *rezubian* are less likely than *gei* (gays) to cheat on their partners—if they themselves have ever cheated.¹⁵⁹ Similar to the Hite and *More* reports, most of the respondents' statements are given out of context, protecting respondents' privacy but rendering it impossible get a clear picture of them as individuals. The complete responses to five consenting individuals are, however, included in the final section of the report, under the English heading "A Lesbian Was Here."¹⁶⁰

While the surveys that became the "Rezubian Report" marked the beginning of the *Stories* project, they comprise only the second half of the book. The first half contains over a

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 284–5.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 285.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 246–282.

dozen articles about what the editors have described as “living as lesbians” (*rezubian o ikiru*), divided into “lesbian lives,” “lesbian experiences,” “lesbian beliefs,” “lesbian sex,” “lesbian groups and spaces,” and, last, “lesbians abroad.”¹⁶¹ And thus, in spite of having roots in a survey on the sexuality of women in the US, the content and the order in which it is presented in *Stories* positions the lives of local lesbians as being of foremost importance. This is of particular significance given the fact that, as will be detailed in chapter five, many of the most prominent lesbian activists have had formative experiences abroad, as well as the fact that in the 1980s most commercially available publications depicting lesbian lives in anything other than a salacious or scandalous manner were translations or gave little attention to women in Japan. Even in *Stories* itself, only five of the 35 works of fiction and nonfiction on the booklist which, in its title, claims to be the product of “dowse[ing] for underground lesbians” are not translations from a European language or primarily focused on a Western culture or cultures.¹⁶²

Literary Transfiguration as a Liberatory Strategy

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, translated literature has long been a touchstone for women rethinking what it means to be a woman in Japan. Within the *ribu*, *rezubian*, and queer *shōjo* manga communities of the 1970s and 1980s this remained true to varying degrees. I would like, however, to focus the remainder of this chapter on the

¹⁶¹ I have translated four of these articles into English, which are available in Mark McLelland, Katsuhiko Suganuma, and James Welker, eds., *Queer Voices from Japan: First-Person Narratives of Japan's Sexual Minorities* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington, 2007).

¹⁶² Nishihara and Bukkurisuto-han, “Rezubian no suimyaku o tadoru bukkurisuto 35.” Admittedly this could be a reflection of the bias of the compiler of the list. The “literature depicting lesbians” (*rezubian o atsukatta sakuhin*), summaries, excerpts, and discussions of which occupy over a quarter of the spring 1975 issue of *Wakakusa*, a *mini-komi* produced by Wakakusa no Kai, are balanced numerically in favor of fiction from Japan. Pierre Louÿs’s *Les chansons de Bilitis* (1894) and Violette Leduc’s *La bâtarde* (1964), as well as the legend of female homosexuality on Lesbos, are given far lengthier treatment than individual Japanese works, however. A 1993 “guide to aesthete novels and gay literature” gives more overall space to *rezubian* in Japan, but a more substantial discussion to foreign literature, which is placed before literature from Japan. See section three, “Rezubian bungaku,” in Kakinuma Eiko and Kurihara Chiyo, eds., *Tanbi shōsetsu, gei bungaku bukkugaido* (Tokyo: Byakuya Shobō, 1993).

consumption and transfiguration of translated literature within the queer *shōjo* manga sphere, which, in fact, first emerged as the genre of *shōnen ai* through direct and indirect repurposing of elements from translated literary works at the beginning of the 1970s.

These translated texts, like their transfigurations into *shōjo* manga, were set in places that were foreign to *shōjo* readers. In many 1970s *shōjo* manga works, not simply in *shōnen ai*, the foreign offered “a means to embody the dreams and *akogare* [longing] of the *shōjo*.”¹⁶³ It is easy, therefore, to see its use in *shōjo* manga as foreshadowing if not shaping the “narratives of internationalism” that led to a boom in overseas travel and study of foreign languages among young women in the 1980s and 1990s, narratives that Karen Kelsky argues were themselves founded on *akogare*—a “long[ing] for something unattainable.”¹⁶⁴ While the foreign sphere offered a means of psychic escape, translated texts themselves—and in some cases narratives surrounding the lives of their authors—offered more specific if not more vivid narrative options for female and male readers in Japan. Keith Harvey, whose own “incipient and fragile identity position as a gay man” was bolstered as a teenager in 1970s Britain through reading translated texts by André Gide, Jean Genet, and Marcel Proust, recalls that rather than being put off by the foreignness of their works, the “distance was actually ... the space in which I was able to work out the message I wanted to hear and could get nowhere else.”¹⁶⁵ Similarly, for many *shōjo* manga readers and writers the space of the foreign was at once the object of an insatiable longing and a means of sending and receiving messages about sexual and gender alternatives unavailable elsewhere, most notably in the genre of *shōnen ai*.

¹⁶³ Terada Kaoru, “70-nendai enkyori shōjo manga no jidai,” in Bessatsu Takarajima, no. 288, *70-nendai manga dai hyakka* (Tokyo: Takarajimasha 1996), 160–61.

¹⁶⁴ Karen Kelsky, *Women on the Verge: Japanese Women, Western Dreams* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2001), 26.

¹⁶⁵ Harvey, Keith Harvey, “Gay Community, Gay Identity and the Translated Text,” *TTR: traduction, terminologie, redaction* 13, no. 1 (2000): 148, 150.

As noted in chapter two, the first commercially published *shōnen ai* manga narrative was Takemiya Keiko's *In the Sunroom* (*Sanrūmu nite*), which initially appeared under the title "Snow and Stars and Angels..." (*Yuki to hoshi to tenshi to...*) in the December 1970 issue of the *shōjo* manga magazine *Bessatsu shōjo komikku* [Girls' comic extra](1970–2002).¹⁶⁶ Like most early *shōnen ai* manga, the work's protagonists were beautiful boys (*bishōnen*) in love with each other and the story was set in Europe. Masuyama Norie played a key role in the genesis of this genre, including this first work. Although she was not a visual artist herself, Masuyama was an avid consumer from childhood of high-brow literature, classical music, and film. While she was a fan of manga as well, her disappointment with *shōjo* manga instilled in her a desire to elevate *shōjo* manga from its lowly position as a frivolous distraction for girls into a more serious, literary art form. Drawn to the talents of Takemiya and Hagio Moto, Masuyama recommended to the pair various works of music, cinema, and literature in hopes of inspiring them to incorporate elements of these works into their own art.¹⁶⁷

Among the novels Masuyama recommended were Herman Hesse's *Beneath the Wheel* (1906), *Demian* (1919), and *Narcissus and Goldmund* (1930), each attracting a large enough readership and interest in Japan to have been translated into Japanese multiple times and republished repeatedly from the late 1930s onward. All three novels feature adolescent male protagonists in school environments in Germany. While none of the three depict overt homoeroticism—in fact romantic or erotic relationships with female characters help drive their plots—their narratives all revolve around strong bonds between the protagonist and another youth or, in the case of *Narcissus and Goldmund*, a young teacher. Masuyama never directly suggested that Hagio and Takemiya make a manga version of one of these novels, yet, as art and

¹⁶⁶ Takemiya Keiko, "Sanrūmu nite," in her *Sanrūmu nite* (Tokyo: San Komikkusu, 1976). See Ishida Minori, *Hisoyaka na kyōiku: "yaoi/bōizu rabu" zenshi* (Tokyo: Rakuho Shuppan, 2008), 21, 23 n14.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 52.

film scholar Ishida Minori demonstrates, the texts played a pivotal role in the development of *shōnen ai*.¹⁶⁸

Drawing on her own interviews with Masuyama and Takemiya, as well as existing essays and commentary by Takemiya and Hagio, Ishida lays out a compelling case that these novels were vital source material for pivotal early *shōnen ai* works, including Takemiya's *In the Sunroom* and *The Song of the Wind and the Trees* (*Kaze to ki no uta*, 1978–1984), and Hagio's *November Gymnasium* (*Jūichigatsu no gimunajiumu*, 1971) and *The Heart of Thomas* (*Tōma no shinzō*, 1974).¹⁶⁹ In addition to the European boys' boarding school setting, which serves as a key site for seminal *shōnen ai* narratives, and the use of male protagonists in and of itself, Ishida argues that Takemiya and Hagio “drew great inspiration” from the rich and deft depictions of the psyches of the youths in Hesse's works.¹⁷⁰ Attention to characters' internal worlds is emblematic of classic *shōnen ai* manga—beginning with the internal monologue that opens *In the Sunroom*—and, Ishida suggests, it is one of the ways *shōnen ai* manga helped to foster literary qualities in *shōjo* manga in general.¹⁷¹ Ishida proposes, moreover, that the typical gender balance between pairs of male protagonists in *shōnen ai* manga, whereby one is positioned as relatively masculine and the other feminine, can be traced back to Hesse as well.¹⁷² Finally,

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 298.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 58, inter alia. Takemiya Keiko, “Sanrūmu nite,” and *Kaze to ki no uta*, 10 vols. (1976–1984; Tokyo: Hakusensha Bunko, 1995); and Hagio Moto, “Jūichigatsu no gimunajiumu,” in her *Jūichigatsu no gimunajiumu* (1971; Tokyo: Shōgakukan Bunko, 1995), and *Tōma no shinzō* (1974; Tokyo: Shōgakukan Bunko, 1995).

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 70–71.

¹⁷¹ Takemiya, “Sanrūmu nite,” 6–7; Ishida, *Hisoyaka na kyōiku*, 71.

¹⁷² Ibid. 76. *Shōjo* manga critic Fujimoto Yukari has observed that this relative gender binary manifests itself in the characters' hair colors: the more masculine partner typically has dark hair and the more feminine, blonde. See Fujimoto Yukari, “Shōjo manga ga mederu otoko no karada,” *Kuia Japan* no. 1 (1999): 25. Many critics have suggested that the “beautiful boy” (*bishōnen*) characters are not actually boys, or are at least open to being read as girls. This sentiment was echoed by several of the women with whom I spoke about their *shōnen ai* consumption. However, other women I interviewed appeared to have never even considered that the beautiful boys were anything but male. For a summary of this discourse and a discussion of the gender of the characters in *The Heart of Thomas* and *The Song of the Wind and the Trees*, see James Welker, “Beautiful, Borrowed, and Bent: Boys' Love as Girls' Love in *Shōjo* Manga,” *Signs* 31, no. 3 (2006): 846–55.

Ishida argues, Takemiya in particular draws on a latent romanticism and eroticism between some male characters in Hesse's writing, "emphasiz[ing] a tendency in Hesse's works."¹⁷³ Takemiya has written specifically of *Beneath the Wheel* that she finds something vaguely erotic—a sort of "chaste eroticism"—in the youths depicted by Hesse.¹⁷⁴

From the opening scene of two adolescent boys having sex, the overt eroticism of *The Song of the Wind and the Trees*, goes far beyond anything possibly read into Hesse's novels, however. This can be traced to the eroticized beautiful boys celebrated in the writing of Inagaki Taruho, whose *Aesthetics of Boy Loving* (*Shōnen ai no bigaku*) inspired the name of the new genre.¹⁷⁵ As I discuss in chapter three, Taruho's work draws extensively on both European and Japanese traditions and customs surrounding the adoration of beautiful youths as depicted in literature and historical scholarship; and, like his own use of the term "*shōnen ai*," Taruho's writing cannot be easily be classified as simply "Japanese." While *The Song of the Wind and the Trees* was not initially serialized until 1976, Takemiya had first conceived of the narrative and began to pen drawings seven years earlier, before *In the Sunroom* was published.¹⁷⁶ As Takemiya recalls, when she decided to draw *The Song of the Wind and the Trees* is when she read Taruho's book. British public schools are frequently referenced in *Aesthetics of Boy Loving*, and "so the first thing I decided was to make a public school-like place the setting for *The Song of the Wind and the Trees*."¹⁷⁷ Yet, the manga's setting is not a British public school, nor an early twentieth century German one as depicted in Hesse's novels, but a boarding school in nineteenth century France.

¹⁷³ Ishida, *Hisoyaka na kyōiku*, 72.

¹⁷⁴ Takemiya Keiko, *Takemiya Keiko no manga kyōshitsu* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 2001), 217; Takemiya Keiko, "Karaa irasuto kagami no kuni no shōnentachi," *Peepaa mūn* no. 14 (1978): 5–6, cited in Ishida, *Hisoyaka na kyōiku*, 74.

¹⁷⁵ Inagaki Taruho, *Shōnen ai no bigaku* (Tokyo: Tokuma Shoten, 1968). See also chapter three.

¹⁷⁶ Masuyama Norie, "Kaze to ki no uta no tanjō," *June* no. 36 (September 1987): 55.

¹⁷⁷ Quoted in Ishida, *Hisoyaka na kyōiku*, 88.

Hagio, however, did set her two early *shōnen ai* narratives in German boarding schools. And yet Hagio credits the 1964 French film *Les amitiés particulières* (*These Special Friendships*) as the inspiration for *The Heart of Thomas*, which she had begun working on before *November Gymnasium*.¹⁷⁸ Based on a semi-autobiographical novel by Roger Peyrefitte, the film depicts two boys in a Catholic boarding school who fall in love and ends with the suicide of one of them.¹⁷⁹ This suicide that would be echoed by the titular character in *The Heart of Thomas*, whose name, it should be noted, is given a Japanese pronunciation—“Tōma”—based on the French, not German, version of “Thomas.” Takemiya, for her part, was initially most influenced by the films of Italian director Luchino Visconti, whose *Death in Venice* (1971) was frequently mentioned in correspondence from young female readers printed in the *shōnen ai*-related magazine *Allan* and, as mentioned in chapter three, on at least one occasion in the *homo* magazine *Barazoku* [Rose tribe].¹⁸⁰ In this Occidentalist blurring of all things European, Hagio and Takemiya, and other artists, borrowed freely from settings, characters, and plot elements, transfiguring into *shōnen ai* manga the often nostalgic depictions of intimate friendships as well as romantic and erotic relations between beautiful European boys in translated literature and film, as well as in Taruho’s writing.

In literary studies, this kind of borrowing might be subsumed under the notion of intertextuality, a practice long central to *shōjo* culture, broadly defined.¹⁸¹ The concept of intertextuality is often used to index the presence in one text of overt references—marked or unmarked as such—to other texts, what Norman Fairclough calls “manifest intertextuality.”

¹⁷⁸ Hagio Moto, “The Moto Hagio Interview,” by Matt Thorn, *The Comics Journal* no. 269 (June/July 2005); *Les amitiés particulières*, directed by Jean Delannoy (France: Paris: Progéfi, and LUX C.C.F., 1964).

¹⁷⁹ Roger Peyrefitte, *Les amitiés particulières: roman* (Marseille: Jean Vigneau, 1943).

¹⁸⁰ *Death in Venice*, motion picture, directed by Luchino Visconti (Italy: Alfa Cinematografica, 1971).

¹⁸¹ Tomoko Aoyama and Barbara Hartley observe that within *shōjo* culture “girls ... engage in highly sophisticated and complex borrowing and interweaving of themes and ideas across texts.” See Tomoko Aoyama and Barbara Hartley, “Introduction,” in their *Girl Reading Girl in Japan* (London: Routledge, 2010), 5.

Fairclough distinguishes this intertextuality from what he calls “constitutive intertextuality,” or “interdiscursivity,” namely “the heterogeneous constitution of texts out of elements (types of convention) of orders of discourse” rather than specific texts.¹⁸² I would argue that depictions of Western adolescent boys such as by the pen of Hesse and through the lens of Delannoy, tinged as they are with nostalgia as well as eroticism, can be seen to very loosely constitute an order—or a field—of discourse from the perspective of Takemiya, Hagio, Masuyama, and Taruho, as well as from their readers.¹⁸³ It is from this field that these artists and others drew, manifestly and obliquely, and it is this field that Takemiya and Hagio transfigured into a new genre of *shōjo* manga.

As Fairclough points out, “intertextuality points to the productivity of texts, to how texts can transform prior texts and restructure existing conventions (genres, discourses) to generate new ones.” And yet, he notes, this productivity is constrained by the conditions of power operating in society.¹⁸⁴ As has been discussed in numerous analyses of *shōnen ai* manga, however, it is precisely power relations in Japanese society—specifically, gendered relations of power that constrain women’s gender and sexual expression—that Takemiya, Hagio, and other *shōnen ai* artists worked to undermine through their transfiguration of this world for *shōjo* manga readers.¹⁸⁵ As Takemiya herself explains, *shōnen ai* narratives serve “to mentally liberate girls from the sexual restrictions imposed on us [as women].”¹⁸⁶

This does not mean the artists themselves have ultimate control of the parameters of the

¹⁸² Norman Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change* (Cambridge, U.K.: Blackwell Publishing, 1992), 85. Fairclough defines “orders of discourse” as “total configurations of discursive practices in particular institutions” (*ibid.*, 9).

¹⁸³ As is discussed in chapter three, Taruho interweaves into this discursive field a romantic and nostalgic discourse on adolescent youth from Japan’s own past.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 102, 103.

¹⁸⁵ See, e.g., Welker, “Beautiful, Borrowed, and Bent”; and section three in Fujimoto Yukari, *Watashi no ibasho wa doko ni aru no? shōjo manga ga utsusu kokoro no katachi* (Tokyo: Gakuyō Shobō, 1998).

¹⁸⁶ Quoted in Satō Masaki, “Shōjo manga to homofobia,” in *Kuia sutadiizu '96*, ed. Kuia Sutadiizu Henshū Inkaï (Tokyo: Nanatsumori shokan, 1996), 162.

discursive field of *shōnen ai* they created. Masuyama sees the metaphysical sphere of *shōnen ai* within *shōjo* manga, as well as in Taruho's writing, as quite distinct from "the world of homosexuals" (*homosekushuaru no sekai*) such as depicted in the works of, for instance, Mishima Yukio and Shibusawa Tatsuhiko, which, she believes, requires the presence of physical male bodies.¹⁸⁷ Yet, many readers of *shōnen ai* manga in the 1970s and 1980s had their own ideas, reading Mishima as well as Jean Genet and Jean Cocteau and discussing them in the same breath as Hagio and Takemiya. This crossover interest is most saliently evidenced by letters contributed by adolescent girls and young women to magazines aimed at fans of *shōnen ai* and those aimed at *homo* men, as well as vocabulary flowing between the two ostensibly separate spheres.¹⁸⁸ For many of these readers a clear line cannot be drawn between *homo* and *shōnen ai*, nor between *homo* men in Japan and gay men elsewhere. Indeed, the protagonist of Takemiya's *The Song of the Wind and the Trees*, Gilbert, is given the surname Cocteau, an obvious reference to the French writer.

Similarly, a sharp distinction cannot be made between the *shōnen ai* of Hagio and that of Takemiya, although readers had their own preferences, endlessly discussed in their letters printed in the pages of *June*, *Allan* and *Gekkō*, from the late 1970s onward. While they were each developing their own versions of *shōnen ai*, Takemiya and Hagio lived together in a small apartment that came to be called the Ōizumi Salon on account of the constant presence of other young *shōjo* manga artists and other key figures. Unsurprisingly, given her relationship with the

¹⁸⁷ Ishida, *Hisoyaka na kyōiku*, 99-100.

¹⁸⁸ While largely derogatory now, "*homo*" was the most common term in use in the 1970s and 1980s to refer to male homosexuals. I discuss letters from readers printed in magazines for fans of *shōnen ai* and for *homo* men in "Flower Tribes and Female Desire: Complicating Early Female Consumption of Male Homosexuality in *Shōjo* Manga," *Mechademia* 6 (forthcoming), and "Lilies of the Margin: Beautiful Boys and Queer Female Identities in Japan," in Fran Martin et al., ed., *AsiaPacifiQueer: Rethinking Genders and Sexualities* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008).

two artists, Masuyama herself was a neighbor and frequent guest.¹⁸⁹ Even if Hagio, for instance, claims to have herself found no appeal in the *homo* magazine *Barazoku* [Rose tribe] (1971–2004), *The Heart of Thomas* and *The Song of the Wind and the Trees* sprang from the same fertile intellectual and artistic milieu.¹⁹⁰

* * *

Sometimes the intertextual references to translated literature were more blatant. And, while relatively rare, queer *shōjo* manga of the 1970s and 1980s sometimes included representations of female-female romance and sexuality and non-normative gender identity.¹⁹¹ One example comes from the mid-1980s, Yoshida Akimi's *Sakura no sono* [The cherry orchard], initially serialized in the *shōjo* manga magazine *LaLa* (1976–) from 1985.¹⁹² Through casting her characters in Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* (1904), Yoshida temporarily transports them into the liminal, liberatory space of the foreign. It is the encounter of the characters—students entering their last year at a girls high school—with this translated play that helps to bring gender and sexual alternatives to the fore.

Yoshida's *Sakura* is, then, not a direct translation of Chekhov's foreign text into *shōjo* manga but rather a redeployment of some of the elements of the translated work in a way that renders them meaningful to the lives of both Yoshida's characters and her readers. Like the less obvious constitutive intertextuality of early *shōnen ai* manga, such obvious redeployment of a specific text, is one way translated literature has been subsequently transfigured in *shōjo* manga.

¹⁸⁹ Takemiya, Takemiya Keiko no manga kyōshitsu, 217, 247.

¹⁹⁰ Hagio, "The Moto Hagio Interview."

¹⁹¹ An overview of same-sex love among females in *shōjo* manga from the 1970s to the 1990s can be found in James Welker, "Drawing Out Lesbians: Blurred Representations of Lesbian Desire in *Shōjo* Manga," in Subhash Chandra, ed., *Lesbian Voices: Canada and the World: Theory, Literature, Cinema* (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 2006).

¹⁹² Yoshida Akimi, *Sakura no sono* (1986; Tokyo: Hakusen Bunko, 1994). An extended discussion of *Sakura* can be found in Welker, "From the Cherry Orchard to *Sakura no sono*." I use the Japanese title in my discussion here to distinguish Yoshida's text from Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*.

It is in no small part through this process of transfiguration of foreign texts and foreign spaces within *shōjo* manga—by writers and readers (and no clear line can be drawn between the two)—that readers can begin to find a sense of affirmation and to make sense of, in *shōjo* manga critic Fujimoto Yukari’s terms, where they belong.¹⁹³

First gaining prominence at the end of the 1970s, Yoshida is best known for works such as *BANANA FISH* (1987-1994) and *California Tale* (*Kariforunia monogatari*, 1979-1982), which are set in the contemporary United States and include male homosexual relationships. Like many manga artists, however, she also writes about everyday school life in Japan.¹⁹⁴ While most of her best-known works focus on male homosocial environments, *Sakura no sono* is a narrative about a female homosocial sphere, a Japanese girls’ high school. As just noted, through their performance of Chekhov’s *The Cherry Orchard*, the characters themselves are transported to another space and time and, in the process, come to a deeper understanding of themselves.

As I outline in greater detail elsewhere, *Sakura*’s affirmative depiction of alternative gender possibilities and same-sex affection, and its critique of the heteropatriarchal limits imposed on women, mark it as a lesbian text and help liberate it from earlier *shōjo* manga narratives that ultimately retreat into “lesbian panic,” disrupting the possibility of female-female desire.¹⁹⁵ Further, in contrast to its *shōnen ai* predecessors, *Sakura* portrays the trials and tribulations of “very ordinary high school girls” in Japan, thus encouraging its readers to

¹⁹³ Fujimoto, *Watashi no ibasho wa doko ni aru no?* A central thesis of Fujimoto is that one of *shōjo* manga’s most fundamental purposes is to help readers find affirmation and feel a sense of belonging.

¹⁹⁴ Yoshida Akimi, *Kariforunia monogatari* (1979-1982), 4 vols. (Tokyo: Shōgakukan Bunko, 1994); and *BANANA FISH*. 19 vols. (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1987–1994).

¹⁹⁵ See Welker, “From *The Cherry Orchard* to *Sakura no sono*,” 163–64. Patricia Smith defines lesbian panic as “the disruptive action or reaction that occurs when a character—or conceivably an author—is either unable or unwilling to confront or reveal her own lesbianism or lesbian desires.” See Patricia Juliana Smith, *Lesbian Panic: Homoeroticism in Modern British Women’s Fiction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 2. On lesbian panic in *shōjo manga*, see Welker, “Drawing Out Lesbians,” 164–68.

empathize, if not identify, with the characters.¹⁹⁶ While many of the early *shōjo* manga narratives depicting female-female desire were likewise set in Japan, most were set in boarding schools, still an “other” space for the majority of young Japanese readers.¹⁹⁷ Aoyama observes that in her works that depict homosexuality among young men, Yoshida was among the first *shōjo* manga artists to create narratives and drawings that “break the perfection of the ideal homosexual world” and render it “more realistic.”¹⁹⁸ One reader, in fact, explains that “Yoshida Akimi’s work [*Sakura*] reveals the me I want to hide, I don’t want to know.” This reader criticizes *Sakura* for being too realistic, thus making her relive the self-contempt she felt in high school.¹⁹⁹ Another reader, however, recalls feeling reassured on reading *Sakura* to find that she was not the only one who was unable to accept being female.²⁰⁰

While Yoshida has not been associated with the lesbian community, in her own transfiguration of Chekhov’s play, she inscribes a narrative that is in many ways emblematic of the role of translation in constructions of “lesbian” in modern Japan.²⁰¹ Moreover, her use of Chekhov links *Sakura* to Japanese translation and theatrical tradition and, perhaps inadvertently, to Japanese lesbian history. Chekhov has long been a very popular playwright in Japan, inspiring countless locally produced critical works, translations of critical works from other languages, and special issues of journals.²⁰² His plays are still performed by professional and amateur groups

¹⁹⁶ Nimiya Kazuko, *Adaruto chirudoren to shōjo manga* (Tokyo: Kōsaidō, 1997), 35; Fujimoto, *Watashi no ibasho wa doko ni aru no?*, 205–6.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 177–224.

¹⁹⁸ Aoyama, Tomoko, “Male homosexuality as treated by Japanese women writers,” in *The Japanese Trajectory: Modernization and Beyond*, ed. Gavin McCormack and Yoshio Sugimoto (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 196–97.

¹⁹⁹ Quoted in *Manga yawa 4*, “Yoshida Akimi, ‘*Sakura no sono*,” transcript of NHK BS2 Broadcast, *BS manga yawa* (August 28, 1996), (Tokyo: Kinejunpōsha, 1999), 154.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 156.

²⁰¹ See Beverley Curran and James Welker, “From the *Well of Loneliness* to the *akarui rezubian*,” in *Genders, Transgenders, and Sexualities in Japan*, ed. Mark McLelland and Romit Dasgupta (London: Routledge, 2005).

²⁰² Nakamoto Nobuyuki, *Cheehofu no naka no Nihon* (Tokyo: Daiwa Shobō, 1981), 7–8; Ura Masaharu, “Cheehofu no bunken mokuroku,” *Yuriika* 10, no. 6 (1978).

with some regularity, demonstrating their continuing resonance with Japanese audiences. *The Cherry Orchard* was, in fact, “the first major postwar production of the modern theater,” staged just four months after the end of the war²⁰³—which reflects the work’s position within the Japanese modernity to which the theater troupes were attempting to return. Scholar of Russian literature Nakamoto Nobuyuki has even asserted—perhaps by way of an explanation of Chekhov’s popularity—that the Russian playwright’s works draw on imagery from Japan. The aesthetic value assigned to cherry trees in *The Cherry Orchard* is one such example.²⁰⁴

Although a partial translation of the play appeared in the magazine *Shin shichō* [New thought] (1907–1979) around 1910, it was bluestocking Senuma Kayō who produced the first complete translation of the play—reputedly the first from the original Russian, serialized between March and May of 1913 in the pages of *Seitō*.²⁰⁵ While *The Cherry Orchard* has since been retranslated from Russian more than a dozen times, the characters in Yoshida’s *Sakura no sono*, by coincidence or design, read from a mid-century translation by Yuasa Yoshiko.²⁰⁶ Yuasa was a renowned translator and scholar of Russian literature who associated with some of the feminists of Seitōsha and has been claimed as a Japanese lesbian foresister. While we cannot be certain Yoshida made a conscious choice to use a translation by a woman (the majority of *The Cherry Orchard* translations have been by men), she may well have been aware that Yuasa’s romantic and sexual partners were exclusively women. In fact, late in life Yuasa expressly

²⁰³ Ted T. Takaya, “Introduction,” in his *Modern Japanese Drama: An Anthology*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), xxii.

²⁰⁴ Nakamoto argues that, as Russian cherry trees were not appreciated for their blossoms, the trees Chekhov was imagining as he wrote *The Cherry Orchard* were undoubtedly the Japanese *sakura* Chekhov had planted at his dacha in Yalta. See Nakamoto, *Cheehofu no naka no Nihon*, 132–47.

²⁰⁵ Uno Jūkichi, *Cheehofu no Sakura no sono ni tsuite* (Tokyo: Bakushūsha, 1978), 16; Mizusaki Noriko, “Gaikoku bunka no juyō to hyōka: hon’yaku,” in *Shin Feminizumu Hihyō no Kai, Seitō o yomu*, 158. Senuma has in fact been credited with having been the first to translate any of Chekhov’s works from Russian (see *ibid.*, 158). My thanks to Hiroko Cockerill for her efforts to verify this for me.

²⁰⁶ Anton Chekhov, *Sakura no sono* (1904), trans. Yuasa Yoshiko (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1950). On the source of the translation quoted in Yoshida’s *Sakura*, see the note on the copyright page in Yoshida, *Sakura no sono* (1994), 240. For a listing of postwar translations, see Uno, *Cheehofu no Sakura no sono*, 16.

applied the word “*rezubian*” to herself.²⁰⁷ Even if merely serendipitous, this both reinforces a lesbian reading of *Sakura* and, in a sense, allows Yuasa to vicariously participate in the production of this liberatory text nearly four decades after she penned the translation.

Like *The Cherry Orchard*, the themes in Yoshida’s *Sakura* include the fleeting nature of time and the inability to return to the innocence of one’s childhood. Nostalgia is, in fact, doubly inscribed in the very title of her work, given that *sakura* blossoms are themselves traditionally associated with the passage of time. And, while the school’s name, Ōka Gakuen (literally meaning “cherry blossom academy”) and the lines spoken from the script are written in contemporary *kanji* characters, in both the title of her manga and each reference to Chekhov’s play Yoshida writes the word “*sakura*” with the pre-war and hence old-fashioned *kanji* character, suggesting a certain lingering of a bygone era.²⁰⁸ Svetlana Evdokimova points out that *The Cherry Orchard*’s central figure, Madame Ranevskaya, embodies the stark contrast between “the bliss of childhood ... [and] the heavy burden of ... post-puerile adult life,” a burden that also looms for the students in Yoshida’s narrative.²⁰⁹ Ranevskaya’s reluctance to accept the passage of time and her adult responsibilities leads to the downfall of her estate and the felling of the orchard. While the cherry trees at Ōka Gakuen High School will not be chopped down—in fact each graduating class traditionally leaves a new cherry tree behind—the protagonists, who are in their last year of high school, will no longer be there to see the trees when they bloom again. The protagonist girls of Yoshida’s manga face their own impending adulthood with a great deal of ambivalence. Like Ranevskaya, these girls are to varying degrees excited about the possibility of

²⁰⁷ See Hirosawa Yumi [Sawabe Hitomi], “Dandi na Roshia bungakusha Yuasa Yoshiko hōmonki,” in Bessatsu Takarajima, no. 64, *Onna o ai suru onnatachi no monogatari*, 69.

²⁰⁸ The word “*ōka*” is written with the characters for “*sakura*” [cherry tree], which is alternatively pronounced *ō*, and “*hana*” [blossom], alternatively pronounced *ka*.

²⁰⁹ Svetlana Evdokimova, “What’s so Funny about Losing One’s Estate, or Infantilism in *The Cherry Orchard*,” *Slavic and East European Journal* 44, no. 4 (2000): 631.

romantic and sexual relationships. However, their maturing bodies are also a constant source of anxiety and at times embarrassment or even humiliation.²¹⁰

Divided like Chekhov's work into four "acts," *Sakura* is narrated in turn from the perspectives of four girls taking part in their school's annual production of *The Cherry Orchard*. Although the narrators speak from the present, their adult future is represented in the first "act" by Nakano's soon-to-be-married sister, ten years her senior, whose cameo appearance with her fiancé toward the end of the last "act" marks a rupture in the lesbian script, reminding readers of the heteronormative women's narrative society holds in store for these students. Yoshida uses the performance to force her characters to reconsider their own gender and sexual identities by cross-dressing the performers. In this sense, the performance recalls the Takarazuka all-female musical revue, which was founded in 1913—by chance the same year Senuma's translation of *The Cherry Orchard* was published—and which is sometimes associated with female-female desire.²¹¹ This connection between the drama club performance and Takarazuka cross-dressing is obvious to the girls of Ōka Gakuen, some of whom still swoon over Kurata Chiyoko's past performances as an *otokoyaku* ["trouser role" player]. As will be demonstrated below, the effect of this trans-gender performance, particularly given *Sakura*'s striving for realism, is a radical exposure of "the fundamental contradictions marking female sexuality from its earliest stages."²¹² The behind-the-scenes look at the staging of *Sakura* also exemplifies through the characters/performers' struggles how, gender is not natural but "performative," as Judith Butler has famously elaborated. In effect, gender is rendered "thoroughly and radically *incredible*."²¹³

²¹⁰ For instance, menstruation, a sign of the girls' physical womanhood and their potential to become mothers, is a repeated source of both lighthearted teasing and profound anxiety. See Yoshida, *Sakura no sono* (1994), 11, 82, 110–13.

²¹¹ See Jennifer Robertson, *Takarazuka: Sexual Politics and Popular Culture in Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

²¹² See renée c. hoogland, *Lesbian Configurations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 69.

²¹³ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990),

In creating a fictive narration of Adrienne Rich's notion of a "lesbian continuum," Yoshida reverses and subverts the expected high-school romance narrative—working "backward" from a girl's first sexual experience with a boy, to another girl's first kiss with a boy, to a third girl's declaration of affection to a receptive fourth girl.²¹⁴ While boy-girl relationships are important in the first "act," they gradually lose prominence—as female relationships deepen—so that by the end of the story, rather than the typical narrative in which the lesbian characters are erased, it is the boys who are expunged from the story. This erasure is implemented through both dialogue and visual imagery. By the second half of the narrative the few images of male characters are either literally cut out of the narrative frame, obscured by dialogue bubbles, or turned away from the viewer/reader. Thus the text gradually moves toward the state of "lesbian utopia" that Patricia Smith observes is common in "homosocial school fictions" in British literature.²¹⁵

While the possibility of a kiss is often the source of tension or humor in plays with single-sex casts that occur in other queer *shōjo* manga works, in Yoshida's text, it is not the possibility of a kiss but the self-questioning the performance arouses in the performers that makes *The Cherry Orchard* so important for the development of the lesbian narrative. As a case in point, although last year she performed as an *otokoyaku*—a role better suited to her height and masculine traits—Kurata Chiyoko is cast this year as the heroine, Madame Ranevskaya, a part she is clearly uncomfortable performing. In a twist on the trouser role, in costume Kurata looks like a boy in drag, "mock[ing] both the expressive model of gender and the notion of a true

141 (emphasis original).

²¹⁴ Rich has articulated the lesbian continuum as "a range—through each woman's life and throughout history—of woman-identified experience, not simply the fact that a woman has had or consciously desired genital sexual experience with another woman." See Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," in her *Blood, Bread, and Poetry* (New York, Norton: 1986), 51.

²¹⁵ Smith, *Lesbian Panic*, 135–36.

gender identity.”²¹⁶ Kurata’s obvious discomfort with and desire to reject this female “role” graphically illustrates “the duress under which gender performance always and variously occurs.”²¹⁷ As Honda Masuko elaborates specifically about the *shōjo*, “Of all the classifications concerning human beings, nothing is more desperate than the distinction between ‘man’ and ‘woman’.... For a girl to affirm her sex is to recognize that the world is a cold Other.”²¹⁸ While openly wishing she were more feminine, Kurata bemoans her most visible sign of being a woman, her large breasts, which are all the more prominent in her ill-fitting costume. A sympathetic Shimizu Yūko—whose past unpleasant experiences have led her to reject men and who is drawn to Kurata throughout the narrative—constructs a frilly ribbon to attach to the bosom of the dress to cover and draw attention away from Kurata’s breasts. Honda observes that swaying, “*hirahira*,” frills and ribbons function to conceal the body and yet “inevitably draw ... the attention of others,”²¹⁹ allowing for the simultaneous denial of womanhood and emphasis of femininity. And thus, as Yoshida illustrates, this figure of the girl embodies the tension between being feminine and being a woman. The budding romance between Kurata and Shimizu shows readers that it is possible for girls to affirm each other and their sometimes powerful affection for one another.

The other cross-dresser in Yoshida’s narrative, Sugiyama Noriko, is trapped in an internal conflict over her femininity and her willingness to adapt to heteropatriarchal norms. In this year’s production of *The Cherry Orchard*, Sugiyama is made to perform an *otokoyaku*, Yasha. While she takes on the role reluctantly, expressing jealousy toward others who are given women’s roles, in her own life she vociferously rejects sexual double standards, dresses

²¹⁶ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 137.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 139.

²¹⁸ Honda Masuko, “The Genealogy of *hirahira*: Liminality and the Girl,” trans. Tomoko Aoyama and Barbara Hartley, in Aoyama and Hartley, *Girl Reading Girl in Japan*, 36.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 34.

somewhat androgynously, and—even as she is widely suspected of being sexually experienced—is reluctant to date and kiss boys (although she is happy when she finally does). In performing this male role, however, Sugiyama realizes that the other side of the gender fence is no more comfortable for her. Yoshida’s critique of the patriarchal social structure via Sugiyama, more than any other character, marks *Sakura* as an overtly feminist text.

Although Sugiyama and the protagonist/narrator of the first act, Nakano Atsuko, both eventually find comfort and affirmation in the arms of an adolescent boy, the work as a whole resists the implication that men offer the only opportunity for love and affirmation. Ultimately, “the story’s emotional and intellectual focus, despite an ostensible preoccupation with the problematical aspects of male/female relationships, indisputably lies with female same-sex interaction.”²²⁰ Thus, even in the face of the heteronormative world looming outside the school grounds and at the end of the school year, within the confines of the “cherry orchard” at the top of the hill, the girls are at liberty to explore a range of women-identified experiences.

Rather than engaging in acts of literary translation, Yoshida and other manga artists are deploying imagery and plot elements from translated texts. Nevertheless, their transfiguration of translated originals has served as a means to circumvent the restrictions inherent in their own identities as Japanese women. Moreover, it was through the act of transfiguring a foreign space, a well-known name, or another era into something accessible to *shōjo* that these artists hoped also to liberate their readers. Yoshida’s *Sakura no sono* demonstrates how translation and the transfiguration of texts can create spaces for new narratives, both fictional and real. Such linguistic, cultural, and generic transformations inherent in the telling of this narrative enable the construction, de-construction, and re-construction of multiple sexual and gender options. And, while readers may enjoy the liberatory aspects of a Western liminal space as they read more

²²⁰ Hoogland, *Lesbian Configurations*, 83.

directly translated texts, Yoshida's manga as well as the *shōnen ai* manga and its reception discussed above illustrates that, at some level, *shōjo* readers remain aware of how these foreign spaces may be transfigured into tangible local acts and understandings.

Conclusion

Levy suggests in this chapter's opening epigraph that, in spite of translation's centrality to modern Japan, the project of elucidating its role in the (re)construction of Japanese culture is still in its early stages.²²¹ Yet there is a growing body of diverse scholarship on translation in Japan, even if there is as yet no formal discipline of translation studies within Japan itself.²²² A majority of the scholarship on translation in Japan has, like the section above, focused on literary translation. As the other portions of this chapter demonstrate, however, the translation of essays and empirical studies also served as critical tools for those seeking challenge gender and sexual norms in the twentieth century. Both through direct translation and more extreme transfiguration of many kinds of foreign texts, the women and adolescent girls in the *ribu*, *rezubian*, and queer *shōjo* manga spheres worked to expand the possibilities for the category "women" in Japan.

My discussion of the uses of literary translation shows that neither the original texts nor their translations need to be feminist for the texts to be transfigured toward feminist aims. This is also true for other genres of writing. Setsu Shigematsu, for instance, demonstrates how, Tanaka, who has long and vociferously rejected the possibility that *ribu* was imported, nonetheless draws on Marx and Lenin, as well as Wilhelm Reich and others in her own theory of *ribu*.²²³ Tanaka's

²²¹ Levy, "Introduction," 11.

²²² Ibid., 11. The point that there is no discipline of translation studies in Japan is credited to Yanabu Akira, whose own many works on translation in Japan occupy the last two pages of the volume's annotated bibliography. See Aragorn Quinn, compiler, with Joanna Sturiano, "Annotated Bibliography of Translation Studies in Japan," in Levy, "The Culture of Translation," 265–96.

²²³ See chapter three in Setsu Shigematsu, "Tanaka Mitsu and the Women's Liberation Movement in Japan: Towards a Radical Feminist Ontology," PhD diss., Cornell University, 2003.

use of Marx and Lenin is rather unsurprising given that, emerging as it did out of Japan's New Left, *ribu* discourse in general was heavily inflected by Marxist-Leninist discourse. Reich may have been more revolutionary for Tanaka, however. Almost forty years later, Tanaka still recalls in a published interview that reading Reich's *The Sexual Revolution* was as if a veil had been pulled from her eyes. She saw through him that "the nucleus of human consciousness was sex (*sei*)," which helps account for the centrality that Tanaka gave within her own theory of *ribu*.²²⁴ Even her famous concept of women being "toilets" (*benjo*) may be considered a transfigured version of Reich's positing that prostitutes are like toilets.²²⁵ Of course, Tanaka was more concerned with rejecting the notion that she had been influenced by foreign feminists than rejecting ties between her work and foreign discourse in general. In the same interview, moments before gushing about Reich, she boasts with a laugh, "I'm not proud of it but I still haven't read Beauvoir."²²⁶ Nevertheless, her transfiguration of ideas taken from a translated text, *The Sexual Revolution*, helped form the foundation of the theory she spells out in her influential *For Women with Spirit*, as well as the signature symbolism in her "Liberation from Toilet" pamphlet.

And translation goes both ways. Some women at Ribu Shinjuku Center, including Sawabe Hitomi, formed Translation Group (Hon'yaku Gurūpu) in March 1974 to read materials and letters sent to the center from abroad.²²⁷ Realizing they could also introduce the current situation for women in Japan to women elsewhere, they created English-language materials, which center members took with them in June, 1975 to attend the First United Nations World Conference on Women, in Mexico City. Founded in the mid-1970s by Takagi Sawako, who had

²²⁴ Tanaka Mitsu, "Mirai o tsukanda onnatachi," interview by Kitahara Minori and Ueno Chizuko, in *Sengo Nihon sutadiizu 2: 60, 70-nendai*, ed. Komori Yōichi et al. (Tokyo: Kinokuniya Shoten), 285; Wilhelm Reich, *Sei to bunka no kakumei*, trans. Nakao Hajime (Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 1969).

²²⁵ Shigematsu, "Tanaka Mitsu and the Women's Liberation Movement," 163.

²²⁶ Tanaka, "Mirai o tsukanda onnatachi," 283. Something she wrote in one of her early manifestos, contradicts this: "Having read Marx, Engels and de Beauvoir, I now am left with a big wrinkle in my left brain." Quoted in Shigematsu, "Tanaka Mitsu and the Women's Liberation Movement," 153–54.

²²⁷ See RSSSHK, *Kono michi hitosuji*, iv-v; Sawabe, "Onna o ai suru onnatachi no monogatari," 40.

been abroad and found herself unable to adequately explain the Japanese *ribu* movement, Femintern Press released a series of pamphlets on the Japanese movement as well as other feminist issues encompassing Asia more broadly.²²⁸ Akiyama Yōko's pamphlet introducing Ding Ling and her translation from the Chinese of Ding's "Thoughts on the Eighth of March" helped introduce Ding to feminists outside of Asia.²²⁹ Within the foreign lesbian community in Japan itself, Joni van Dyke, for instance, created a bilingual "Dyketry" in order to "help bridge the communication gap" between Japanese and foreign lesbians "to fight the patriarchal strategies for blocking DYKE ENERGY!"²³⁰ And as BL and *yaoi* manga and anime have gained a global following over the past two decades, earlier *shōnen ai* texts have sometimes been translated as well, this time by fans abroad. The anime version of *The Song of the Wind and the Trees* (1987), for instance, is currently available with English and Spanish subtitles on YouTube.²³¹ The complex layers of translation and further transfiguration of subtly and not so subtly queer European texts in the 1970s have come full circle not just in translation but in the production and consumption of original *yaoi* abroad and in the seemingly borderless realm of the internet. In the very physical space of conventions such as Yaoicon, first held in San Francisco a decade ago, some foreign fans engage in cosplay, dressing as *yaoi* icons and physically embodying, if only for a moment, characters whose lineage can be traced not just back to 1970s Japanese artists, but also to postwar French cinema, pre-war German novels, and centuries of

²²⁸ Takagi Sawako, interview with author, April 2009. Examples of Femintern Press publications include Tanaka, *A Short History of the Women's Movement in Modern Japan*; Akiyama Yōko, *The Hidden Sun: A Brief History of Japanese Women* (Tokyo: Femintern Press, 1975); Matsui Yayori, *Why I Oppose Kisaeng Tours: Exposing Economic and Sexual Aggression against South Korean Women*, trans. Lora Sharnoff (Tokyo: Femintern Press, 1975).

²²⁹ Ding Ling and Akiyama Yōko, *Ting Ling: Purged Feminist*, trans. Akiyama Yōko and Larry Taub (Tokyo: Femintern Press, 1974); Akiyama, interview.

²³⁰ "Why Have a DYKETIONARY?" (preface), in Joni van Dyke, *Dyketry*, 2nd ed. (Tokyo: privately printed, ca. 1985), n.p. Van Dyke writes that the need for the *Dyketry* exists "because the boys keep words and concepts like clitoris, compulsory heterosexuality, coming out...out of their dicktionaries" (ibid.).

²³¹ *Kaze to ki no uta: sanctus seinaru kana*, directed by Yasuhiko Yoshikazu (Japan: Shōgakukan/Herald, 1987).

idolizing beautiful boys in Japan.

Sandra Bermann urges that that we seek both evidence and the effects of globalization “in the interstices, the nodes, those endless, precarious junctures where translation between cultures and languages takes place. ... Here conflicting histories make their claims, with their stories of passions felt and decisions taken. ... In these junctures lie unheard, muted voices of past and present....”²³² This chapter has shown that to even begin such a complicated and important task requires attention to multiple fields of discourse and multiple approaches. Situating translation as a mode of transfiguration encourages us to pay attention to the important distinction between attempts at direct translation and attempts to more greatly transform a text, without losing sight of the way both are often contained in everyday speech within a very loose notion of translation. Yet even loosely defined, confining ourselves to pure translation would miss the way translated texts are often, in turn, transfigured into texts like *Stories of Women Who Love Women* and *The Heart of Thomas*. Transfiguration also steers us to look for effects beyond translated texts themselves, beyond their translators and beyond even dramatically transfigured texts such as these to the communities and the individuals who have been affected. It is here, in the sometimes subtle ripples and reverberations, we can see how much translation really matters.

²³² Sandra Bermann, “Introduction,” in *Nation, Language, and the Ethics of Translation*, ed. Sandra Bermann and Michael Wood (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005), 7–8.

CHAPTER FIVE: TRAVEL

In the wake of EXPO '70 in Osaka, Japan National Railway (JNR) began a campaign encouraging young women to hit the rails and “Discover Japan.” This was a time in which expectations lingered that, until married, a young woman would sleep in the family home under parental supervision and not spend the night unsupervised in a strange place—a fact that added, in the advertising campaign designer’s own calculations, a certain erotic liberation to the journeys he was promoting.¹ During this same period, domestic and, in particular, foreign travel was also increasingly a part of the broader intertwined discourses of consumption and status, with overseas holidays as one of the big three symbols of having truly achieved financial success in the 1970s.² And, while fixed exchange rates unfavorable to the yen as well as currency export restrictions and other obstacles hampered travel abroad through the early part of the decade, in the 1970s and 1980s foreign journeys slowly entered the realm of the possible for an increasing number of Japanese, including women.

This period also saw a new wave of magazines targeting young women consumers, beginning with *An An* (1970–) and *Non-no* (1971–) at the opening of the 1970s, followed by *Croissant* (*Kurowassan*, 1977–) and *More* (*Moa*, 1977–) later in the decade. These magazines simultaneously produced and reflected among their readers an interest in travel and eroticism, along with other kinds of consumption. *An An* and *Non-no* in particular have been associated with an increase among young women in both domestic and overseas travel, linked with their

¹ Marilyn Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 36–38.

² In the mid- to late 1950s, consumers were said to have first strived for the “three sacred treasures” of an electric fan, a washing machine, and a rice cooker, or, alternatively, a washing machine, a refrigerator, and a black and white television. This was followed by a car, an air conditioner, and a color television in the 1960s, and jewels, a house, and an overseas vacation in the 1970s. See William W. Kelly, “Finding a Place in Metropolitan Japan: Ideologies, Institutions, and Everyday Life,” in *Postwar Japan as History*, ed. Andrew Gordon (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 195 n17.

promotion of Japanese tourist attractions, as well as—particularly from the mid-1970s onward—foreign destinations including Paris, New York, and London.³ While prior to the 1970s overseas travel had been limited largely to (men’s) business trips and study abroad, already in 1976, a quarter of all Japanese who traveled abroad, or roughly 732,000 individuals, were women.⁴

The JNR campaign was built around the Japanese idea of *tabi*—a concept with “an aura of the antique”—that originally implied a journey, most often on foot, with a purpose such as a religious pilgrimage or a trip taken as part of one’s occupation.⁵ From ancient travel literature to the present, *tabi* have also been tinged with the stuff of dreams.⁶ JNR is not alone in capitalizing on—and stretching the meaning of—this traditional idea of a sometimes fantastic, often nostalgic journey with a purpose. As Sylvia Guichard-Anguis points out, in contemporary Japan people continue to make “*tabi*,” whether by train, plane, or the internet, and quite often to destinations beyond the Japanese border.⁷ The initial inspiration for the JNR “Discover Japan” campaign, in fact, came from abroad. The “Discover Japan” promotion’s creators transfigured a 1967 “Discover America” campaign aimed at keeping American travel money within the borders of the United States into a series of advertisements encouraging young Japanese women to fill

³ Keiko Tanaka, “Japanese Women’s Magazines: The Language of Aspiration,” in *The Worlds of Japanese Popular Culture: Gender, Shifting Boundaries and Global Cultures*, ed. D.P. Martinez (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 111, 116–17. The first issue of *An An* contained a feature on model Tachikawa Yuri supposedly traveling on her own to Paris and London. *An An* was more focused on Europe and *Non-no* on the US due to the magazines’ respective collaboration with the French magazine *Elle* and the US magazine *Glamour*. See Barbara Holthus, “Sexuality, Body Images and Social Change in Japanese Women’s Magazines in the 1970s and 1980s,” in Ulrike Wöhr, Barbara Hamill Sato, and Suzuki Sadami, eds. *Gender and Modernity: Rereading Japanese Women’s Magazines* (Kyoto: International Research Center for Japanese Studies, 2000), 142.

⁴ From a 1977 Tourism White Paper, cited in Bamba Tomoko, “The ‘Office Ladies’ Paradise: Inside and Out,” *Japan Quarterly* 26, no. 2 (April–June 1979): 242. Bamba does not provide a breakdown to indicate the purpose of these women’s travel or who they were traveling with.

⁵ Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing*, 36–37.

⁶ Sylvie Guichard-Anguis, “Introduction: The Culture of Travel (*tabi no bunka*) and Japanese Tourism,” in *Japanese Tourism and Travel Culture*, ed. Sylvie Guichard-Anguis and Okpyo Moon (London: Routledge, 2009), 2.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 2–3.

JNR's coffers by traveling around Japan by train.⁸

Moreover, the “Discover Japan” campaign was sold to these women as a journey to discover oneself (*jibun*)—a journey that required leaving home to discover a self whose origins lie imbricated in a nostalgic notion of Japan, a Japan that was also home.⁹ Marilyn Ivy remarks that the “Discover Japan” campaign positioned young women simultaneously as the subjects of these journeys and as objects. They were subjects who must leave a home that is “essentially lacking: lacking both in the satisfaction necessary to keep women at home...and in the resources necessary to actualize ‘woman’ as the desirable object of the male gaze.”¹⁰ In short, through journeying in Japan, the targets of this campaign were expected to come to understand themselves as having a self that was both authentically Japanese and a female, by definition the object of male desire.¹¹ The travel that is the focus of this chapter dates to the same period as the JNR campaign and is also intimately linked with self-discovery and transformation through venturing away from home. These journeys, however, served to challenge—rather than reinforce—the gender and sexual norms that would position women as sexual objects. And in some cases, they also unsettled the travelers’ Japaneseness.

Like translation, in the 1970s and 1980s travel in various forms played a vital role in shaping the *ūman ribu*, *rezubian*, and queer *shōjo* manga spheres, as well as in reshaping the self-understandings of many of the individuals associated therewith. By contrast with the mostly rural destinations of the “Discover Japan” campaign, the domestic journeys for the women who are my focus here most often entailed travel to, not from, urban centers. Arguably the cultural

⁸ As Ivy points out, while the man who conceived of the campaign claimed they were completely different, he had in fact co-authored a book about the “Discover America” campaign, published in 1968. See Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing*, 42. By coincidence, the subtitle in the chapter in which Ivy discusses this campaign is “Trans-Figuring Japan.” Unfortunately, she does not define what she means by transfiguring, though clearly this campaign is an instance of transfiguration as I have defined it.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 40–42.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 39, 42.

capital of each of these three communities, Tokyo, in particular, had a centripetal pull that drew many of the women to whose lives I have been referring—though, to be sure, the Osaka-Kyoto area comes in a close second, especially within the *ribu* movement. My concern in this chapter, however, is travel abroad, both real and vicarious.

Within my three focal communities, regardless of the purpose of any given journey, the destination of foreign travel was most commonly—but not exclusively—located in the West. Some of the interest within these spheres in occupying Western cultural spheres seems to prefigure the *akogare* [yearning] for an ultimately unobtainable idea of the West that Karen Kelsky found in her study of internationally-minded women in the late 1980s and the 1990s. Those women rejected Japan for what they often later discovered to their disappointment had been an overly idealized understanding of Western culture—and Western men.¹² While the *akogare* of the women in Kelsky’s study was imbued with and perpetuated an “attitude of Japanese inferiority,”¹³ such an attitude, while also present to a degree in these three spheres, does not appear to have not an overriding force among the women and adolescent girls in the *ribu*, *rezubian*, and queer *shōjo* manga spheres, who, with few exceptions, did not express the same rejection of Japan as had the women in Kelsky’s project.

Aside from the United Nations First World Conference on Women in Mexico City, travel to countries outside the West received relatively limited attention within these spheres in most of the 1970s and 1980s. And there were few women from outside the West whose voices were prominent in the discourse of these three communities. As discussed in previous chapters, queer *shōjo* manga narratives were predominantly set in the West for much of these two decades, with

¹² Karen Kelsky, *Women on the Verge: Japanese Women, Western Dreams* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2001), 26

¹³ *Ibid.*, 26. Kelsky does note that however enamored these women seemed to be with the liberatory potential of the West, the narratives they told about their experience of the West were not blindly or unquestioningly positive “but tentative, shifting, contradictory, and contingent” (*ibid.*, 87).

most of the remainder set in Japan. Within the *rezubian* community, it would take until the mid-1980s for *rezubian* groups to begin networking with other lesbians in Asia, and even those connections were forged a lesbian event in Europe (discussed below). Some women's groups in Japan did attempt to directly reach out to and network with other Asian women from the very beginning of the 1970s, but such efforts were seldom made by *ribu* groups specifically.¹⁴

Among *ribu* and other women's groups, the most prominent discussion of Korea and elsewhere in Asia in the 1970s was a campaign to end prostitution tours by men.¹⁵

As I have shown in the preceding chapters, elements from the West—primarily the US and Western Europe—were transfigured in these communities by women and adolescent girls (as well as men) in the process of redefining “women” in Japan. Many of these elements were introduced via transnational travel—that is, flows of people across national borders. For instance, the American radical feminist writing that was among the first to be translated into Japanese, discussed in chapter four, was brought to Japan by a pair of Americans who had traveled to the country to both protest US military aggression in Southeast Asia and to evade the draft. And the multi-sited, multi-stage shift in pronunciation from “*resubian*” to “*rezubian*,” discussed in chapter three, began with direct contact between American lesbians and a Japanese man who had

¹⁴ There are, of course, exceptions, for instance a special feature on “Chinese women's liberation” in the Nagoya-based *mini-komi Women's Rebellion: Onna no hangyaku*, “Chūgoku no fujin kaihō,” no. 4 (March 1972). One prominent example of non-*ribu* feminists engaging with women elsewhere in Asia is the Conference of Asian Women Fighting Discrimination=Invasion (Shinryaku=Sabetsu to Tatakau Ajia Fujin Kaigi), which arose from the New Left and was founded in 1970, like many *ribu* groups. This group focused on how economic exploitation differently affected women in Asia. Ties formed in mid-1970 led to 10 women taking a tour at the end of the year to learn more about and strengthen connections with women in China. This tour is written about in Shinryaku=Sabetsu to Tatakau Ajia Fujin Kaigi, *Chūgoku o otozurete: Kichi de tatakau Nihon fujin daihyōdan* (Tokyo: Shinryaku=Sabetsu to Tatakau Ajia Fujin Kaigi, 1971), reprinted in Shinryaku=Sabetsu to Tatakau Ajia Fujin Kaigi Shiryō Shūsei Kankō Kai, ed., *Shinryaku=Sabetsu to Tatakau Ajia Fujin Kaigi Shiryō Shūsei*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Inpakuto, 2006).

¹⁵ Most prominent in this struggle was female journalist and world traveler Matsui Yayori, who wrote frequently about the topic, e.g., Matsui Yayori, “Watashi wa naze kiisen kankō ni hantai suru no ka: keizai Shinryaku to sei Shinryaku no kōzō o abaku,” *Onna erosu* no. 2 (April 1974). This article was reprinted in English translation in pamphlet form as *Why I Oppose Kisaeng Tours: Exposing Economic and Sexual Aggression against South Korean Women*, trans. Lora Sharnoff (Tokyo: Femintern Press, 1975). Articles on these prostitution tours also occasionally appeared in *Ribu News*, *Women's Revolt*, and other *ribu mini-komi*.

journeyed to New York; this shift also involved other transnational voyages and face-to-face contact between women from Japan and people from the US through which women from Japan directly heard how the word was pronounced in English.

Like the transfigured words, texts, and practices discussed in previous chapters, the purposes and effects of travel abroad within these spheres were sometimes the result of coincidence rather than planning and were seldom as straightforward they might initially appear. These trips often served multiple functions, and at times had unforeseen consequences. Among the intended purposes of travel abroad in these spheres was escape. This escape might have been from Japanese patriarchal norms broadly defined, from the parental home, from aspects of the self, or from a combination of these. For the women with whom I have spoken, as well as within the discourse of these three communities, however, these journeys were generally more focused on the appeal of the destination than problems with the point of origin. That is, these were framed as *journeys to* more so than *journeys from*. While this is a difference of degree rather than kind, it is a distinction not without significance. For those in the *ribu* and *rezubian* spheres in particular, rather than frame travel abroad as an attempt to merely escape oppressive gender and sexual norms, these journeys were quite often undertaken for the purpose of networking with and learning from women in other cultures—or at least thusly framed—so that they could bring back knowledge that might strengthen women’s activism within Japan. Further, for some women these journeys—including both short- and long-term sojourns abroad—were for work, either for an individual’s own job, her partner’s, or a parent’s. Finally, as travel abroad became more affordable, particularly in the 1980s and after, an increasing number of these journeys were primarily for pleasure.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will focus real and vicarious travel experiences in the

ribu, *rezubian*, and queer *shōjo* manga spheres. In contrast with the last chapter in which I used a relatively narrow definition of translation, for my purposes in this chapter I provisionally locate long-term, even permanent, dwelling abroad on the continuum of travel. I do so because the choice to move away from—and in some cases to—Japan, can often be linked to experiences in these communities and because women from Japan who have become long-term residents of other countries and long-term foreign residents of Japan alike have contributed significantly to the discourse of these spheres. Articles and letters appearing in commercial and non-commercial publications in these three spheres from women on trips or residing abroad often provided information about foreign cultures, including details about topics such as the status of women, the dominant family structure, the state of feminist activism, the shape of queer communities, and—in the case of discourse in the queer *shōjo* manga sphere—the attractiveness of adolescent boys and young men. Narrated from the perspective of women who had grown up in Japan, such articles and letters allowed readers in Japan to vicariously share in the experience of someone often very much like themselves.

Early Travel Experiences

Amano Michimi traveled to Europe by herself in 1968, an exceptionally early time for a young Japanese woman to travel solo, particularly abroad. Her motivation for doing so was a combination of a yearning for Europe, a dream to become a writer, and a desire to escape. Her actual travel experience and its aftereffects were quite different from her expectations.

Born right at the end of the war, Amano had had an unusual upbringing.¹⁶ Her father,

¹⁶ This description of Amano's experiences is based on an interview I conducted with her in April 2009, follow-up correspondence in May and June of 2010, as well as Amano Michimi, "Women in Japan: Lucy Leu Interviews Michimi," *The Second Wave* 3, no. 4 (Winter 1974), an interview conducted with her when she was in New York.

born in the Meiji era, held very traditional ideas about the position of women in the family and in society, but her mother abandoned the family when she was four. She subsequently received little in the way of discipline from either her grandmother, who raised her and her two brothers for the next six years, or her stepmother, who joined the family when Amano was around ten years old. Further, as she recalls, no one made much effort to inculcate in her normative feminine behavior—a frequent complaint in the discourse in the *ribu*, *rezubian*, and queer *shōjo* manga spheres, and among the many women with whom I have spoken. Nevertheless, Amano developed a rebellious streak and yearned to escape her family and Kyoto, the conservative city of her birth. Her father allowed her to go to a four-year university—still somewhat unusual for young women at the time—but not to a school in Tokyo, where she desperately wanted to live. As a university student in the early 1960s, Amano tried to “act like an intellectual” and read what those around her were reading, such as works by Marx and Engels as well as Japanese writers like Yoshimoto Takaaki and Oe Kenzaburo, but found them too opaque. Upon the recommendation of a friend, she read Beauvoir’s *Second Sex* and was instantly hooked. Amano subsequently read everything else by Beauvoir that had been translated into Japanese and, in the process, her intellectual infatuation with the philosopher developed into a strong desire to become a writer and, concomitantly, an irrepressible yearning to directly experience the France in which Beauvoir wrote. Knowing that her father and stepmother would try to stop her, she planned her trip in secret and sprang it on them the day before she left.

Her actual experience of France was far from the rose-colored image she held of the country before she arrived. She worked as an au pair for series of families over the course of about ten months, and was often lonely and miserable. She had a great deal of difficulty communicating with people, who often mistook her for a Vietnamese refugee. She was poorly

paid but when she had enough money, she spent time with a Japanese friend at a café Beauvoir was said to frequent, eventually managing to see the object of her passion in person twice. While in less than a year's time her worried parents offered to pay for a flight back to Japan, Amano did not want to appear that she could not take care of herself, so she moved to Copenhagen. There she cleaned rooms at a Scandinavian Airlines-owned hotel for a year, long enough to entitle her to a free flight back to Japan. Before she left, she did scrape together enough money to make circuit around Europe, hitting spots then popular with the bohemian set she was trying to emulate. While this journey was on the whole not as rewarding as she had hoped, and she does not speak of it as a transformative experience, she did come back with a limited ability to speak French and, more importantly, greater self-confidence. And, while Amano's trip appears to have been little more than an unusual adventure for a young Japanese woman in the late 1960s, it set in motion a chain of events that got her involved in *ribu* and engaged in further transnational networking.

After returning to Japan, Amano was invited by someone she had met in Europe to a party for British writer Angela Carter (1940–1992), who had moved to Japan in 1969. Among the last people remaining at the party that evening were Amano and Larry Taub (1936–), an American in Tokyo in part to protest the Vietnam War. Later Taub asked for her assistance in getting permission from Tanaka Mitsu to translate Tanaka's book *For Women with Spirit*.¹⁷ While that translation did not work out, Amano found herself pulled into the *ribu* movement, first as a member of Group Fighting Women (Gurūpu Tatakau Onna). Amano believes that Tanaka both invited her to join because she was so self-assured, and then kicked her out of the group within about six months because, at almost Tanaka's age and with a four-year degree and two years experience living abroad, Amano threatened Tanaka's authority.

Amano stayed involved in the *ribu* movement, however, taking part in the four-woman

¹⁷ Tanaka Mitsu, *Inochi no onnatachi e: torimidashi ūman ribu ron* (Tokyo: Tabata Shoten, 1972).

collective, Red June (Akai Rokugatsu), a group with which she grew increasingly dissatisfied. Before long, Amano had saved enough money to travel again, and this time chose to go to New York. She told those around her she was going to learn about the women's liberation movement in the US, but, in fact, she merely wanted to extract herself from the community. Through Taub, she did get introductions to New York-based radical feminists, most of whom, she says, identified as lesbian. Amano supported herself and earned money for the return trip by working under the table at a Japanese restaurant, and then at a hostess bar catering to Japanese business men. In spite of being impressed by how openly women expressed lesbian desire in the radical feminist community she had connected with, and in spite of being given small scale celebrity status by constantly being introduced by one woman as "the only lesbian in the Japanese lib [movement]," she was disappointed with her experience and stayed only five months.¹⁸ Back in Japan, Amano wrote up her experience abroad for the readers of *Woman Eros*.¹⁹

Although she had openly identified herself as *rezubian* all the while she was involved in *ribu*, Amano was not particularly interested in *rezubian* activism and was not drawn to the emerging *rezubian feminisuto* movement. At Funamoto Emi's invitation she joined the editorial team producing *Woman Eros*, a position she continued through the late 1970s. While she would go on to pursue other interests, including abstract art and acupuncture, Amano continued to contribute to *ribu* and other feminist publications such as the Osaka-based *From Woman to Women* through well into the 1980s.

Takagi Sawako (1947–) was another early traveler with connections to the *ribu*

¹⁸ Amano Michimi, "Onna kaihō: yō no tōzai o mazu toeba," *Onna erosu* no. 4 (March 1975): 147. While Amano told me in the interview that she found New York and the US in general boring, in a article about her experience she published in *Woman Eros* soon after her trip, she described New York as "dangerous...dirty...[and] traumatic"—shocking beyond compare—nothing like France, Denmark, or the other countries she visited in Europe. See *ibid.*, 140. Rather than any deliberate attempt to reframe the experience for me or to exaggerate the danger of New York for readers of *Woman Eros* in 1975, I suspect that this aspect of her trip no longer forms a significant part of her memory of being in New York.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

movement that came about by coincidence rather than design. Takagi had attended a high school unusual in that it offered courses in French and German in addition to English.²⁰ The two years of French she took along with a rather risqué film by Jean-Luc Godard piqued her interest in the country. After finishing high school, Takagi continued to study French for another two years while preparing to pass the entrance exam to gain admission to Waseda University, which had a professor of French with whom she wanted to study. While she was in university during the peak of the student movement and then the rise of *ūman ribu*, she was so busy with work and study she was unaware of the new women's movement that was beginning to take shape. After graduation she found a position with the Japan Family Planning Association (JFPA) in publicity, at the time one of the few jobs besides teacher, doctor, and nurse open to women with a four-year degree. Around 1971, on assignment at a gathering celebrating a milestone anniversary for the *Women's Democratic Newspaper* (*Fujin minshu shinbun*, 1946–), she first learned about the existence of *ribu* from fliers being handed out, but she did not immediately get involved. Through her job she would, however, continue to have occasion to interact with both old-school feminists and new-school *ribu* activists, including Amano, who was to eventually become her roommate.

In 1973, through her involvement with the French-speaking community in Tokyo, Takagi met a woman involved in the French feminist movement who had followed her journalist boyfriend to Japan on assignment. This woman told her about the upcoming International Feminist Planning Conference, co-sponsored by the National Organization for Women, to be held in Cambridge, Massachusetts, at the beginning of June. This time Takagi was sufficiently curious to decide to attend on her own rather than as part of her job. Indeed, while the conference

²⁰ This description of Takagi's background and experiences comes from an interview I conducted with her in April 2009. Larry Taub was present for the first half of the interview, and helped clarify some of the details.

was only several days long, she decided to quit her position at JFPA and combine the conference with a three-month sojourn in the US. Unable to speak English sufficiently, she had requested an interpreter, but the person provided by the conference organizers, a Japanese woman residing in the US, disappeared after the first day. Prolific feminist writer Higuchi Keiko (1932–), ended up spending her own money to hire an interpreter that she, Takagi, and Yoshihiro Kiyoko (1940–), the only three participants coming from Japan, were able to make use of for the remainder of the conference. While mere curiosity had gotten Takagi to the conference, it was clearly inspirational to her, and she threw herself into the *ribu* movement upon her return to Japan, speaking to the women at Ribu Shinjuku Center about her experience, as well as laying the groundwork for further transnational exchange.²¹ Yoshihiro also shared with readers of *Woman Eros* experience at the conference and subsequent participation in women’s liberation activities in New York. The most striking point about the US movement for Yoshihiro—one which occupies most of her article in the journal—seems to have been the prominence of lesbians in the movement, something which stood in sharp contrast to the *ribu* movement and which would stand out to varying effects for other travelers from Japan.²²

During Takagi’s own time in the US, including at the conference, she found herself repeatedly asked about feminism and women in Japan but unable to adequately explain conditions. This was the inspiration for Femintern Press (Femintaan Puresu), which she founded to publish English language materials about feminism in Japan and elsewhere in Asia, “not only to satisfy the curiosity and chance questions that interested American, Canadian, European, and

²¹ In September of 1973, Takagi led a discussion on the international feminist conference at a community center in Tokyo’s Shibuya neighborhood. See *Ribu nyūsu: kono michi hitosuji*, “Sukejūru,” no. 4 (September 1973), reprinted in Ribu Shinjuku Sentaa Shiryō Hozon Kai, *Kono michi hitosuji: Ribu Shinjuku Sentaa shiryō shūsei*—hereafter, RSSHK, *Kono michi hitosuji*—(Tokyo: Inpakuto, 2008).

²² Yoshiro wrote up her See Yoshihiro Kiyoko, “Amerika no ribu no atarashii nami,” *Onna erosu* no. 1 (November 1973).

other feminists may have, but also from the conviction that feminists in these countries have the *obligation* to become informed about and support the actions of women in Asia, and particularly in undeveloped countries.’’²³ The name of Takagi’s new press, which echoes Comintern, was suggested by Taub, whom Takagi had met through Amano, and who would go on to assist with translating and proofreading the press’s publications. From 1974 to around 1977, Femintern produced a series of at least seven English-language pamphlets, which they promoted in English-language women’s periodicals and newsletters.²⁴ Incidentally, it was also around 1974 that the translation group at Ribu Shinjuku Center began producing their own materials in English in response to requests for information from abroad, as noted in chapter four. One of the earliest Femintern Press pamphlets was Kazuko Tanaka’s *A Short History of the Women’s Movement in Modern Japan*, which was first published in 1975 and sold sufficiently well that it was in its third edition two years later.²⁵ The press also reprinted a paper by Akiyama Yōko, written at the suggestion of American scholar and women’s rights activist Evelyn Reed, and presented for Akiyama at the 1973 conference in Cambridge by Takagi.²⁶ In keeping with Takagi’s belief that feminists in more developed countries must be aware of issues confronting women in developing countries in Asia, one of the pamphlets focused on Chinese feminist Ding

²³ Takagi Sawako, “A Short Message from Femintern Press: For International Communication,” in *Shiryō Nihon ūman ribu shi*, 3 vols., ed. Mizoguchi Akiyo, Saeki Yōko, and Miki Sōko (1974; Kyoto: Shōkadō Shoten, 1992–1995), vol. 2, 309 (emphasis original).

Further evidence of an expectation, or at least the hope, among women in Japan in this period that there would be a more balanced exchange can be found in the foreword by Kazuko Tsurumi to an early edited collection on women in Japan, in which she expresses the anticipation that it “may well be a harbinger of the new trend...of the study of Japanese women by their foreign counterparts.” See Kazuko Tsurumi, “Foreword,” in *Women in Changing Japan*, ed. Joyce Lebra, Joy Paulson, and Elizabeth Powers (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1975), vi.

²⁴ A list of Femintern Press publications can be found in Mizoguchi, Saeki, and Miki, *Shiryō Nihon ūman ribu shi*, vol. 2, 307. An example of a Femintern Press promotion can be found in *Women’s International Network News*, “Japan,” no. 1 (January 1975), which in

²⁵ Kazuko Tanaka, *A Short History of the Women’s Movement in Modern Japan*, 3rd ed. (1975; Tokyo: Femintern Press, 1977).

²⁶ See the acknowledgement in Akiyama Yōko, *The Hidden Sun: A Brief History of Japanese Women* (Tokyo: Femintern Press, 1975), 2.

Ling and another on prostitution tours to Korea.²⁷ Takagi sold enough of the pamphlets for several hundred yen or several dollars each domestically and abroad that she was able to turn a small profit.

While both of Amano's sojourns in the West can be linked—if somewhat tangentially—to her rebellion against normative restrictions on women, and she used her experience in *ribu* to reflect on her journeys, she while seems to have taken away little except broken French, somewhat improved English, the knowledge that New York was very dangerous and that Japanese men were as dependent on women abroad as they are in Japan.²⁸ She does not reflect back on those journeys as shaping her identity as either a feminist or as a lesbian. Through a series of unlikely coincidences, Takagi also traveled abroad in the early 1970s and became acquainted with American feminists. But for Takagi, her encounter with feminists from the US and elsewhere motivated her to become more engaged in feminism herself. Though, like Amano, she was initially more interested in France and French than the US and English, Takagi founded an English-language press to share information about *ribu* and women in Japan in general with readers of English.

Other women who were already committed feminists, like Inoue Teruko, had a clearer purpose for heading to the US. As discussed in chapter two, Inoue traveled around the country specifically to learn about the emerging field of women's studies, a trip which helped lay the foundations for establishing women's studies in Japan later in the decade.²⁹ Finally, other women went abroad for reasons completely unrelated to the *ribu* movement. Akiyama, who

²⁷ Ding Ling and Akiyama Yōko, *Ting Ling: Purged Feminist*, with translations by Akiyama Yōko and Larry Taub (Tokyo: Femintern Press, 1974); Matsui, *Why I Oppose Kisaeng Tours*.

²⁸ Amano, "Onna kaihō," 140, 141–42.

²⁹ Inoue Teruko, *Joseigaku to sono shūhen* (Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 1980), 230. Inoue wrote up that trip for *Woman Eros* in 1974: Atari Teruko [Inoue Teruko], "Amerika no josei to josei kaihō undō: ryokōsha no kaima mita Amerika," *Onna erosu* no. 2 (April 1974).

contributed two publications to Takagi's press, was herself well-traveled by the mid-1970s, though the traveling she did was not in conjunction with *ribu* activism. Akiyama's first trip abroad, as a graduate student, was a brief trip to Cuba in 1969, on which she found herself invited by chance.³⁰ And several years later followed her husband, a translator, to Moscow for his work, where they, along with one and then two children, lived from 1974 to 1981.³¹ While activism did not motivate these trips, Akiyama did send "letters from the Soviet Union" to publications like *Ribu News* and *Woman Eros*, in which she discussed women, family structure, and society in Russia, illustrating how she used her *ribu* involvement to reflect on Russian culture.³²

Taub, who gave the name to Takagi's small press, was one of a number of foreigners who found their way to Japan and interacted with the *ribu* movement in the first half of the 1970s, many of whom first came to Japan in conjunction with the anti-war movement, beginning in the 1960s and including individuals mentioned in previous chapters, who attended and contributed their voices and experiences at early *ribu* meetings and retreats. And even those foreigners who came to Japan for other reasons entirely, sometimes found themselves involved in this sphere. For instance, Angela Carter, mentioned above, came to Japan not as part of the war movement but to "estrangle" herself from her present life and continue to develop as a writer through a process of self-discovery.³³ She later wrote that through her experience in Japan, which she funded with her prize money from the 1968 Somerset Maugham Award, she "learnt what it is to

³⁰ Akiyama Yōko, *Ribu shishi nōto: onnatachi no jidai kara* (Tokyo: Inpakuto Shuppankai, 1993), 8.

³¹ Akiyama Yōko, interview with author, March 2009.

³² See, e.g., Akiyama Yōko, "Sobieto kara no tegami," pts. 1 and 2, *Ribu nyūsu: kono michi hitosuji* no. 14 (November 1974), and no. 15 (February 1975), reprinted in RSSSHK, *Kono michi hitosuji*; and "So-ren kara," *Onna erosu* no. 13 (September 1979).

³³ Gemma López, *Seductions in Narrative: Subjectivity and Desire in the Works of Angela Carter and Carter and Jeanette Winterson* (Youngstown, N.Y.: Cambria Press, 2007), 39.

be a woman and became radicalised.”³⁴ American scholars whose work focuses women in Japan such as Susan Pharr and Kathleen Uno also made connections with activists at Ribu Shinjuku Center.³⁵ In addition to researchers, foreign feminist activists, including lesbian feminists, regularly visited Ribu Shinjuku Center, as did foreign residents of Japan.³⁶ Pharr was one of a handful of foreigners, mostly Western visitors or residents of Japan, who contributed writing to *ribu* and *rezubian* publications, thus participating in local discourse on the meaning of “woman” from the perspective of someone who was almost an outsider, but not quite.³⁷ That such individuals are seldom mentioned in discourse on *ribu* and *rezubian* history speaks to the fact that most played only temporary and seemingly marginal roles. Nevertheless, foreigners visiting and residing in Japan did add to the discourse and occasionally set in motion changes of they themselves may never have been aware.

* * *

Not all early 1970s travel can be tied to activism, however. In September of 1972, four young women, *shōjo* manga artists and denizens of the so-called Ōizumi Salon, Hagio Moto and Takemiya Keiko, along with Takemiya’s muse and Ōizumi regular, Masuyama Norie, as well as

³⁴ Angela Carter, *Nothing Sacred: Selected Writing* (London: Virago, 1982), 28, quoted in *ibid.* 40.

³⁵ Kathleen Uno dedicates her influential article on the “good wife, wise mother” paradigm to her “sisters” she had met twenty years before at the Ribu Shinjuku Center, including Tanaka Mitsu and Wakabayashi Naeko. See Kathleen S. Uno, “Womanhood, War, and Empire: Transmutations of ‘Good Wife, Wise Mother’ Before 1931,” in *Gendering Modern Japanese History*, ed. Barbara Molony and Kathleen S. Uno (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2005), 293. Susan Pharr, then a graduate student at Columbia University, connected with the *ribu* movement while researching her dissertation. To the first issue of Ribu Shinjuku Center’s *Ribu News*, she contributed an article comparing women in Japan and women in the US—who she believed to be facing similar issues: Susan Pharr, “Nihon no josei, Amerika no josei,” trans. Kō Mami, *Ribu nyūsu: kono michi hitosuji* no. 1 (September 1972), reprinted in RSSHK, *Kono michi hitosuji*. Amano later met her in New York, though she felt as though she was being interrogated by Pharr about why Japanese women, who were in such an awful position socially, were not burning with anger. See Amano, “Onna kaihō,” 142.

³⁶ See, e.g., Wakabayashi Naeko’s comment in Endō Misaki et al., “Ribusen o taguri yosete miru,” *Zenkyōtō kara ribu e*, ed. Onnatachi no Ima o Tou Kai (Tokyo: Inpakuto Shuppan Kai, 1996), 221.

While foreign visitors to the center were seldom mentioned in the interviews I conducted and rarely come up in the written materials about the center, when I asked individuals involved in center activities, such as Yonezu Tomoko and Akiyama Yōko, I was told that there were often foreign women at the center.

³⁷ Pharr, “Nihon no josei.”

popular *shōjo* manga artist and occasional Ōizumi guest, Yamagishi Ryōko (1948–), set off for Europe. Their journey might best be described as a research trip, but it was also certainly motivated by the yearning that the artists themselves felt for the continent, a yearning instilled or reinforced by the same works they transfigured into the *shōnen ai* [boys’ love] genre.³⁸ According to Masuyama, the artists had already run to all the bookstores in Tokyo that stocked foreign books and bought and read over what few they could find on the history of clothing, accessories, wallpaper, furniture and so forth. And they watched a lot of films. What they talked about afterwards was not the plot so much as things like the way the pavement looked and the shape of the windows and the doorknobs. Hagio and Takemiya believed that to “give life” to their own stories, they needed their drawings to convey a certain realism.³⁹ (Their desire for authenticity is, of course, more than a little ironic given the Occidentalist blurring of cultures that went into the genre’s creation, discussed in the previous chapter.) Realizing the limited resources available to them in Japan were insufficient, they decided to visit Europe and see things for themselves.

As scholar Ishida Minori points out, for young women to travel independently and with their own money to Europe that early in the postwar era was exceedingly unusual, all the more so because they went for professional reasons rather than just for sightseeing.⁴⁰ When Masuyama thinks back about the trip and how young they were—all four were around 21—even she seems impressed, if not a little boastful. “At a time when the dollar was at 360 yen, a trip to Europe that wasn’t part of a tour—well, it was pretty reckless. But if you’re going to draw a foreign country,

³⁸ The Ōizumi Salon is discussed in chapter two.

³⁹ Quoted in Ishida Minori, *Hisoyaka na kyōiku: “yaoi/bōizu rabu” zenshi* (Tokyo: Rakuhoku Shuppan, 2008), 140.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 144.

don't you have to actually see it?"⁴¹ Over the course of 40 days, the four young women traveled across Russia to Stockholm and from there visited Brussels, Paris, Versailles, Strasburg, Lausanne, Heidelberg, Vienna, Rome, and Venice.⁴² Takemiya explains that, rather than simply taking in the beauty of famous sites, they spent their time examining things like how thick the walls were and how the doors opened, an interest reflected in the photos, and later in their own manga works.⁴³ Their photos from the trip are of “benches, boys, and windows,” rather than landmarks themselves, collectively forming a catalogue of objects for later reference.⁴⁴

Rather than simply use the experience as a resource for their manga, however, Takemiya and Hagio co-produced a five-part travelogue in manga and text, which they published in *Weekly Shōjo Comic* (*Shūkan shōjo komikku*, 1968–) at the beginning of 1973. They drew themselves and their traveling companions in “gag manga” (*gyagu manga*) style, and Europeans as well as the scenery in a somewhat more realistic—if beautifully exaggerated—*shōjo* manga style.⁴⁵ The use of the gag style for artists to represent themselves is a common way for artists to insert editorial comments, simultaneously placing themselves inside the narrative from and yet situate themselves at a remove from the action—and show they do not take themselves too seriously. Through this graphic travelogue, their fans were able to experience their tour vicariously, from savoring the tranquility of Vienna, to posing for photographs with beautiful boys dressed in unrealistically traditional clothing, to calculating expenses.⁴⁶ It would take another decade or more for fans of these artists to have the resources to themselves experience these things in significant numbers, however. In the 1970s, Europe would remain for *shōjo* readers the object of

⁴¹ Masuyama Norie and Sano Megumi, “Kyabetsu batake no kakumeiteki shōjo mangakatachi,” in *Bessatsu Takarajima*, no. 288, *70-nendai manga daihyakka* (Tokyo: Takarajimasha, 1996), 170–71.

⁴² Ishida, *Hisoyaka na kyōiku*, 144.

⁴³ Quoted in *ibid.*, 146.

⁴⁴ Masuyama and Sano, “Kyabetsu batake,” 171.

⁴⁵ Ishida, *Hisoyaka na kyōiku*, 147, 150.

⁴⁶ See Takemiya Keiko, “Konnichiwa, sayonara,” *Shūkan shōjo komikku* February 11, 1973, 116–17, reprinted in Ishida, *Hisoyaka na kyōiku*, 148–49.

their longing and their fantasies.

1975 and Its Aftermath

The year 1975, United Nations International Women's Year, was pivotal for women around the world. Whatever the critiques of the United Nations-sponsored First World Conference on Women in Mexico City—and there were many—the gathering provided opportunities for one-on-one interactions among women across economic and cultural differences, both at the official meetings and at counterdemonstrations, setting the stage for a more global movement for women's human rights.⁴⁷ For the *ribu* movement, it is frequently seen to mark either the end, or at least a major turning point leading toward its decline.⁴⁸

Women from Japan attended the Mexico City conference as part of both official and non-governmental delegations. Old-school feminists, including several members of parliament, spearheaded the organization of women from all walks of life into the grassroots Group of Women Taking Action for International Women's Year (Kokusai Fujin-nen o Kikkake Toshite Kōdō o Okosu Onnatachi no Kai). The group, which sent a delegation to the conference, set its mission as promoting women's full participation in society and more equitable cooperation between women and men, goals that were decidedly part of a liberal feminist philosophy.⁴⁹ This

⁴⁷ Charlotte Bunch, "Women's Human Rights: The Challenges of Global Feminism and Diversity," in *Feminist Locations: Global and Local, Theory and Practice*, ed. Marianne DeKoven (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 131. The Mexico conference, as well as subsequent conferences in Copenhagen (1980) and Nairobi (1985) were criticized for being more concerned with Cold War politics, Western imperialism, and racism than basic rights of women, and conversely as a conflict between Western women, who wanted to focus exclusively on "women's issues," and Third World women, who saw racism, imperialism, and economic exploitation as of greater concern to them than rights based on Western liberal feminist ideals. See Rosemarie Putnam Tong, *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1998), 228–31.

⁴⁸ Kano Mikiyo, for instance, says that even if 1975 was not exactly the end of the movement, "the mood [of *ribu*] really changed after International Women's Year." See Akiyama Yōko et al., "Tōdai tōsō kara ribu, soshite joseigaku, feminizumu," in *Onnatachi no Ima o Tou Kai, Zenkyōtō kara ribu e*, 56.

⁴⁹ Vera Mackie, *Feminism in Modern Japan* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2003), 175–77. The group was active as of 1980. See Vera Mackie, "Kantō Women's Groups." *Feminist International* [Japan] no. 2 (June 1980): 106–7.

loosely knit organization was able to use the conference and associated International Women's Year and subsequent Decade for Women (1976–1985), as well as the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)—signed by Japan in 1980 and ratified in 1985—to put international pressure on the Japanese government, prompting legal changes that would improve women's legal status including the promulgation in 1985 of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law.⁵⁰

Several *ribu* activists went to Mexico City in conjunction with the conference as well, but the consequences for certain individuals as well as the *ribu* movement were unforeseeable. Those attending from Ribu Shinjuku Center were Tanaka, Wakabayashi Naeko, and Takeda Miyuki (1948–), the latter of whom was involved in Tokyo Komuune, a group using the center.⁵¹ For Tanaka, leaving for Mexico also marked her departure from *ribu* activism. Exhausted from all the energy she had put into the movement, Tanaka needed to pull herself away but felt unable to do so if she remained in Japan, so she settled down in Mexico City, where she lived for the next four years.⁵² For Tanaka then, rather than an object of any sort of yearning or a place she hoped to network with and learn from local women, Mexico was merely a convenient site that was “not Japan,” and which served as little more than a backdrop for her recuperation. Tanaka did not, however, cut off ties completely with individuals from the *ribu* movement, several of whom visited her during the years she was in Mexico. When Tanaka finally returned to Japan she

⁵⁰ See Yamashita Yasuko, “The International Movement Toward Gender Equality and Its Impact on Japan,” trans. Elizabeth A. Leicester, *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal*, English Supplement, no. 5 (1993). A discussion of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law (Danjo Koyō Kikai Kintō Hō), and its implementation can be found in Yoko Kawashima, “Female Workers: An Overview of Past and Current Trends,” in *Japanese Women: New Feminist Perspectives on the Past, Present, and Future*, ed. Kumiko Fujimura-Fanselow and Atsuko Kameda (New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1995), 283–89.

⁵¹ See Endō et al., “Ribusen o taguri yosete miru,” 209. Tokyo Komuune, whose name combines “*ko umu*” [birth a child] with “*komyūn*” [commune], was a group promoting communal living. Like Ribu Shinjuku Center, discussed below, the departure of one of its core members, in this case Takeda, for the Mexico City conference was the final blow to a group of already exhausted members. See Saeki Yōko, “Tōkyō Komuune,” in Mizoguchi, Saeki, and Miki, *Shiryō Nihon ūman ribu shi*, vol. 2.

⁵² Tanaka Mitsu, “Mirai o tsukanda onnatachi,” interview by Kitahara Minori and Ueno Chizuko, in *Sengo Nihon sutadiizu 2: 60, 70-nendai*, ed. Komori Yōichi et al. (Tokyo: Kinokuniya Shoten, 2009), 307.

studied acupuncture, and then opened her own clinic in 1982.⁵³

Tanaka's long-term departure from Japan in connection with the UN conference is sometimes linked to the end of the most visible phase of the *ribu* movement. Indeed, her absence left had a huge impact on Ribu Shinjuku Center. Asakawa Mari believes that Tanaka's absence made it possible, or at least easier, to organize the "wonderful women" (*subarashii onnatachi*) survey to find out about *rezubian* within the *ribu* movement and to produce the *mini-komi* of the same name in 1976.⁵⁴ As for others heavily involved in the center's activities, exhausted themselves, they ended their collective living arrangement and began taking turns managing the center, before finally closing it in May 1977.⁵⁵

Some of these women started up new feminist projects. Yonezu Tomoko, Mori Setsuko (1948–), who had been in Thought Collective S.E.X. with Yonezu, and Doi Yumi formed the core of a women's printing collective called Aida Kōbō. By the end of the decade, however, relations within the group had grown poor, as had Yonezu's health. Yonezu pulled out of the collective, and in 1981 Doi headed to the US to "take a year off" and cool her head. Enjoying her new life, Doi decided to stay long term and was able to parlay her experience in the printing collective into a job at a printing company and eventually a green card.⁵⁶ Though she had not planned to live abroad permanently, and while she has maintained ties with friends from her time in *ribu*, almost twenty years later Doi is still living in San Francisco.⁵⁷

⁵³ Ibid., 280.

⁵⁴ Asakawa Mari, "Ribusen de deatta 'subarashii onnatachi'," oral history taken by Sugiura Ikuko, in *Nihon no rezubian komyuniti: kōjutsu no undō shi* (Tokyo: privately printed, 2009), 8–9.

⁵⁵ RSSSHK, *Kono michi hitosuji*, iii–iv. Without naming individual names, Ribu Shinjuku Sentaa Shiryō Hozon Kai describes this as the result of the absence of three of the managing members of the center (ibid., iii), but individuals recalling the experience, such as Asakawa, "Ribusen de deatta," 8, suggest that it was largely Tanaka's absence that brought about the change in management and ultimate closure of the center.

⁵⁶ Doi Yumi, interview with author, May 2006.

⁵⁷ Doi appears, for instance, in the recent documentary *30-nen no shisutaafuddo: 70-nendai no ūman ribu no onnatachi* (documentary), DVD, directed by Yamagami Chieko and Seyama Noriko (Tokyo: Herstory Project, 2004), and accompanied a 2006 tour of universities in the US Midwest and East, promoting the documentary. The

Wakabayashi was another Ribu Shinjuku Center member who combined the Mexico City conference with an extended sojourn in North America, but unlike Tanaka, Wakabayashi used her time abroad to network with and learn from foreign feminists, and came back recharged and ready to engage again in local activism.⁵⁸ Wakabayashi went to Mexico via Los Angeles, where she spent a brief time at the Feminist Women's Health Center. After Mexico, she went back up to LA and then onto San Francisco and Berkeley, the latter of which she loved for its hippie atmosphere, so she decided to stay a while. In the house where she chose to rent a room, it turned out that two of the women were lesbians. Through the people she had met at the health center in LA, she found herself employed at the Feminist Women's Health Center in neighboring Oakland. Two things stood out at the health center. One was its promotion, in conjunction with the LA center, of the use of speculums to help better acquaint women with their own bodies as part of the broader women's health movement, which can be traced in part to the Boston Women's Health Book Collective's *Our Bodies, Ourselves* series, and which motivated Wakabayashi to introduce speculums to women back in Japan and to work toward the establishment of women's health centers in the country (discussed in chapter four). The other was that her coworkers were lesbians.

Wakabayashi had had a negative impression of lesbians prior to getting involved in the *ribu* movement based on images circulating in public discourse, including pornography, but through translating materials for *Ribu News* that had come from lesbian-feminists abroad for

tour was organized by Tomomi Yamaguchi, then a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Chicago.

⁵⁸ This description of Wakabayashi's experience is summarized from Wakabayashi Naeko, "Onna no nettowaaku no naka de ikiru," oral history taken by Sugiura Ikuko, in Sugiura, *Nihon no rezubian komyuniti*, 17–25; and *Anisu*, "Komyuniti no rekishi, 1971–2001: nenpyō to intabyū de furikaeru" (Summer 2001): 38–41; and [Wakabayashi] Naeko, "Lesbian = Woman," in *Queer Japan: Personal Stories of Japanese Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, and Transsexuals*, ed. Barbara Summerhawk, Cheiron McMahill, and Darren McDonald (Norwich, Vt.: New Victoria, 1998), 184–87. When asked in a 1996 roundtable why she went to the US, she could not remember her initial reason, but Yonezu Tomoko, another roundtable participant recalled that Wakabayashi talked about needing a change of scenery. See Endo et al., "Ribusen o taguri yosete miru," 209.

Ribu News as well as through interaction with *rezubian* friends within the movement, her prejudice against lesbians “quickly disappeared.”⁵⁹ Nevertheless, prior to living in the US she did not think women loving women had anything to do with her. But at the clinic, for the first time in her life, she became romantically attracted to a woman, specifically an African American woman who was the partner of a Filipina who regularly visited the clinic. While her attraction led nowhere with this woman, it did lead her to the realization that liking women was the same as liking men had been for her in the past. Having experienced racism herself for the first time while in the US, Wakabayashi had become increasingly aware of race and identity, and she does not believe her liking a woman who was African American was insignificant.⁶⁰ As a result of these experiences, while she had arrived in the US identifying as a heterosexual woman within the *ribu* movement, Wakabayashi returned to Japan identifying as an “Asian lesbian feminist.”⁶¹

Other Transnational Stories of Women Who Love Women

Beginning around 1974, Sawabe Hitomi, like Wakabayashi, took part in translating lesbian feminist materials at Ribu Shinjuku Center.⁶² Sawabe was specifically in charge of going over the American feminist newsletter *off our backs* (1970–2008). It was through reading this publication that Sawabe learned about lesbian feminists in the US, a knowledge that instilled in her the desire to visit the country. At the time, no one she knew in the center was openly *rezubian*. Details about lesbian life in the US were filled in for her by Kim, an American student at Waseda University, information that reinforced Sawabe’s yearning to see the US for herself.

⁵⁹ Wakabayashi, “Onna no nettowaaku,” 24.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 24–25.

⁶¹ Wakabayashi, “Lesbian=Woman,” 185.

⁶² Information about Sawabe’s experiences are summarized from Sawabe Hitomi, “*Onna o ai suru onnatachi no monogatari o meguru hyōgen katsudō*,” oral history taken by Sugiura Ikuko, in Sugiura, *Nihon no rezubian komyuniti*, especially 39–45.

After she made up her mind to go, she began to study both English and the martial arts Shorinji kempo and karate, for former to be able to communicate and the latter to be able to defend herself in a place she thought would be frightening. And to combine earning money with an education on *rezubian* culture, she got a job at one of Tokyo's "rezu bars" with crossdressing women on the staff, though she was extremely uncomfortable with the atmosphere there and quit within a couple of months.

A few months before Tanaka, Wakabayashi, and other *ribu* and feminist activists headed to Mexico City, Sawabe found her way to the US.⁶³ In her diary, she wrote that her motivation for the trip was to "discover some kind of legitimacy to being homosexual."⁶⁴ In three months' time, she had visited places as far-ranging as Berkley, Seattle, New York, and Minnesota, and found many lesbian feminists with whom she could identify, women whose expression of gender seemed very liberated—neither particularly feminine nor masculine. This was a far cry from the women at the bar where she had briefly worked, which expected women be one or the other. And thus, the US lesbian feminists provided a model of lesbian identity she felt would work for her. Reflecting back more than thirty years later, she says that meeting those women "was like a baptism" into a new world for her.⁶⁵ She took this new understanding of what it might mean to be a lesbian back with her to Japan, laying the foundation for later projects, including *Stories of Women Who Love Women* (*Onna o ai suru onnatachi no monogatari*), the "rezubian bible" she produced over a decade later, a book which helped many women in Japan learn about and connect with the *rezubian* community.⁶⁶

⁶³ In "*Onna o ai suru onnatachi no monogatari*," Sawabe recounts that her trip began in the summer of 1975 (ibid., 42), but she mentions elsewhere that Tanaka was still in Tokyo when she returned (ibid., 44). Since Tanaka had already left for Mexico by the summer, Sawabe probably went during the spring.

⁶⁴ Quoted in ibid., 42.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 44.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 49. Bessatsu Takarajima, no. 64, *Onna o ai suru onnatachi no monogatari* (Tokyo: JICC Shuppanyoku, 1987).

Both Sawabe and Wakabayashi got involved in *rezubian feminisuto* activism right after returning, with both contributing to the *Wonderful Women* project.⁶⁷ Wakabayashi devoted much of her energy over the next few years to women's health issues, playing an important role in the women's health movement in Japan, while Sawabe focused on *rezubian feminisuto* writing and activism, and later broader feminist work. Both, however, were involved in the creation of the new *rezubian feminisuto* group Regumi no Gomame in 1985. And both went to Switzerland to attend the eighth International Lesbian Information Service Conference, held in Geneva in March 1986, a conference whose roots, in fact, trace back to lesbian organizing at the 1975 UN conference in Mexico City.⁶⁸ The connections they made there with the handful of other Asian lesbians led to the creation of the Asian Lesbian Network (ALN), which held its first international meeting in Bangkok in 1990, followed by a meeting in Tokyo in 1992.⁶⁹ As discussed in chapter four, responses to the article Sawabe wrote up about the experience, published in the mainstream women's magazine *Fujin kōron*, helped motivate the production of *Stories of Women Who Love Women*, just after the establishment of Regumi Studio Tokyo in 1987. For Sawabe and Wakabayashi, then, spending time among lesbian feminists in the US was transformative. It ultimately changed their understanding of themselves and their options for living their desire. In other words, how they made sense of their experiences abroad transfigured for them the meaning of "*rezubian*" and, in the process, their own identities. And, like other kinds of transfiguration, the ripples from their own experiences set in motion affected many

⁶⁷ As noted above, Wakabayashi translated an article from English. Sawabe participated in the roundtable discussion, *Subarashii onnatachi*, "Zadankai 'rezubian ōi ni kataru,'" no. 1 (November 1976). See Sawabe, "*Onna o ai suru onnatachi no monogatari*," 45.

⁶⁸ Sawabe wrote about this experience in Hirosawa Yumi [Sawabe Hitomi], "Sekai rezubian kaigi ni sanko shite," *Fujin kōron* 71, no. 7 (June 1986). On the roots of the ILIS conference, see Charlotte Bunch and Claudia Hinojosa, *Lesbians Travel the Roads of Feminism Globally* (New Brunswick: N.J.: Center for Women's Global Leadership at Rutgers' University, 2000), 3–9.

⁶⁹ See Wakabayashi Naeko, "Ajiakei rezubian toshite," *Imago* 6, no. 12 (November 1995). See also *Lesbian Histories and Cultures: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Bonnie Zimmerman (London: Taylor & Francis, 2000), s.v. "Asian Lesbian Network."

other women.

The survey in *Stories of Women Who Love Women* demonstrates, however, that Sawabe and Wakabayashi's own transnational understanding of what it might mean to be a *rezubian* was not unique. While there was nothing about the survey questions that directed respondents to talk about life in other countries, such references do come up. A number of responses name foreign films and fiction as helping respondents rethink their own same-sex desire, and some make comparisons between the respondents' experiences and lesbian life abroad. Other respondents incorporate foreign travel or living abroad into their understanding of what might be a good life as a lesbian. One woman explains that she and her girlfriend were considering having a child, and that her girlfriend wants to raise it in the US, perhaps given the lack of models of lesbian mothers in Japan.⁷⁰ And another woman mentioned having gone to Europe the year before and being shocked by the "culture of lesbianism" at women's collectives, bookstores, and cafes she visited, an experience that—even though she "had already started living with a man"—helped her reinterpret feelings she had previously felt for women as romantic love (*koi*).⁷¹

Hara "Minata" Minako, who would go on to become a prominent member of the *rezubian* community and to translate several important lesbian texts into Japanese, was among the women who contributed her experiences to *Stories of Women Who Love Women*.⁷² From the

⁷⁰ Hirosawa Yumi [Sawabe Hitomi] and Rezubian Ripōto-han, "Rezubian ripōto: Nihon de hajimete! 234-nin no rezubian ni yoru shōgen," in Bessatsu Takarajima, no. 64, *Onna o ai suru onnatachi no monogatari*, 217. References to lesbian mothers abroad can be found as early as 1973 in *Woman Eros*. See Yoshihiro, "Amerika no ribu no atarashii nami," 109–10. While *Stories* itself contains a brief piece in which a family friend interviews the five-year-old daughter of a lesbian couple, Ogura Yūko [Sawabe Hitomi], "Kanojotachi no go-sai no musume," in Bessatsu Takarajima, no. 64, *Onna o ai suru onnatachi no monogatari*, I have encountered no earlier references to lesbian mothers (*rezubian maza*) in Japan in this discourse.

⁷¹ Hirosawa Yumi and Rezubian Ripōto-han, "Rezubian ripōto," 165.

⁷² This description of Hara's experiences abroad comes from an interview conducted in July 2009. Hara's main lesbian translations are Lillian Faderman, *Resubian no rekishi*, trans. Tomioka Akemi and Hara Minako (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1996), originally published as *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Penguin, 1991); and Pat Califia, *Safisutorii: rezubian sekushariti no tebiki*, trans. Hara Minako (Tokyo: Taiyōsha, 1993), originally published as *Sapphisty: The Book of Lesbian Sexuality* (Tallahassee, Fla.: Naiad Press, 1980).

age of eight to the time the volume was published, when she was around thirty, Hara had spent more time living abroad than in Japan, an experience indelibly shaping who she was as an individual, including her understanding of possibilities for expression of gender and of same-sex desire. Around 1963, when Hara was an elementary school student, she accompanied her mother to East Lansing, Michigan, while her mother was working on a PhD. Hara found herself more comfortable at school there than she had been in Japan because there was little expectation expressed by those around her in the US that she dress and act femininely. Uncomfortable back in Japan both because of more rigid gender norms and because she felt ostracized on account of her speaking English, she later followed her mother to the Philippines, where she finished high school.⁷³ In Japan she often tried to hide her English ability, whereas in the Philippines most people around her spoke multiple languages so she felt normal being able to speak Japanese and English, as well as Spanish, which she began studying there.

Back in Japan around 1973, she heard about the *ribu* movement and went to a *ribu* space, but she did not get involved because she was disappointed with the absence of open discussion about homosexuality—Hara had only been attracted to women from a young age—and the lack of men, which made the space too feminine for her to feel comfortable. While Hara wanted to go to a university in Mexico for the country’s similarities to the Philippines and to master a language her parents did not speak, her plans did not work out, so she chose to study in Spain.⁷⁴ During the last week of her first year, she told a close friend at her dorm that she liked women, and the friend told the teachers and the dorm head, who temporarily removed her from the dorm, a crisis that solidified Hara’s identity as a lesbian. She overcame this crisis, and, after receiving

⁷³ In an ethnography of returnee families conducted in the 1980s, Merry White writes that returnees were often treated as “contaminated” to the extent that they were foreignized in language and behavior. See Merry White, *The Japanese Overseas: Can They Go Home Again?* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988), 13.

⁷⁴ While she did not mention this in the interview, I suspect that Mexico was on her radar because of the upcoming Mexico City conference.

her degree, moved to London for a year, before returning in 1982 to Japan, where she has lived ever since.

Hara pointed out to me in my interview with her that the prejudice she experienced which cemented her sense of being a lesbian just happened to have occurred abroad. Yet, it is also true that her experiences abroad, particularly at a young age, helped her see that the extent to which it was possible for her to circumvent or ignore the gender norms that she found oppressive. And to experiment in both directions. In her early twenties when she was living in London, in order to connect with the feminine part of herself, she decided to have a child but not to get married, something she accomplished with a male friend/boyfriend. While some *ribu* activists had shown in the early 1970s this was possible in Japan, more flexible ideas about parenthood, womanhood, romantic relationships, and sexuality made this much easier to do in London.

* * *

As Hara's experience shows, even if differences do not always work out in an individual's favor, merely being away from the country and culture of one's birth, that is being an outsider for whom local norms do not exert as much pull, can be liberating in various ways. Even Japan, which Wakabayashi and Sawabe, as well as Tanaka, Takagi and others have found oppressive for women in general and for *rezubian* in particular, has served as a liberating space for foreign women coming from relatively privileged backgrounds. Many foreign lesbians in the English-speaking lesbian community in the 1980s found freedom from blatant homophobia, sometimes coming from their own families, combined with the solidarity facilitated in expatriate communities and the special treatment often afforded Westerners, particularly Caucasians from wealthy countries. For many Western lesbians, Japan was a safe, clean place to live where they could earn a relatively large amount of money compared with what was possible in their home

countries.⁷⁵ While Western women were subject to some of the same sexism and ideas about female sexuality that oppressed (and oppresses) *rezubian*, the majority, those whose position involved teaching English at a university, language school, or public school in or near an urban area, were also somewhat protected from the worst of this by virtue of their ability to pull back into what might be called an expatriate bubble. Unsurprisingly then, in the 1980s a majority of the writing on oppression of lesbians in the English-language newsletter circulating in this community, nicknamed *The DD* (1986–1996), was focused on oppression within Western culture, rather than the Japanese culture toward which most members of the English-speaking community had positioned themselves as outsiders.⁷⁶

Participation in the English-speaking community also offered the possibility of a temporary escape for lesbians from Japan with strong transnational ties, particularly at the “Weekends” (*Uiikuendo*), the lesbian retreats first held in 1985 as a joint venture of the Japanese- and English-speaking communities. While the Weekends provided a transnational space for women from Japan, from English-speaking countries, and elsewhere, language and cultural differences created a division between the Japanese- and English-speaking communities, something noted in the discourse of both communities.⁷⁷ The problem was not simply differences of language, communication style, and worldview. While most English-speaking lesbians would leave the retreats and return to the expatriate bubble in which many were able to identify themselves at least to a limited extent as lesbians while working at relatively well-paying jobs, most lesbians from Japan returned to lives in which that was not possible.

⁷⁵ Margaret Diehl, “Lesbians in Japan,” *Dykes Delight* [Japan; also called *The DD*] no. 15 (Spring 1990): 13.

⁷⁶ While American lesbians were occasionally criticized in *The DD* for assuming all foreigners came from roughly the same background, most writing in the newsletter, regardless of the nationality of the author, tended to assume the existence of a loosely defined “West” not too different from the Americentric idea of the West predominant in Japanese discourse.

⁷⁷ Hara Minako, interview with author, July 2009; Diehl, “Lesbians in Japan,” 14.

Foreign women who chose to avoid or were unable to be as shielded by the expatriate bubble, however, might find themselves in a similar situation.⁷⁸

And not all *rezubian*-identified women found life in the West liberating either. For instance, “Sano Rie” (1964–), who grew up in the center of the country along the Sea of Japan, had been interested in foreign countries from a young age.⁷⁹ While a lot of her friends in middle school had their eyes Europe, she became interested in the US, somewhat ironically, through practicing karate. In the late 1970s, Sano was in her middle school’s karate club, when an American karate team visited Japan. She befriended one of the team members, and began to correspond with that person, who was from Georgia. Although she had not directly connected with the *rezubian* community yet, while still in school she had realized that she was attracted primarily to other women and from around 1980 she began reading *shōnen ai*-themed *Allan*, neither for the beautiful boys nor for the representations of Western culture but for the correspondence from adolescent girls and young women who were romantically interested in other women.

After she finished high school, Sano’s parents tried to convince her to go to a junior college and would not support her desire to go to a four-year university, so she chose to go study the travel industry at a technical college, hoping a career as a travel agent would take her away from home, possibly even abroad. After the program at the technical college, she found work at a travel agency, but the job was extremely taxing and she quit within two years. Her next job was as a secretary for a large firm, and by chance she was offered the opportunity to work in their Atlanta division, which she immediately accepted. While Sano was excited to be able to

⁷⁸ For instance, even in the early 1990s, Claire Maree, then a graduate student at Tokyo University, felt the need to be very closeted about being a lesbian. See Marou Izumo and Claire Maree, *Love Upon the Chopping Board* (North Melbourne, Australia: Spinifex Press, 2000), *passim*.

⁷⁹ The experiences of “Sano Rie” are summarized from an interview conducted with her in March 2009.

live in Georgia, in which she had developed an interest because of her friend, her actual experience was miserable. People around her frequently made very homophobic comments and she felt the need to remain silent and to pretend to be heterosexual. Since she expected the position to be temporary, she did not try to find a girlfriend or otherwise connect with the lesbian community in Atlanta. Later, she was actually given the opportunity to make the position permanent and to apply for a green card, but she turned it down thinking that if she remained there she would need to get married for the sake of her relations with her American coworkers.⁸⁰ Thus, for Sano, life in the US was actually more restrictive than life had been and would again be in Japan. Indeed, when she returned to Japan a year and a half later, she came back with the ability to say “no” to her parents, and was able to resist their pressure to go on *o-miai* [arranged marriage] meetings with potential husbands.

From Fantastic to Real Voyages

By the time they reached an age at which they could travel at least somewhat independently, the women who grew up in the 1970s and 1980s reading queer *shōjo* manga were also exposed to an increasing amount of media and advertising promoting foreign travel. And by the 1980s, this would include discourse touting the appeal of study abroad, which grew increasingly targeted at young women at this time. Indeed, while elite young men constituted the vast majority of those from Japan who studied abroad through the 1970s, over the course of 1980s and 1990s this was reversed to the extent that by the end of the century, young women made up over two thirds of students from Japan at foreign educational institutions.⁸¹ In this context, it is significantly more difficult to directly link foreign travel with consumption of queer

⁸⁰ This is particularly ironic given that it has often been said that (male) homosexuality is tolerated in Japan as long as one gets married both for the sake of one’s family and for the sake of appearances at the workplace.

⁸¹ Kelsky, *Women on the Verge*, 102.

shōjo manga and related texts than it is to link involvement in the *ribu* and *rezubian* spheres, particular in the 1970s.

Moreover, while most discourse on the foreign in the *ribu* and *rezubian* communities focused on the concrete, the queer *shōjo* manga sphere was a realm of fantasy. This is true to a great extent even beyond manga texts themselves. In magazines like *June*, *Allan*, and *Gekkō*, as well as certain *dōjinshi* [coterie magazines], queer *shōjo* manga blurs with representations of and discourse about musicians, actors, and other flesh-and-blood Western male celebrities—as well as, to a lesser extent, celebrities from Japan.⁸² In editorial and reader-submitted content in these magazines, particularly *Allan* and *Gekkō*, foreign musicians and actors such as David Bowie, Queen, and the Vienna Boys' Choir, as well as Rupert Everett and River Phoenix, are profiled and gossiped about alongside photos and drawings of beautiful, boys and young men, a majority of whom are Caucasian. Advertisements also appear in these magazines promoting *dōjinshi* in which amateur manga homoerotically parody Western performers, one way fans could claim ownership over the celebrities they yearned for and fantasized about. Still, these performers—rock stars, boys' choirs, and actors alike—sometimes visited Japan. This pushed them into the realm of the real for those young women who could afford and get (or get around needing) permission to attend their concerts or to show up to greet them and send them off at the airport—and, especially, for the those young women who followed them backstage or to their hotel rooms.

Further, letters and other contributions from readers published in *Allan*, *Gekkō*, and *June* do sometimes reference the foreign in more concrete terms, even as travel abroad for these readers was as yet largely unrealistic. Editorial content as well occasionally offers descriptions of

⁸² While not entirely absent, female celebrities, from Japan or otherwise, were far less a part of this discourse.

foreign countries and cultures in realistic terms, sometimes framed as travelogues. Most content offering glimpses of foreign life was focused on the US and Europe and appears to have been intended as more titillating than informative.⁸³ The second issue of *Allan*, for instance, contains an article by a Japanese woman describing aspects of gay culture she saw walking around New York City—including gay publications for sale, gay bars, and gay couples, as well as male prostitutes walking around in the vicinity of Christopher Street.⁸⁴ A subsequent issue contains an interview with “K,” who lived in Florida for a year and talks about illegal drugs in the US and differences in morals between the US and Japan.⁸⁵ Reflecting an increasing visibility of readers interested in female-female romance in the magazine, a handful of articles on foreign culture focused on lesbians, including one with a cursory description of the contents of magazines about lesbians and gays that “you can get your hands on at train station kiosks” in Italy, and another offering a “London Lesbien [*sic*] Report” with brief information about Gay Pride Week and details about the contents of lesbian and feminist magazines, including a summary of and response to an article on lesbians in Japan.⁸⁶

June, which devoted most of its editorial page space to manga and fiction, ran fewer such articles. One from the late 1980s used the content of foreign gay magazines to describe gay

⁸³ The very first issue of *Allan* actually includes a feature on Hong Kong, which provides a combination of history and information normally found in a travel guide, including Chinese phrases and information about the Hong Kong dollar. See *Allan*, “Honkon ierō mappu: subete no korekutaa ga manzoku suru fantasutikku shiti Honkon no subete!,” October 1980. Though this was not repeated in *Allan*, the magazine’s successor, *Gekkō*, would run a series on various Chinatowns, albeit without any suggestion of actual travel. The presence and then absence of representations of Chinese culture seems to be a reflection of the interest of Nanbara Shirō, *Allan*’s editor, and its publisher, Minori Shobō. These differences eventually led to Nanbara leaving the publisher and starting *Gekkō*, in which he was freer to publish on topics of his own choosing.

⁸⁴ Matsuo Setsuko, “Amerika no saishin GAY jijō: Matsuo Setsuko no Nyū Yōku nikki,” *Aran*, January 1981.

⁸⁵ *Aran*, “Amerikan doragu,” August 1984.

⁸⁶ Azuma Reiko, “Itaria rezubika tansaku kikō,” *Aran*, October 1983; Yurino Reiko [Azuma Reiko], “London Lesbien Report: Global Lesbianism,” *Aran*, October 1982. The article being summarized is Anne Blasing, “The Lavender Kimono,” *Connexions: An International Women’s Quarterly* no. 3 (Winter 1982). Azuma writes that the article does a good job of offering a snapshot of contemporary lesbian feminist groups, but criticizes it for not mentioning “Japan’s traditional concealed group, Wakakusa no Kai.”

culture abroad.⁸⁷ Another offered a personal account of following the band the Communards around the UK, attending a gay film festival, and experiencing other aspects of the gay scene in London.⁸⁸ Similar articles would appear in the magazine with somewhat greater frequency in the 1990s, when the magazine's tone began to change, perhaps in reaction to the "gay boom," which entailed an increase in popular media depictions of realistic images of (predominantly male) homosexual culture, both domestic and foreign.

While relatively rare in these magazines, such descriptions of foreign culture, particularly when presented in a travelogue format from the perspective of a Japanese woman, moved the sphere of the foreign from purely fantastic to a space any reader could, if she so desired, imagine herself experiencing one day. Still, though most of the with whom women I have spoken who were passionate about queer *shōjo* manga also traveled abroad on one or more occasions, the same is true for women in the *ribu* and *rezubian* spheres. Few queer *shōjo* manga consumers linked their interest in or yearning for a specific foreign country primarily to consumption of these manga or related magazines, although they sometimes linked an interest in a particular place to a specific experience. Sano, for instance (discussed above), was a regular reader of *Allan* but linked her interest in the US and Georgia in particular to a visiting American karate team. Some women with whom I have spoken do name queer *shōjo* manga texts or related magazines as influencing their interest in Western culture, but generally only as part of an array of other influences and experiences.

In a conversation I had with "Yamamoto Tomiko" and "Ikeda Taeko," friends born in the early 1960s who grew up near a medium-sized city in central Japan, the pair's passionate consumption of *shōnen ai* manga in middle school blurred with their fandom of foreign male

⁸⁷ Kakinuma Eiko, "Senmonshi de shiru igai na chomeijin, jinsei sōdan, kojim kōkoku, gei-do chekku," *June* no. 39 (March 1988).

⁸⁸ Nomura Fumiko, "Komyunaazu gei ando mūbii," *June* no. 35 (July 1987): 50–52.

celebrities—echoing the discourse in *Allan and June*.⁸⁹ Although both attended concerts of foreign musicians in Osaka and Nagoya, while still in middle school Yamamoto managed to use her then broken English to meet and socialize with band members, reinforcing an infatuation with American popular culture that ultimately led to her spending significant time in the US in her twenties. Though Yamamoto has had romantic and sexual relationships with American men, she ultimately decided to live in Japan. She eventually married a Japanese man and had a child, and seems quite content with her life—albeit it is a life that has been unconventional, including a large contingent of foreign friends residing both in Japan and abroad, and returning to school in her forties to start a new career. The other woman, Ikeda, has traveled overseas but did not develop the same yearning to be in the West. She too married and has children.

While both women, Yamamoto in particular, are critical of sexual discrimination in Japan, neither links her interest in Western culture directly with a critique of gender roles. Still, both used the imaginary Western space of early *shōnen ai* manga as the site in which they initially explored sexuality in contravention of expectations of girls their age. And Yamamoto translated her infatuation with the West both into seeking experiences abroad and into sexual relationships with men that were not sanctioned by norms that dictated young women should remain virgins until their marriage. In the end, however, the strongest assertion I can make about these women is that their consumption of queer *shōjo* manga in their youth is part of a larger matrix of fandom and other interests tied to both their defiance of existing sexual norms and their varying degrees of interest in travel to the west.

Another woman with whom I spoke does link her queer *shōjo* manga consumption with her interest in Western culture and eventual move abroad, but in her case too, it is not an entirely straightforward connection. “Takeda Hiroko” (1966–) grew up reading queer *shōjo* manga while

⁸⁹ “Yamamoto Tomiko” and “Ikeda Taeko,” interview with author, June 2006.

she was still in elementary school. These texts, including both male-male and female-female romance, were given to her by her uncle, whom she identifies as *gei* [gay].⁹⁰ She was (and is) particularly fond of Takemiya's manga, including *Song of the Wind and the Trees*.⁹¹ It is through Takemiya, she says, that she became interested in Germany and Austria and in studying German, which she began in middle school. While her favorite of Takemiya's works, including *Song of the Wind and the Trees*, are set in France, she explained when I pressed her that it was not Takemiya's manga but the artist's interest in the Vienna Boys' Choir that led to Takeda's own interest—an intriguing blurring of cultures akin to what can be seen in the origins of the genre *shōnen ai*.⁹² Takeda added that she must have also seen programs on television about these countries that helped promote this interest of hers. When Takeda was around 20, she began to date an older German Swiss man who was teaching German at the language school she attended. Eventually they married and moved to Zurich. While she had been living back in Japan for several years to earn a professional qualification in her field while I was doing research in 2009, Takeda intends to move back to Switzerland in the near future. She also told me that she had given up reading manga of any kind after getting married because her husband did not understand her interest but clients in Japan had gotten her reading it again.

Based on Takeda's own narration of her life, her consumption of queer *shōjo* manga and related texts set her on a path that led to her study of German, her marrying a German-speaking Swiss man (although at over a decade older than Takeda, he was clearly not the kind of beautiful youth idealizing in her favorite manga), and her eventual move to Switzerland. Such a direct

⁹⁰ "Takeda Hiroko's" personal experience is summarized from an interview conducted in July 2009. The two texts she named that she received from him were Takemiya Keiko's *Kaze to ki no uta* (1976–1984; Tokyo: Hakusensha Bunko, 1995) and Ikeda Riyoko's *Onii-sama e* (1974; Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2002).

⁹¹ Takemiya, *Kaze to ki no uta*.

⁹² This blurring is discussed in chapter four. Takeda writes about her interest in *June*. See, e.g., Takemiya Keiko, "O-egaki kyōshitsu," *June* no. 15 (March 1984), which, incidentally, includes a photo of Takemiya posing with members of the Regensburg Cathedral Choir, another example of presenting travel experiences from the perspective of a young Japanese woman.

correspondence between queer *shōjo* manga consumption and the choice to travel, even live abroad appears unusual. Like other women of her generation, however, Takeda grew up surrounded by discourse about travel and the appeal of Western culture. Her own qualification that television programs may have helped foster her interest in German-speaking countries and the German language suggests this to be the case. It seems, then, that while *shōjo* manga played a larger role in steering Takeda toward the path she has been taking than was the case for most women, Takeda—like other young women who grew up at the same time—read these manga in the context of a broader idealization of the west in other streams of popular discourse, discourse in which travel to the west was increasingly presented as a possibility, as well as meeting individuals from Western countries who had traveled to Japan.

An article on foreign settings in *shōjo* manga contained in a Bessatsu Takarajima volume reflecting back on 1970s manga opens with a two-page spread of characters from various 1970s *shōjo* works, half from *shōnen ai* narratives. Next to each character is the country in which each of the manga is set: Egypt, America, Japan, Germany, England. And above is the heading, “The dreams of the *shōjo* freely transcend time and space.”⁹³ I would suggest to the contrary that the dreams of adolescent girls, and the ways they sometimes worked to transform them into reality, can only be understood in the context of the time and space in which they transpired.

Conclusion

The word “travel,” observes James Clifford, “has an inextinguishable taint of location by class, gender, race, and a certain literariness.”⁹⁴ We can see all of these elements situated within

⁹³ Terada Kaoru, “70-nendai enkyori shōjo manga no jidai,” in Bessatsu Takarajima no. 288, *70-nendai manga daihyakka*, 159.

⁹⁴ James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 39.

or beneath the personal narratives discussed above. Gender, of course, or rather the challenging of gender norms is central to all of these trips. Even in the case of Amano's early voyage to Europe, while not overtly "about" contravening gender norms, she knew her father would try to stop her because such travel ran counter to what a young woman "should" do. Hence, she waited until it was too late to stop her to announce her plans to go on a journey that, by chance, later led to her involvement in the *ribu* movement. Many of the other women discussed in this chapter engaged in travel for the purpose of transnational feminist—or lesbian-feminist—networking as part of a more overt questioning of gender *and* sexual norms.

Thus, unsurprisingly, to Clifford's list I would add "sexuality." And here I am pointing not just to same-sex desire, but also to the erotic subjectivity that was central to Tanaka's theory of *ūman ribu*, as well as to the broader ties between women's sexuality and reproduction that was so crucial to much *ribu* thinking and activism. Clearly, though, same-sex desire has played a significant role in many of these trips, whether it was for young women tourists writing in *June* and *Allan*, for whom overseas gay male culture as well as beautiful men in general were the object of their curious and eros-laden gaze, or for the women like Wakabayashi and Sawabe, who sought and/or found in the US new ways to be a lesbian. While these two women's ability to undertake their trips cannot be pulled apart from Japan's role as an economic superpower built on exploitation of former colonies, given Sawabe and Wakabayashi's status as culturally and racially Other in a still economically and politically dominant US, their experiences contrast sharply with the privileged, often exploitative "gay tourism" that has drawn the attention of academics in the past ten to fifteen years and of the travel industry for significantly longer.⁹⁵

In this we see that race is also at issue. Indeed, in spite of the then (and still) prevalent

⁹⁵ For a discussion of the power imbalances inherent in much contemporary gay tourism, see Jasbir Kaur Puar, ed., "Queer Tourism: Geographies of Globalization," special issue, *GLQ* 8, nos. 1–2 (2002).

belief that Japan is culturally homogeneous in terms of race, ethnicity, and class, we can see all of these operating in the travel experiences discussed above. While I did not encounter evidence in these spheres of a “faith in the racial and cultural superiority of the West,” that Kelsky found in women’s “internationalist narratives” in the 1980s and 1990,⁹⁶ in the *ribu* and *rezubian* spheres there was a clear sense that women in Japan had things they could learn from women in the US and elsewhere. This, though, was balanced somewhat by efforts to promote the exchange rather than one way flow of information, such as by the translation group at Ribu Shinjuku Center as well as by individuals like Takagi, who asserted that women in the West had an “obligation” to know about women in Japan and elsewhere in Asia. Race was at issue on a personal level as well, such as in Wakabayashi’s romantic interest in an African American woman, which she saw as part of a larger discovery of herself as a racially “Asian” woman. It was because of this “Asianness” that a handful of women at a international conference of lesbians in Switzerland dominated by women from Western countries decided they needed to do forge stronger connections among themselves and founded Asian Lesbian Network. In the queer *shōjo* manga sphere, the idealization of Western beauty found in *shōnen ai* manga as well as related magazines sometimes led to travel to Europe, and, perhaps less frequently, romantic or sexual relationships with foreign men. It is important to remember, however, that this positioning of Western boys and men as either real or fictive erotic objects was an act of an erotic subjecthood on the part of these women.

Finally, while 90 percent or more Japanese are said to have considered themselves as middleclass by the 1970s, this number is belied by disparities of income and education,⁹⁷ which

⁹⁶ Kelsky, *Women on the Verge*, 123.

⁹⁷ Shigeru Aoki, “Debunking the 90%-Middle-Class Myth,” *Japan Echo* 6, no. 2 (1979): 29; Carol Gluck, “Introduction,” in *Showa: The Japan of Hirohito*, ed. Carol Gluck and Stephen R. Graubard (New York: Norton, 1992), xli.

limited overseas trips to those who, in most of the early cases, had either the financial means or time enough to work and save for overseas travel, or who were connected enough to receive an official invitation and partial or complete sponsorship, as Takagi did to attend the Mexico City conference.⁹⁸ Moreover, most of the travelers discussed above were very unusual in that they held—or were in the process of obtaining—four-year degrees.⁹⁹ Although for women, a bachelor's degree was severely limiting in terms of career options in the 1970s and 1980s, some of the few careers it did open up involved higher wages and status and greater opportunities to travel. This distinction was, however, diminished by a stronger yen and a stronger Japanese economy during the peak of the economic bubble in the 1980s, as overseas travel became increasingly affordable for a majority of the population.

* * *

In the early 1970s, even as Japan National Railway was encouraging young women to go on *tabi*, or journeys, in Japan through which they were expected to discover selves (*jibun*) that were both women and authentically Japanese, individuals in the *ribu*, *rezubian*, and queer *shōjo* manga spheres were boarding trains and boats and planes to the West and back—and vice versa. While the motivation driving these women's voyages did not always overtly include self-discovery, travel by women in all these spheres was transformative. As we have seen in this and in preceding chapters, some of this transformation was produced through the transfiguration

⁹⁸ Takagi, interview. An appearance on an NHK (Nippon Hōsō Kyoku) television program about *ribu* after she returned to Japan from her 1973 trip to the US got Takagi noticed by someone at the American Embassy in Tokyo, leading to an official invitation through the United Nations and most of her expenses covered.

⁹⁹ To be sure, the *ribu* movement's strong links to campus activism, make this seem unsurprising. Yet, in 1970, only 6.5 percent of women (compared with 27.3 percent of men) entered a four-year university and a decade later the figure for women had not quite doubled to 12.3 percent (and increased by over a third to 39.3 percent for men), inching up to just 13.7 percent (and down to 38.6 percent) in 1985. See Kumiko Fujimura-Fanselow, "College Women Today: Options and Dilemmas," in Fujimura-Fanselow and Kameda, *Japanese Women*, 127. Contrasting this with the nearly double the number of parents—27.7 percent (73 percent)—who desired their daughters (sons) to at least obtain a university degree, it seems likely that the lack of income to invest in higher education for their children is a factor. See Atsuko Kameda, "Sexism and Gender Stereotyping in Schools," trans. Kumiko Fujimura-Fanselow and Atsuko Watanabe, in Fujimura-Fanselow and Kameda, *Japanese Women*, 109.

of words, texts, and practices. Sometimes, it was individuals themselves who were transfigured through travel. As a direct result of their own personal border crossings and encounters with people from other cultures, some women came to new understandings of themselves—as feminists, as lesbians, as women, as Asian. And the ripples of change these women set in motion played a role not just in (re)shaping their communities in Japan, but other women in- and outside of them.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

The mid-1990s collection *Re-Imaging Japanese Women* presents a revised image, or rather images, of Japanese women that had arisen over the five decades since the end of the Pacific War.¹ In her introduction to the volume, Anne Imamura points to the 1970s in particular as when “the image of the successful woman expanded to include varied opportunities along the life course: education, work, marriage, community and child-related activities, hobby and study circles, part-time work, and family leisure.”² Absent from this description of success are women who choose alternatives to the heteronormative life course of marriage and family. Those who desired a professional career outside a narrow number of fields such as education and medicine often chose to step off this path, only to find themselves denied promotions beyond lower level management, as well as pitied for their lonely lives.³

Also in the 1970s, the women in the *ūman ribu* movement and the *rezubian* community, as well as the women artists and adolescent girl readers of queer *shōjo* manga began to envision and often actively sought options that could not be folded as neatly into this normative understanding of “women.” The women and girls in these three spheres all variously worked to expand the possible modes of sexual and gender expression available to them as women and members of Japanese society. In a sense, they all sought to “queer” the category “women.” By “queer,” I am both pointing to the language of queer theory to indicate a deliberate deviation from norms, as well as following lesbian feminist Charlotte Bunch, who argued back in 1975—well before the word “queer” was reclaimed by LGBTQ rights activists and “queer theorists”—that if you reject the centrality of men inherent in heterosexuality, “no matter who

¹ Anne E. Imamura, ed., *Re-Imaging Japanese Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

² Anne E. Imamura, “Introduction,” in *ibid.*, 3.

³ *Ibid.*, 9.

you sleep with—you're a queer."⁴ Unlike contemporary queer theory which often seems to assume the *desire* on the part of “queers” to be nonnormative—what Judith Halberstam calls “willfully eccentric modes of being”⁵—for Bunch “[i]t is *not* okay ... to be queer in patriarchy. The entire system... must be changed.”⁶ While only some of these women and girls actively sought to rent a hole in the social fabric woven with the threads of normative gender and sexuality, the acts of the others often served to unravel it at the edges.

The goals of the women in the *rezubian* community have varied. Wakakusa no Kai founder Suzuki Michiko sought simple social acceptance for those attracted to the same sex, without making overt critiques of the patriarchal system itself. *Rezubian feminisuto* and *ribu* activists, on the other hand, more broadly denounced gender and sexual norms that placed on women restrictive expectations of “femininity” (*onnarashisa*) and denied them sexual subjecthood. For *ribu* activists adhering to Tanaka Mitsuo’s philosophy, the “liberation of eros” (*erosu no kaihō*) was key to undoing norms that oppressed both sexes and to enabling women and men to truly communicate with each other. While most *ribu* discourse is not framed in terms of women’s “rights” (*kenri*), many *ribu* activists fought passionately to preserve women’s ability to make choices about their own reproductive lives, including having access to abortion and knowledge about their own bodies and reproductive health. *Rezubian feminisuto* sought to undo not just expectations about marriage and children, but also about choosing men as romantic and sexual partners, in an attack on—in the language of American lesbian feminists—the institution of “compulsory heterosexuality.”⁷ In this same context, ostensibly heterosexual artists used

⁴ Charlotte Bunch, “Not for Lesbians Only” (1975), in *Materialist Feminism: A Reader in Class, Difference, and Women’s Lives*, ed. Rosemary Hennessy and Chrys Ingraham (New York, Routledge, 1997), 56.

⁵ Judith Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 1.

⁶ Bunch, “Not for Lesbians Only,” 58 (emphasis mine).

⁷ See Joni van Dyke, *Dyketionary*, 2nd ed. (Tokyo: privately printed, ca. 1985), s.v. “compulsory heterosexuality”; Sawabe Hitomi, “Iseiai kyōsei to iu fashizumu,” *Shin chihei* no. 150 (June 1987); and Adrienne

queer narratives about beautiful boys in love with each other in a different time and place to allow adolescent female readers the freedom to vicariously experience and experiment with romance and sex, partially liberated from both the heteronormative romance script and from norms that would not have adolescent girls (or women) as possessors of an erotically objectifying gaze.

To what extent were the women in these communities successful in expanding the possibilities contained within the category “women,” and, in the process, changing Japanese society? The *ribu* movement may be consigned to reminiscences by former activists, but the feminism and women’s studies, for which *ribu* helped create space, continue to have a small but significant presence in public discourse as well as on university campuses. In spite of a new round of attacks on access to abortion in the early 1980s, it remains legal, and at the end of the 1990s, women’s outrage at the approval of Viagra for sale in Japan shortly after it went on the market in the US finally led to legalization of the birth control pill—though this was sought by only a minority of *ribu* activists.⁸ And, even if the authority of doctors remains powerful, thanks to both Japan’s massive publishing industry as well as the internet, women today have access to far more information about their own bodies than they did in the *ribu* era. And the norms that positioned women as sexual objects who should remain virgins until marriage and whose pleasure was secondary to their husbands have largely vanished. While these changes cannot be tied directly or solely to *ribu* activism, it was the *ribu* movement in the early 1970s that forced many of these issues into the sphere of public discourse.

Still we can question the extent to which these changes might be seen as positive from the

Rich, “Kyōseitēki iseiai to rezubian no sonzai” (Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence), in her *Chi, pan, shi*, trans. Ōshima Kaori (Tokyo: Shōbunsha, 1989), originally published as *Blood, Bread, and Poetry: Selected Prose 1979–1985* (New York: Norton, 1986).

⁸ Tiana Norgren, *Abortion Before Birth Control: The Politics of Reproduction in Postwar Japan* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001), 129.

perspective of *ribu* philosophy. In her recent “rereading” of the *ribu* movement, Nishimura Mitsuko asserts that contemporary women may well have “internalized” the thinking behind the “liberation of eros,” but the effect is not necessarily positive. Women on the whole, she observes, have become sexual subjects (*sei no shutai*) and the traditional system of monogamy attacked by Tanaka and others has “eroded from the inside,” but, rather than the open communication between the sexes that Tanaka espoused, sex has become even more commodified and more of a meeting of genitals than a meeting of spirits. Thus, she argues, the idea of the “liberation of eros” has reached women in contemporary Japan, but in a “diffused, warped” form.⁹

Many women who grew up reading about beautiful boys in love graduated to “ladies comics” (*redisu komikku*), a genre of often pornographic usually heterosexual manga that emerged in the 1980s. Others women, those who identify as heterosexual as well as those who identify as *rezubian*, continue to enjoy *shōnen ai* and its descendents, alongside a younger generation of predominantly female producers and consumers around the globe in commercial and non-commercial spheres, as discussed in chapter two. And while female-female romance narratives were marginal at best in the 1970s and 1980s, they have in recent years become a global phenomenon in their own right, albeit one with a far more gender-balanced readership than manga depicting male-male romance and sex. While the now international label for the genre, “*yuri*” [lily], sounds similar to “*yaoi*,” it derives from the *homo* magazine *Barazoku*, in which it was created as a counterpart to the term “*bara*” [rose], used to name *homo* men. The origins of the symbolism of the rose itself are unclear, however.¹⁰ While *yuri*/lily symbolism was adopted to a limited extent within the *rezubian* community beginning in the 1970s, featured

⁹ Nishimura Mitsuko, *Onna(ribu)tachi no kyōdōtai (korekutibu): nanajū nendai ūman ribu o saidoku suru* (Tokyo: Shakai Hyōronsha, 2006), 16–17.

¹⁰ See James Welker, “Flower Tribes and Female Desire: Complicating Early Female Consumption of Male Homosexuality in *Shōjo* Manga,” *Mechademia* 6 (forthcoming).

for instance on the cover of the first issue of *Regumi Communications* to be published out of Regumi Studio Tokyo in 1987, its use as a label from the genre is probably traceable to American fan Erica Friedman around 2000.¹¹ The term has since been adopted within Japan as well, finding its way into the name of several commercial magazines that specialize in these narratives, including *Yuri Sisters* (*Yuri shimai*, 2003–2004) followed by *Yuri Princesses* (*Yuri hime*, 2005–), with a readership base of both women and men.¹²

As noted in chapter two, the *rezubian* community has never been stronger than it is at present. While the community lacks a consumer base large enough to keep a commercial magazine in print, books produced by and about the *rezubian* community as well as translations of foreign lesbian books continue to be published regularly. And there are a number of popular *rezubian* blogs and other websites as well as *rezubian*-related groups on social networking websites such as Mixi that reach a far wider readership. The internal politics of its organizing committee has meant that the Tokyo Lesbian and Gay Parade has been an on-again off-again event, but parades and other pride events are regularly held in other major metropolitan areas including Sapporo to the north, Nagoya and Osaka in the center, and Fukuoka to the southwest. Queer topics, including issues related to lesbian culture have received increasing critical and academic attention since the 1990s, and I have met a handful of women writing master's and doctoral theses on lesbian-related themes (whether they can ultimately find research and teaching positions at Japanese universities remains to be seen).

While women still must confront or avoid confronting parents and other family members

¹¹ Erica Friedman, personal communication, and “What Are Yuri and Shoujoai, Anyway?” in *Yuricon '05 in Tokyo*, event program for Yuricon 2005 in Tokyo, April 16, 2005, 26.

¹² In 2007, Ichijinsha, publisher of *Yuri Princesses* began to produce *Yuri Princesses S* (*Yuri hime S*). Yuri manga fan and popular blogger, Erica Friedman speculates that the readers of the original magazine are around 70 percent female and 30 percent male, while the readership of *Yuri Princesses S* is the opposite (personal communication, January 2009).

as well as employers who might expect them to get married, changing social norms about marriage and family have made this easier for women who do not wish to “come out” (*kamu auto*) outside the community itself. And it appears an increasing number of young women are coming out both to family and friends and more widely. In the spring of 2008, as part of its “Let’s Connect Our Hearts” (*Haato o tsunagou*) program, NHK (Nippon Hōsō Kyōku) Educational Network broadcast the first a series of shows portraying the lives of Japan’s LGBT population, or “sexual minorities”—variously called *seiteki shōsū-ha* (a literal translation), *sekushuaru mainoriti* (a transliteration), and, within the community *sekumai* (an abbreviation of the latter)—including *rezubian*, *gei*, and *toransujendaa* [transgenders]. What was striking about the shows I saw was not just the fact that the producers appeared to have worked very hard to accurately represent, in a non-sensational manner, issues of concern to sexual minorities in Japan but the fact that a majority of the participants, including *rezubian*, chose to allow their own faces and voices to be shown on TV, and not obscured as was common in the past.¹³

All of these situations—women’s increasing sexual autonomy, the global boys’ love (and *yuri*) phenomenon, and the increasing visibility of the *rezubian* community can be traced to the activities of women and girls in the 1970s and 1980s. And all of these can be traced in part to acts of transfiguration. As should be clear by now, to state this is not the same thing as saying that these situations are evidence of “imported culture.” As we have seen, while “loan words” can carry meanings very similar to those in the language whence they came, terms like “loan” and “borrow,” fail to convey the process of transfiguration that goes into these ostensibly simple imports and which can reshape the meaning of “native” words as well. Similarly, while translation has played a key role in all three of these spheres, it was the further transfiguration of

¹³ New programs on LGBT issues have been broadcast since the original programs aired in April 2008. Details about the program are available on the NHK website at <http://www.nhk.or.jp/heart-net/hearttv/>.

texts, not the initial translation, that most often had the greatest impact. Finally, while overseas holidays have long been a relatively common leisure activity among Japan's population, beginning at the tail end of the 1960s, the women in the *ribu*, *rezubian*, and queer *shōjo* manga spheres engaged in travel that was often far more transformative than a mere vacation. As noted in earlier chapters, the women in these three spheres were not starting from scratch, but rather building on layers and decades of transfiguration that have gone into the construction of contemporary Japan.

While some women in Japan, including members of these communities, turned to what they perceived as an advanced West for solutions to or an escape from local issues, most were firmly focused on the local—even as they selectively adapted, even celebrated, Western practices. For the majority of even the most radical women, as we have seen, the Western turn was not a turn away from Japan. Rather, it was integral to being a woman *within* Japan. More significantly, among women and girls in the *ūman ribu* movement, the *rezubian* community, and the queer *shōjo* manga sphere—and, ultimately, beyond it—the act of transfiguring Western cultural practices into something locally meaningful, as well as the products thereof, resulted not just in change at the individual and community level, but the transfiguration of the category “women” in Japan. This more expansive notion of the female accommodated not merely a significantly increased number of public roles not bound to being a mother or a wife but a greater diversity of gender and sexual expression.

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