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der by Taishō middle-class feminist workers and activists described by Rodd, Nagy, and Silverberg in this volume (chapters 8, 9, and 11), though not explicitly articulated by the women in my study, also undoubtedly helped to motivate changes in working-class women's attitudes. In sum, the 1920s was a period of significant change in the composition, conditions, and consciousness of the female work force in the cotton textile industry as older, better-educated, and more autonomous and activist workers from rural backgrounds sought to determine their own economic and social conditions while contributing to the industrial and demographic development of Japan.

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ELEVEN

The Modern Girl as Militant

Miriam Silverberg

Where can you folks clearly say that there is a typical Modern Girl?
KATAOKA TEPPEI

Let's get naked and while we're at it work our damnedest.
HAYASHI FUMIKO

The Modern Girl makes only a brief appearance in our histories of prewar Japan. She is a glittering, decadent, middle-class consumer who, through her clothing, smoking, and drinking, flaunts tradition in the urban playgrounds of the late 1920s. Arm in arm with her male equivalent, the Modern Boy (the *mobo*) and fleshed out in the Western flapper's garb of the roaring twenties, she engages in *ginbura* (Ginza-cruising).[1] Yet by merely equating the Japanese Modern Girl with the flapper we do her a disservice, for the Modern Girl was not on a Western trajectory.[2] Moreover, during the decade when this female, a creation of the

Earlier versions of this essay were given at the Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, June 1987; and at the conference "Women in 'Dark Times': Private Life and Public Policy Under Five Nationalist Dictatorships in Europe and Asia, 1930–1950" in Bellagio, Italy, August 1987. I am grateful to the participants of the Bellagio conference for their responses, to Fujita Shōzō for introducing me to the women of *Nyonin geijutsu*, and to my students at Hamilton College for helping me to take a closer look at the Modern Girl.

1. See Peter Duus, *The Rise of Modern Japan* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976), 187–88; the segment devoted to the Modern Girl in Umino Hiroshi, ed., *Modan Tōkyō hyakukei*, special issue of *Taiyō*, "Nihon no kokoro" ser. no. 54 (Heibonsha, 1986), 126–28; and the entry in Tsuchida Mitsufumi, ed., *Meiji Taishō fūzokugoten* (Kadokawa Shoten, 1979), 325–26.

2. For an analysis of how the flapper as emblematic of sales mania displaced the "social mother" of the preceding era, see Mary Ryan, *Womanhood in America: From Colonial Times to the Present* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1983), 220–23. To equate the *moga* with the flapper would be to engage in the specialized brand of Orientalism documented in Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," *Feminist Review*, no. 30 (Fall 1988): 61–88.

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mass media, titillated her Japanese audience, she was not easily defined. Who was this "Modern Girl"? Why did she do what she did? These two questions, raised by the Japanese Modern Girl's contemporaries, are also the two problems posed in this chapter.

The Modern Girl was a highly commodified cultural construct crafted by journalists who debated her identity during the tumultuous decade of cultural and social change following the great earthquake of 1923. By asking first of all who she was, I am concerned with the representation of the Modern Girl as the Japanese cultural heroine of the 1920s, and not with the actual beliefs or practices of young women of that era. (In this essay, therefore, I do not call the heroine by her nickname, *moga*, for to do so would be to deny her the full respect that is her due. It would also depart from the practice of her time, when most commentators spelled her name out in full, as *modan gaaru*.) The second question has been appropriated from the title of the hit movie of 1930, *What Made Her Do What She Did?* (*Nani ga kanojō wo sō saseta?*). In this saga of an orphan turned criminal, based on a play by Fujimori Seikichi, the heroine withstood varied forms of servitude, including domestic labor for a lecherous government official, before she took her revenge by setting fire to a Christian institution for wayward young girls. According to Fujimori's stage directions, published in 1927, at this moment the curtain was to fall on the electrically lit query, "What made her do what she did?" floating above the flames.[3] The movie audience, which included members of the new salaried middle class, off-duty groups of geisha, and working men and women who had crowded into Asakusa, the honky-tonk night-life neighborhood of Tokyo, to watch the show had to formulate their own answers to this question—just as the historian must do when asking why the Modern Girl moved so vigorously through the closing years of the 1920s. To answer this question, the Modern Girl must be made a part of the political economy and sociocultural transformations of her time.

DEFINING THE MODERN GIRL

The first documented reference to the Modern Girl appeared in August 1924 in the title of an article in the woman's magazine *Josei*. The author, Kitazawa Shūichi, established the character of the Modern Girl as apolitical but militantly autonomous, neither an advocate of expanded rights for women nor a suffragette; yet at the same time, she had no

3. The movie directed by Suzuki Jūkichi drew unprecedented crowds when it opened in 1930. For a discussion of its appeal, see Tanaka Junichirō, ed., *Nihon eiga hattatsu shi*, vol. 2: *Musei kara tooki e* (Chūō kōronsha, 1968), 178. "Nani ga kanojo wo sō saseta" first appeared in the January 1927 issue of *Kaizō* and was staged by the Tsukiji Theater in April of that year. I am working from Fujimori Seikichi, *Nani ga kanojo wo sō saseta* (Kaizōsha, 1927), pp. 1–160.

intention of being a slave to men. This self-respecting modern girl had liberated herself from age-old traditions and conventions, and now, suddenly, without any argument or explanation, she had stepped out onto the same starting line with man in order to walk alongside him. Kitazawa saw a reconstruction of gender accompanying this reordering of power, but he did not bemoan the fact that woman was becoming more like man both spiritually and physically, for what woman had lost in grace she had gained in a newfound animation.[4]

Nii Itaru, who is usually given credit for coining the term *modan gaaru*, followed with his "Contours of the Modern Girl" in a 1925 issue of another woman's magazine, *Fujin kōron*.[5] He provided a character sketch of someone who, like Kitazawa's Modern Girl, was highly animated. She was also "brightly breezy" and shockingly fond of the double entendre and other erotic come-hithers. One young woman, for example, after a single meeting with the author, had sent him a note that read, "I am lonely sleeping all alone today. Please come visit." Nii reported that he did not know how to interpret this message, but he was convinced that all contemporary young women were in the process of changing for the sake of "liberation and freedom of expression." Nii admitted that the contemporary young Japanese woman was aggressive and erotic, but was she in fact a "Modern Girl" like her European counterpart, the modern young woman, whom he likened to a bouncing ball of reason, will, and emotion, thrown at full force? And was the anarchistic Modern Girl a creature to be lauded as the proletarian emblem of revolutionary possibility, or should she be reviled as one final expression of a decaying class, owing to origins in the wealthier strata of society? Nii offered his readers choices, but he would not take a stand.[6]

Nii's ambiguity set the tone for Japanese mass journalism. From 1925 until the early 1930s writers attempted to flesh out the contours provided by Nii, in such print media as a cartoon series about a Modern Girl and a Modern Boy entitled "Mogako and Moborō," in sensational newspaper articles, in questions and answers in advice columns, and in special issues of popular magazines aimed at men and women.[7] While

4. Kitazawa Shūichi's article is cited in Satō Takeshi, "Modanizumu to Amerikaka: 1920 sen-kyūhyaku nijūnen wo chūshin to shite" in *Nihon modanizumu no kenkyū*, ed. Minami Hiroshi (Tōkyō Bureen Shuppan, 1982), 41–42; Ueda Yasuo, "Josei zasshi ga mita modanizumu," in ibid., 135–36; and Barbara Hamill, "Josei: Modanizumu to kenri ishiki," in ibid., 215–16.

5. Nii Itaru, "Modan gaaru no rinkaku," *Fujin kōron*, April 1925, 24–31. Nii's colleague, Ōya Sōichi, is responsible for attributing the origin to Nii, but Nii gave credit to Kitazawa; see Hamill, "Josei," 229.

6. Nii, "Modan gaaru no rinkaku," 24–5, 29–31.

7. Maeda Ai notes how the term *modan gaaru* won out over the label "woman of the new era" (*shin jidai no onna*) in *Kindai dokusha no seiritsu* (Yūseido, 1972), 214–15. Ueda, "Josei zasshi," 115–30, follows what he terms the discourse on the modern girl through

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ambiguity remained, a composite picture of a Modern Girl does emerge from a select reading of articles written by journalists and feminist critics of the 1920s.

First and foremost, the Modern Girl was defined by her body and most specifically by her short hair and long, straight legs. In a brief disquisition entitled simply "Woman's Legs," the proletarian writer Kataoka Teppei argued that, while other eras of Japanese history had been graced by sightly legs (which nobody had noticed), the preponderance of beautiful legs among contemporary young women had to be explained. His answer: the legs of the Modern Girl were a product of the ability of the human spirit to shape the human form; her legs symbolized the Modern Girl's growing ability to create a new life for woman. The author ended his polemic with the hortatory appreciation of the modern girl in motion: "Onward! Dance! Legs! Legs! Legs!"[8]

Discussion of fashion is always talk about the female body, as another article, "Studies on the *Moga*," made blatantly clear. In the course of his attempt to define the Modern Girl, Kiyosawa Kiyoshi emphasized the significance of her protruding buttocks by repeating how the traditional function of the obi ("to hide the ass") had been abandoned by the modern girl, who wore her obi high.[9] The preoccupation with the clothing of the Modern Girl also confirms Rosalind Coward's thesis that "women's bodies, and the messages which clothes can add, are the repository of the social definitions of sexuality."[10] According to Kataoka, the Modern Girl's simple hairstyle was the outcome of a strategic decision to facilitate violent hugging, and her boldly colored and patterned clothing expressed her attraction to the fleshly vitality exuded by the Westerner. This Modern Girl went after the physical pleasures of love (*ren'ai*), which meant that she sought "fleshly" stimuli in "flirtation," an activity that had spread from the United States to England, France, and Japan. (The author spelled "flirtation" in English after he had transliterated it into the Japanese syllabary reserved for imported terms.) The Modern

articles published in *Josei* from 1924 through 1928. He cites the cartoon series, penned by Tanaka Hisara, as beginning in the September 1928 issue of *Shufu no tomo*; see p. 127. For a commentary on the manufacture of the *moga* via the reinforcing "advertisements" of newspapers, magazines, and the movies, see Hoshino Tatsuo, "Modaan shinbun zasshi eiga mandan," in *Kaizō*, June 1929, 42–45.

8. Kataoka Teppei, "Onna no kyaku" (October 1926), in *Kindai shomin seikatsushi*, ed. Minami Hiroshi, vol. 1: *Ningen seken* (Sanichi Shobō, 1985), 175–77; quote 177.

9. Kiyosawa Kiyoshi, "Modan gaaru no kenkyū," in ibid., 143–58; on female buttocks, 143–44.

10. Rosalind Coward, *Female Desires: How They are Sought, Bought, and Packaged* (New York: Grove Press, 1985), 30; see this volume generally for insightful analysis associating fashion with the historical construction and representation of the female body.

Girl was flirting, the author explained, when she went for a shoulder or a hand in a crowded train and then pulled back, protesting with a polite "Oh, excuse—it was just that it was oh so crowded" when her motions were met with anger. This mixed message was also projected in dance halls and theaters, where the Modern Girl went after man's physical rather than spiritual beauty.[11]

For Kataoka, as for other male writers, to talk about the Modern Girl's body and clothing, and thereby her sexuality, was to underscore her promiscuity. In contrast, the feminist journalist and critic Kitamura Kaneko, in an essay called "Strange Chastity," defended the Modern Girl from a double standard, pointing out the obvious contradictions in the public outcry at woman's indiscretions. For a woman to have played around with a man was considered bad: but if there were women who had transgressed with men, there had to have been men who had played around with women.[12] Kitamura refused to define the Modern Girl as sexual transgressor. But like Kiyosawa, who saw woman as moving closer to man spiritually and physically, and like Kataoka, who celebrated new, separate cultures for men and women and claimed that gender distinctions were based on the differing attitudes toward love held by men and women, she accepted that what it meant to be feminine and what it meant to be masculine were being called into question.[13]

The intimate relationship between efforts to conceptualize the *moga* and the cultural reconstruction of gender is made clear in a section of Kiyosawa's Modern Girl essay called "Man's Education and Woman's Education." According to the author, gender differentiation in 1920s Japan began at birth, as baby girls were put into red kimono, and baby boys were swaddled in kimono decorated with images of the mythical peach-boy. At age six or seven, the boy child was reprimanded for the unmanly behavior of crying with the rebuke, "What is this—and you a boy. . . !" By the time the boy and girl were adults, they had been educated for entirely different societies; they were like two races separated

11. Kataoka Teppei, "Modan gaaru no kenkyū" (September 9, 1926), in Kataoka, *Modan gaaru no kenkyū* (Kinseidō, 1927); reprinted in Minami (ed.), *Kindai shomin*, 170, 163–64, 172. The term *ren'ai*, used to translate the Western term "love," was, like the words for philosophy (*tetsugaku*) and society (*shakai*), a Meiji invention. Two Chinese characters—*ren* (or, in the Japanese pronunciation, *koi*), alluding to feelings of deep affection between a man and a woman, and *ai*, meaning to be drawn to something and yearn for it or feel a tenderness toward it—were combined to create the new word, which could only apply to a yearning for a member of the opposite sex; see Tanaka Sumiko, ed., *Josei kaihō no shisō to kōdō*, prewar vol. (Jiji Tsūshinsha, 1975), 166.

12. Kitamura Kaneko, "Kaiteisō" (1927), in Minami (ed.), *Kindai shomin*, 128–42, esp. 131–34.

13. Ueda, "Josei zasshi," 135; Kataoka, "Modan gaaru no kenkyū," 161, 168; Kitamura, "Kaiteisō," 133.

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by a broad river, living according to differing moral standards. Kiyosawa gave the Modern Girl's resolution to this predicament: let the boy and girl start at the same place.[14]

Although the Modern Girl's bold gestures crossed gender boundaries, they were, according to her creators, unquestionably female. Her cultural identity, however, was less certain. Nii had begged the issue in his "Contours of the Modern Girl" when he claimed that European ways had been integrated into daily life in Japan, while simultaneously refusing to equate the Modern Girl with her Japanese sisters.[15] Kiyosawa also separated the Modern Girl of Europe and the United States from the Japanese Modern Girl, by suggesting a distinction between the function and the intent of the latter. Whereas both sets of Modern Girls stood "in the vanguard of a changing age to battle old customs," the author feared this had not actually been the goal of the Japanese version, whose short hair might not in fact be an emblem of resistance but the "mark of decadence" of a woman still content to live by the actions and decisions of men.[16]

Was the Japanese Modern Girl Japanese? Europeanized? Cosmopolitan? To the artist Kishida Ryūsei, who defined the short-haired Modern Girl by her body, clothing, and rapid style of walking on Ginza, she was all of the above. While she appeared for the most part in Japanese-style clothing, the face of this beauty, originally that of a Japanese person, had been harmonized to become, in a most natural fashion, a Western-style face. The Modern Girl was not indulging in the forced Europeanization of an earlier era; rather, Kishida concluded, she was part of a process whereby "all material civilization would . . . inevitably Europeanize Japan." Japan was not to lose its identity; only after it had been thoroughly Europeanized could Japanese culture become non-European.[17]

An alternate resolution to the ambiguity in the Modern Girl's cultural identity was embodied in Naomi, the polymorphously perverse heroine of Tanizaki Junichirō's fictional *A Fool's Love*, whose exploits were serialized in the *Ōsaka asahi shinbun* and *Josei* during 1924 and 1925.[18] In the story, a nondescript young engineer becomes obsessed by the body

14. Kiyosawa cites in romanized letters a "Dr. Meyrick Booth," published in the "Hibbert Journal"; "Modan gaaru no kenkyū," 152, 155–56.

15. Nii, "Modan gaaru no rinkaku," 24.

16. Kiyosawa, "Modan gaaru no kenkyū," 156–57.

17. Kishida Ryūsei, "Shinko saiku Ginza dōri," in *Kishida Ryūsei zenshū*, vol. 4 (Iwanami Shoten, 1979), 295–97. This essay was serialized in the evening edition of the *Tōkyō nichi nichi shinbun*, May 24 through June 10, 1927.

18. *Chijin no ai* was serialized in the *Ōsaka asahi shinbun* from March through June 1924, and in *Josei* from November 1924 through July 1925; the version cited here is from *Tanizaki Junichirō zenshū*, vol. 10 (Chūō kōronsha, 1967), 1–302. For an English translation, see Tanizaki Junichirō, *Naomi*, trans. Anthony H. Chambers (New York: Knopf, 1985).

and costuming of his child-bride, whom he has rescued from her labors as a café waitress. As Naomi's body and desires mature, he is overwhelmed by her sexuality, and both confused and enticed by her constantly shifting persona, which challenges fixed notions of gender and culture.

Naomi's bold transgressions across gender and culture boundaries identify her as a Modern Girl and illustrate Coward's explication of how social definitions of both female and male sexuality are projected onto women's bodies, while "men are neutral."[19] This is the case in Tanizaki's melodrama. Naomi's play with a fixed gender identity, expressed in cross-dressing, is transformed into a power play involving the final shift in a mistress-slave relationship. By the end of the story, the heroine has taken on male language to challenge the authority of her former mentor. In response, her husband's speech does not become feminized, in a role reversal, but rather infantilized: he responds to her demands that he do whatever she desires of him with the acquiescent monosyllabic grunt of a domesticated male child.[20]

Naomi's chief desire is to act and look Western, an aspiration at first encouraged by her mentor, who calls his Mary Pickford–look-alike protégée a "Yankee girl."[21] Although her upward mobility into the ballroom society of the genteel dance hall challenges class distinctions, and her affectation of male speech threatens the narrator, her appearance as a Westerner who is not Western (captured in the ambiguity of her untraceable name, "Naomi," which appears Eurasian but may not be) is her most militant statement.[22] Naomi's identification with Pickford, Gloria Swanson, and Pola Negri remains titillating only as long as the hero is attracted to the *haikara* Western life-style, which is epitomized in the "culture house" chosen by the young couple for its Western architecture and furnished with imported goods aimed at a "simple life."[23] In the end, he is drawn back to a "pure" Japanese-style house, and to a traditional notion of marriage and family. The ballroom dancing scenes are revealed to be battle sites of East-West confrontation: Naomi appears as an unrecognizable apparition in white face, and the author's real con-

19. Coward, *Female Desires*, 30.

20. For a passage describing how the hero poses Naomi in various guises, and for the role reversal, see Tanizaki, *Chijin no ai*, 45, 294. I am grateful to Lucy North for the concept of "mistress-slave relationship."

21. It is noteworthy that Tanizaki chose "Yankee girl," an unambiguously pejorative term that implied an unreflexive copying of Western mores, over "Modern Girl." For a discussion of the term "Yankee girl," see Ueda, "Josei zasshi," 136–37.

22. Tanizaki, *Chijin no ai*, 264.

23. Tanizaki uses the Meiji term *haikara*, derived from the transliteration of "high collar," to mean fashionably Western, rather than *modan*, or "modern." The *bunka jūtaku*, or "culture house," was the term for the Western structures erected for the new middle class during the post–World War I era.

cern turns out to be his discomfort with anything that "smells" Western and is therefore a threat to the authentic Japanese family. Tanizaki projected this fear onto a Modern Girl.[24]

While journalists grappled with the Modern Girl's purported sexual activity, her gender identity, and her cultural identification, they were almost unanimous in proclaiming her unquestionable autonomy. Charges of promiscuity leveled against the Modern Girl, according to Kitamura, stemmed from the new, public nature of woman's activity. She summed up these charges in a composite sketch:

> She went for a walk with a man in Nara Park; I spotted a glimpse of her at a Dotonbori café; she was kicking up her heels at the dance hall; I discovered her going into the movies. When I watched her walking she was moving her left and right legs one after the other; I saw her yawning and decided she was tired out from waiting for a man; she'd decorated her hat with a flower—I wonder who she got it from. She sneezed, she must be run down from being with a man; etc.; etc.; etc.; etc.; etc.; etc.; etc.[25]

Kitamura noted that while sins are committed in the dark, the so-called disgraceful conduct of the Modern Girl was conducted in broad daylight. The Japanese woman was no longer secluded in the confines of the household, but was out in the open, working and playing alongside men. This was her real transgression: she would not accept the division of labor that had placed her in the home.[26]

The trumpeted promiscuity of the Modern Girl, who moved from man to man, was thus but one aspect of her self-sufficiency. She appeared to be a free agent without ties of filiation, affect, or obligation to lover, father, mother, husband, or children—in a striking counterpoint to the state ideology of family documented in the Civil Code and in the ethics texts taught in the schools.[27] According to one critic, the Modern

24. Tanizaki, *Chijin no ai*, 126, 264.

25. Kitamura, "Kaiteisō," 131.

26. Of course, women workers in the textile industry constituted 71 percent of the work force in private industry by 1910, as E. Patricia Tsurumi has documented, but this social reality was not reflected in official ideology regarding woman's place within the family. Kano Masanao suggests that in addition to separating the two parts of the compound word *kokka* into its constituitive *koku* or *kuni* (nation) and *ka* or *ie* (family) in order to posit an analogy between the two terms, historians of the construction of modern Japanese ideology might recognize how men have been placed within the nation and women within the family. See E. Patricia Tsurumi, "Female Textile Workers and the Failure of Early Trade-Unionism in Japan," *History Workshop* 18 (Fall 1984): 5; and Kano Masanao, *Senzen. "Ie" no shisō* (Sōbunsha, 1983), 5.

27. For the assessment that the *moga* was unfettered by tradition or fatalism, and "more than anything respected herself," see the August 1924 issue of *Josei* (Woman), cited in Ueda, "Josei zasshi," 135. The introductory coda to the Civil Code, which explained that Japanese law differed from Western civil codes because the familial nature of the society displaced any notion of individuality, and the fourth book of the code, the *Book of Relatives*, placed woman in a patriarchal web. For an example of the subjugation of woman within the family in the ethics textbooks, consider the elementary school catechism verse about the soft-spoken, filial bride and mother-to-be who, with soft voice, engages in her needlework and cleaning; see Suematsu Kenchō, *Shōgaku shūshin kun*, pts. 2 and 3 (Seikasha, 1892), cited in *Nihon fujin mondai shiryō shūsei*, vol. 5: *Kazoku mondai*, ed. Yuzawa Yasuhiko (Domesu Shuppan, 1978), 369–70. See also Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 120–27.

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Girl had not simply abandoned motherhood: she was anti-motherhood. Even Hiratsuka Raichō, the feminist theorist of the World War I era, agreed. Although she portrayed the Modern Girl as the daughter of the New Woman and as someone who had the power to create the future because of her thought, emotion, action, and everyday life, Raichō did not imagine her having any daughters of her own.[28]

The autonomy of this Modern Girl who "strutted down the street" en route to and from work derived from her economic self-sufficiency. Kataoka surmised that the term *modan gaaru* had originated as a substitute for the vague reference "that sort of woman" which had been attached to the urban working women employed by stores and businesses after the First World War, and Kitamura warned that "it would be problematic to mistake the short skirts and the ability to endure chilled legs as the be-all and end-all of the Modern Girl," because the work and the morals of this "new working woman" differed from those of the "old household woman."[29] According to Kitamura, this heroine's livelihood positioned her beyond the reach of state and family: "Since the old morals have been broken and new morals have not yet come about and new standards of chastity have not been established, working women, in their system of thought, are a nomadic people. Nomadic people have neither laws nor national borders. All they can do is move as their convictions move them."[30]

Although Tanizaki's Naomi remains a consumer whose appetite for moving pictures and carefully chosen foreign and domestic order-in delicacies is matched only by her desire for a large assortment of male companions, the Modern Girl, according to many accounts, was not merely a passive consumer of middle-class culture, for she was depicted as producing goods, services, and new habits. She thereby differed from the New Woman of the previous era, who had exhibited resistance to outmoded traditions but had offered no new model for an everyday life.

28. Hiratsuka Raichō, "Modan gaaru ni tsuite," *Dai chōwa*, May 1927, reprinted in *Hiratsuka Raichō chosakushū*, vol. 4 (Ōtsuki Shoten, 1983), 282–84; and Hiratsuka Raichō, "Kaku arubeki modan gaaru," *Fujin kōron*, June 1927, reprinted in ibid., 290–97.

29. Kataoka, "Modan gaaru no kenkyū," 164; Kitamura, "Kaiteisō," 135.

30. Kitamura, "Kaiteisō," 131.

The cerebral New Woman had been romantic rather than realistic; she had wielded ideals, not economics; she had imitated male habits instead of attempting to create a separately bounded life for women. In contrast, the Modern Girl was more interested in shaping the materiality of everyday existence.[31] It cannot be emphasized too much that the Modern Girl was not "just looking," to employ Rachel Bowlby's evocative term for the commodified woman who is at the same time a customer in a newly rationalized consumer culture.[32]

Authors agreed that the self-sufficient successor to the New Woman was definitely in the vanguard of the new modern age—the postearthquake era of economic, social, and cultural reconstruction. There was also a general consensus that this "free-living and free-thinking" Modern Girl was making history in part because she was making her own money.[33] The Marxist feminist Yamakawa Kikue, however, dissented. In a scathing essay entitled "Modern Girls, Modern Boys," Yamakawa depicted the Modern Girl as a passive figure who lay supine on a beach and afterwards strolled through town, still clad in her bathing suit.[34] While she disagreed with the right-wing press reports that the Modern Girl and Modern Boy (who could be found Ginza-cruising or at the movies or theater) were part of a communist conspiracy to weaken the children of the privileged through dissipation, she concurred that youth's dissolution marked a historic turning point: the behavior of these girls who painted themselves in bright colors and walked half-naked beside boys in kettle-shaped hats and flared pants was reminiscent of the antics of the "degenerate customs and the ephemeral epicureanism" of functionaries in the closing years of the feudal era in Japan. Their lack of interest in anything but sensual pleasures signified the fate of a ruling class in decline.[35]

31. Kiyosawa, "Modan gaaru no kenkyū," 157–58; Kataoka, "Modan gaaru no kenkyū," 161–65.

32. Rachel Bowlby, *Just Looking: Consumer Culture in Dreiser, Gissing, and Zola* (New York: Methuen, 1985), 18–34.

33. The notion is Kataoka's; see "Modan gaaru no kenkyū," 164. The terms *sentan* and *senei*, meaning "vanguard" and "radical," were commonly applied to the *moga*; on this issue, see Minami (ed.), *Nihon Modanizumu*, x.

34. Unlike other writers who either marginalized or ignored the Modern Boy altogether, Yamakawa placed no greater emphasis on the Modern Girl than on her male partner; see Yamakawa Kikue, "Modan gaaru, modan booi," *Keizai ōrai*, September 1927, reprinted in *Yamakawa Kikueshū*, 11 vols., ed. Tanaka Sumiko and Yamakawa Shinsaku (Iwanami Shoten, 1981–82), vol. 4: *Musankaikyū undō no fujin undō 1925–1927*, 268–71.

35. Exhibiting a revolutionary optimism, Yamakawa also drew a second parallel: the interests of the decadent girls and boys were undoubtedly very similar to the diversions enjoyed by the Russian nobility and landowners who were thrown off their land by the roughened hands of the ignorant muzhiks. See ibid., 269–70.

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Yamakawa's prurient definition, which was consistent with the inability of early-twentieth-century Marxism to come to terms with questions of gender or sexuality, ignored the ambiguities and contradictions present in representations of the Japanese-but-Western Modern Girl. In contrast, other writers did attempt to reconcile images of gleeful consumerism and sexual play with the Modern Girl's identity as a wageworker who, having abandoned confining tradition, exhibited strains of resistance. To do this they resorted to a twofold definition, determining that there were Modern Girls—and then there were *real* Modern Girls. According to Kiyosawa, the real Modern Girl lived outside Japan, whereas the Japanese Modern Girl was a colorful but apolitical and anti-intellectual imitation.[36] In "One Hundred Percent *Moga*," Ōya Sōichi, the leading critic of popular culture of the 1920s, offered three contemporaneous versions of the Modern Girl. The first was crafty, manipulative, and intellectualizing. She was free to go out, even to sleep out, and maintained no boundaries between friends and lovers. She was a consumer, not a producer; she was like a mannequin. The second type was group-oriented, productive, and possessed of a self-consciousness. But only the third girl was "one hundred percent *moga*." She was identified as the daughter of heroic leftist activists who had been imprisoned countless times; she thus had no sense of family other than the police, the jails, and the streets. Liberated from the traditions related to so-called female morality, she articulated the authentic language, gestures, and ideology of the new era.[37]

Hiratsuka Raichō's two versions of the heroine appeared in "The Modern Girl as She Should Be." The first was a young woman with time and money to fashion herself a brightly colored ensemble of Western clothing with matching hat in order to attend the cafés on Ginza. This seemingly liberated woman, however, was not free: she was the object of man's physical desires, and while she might appear upbeat, she was in fact depressed. The real Modern Girl, in contrast, would have a social conscience. Although Hiratsuka could not find such a Modern Girl in Japan in the 1920s, she predicted that such women would appear, not from among the "fashion slaves" but from within the ranks of working and laboring proletarian women who had organized as "social women."

36. Kiyosawa, "Modan gaaru no kenkyū," 153–57.

37. Ōya Sōichi, "Hyaku paasento moga," *Chūō kōron*, August 1929, reprinted in *Ōya Sōichi zenshū*, vol. 2 (Eichōsha, 1982), 10–17. Hamill has concluded that the distinction between a (progressive) "real modern girl" and a "real" modern girl interested only in clothing and makeup was present in almost all accounts of the Modern Girl; see Hamill, "Josei," 210.

The model for such a Modern woman was Takamure Itsue, the anarchist feminist.[38]

In sum, the discourse on the Modern Girl was more about imagining a new Japanese woman than about documenting social change. For this reason, as Kataoka Teppei admitted, despite repeated themes there is no clearly defined image:

> When we say the Modern Girl exists in our era we are not in particular referring to individuals named Miss So-and-so-*ko* or Mrs. Such-and-such-*e*. Rather, we are talking about the fact that somehow, from the midst of the lives of all sorts of women of our era, we can feel the air of a new era, different from that of yesterday. That's right; where can you folks clearly say there is a typical modern girl? That is to say that the Modern Girl is but a term that abstractly alludes to one new flavor sensed from the air of the life of all women in society.[39]

The Modern Girl resisted definition, but this did not mean that pundits did not keep trying to confine her. In the January 1928 issue of *Shinchō*, although the members of a roundtable discussion on various facets of modern life agreed to talk about urbanization and new forms of "articulation, expression, language, gestures, writing, and clothing," they could not set aside the topic of the Modern Girl: they were obsessed by the desire to enclose her in one all-encompassing meaning. In the course of their conversation these critics determined the following about the *moga*: (1) she was not hysterical; (2) she used direct language; (3) she had a direct, aggressive sexuality—she checked to see whether a man was compatible; (4) she scoffed at chastity—changing men, for her, was like putting on a clean white shirt; (5) she could be poor—clothing was now inexpensive; (6) she was liberated from the double fetters of class and gender; (7) she was an anarchist; (8) she accosted men when she needed train fare; (9) she had freedom of expression—which she got from the movies; and finally, an indirect commentary on the autonomy of this persona, (10) the *mobo* (Modern Boy) was a "zero."[40]

The women writers of *Nyonin geijutsu* (Women's arts), the journal for and by women that appeared with rare exception from July 1928 through June 1932, did not use the term "Modern Girl," but their unabashed celebration of female creativity, sexuality, and autonomy was a potent contribution to the process of representing and thereby defining her.[41] The magazine, advertised by well-heeled live mannequins at major shopping intersections, was premised on a shrewd analysis: namely, that media manipulation of woman could be subverted through mass marketing of a self-consciously glossy journal produced by women cultural revolutionaries.

The tone of the journal was set on June 20, 1928, the day before the first issue appeared, when the leading women thinkers of the day, clad in both kimono and Western dress, seated themselves at the Rainbow Grill in Ueno and invited the press to photograph them.[42] (The women, conscious of the power of self-representation, had adopted the Japanese male tradition of initiating political and intellectual projects in semiprivate environs but had chosen a more modern and less sex-specific site than a geisha house.) The agenda for the new magazine was set in the inaugural issue in a manifesto by Yamakawa Kikue entitled "An Examination of Feminism."[43] Yamakawa placed women's culture in the context of economic advances and women's demands for equality in suffrage, education, and work. Her reference to women's demand for autonomous actions or freedom of activity constituted yet another rephrasing of the discourse on the Modern Girl's creation of her own separate and unprecedented everyday life, by a woman who was representing herself as a producer of culture.

The writers for *Nyonin geijutsu* denied boundaries erected in our histories (and in their own Japanese political culture) by proving that women on the left could unite to construct a multifaceted critique of women's place. Such writers as Sata Ineko, whose sympathies lay with the Japanese Communist party, and the noncommunist but avowedly Marxist Yamakawa Kikue joined with the anarchist Yagi Akiko and numerous other female (and a few male) writers, poets, and critics to demand a cultural space wherein women would not be treated like the live mannequins that had just appeared on Ginza. (In an article about these women in department store show windows, Yagi called this new job the most extreme example of the commodification of a human being as an item for sale.)[44]

38. Hiratsuka Raichō, "Kaku arubeki modan gaaru," *Fujin kōron*, June 1927, reprinted in *Chosakushū* 4:290–97.

39. Kataoka, "Modan gaaru," 173; the suffixes *-ko* and *-e* are endings of female names.

40. "Modan seikatsu mandankai," *Shinchō*, January 1928, 123–47.

41. The story of the woman who committed suicide after being called a Modern Girl may be apocryphal, but the strategic decision of these women not to wield the label "Modern Girl" is in part explained by Hiratsuka Raichō's remembrance that no woman in short hair and Western clothes would call herself a "Modern Girl," just as the Seitōsha activists of her generation had actively resisted the label of "New Woman"; see Hiratsuka, "Modan gaaru ni tsuite," 283.

42. Ogata Akiko, *Nyonin geijutsu no sekai* (Domesu Shuppan, 1980), 38–39.

43. Yamakawa Kikue, "Feminizumu no kentō," *Nyonin geijutsu* 1, no. 1 (July 1928): 2–7, reprinted in *Yamakawa Kikueshū*, vol. 5: *Doguma kara deta yūrei*, 167–74.

44. Yagi Akiko, "Kotoba: Hyōgen," *Nyonin geijutsu* 2, no. 1 (January 1929): 104–6. This theme may have been influenced by an essay by Yamakawa that I quote and discuss in the conclusion to my book *Changing Song: The Marxist Manifestos of Nakano Shigeharu* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990). For Yamakawa's biting critique of the commodification of women, see Yamakawa Kikue, "Keihin tsuki tokkahin to shite no onna,"

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Nyonin geijutsu used the weapons of the numerous magazines produced for mass circulation during the late 1920s—pictures and photographs, essays, fiction, theory, and roundtable discussion—and drew on both indigenous and foreign sources to champion women's liberation. The writers, unlike their male counterparts who were nervous about the cultural identity of the Modern Girl, made no attempt to distinguish "authentic Japanese" experience from imitations of the West. In addition to articles on Edo life and on domestic politics, the journal included writings by such thinkers as Alexandra Kollontai (whose works were causing a great sensation in Japan owing to rumors that they advocated "free love"),[45] Katherine Mansfield, Bronislaw Malinowski, and Langston Hughes.

The writers for *Nyonin geijutsu* talked about more than just art and theory. The women's magazines of the 1920s featured articles on love and romance, and so too did *Nyonin geijutsu*, in a series of pieces published in its earliest issues. One representative discussion was the "Roundtable Discussion of Other Angles on Love."[46] The fourteen women participants in the event, which was subtitled "Feelings and Sensations of Jealousy/Chastity and Love, Adulterous Love/The Eternal Nature of Love/Love in a Three-sided Affair and in a Multisided Affair/Sexual Desire and Love," were tough, cynical, and, like the Modern Girl as represented in the media, realistic. The political activist Kamichika Ichiko questioned whether strong feelings leading to a marriage based on love could last fifty years into the marriage. It was well and fine, she noted, if one had the time, but she was busy with her family and her work; there was no time for the cultivation of love. Another discussant claimed that only unattainable love was eternal.

Unlike the imagined Modern Girl, the modern women on the panel were confronting actual issues of bonding, relating, and reproducing. Yet significantly, in the process of defining the militant as a Modern Girl, these women, like so many of the women who appeared in *Nyonin geijutsu* as either writers or the subjects of articles, defined themselves as being out in public. They openly expressed their feelings about both love and work. While they may have eschewed the label "Modern Girl,"

Fujin kōron, January 1928, reprinted in *Yamakawa Kikueshū*, vol. 5: *Doguma kara deta yūrei*, pp. 2–8.

45. Kollontai's works were translated between 1927 and 1936 as follows: *Red Love*, trans. Murao Jirō (Sekaisha, 1927); *A Grand Love*, trans. Nakajima Hideko (Sekaisha, 1930); *Great Love*, trans. Uchiyama Kenji (Sekaisha, 1930); *Working Women's Revolution*, trans. Ōtake Hakukichi (Naigaisha, 1930); *Motherhood and Society*, trans. Ozawa Keishi (Logosu Shoin, 1931); and *Women and the Family System*, trans. Yamakawa Kikue (Seibunkaku, 1936).

46. "Tahōmen renai zadankai," *Nyonin geijutsu* 1, no. 3 (September 1928): 2–22. A picture of the discussants is on p. 20 of the article.

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the sentiment that women should move out of the household and into the streets was familiar to the readers of *Nyonin geijutsu*. An example is available in the large print promoting a nationwide contest for the best lyrics for a "Woman's March":

> Women have already kicked off their heavy shackles and escaped from the dungeons of their darkened hearts. What lies before us now is for us to pour into the streets like rain in a sun-shower. What is left is the deafening roar of the factories, the tips of the spires of thought attacking the heavens. Lining up with all peoples we move forward into the world of all living things. Friends, at times like these we need a song that will sing, exhort, exalt, and push forward for us.[47]

The image of a Modern Girl on the road was publicized in "Letters from a Trip to Kyūshū," co-authored by Yagi Akiko and Hayashi Fumiko—whose *Hōrōki* (Tales of wandering), a sensational "diary" of her travels as a working woman spurred forward by desire, was currently being serialized in *Nyonin geijutsu*.[48] The travelogue opened with Yagi's expression of concern over Hayashi's drinking. Hayashi, in turn, boasted of the romance and whiskey she had enjoyed with a "tall, modern" fan in Nagoya, and of her behavior toward the soldier on the train whom she had pinched so as to terminate moves that were not fast enough. This document about wine, men, and song—an update of *Tōkaidō hizakurige*, the Edo classic about the picaresque antics of two déclassé warriors—produced by two women writers on the road, proved that adventure was not gender-bound.

In other words, Hayashi Fumiko, the lusty author-heroine of *Tales of Wandering*, who was busy punctuating her autobiographical account of a down-and-out woman drifter with lyrical references to dancing naked women, was not an idiosyncratic anomaly. Rather, the Modern Girl's protest, expressed through sensuality and mobility, could be communal.

But *Nyonin geijutsu* was not all about art, love, and exploration. Articles on women factory workers, and especially on labor in the Soviet Union, increased in later issues of the journal. The magazine's final six months contained a series on the notorious Tōyō Muslin strike of 1930, which had culminated in street-fighting.[49] This strike also produced fictional heroines in a series of short stories published by Sata Ineko in 1931, one year after Sata had stood in support outside the factory walls,

47. "Zen josei shinshutsu kōshinkyoku wo tsunoru," *Nyonin geijutsu* 2, no. 8 (August 1929): 2–3.

48. Yagi Akiko and Hayashi Fumiko, "Kyūshū tabidayori," *Nyonin geijutsu* 2, no. 9 (September 1929): 70–81; *Hōrōki* was serialized in nineteen installments between October 1928 and November 1930 in most issues of *Nyonin geijutsu*.

49. Nakamoto Takako, "Tōyō Mosu dai ni kōjō" (parts 1–4), *Nyonin geijutsu* July–December 1932.

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listening to the sound of the strike drums. Her four-part narrative, which appeared in disparate sources in the mass media, recounted violence both among the young women workers and between them and the hired thugs of the "justice corps." Sata also presented propaganda produced by both sides, including letters to fathers and brothers appealing to the power of patriarchy.[50]

Like Tanizaki's *A Fool's Love* and Hayashi Fumiko's epic *Tales of Wandering*, Sata's stories presented a militant as a Modern Girl guilty of transgressing in both spoken language and body language. In her stories, class struggle and not cultural definitions were at stake when the teen-age activists refused to stay in their designated place as obedient workers. These young women were in the streets, but they did not dance, shop, or strut to work. Instead they were brawling as only men could. They used the rough male word for "I," *ore*, to refer to themselves, threatened to smash dishware, and literally wrestled physically over issues of ideology. Like most Modern Girls in the media they expressed sexual desires—they did take time to flirt with male co-workers—but this pastime was a secondary diversion. The abiding concern of the modern young women in Sata's stories, as in the articles in the closing issues of *Nyonin geijutsu*, was that they be allowed to continue to produce. They wanted above all to work.

What begins to emerge from the above overview of the varied commentary on the Modern Girl is that men and women writers for the popular press who talked about a new kind of woman believed that this cultural heroine was defining her own options and her own sexuality (along with the sexuality of the *mobo*—who was so inconsequential that his name did not have to be spelled out). This modern young woman transgressed by crossing boundaries erected by class, gender, and culture. Her resistance was usually not organized, but nevertheless it was political, as observers like Kataoka acknowledged, arguing that, as distinct from her predecessors in the Japanese women's movement, the New Woman, "like the grand waves of the Pacific Ocean," drew those before her into her activity. She had neither a leader nor an organization, but hers was the first nationally based movement of women; hers was the first voice of woman's resistance.[51]

The Modern Girl, in other words, was militant. The only article in *Nyonin geijutsu* with the term "Modern Girl" in its title hints at this equa-

50. See Sata Ineko, "Kanbu jokō no namida," *Kaizō*, January 1931; "Shōkanbu," *Bungei shunjū*, August 1931; "Kitō," *Chūō kōron*, October 1931; and "Kyōsei kikoku," *Chūō kōron*, January 1931; reprinted in *Sata Ineko zenshū*, vol. 1 (Kōdansha, 1977), 219–78. Sata has explained that the women workers asked her for aid, and that she had been outside the dormitory in Kameido during the strike; interviews with Sata Ineko, in Tokyo, October 1982; and in Karuizawa, August 1986.

51. Kiyosawa, "Modan gaaru no kenkyū," 158.

tion of women's transgressions across class, sex, and culture lines on the one hand with political action on the other. The heroine of this brief commentary, "The Modern Girl in Jail," is imprisoned for soliciting funds for an after-hours school for working girls. When she is placed in a cell with other women, her "crime" of organizing is not distinguished from the petty criminal acts of the other imprisoned women. They are all political prisoners.[52]

Although interviews with survivors of the Tōyō Muslin strike indicate that the street-fighting did not last long because the girls could not hold out against the strength of the state-backed company, the image of them as street-fighting women has persisted.[53] The same cannot be said for the Modern Girl. We have lost the picture presented by the journalists of the 1920s of an unattached woman who expressed her private desires for sex and for work in public places, thereby challenging the assumption that she belonged in the home. An interrogation as to why the Modern Girl did what she did—or in other words, why she was once represented in the way she was—contributes to an explanation of both the appearance and the disappearance of this pugnacious and lustful, multifaceted heroine.

WHY DID THE MODERN GIRL DO WHAT SHE DID?

In order to begin to explain why this Modern Girl did what she did *when* she did, we must contextualize her representation within a history of Japanese women of the 1920s and 1930s that sees women as consumers, producers, legal subjects, and political activists. For the Modern Girl appeared during a historical juncture when Japanese women were acting in all of these capacities.[54]

First of all, the talk about the Modern Girl's clothed (and disrobed) body cannot be divorced from documented social change in woman's

52. "Kyūchijō no modan gaaru," *Nyonin geijutsu* 2, no. 12 (December 1929): 77–81.

53. See Watanabe Etsuji and Suzuki Yūko, eds., *Tatakai ni ikite: Senzen fujin rōdō undō e no shōgen* (Domesu Shuppan, 1980), 194–214; and Rōdō Undōshi Kenkyūkai and Rōdōsha Kyōiku Kyōkai, eds., *Nihon rōdō undō no rekishi* (Sanichi Shinsho, 1960), 179–94.

54. In this sense the Japanese "Modern Girl" was not unlike the "New Woman" of Weimar Germany. In the words of Atina Grossman, "This New Woman was not merely a media myth or a demographer's paranoid fantasy, but a social reality that can be researched and documented. She existed in office and factory, bedroom and kitchen, just as surely as in cafe, cabaret, and film. I think it is important that we begin to look at the New Woman as producer and not only consumer, as an agent constructing a new identity which was then marketed in mass culture, even as mass culture helped to form that identity"; "Girlkultur or Thoroughly Rationalized Female: A New Woman in Weimar Germany," in *Women in Culture and Politics: A Century of Change*, ed. Judith Friedlander, Blanche Wiesen Cook, Alice Kessler-Harris, and Carroll Smith-Rosenberg (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 64.

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material culture during the 1920s. Articles in women's magazines devoted to sewing Western-style clothes, for example, suggest some shift toward non-Japanese dress. The magazine with the reassuring title of "Housewife's Friend" (*Shufu no tomo*), which was aimed at the housebound married woman, had run its first series on making Western clothing in 1917, and by 1923 such articles as "How to Make a Convenient House-Dress" were promoting Western attire as a stylish commodity. Nevertheless, the daughter of the poet Hagiwara Sakutarō recalls how neighborhood housewives had jeered, "Modern Girl," when her mother—inspired by the author Uno Chiyo—first appeared in Western clothing in 1927. It would appear that many were not as quick to accept new fashions as they were to make use of a new media label.[55]

The social history of the affective life of a real-life Modern Girl during the 1920s is even more difficult to recount. Were young women in fact as animated and promiscuous as they appeared in the claims of Nii and others who suggested that the Modern Girl's gestures mirrored movie imagery? To what extent did the bravado of the women intellectuals in *Nyonin geijutsu* reflect the self-assertive attitudes toward the opposite sex and toward sex reported in the media? One recorded exchange between a man and a woman on a commuter train in 1930 provides an illustration of brazen behavior that matches the accusations of critics who caught (or lauded) the Modern Girl accosting helpless men: A woman of thirty riding on a train was accused by a well-dressed stranger of acting shamelessly for a wife and of threatening the national good, because her permanent wave was "no good" and her powder too thick. The woman's reaction was immediate and relentless. "Excuse me, but how do you know whether or not I'm someone's wife," she retorted. She then demanded his business card, threatened to visit his house that very day, and followed him off the train when he attempted to retreat.[56]

As noted by the witness to this incident, the woman protagonist was undoubtedly en route to the "Marubiru," the office building in the financial district of Tokyo famous for its female clerical workers in Western dress. Beginning in 1923, these women workers could have their hair permed at Japan's first beauty parlor, and, according to contemporary sources, by 1924 women constituted 3,500 of the 30,000 white-collar workers commuting to the Marunouchi district. By the second half of the

55. Ueda, "Josei zasshi," 120. The renovation and expansion of department stores between 1924 and 1930 is also an index to changes in consumer behavior. Hagiwara's reminiscence is from Hagiwara Yōko, *Chichi: Hagiwara Sakutarō* (1959); reprinted in *Nihon no hyakunen*, 10 vols., ed. Tsurumi Shunsuke (Chikuma Shobō, 1961–64), vol. 5: Imai Seiichi, *Shinsai ni yuragu*, 165.

56. Minakami Takitarō, "Teitō fukkōsai yokyō," *Mita bungaku*, May 1930, reprinted in ibid., 166–68.

1920s, approximately 8,200 women were employed at secretarial and service jobs in Japan's urban centers.[57]

During the 1920s, at the same time as the Modern Girl was being defined, journalists and state officials were surveying the Working Woman. A comparison of the six categories used in the 1924 "Survey Regarding Working Women," one of the many surveys released by the Tokyo Social Affairs Bureau, with the categories used in "A Modern Girl Mental Test," published in *Fujokai* (Woman's world), reveals that the discourse on the Modern Girl and the response to the Working Woman were part of the same social and economic history. While the six headings used by the Tokyo officials were teacher, typist, office workers, storekeeper, nurse, and telephone operator, the "Modern Girl Mental Test" had also included bus conductors, café waitresses, and urban women producers of services who could not be classified as middle class and who came from working-class backgrounds.[58] Although the term *shokugyō fujin* was usually used to distinguish white-collar women employees from their sisters in the factories, the meaning of "Working Woman" remained ambiguous. As late as 1932 a commentator, who had read several works on the "working woman problem" in order to put the café waitress in a sociological perspective, still could not find a clearly defined concept to fit the label.[59] Kon Wajirō's typology of the Working Woman in his 1929 *New Edition of the Guide to Greater Tokyo* also illustrated the blurring of class distinctions when he included in his list women bus conductors, chauffeurs, women company representatives,

57. Kon Wajirō, ed., *Shinban dai Tōkyō annai* (Chūō kōronsha, 1929; reprint Hihyōsha, 1986); and Kiyosawa Kiyoshi, *Modan gaaru* (1926); both cited in Tsurumi (ed.), *Nihon no hyakunen*, vol. 5: Imai, *Shinsai ni yuragu*, 162.

58. The appearance of a number of surveys, by such pundits as Yamakawa Kikue and by government officials such as the unidentified gentleman who in 1931 ruefully admitted that Ibsen's Nora had been a prophet, aimed at scientifically analyzing this new social phenomenon, and was one index of the widespread concern over the definition of the Working Woman. See Yamakawa Kikue, "Gendai shokugyō fujinron," in *Nihon fujin mondai shiryō shūsei*, vol. 8: *Shichō* (part 1), ed. Maruoka Hideko (Domesu Shuppan, 1976), 334–44; Nagy's essay in this volume (chap. 9); and Maeda, *Kindai dokusha no seiritsu*, 225–26.

59. The term *shokugyō fujin* has come to be associated with a middle-class response to the creation of thousands of jobs in the expanded tertiary sector after the Russo-Japanese War and accompanying the economic boom during the First World War. See, for example, Margit Maria Nagy, "'How Shall We Live?': Social Change, the Family Institution, and Feminism in Prewar Japan" (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 1981), 118–38; and Murakami Nobuhiko, *Taishōki no shokugyō fujin* (Domesu Shuppan, 1983). In many instances, however, the Working Woman was associated with the Modern Girl or the working-class woman. See Kataoka's contention ("Modan gaaru no kenkyū," 164) that the term "Modern Girl" originated as a means of referring to the *shokugyō fujin*; and Obayashi Munetsugu's query, "Is the Café Waitress a Working Woman?" in "'Jokyū' shakaishi," *Chūō kōron*, April 1932, 151–62.

journalists, women office workers, women shop clerks, gasoline girls, women who handed out advertisements and matchbooks, the elevator girl (newly being paid), and the mannequin who had first appeared in 1928 (and was now found even in the provinces!).[60]

A living counterpart to the imaginary Modern Girl emerges from these various surveys. She is the single or married Japanese woman wageworker who was forced into the work force by economic need following the end of the economic boom of the World War I years.[61] The omnipresent working-class café waitress in novels and stories of the late 1920s and early 1930s is therefore a better indication of the Modern Girl's true identity than the phantom figure of an aimless, mindless consumer frequently depicted in our history textbooks.

While woman's new position as producer was reflected in allusions to the Modern Girl's economic autonomy, there was also an actual social corollary to her representation as free from family obligations. The struggle of Tanizaki's hero to redefine his marriage with Naomi occurred at the very time that scholars and state officials, in response to the emergence of the "small" nuclear family, were actively considering the reconstitution of the modern Japanese family.[62] Commentators on the Modern Girl have all ignored the fact that the discourse on this threatening woman reached its height just when the government was debating revision of the Civil Code, having recognized that the "law ignoring women," as Oku Mumeo had called it, was not working.[63] Inasmuch as the denial of civic responsibility to women had been premised not on a biological determinism but on a notion of the woman's proper place within the family, changes in family life resulting from woman's newly expanded economic roles authorized an institutionalized ideological shift. By 1924, faced with the rise of wife-initiated divorces in urban Japan, pundits were openly lamenting the destruction of the family system; and by 1925, proposals challenging key provisions of the Civil Code, which in 1898 had granted full power to the male head of household, were under active consideration by the Rinji Hōsei Shingikai, a special investigative committee established in 1919 to revise the family provisions of the Meiji Civil Code. Women's competence was acknowledged in the proposed changes that would seemingly eliminate the requirement of parental consent before marriage, make divorce easier for women, expand the parental rights of women, and grant women the right to manage their own property.[64]

The Modern Girl's notoriety thus corresponded historically with the transition in state policy toward women's position within the family. An equally important historic conjuncture was the simultaneous appearance of the ostensibly apolitical Modern Girl and women's political groups. The displacement of the term "husband-wife quarrel" (*fūfugenka*) by the more evocative "family struggle" (*katei sōgi*) indicates the extent to which family reality belied state ideology in the 1920s, and corroborates Sharon Nolte's suggestion that various interrelated political "configurations" during the interwar years may have served "to form a collective impression of rising politicization among women."[65]

Numerous militant feminist organizations emerged during the 1920s after the establishment of the liberal New Woman's Association (Shin Fujin Kyōkai) in 1919 and the Red Wave Society (Sekirankai), the first Japanese socialist woman's organization, in 1921. In 1922, the ban on women's right to attend political meetings was lifted. The League for Women's Suffrage (Fusen Kakutoku Dōmei) was well established by 1925, and as a result of the establishment of left-wing political parties following the promulgation of universal male suffrage in that year, women joined such auxiliary women's associations as the Kantō Women's Federation of the Labor-Farmer party. Women were also active in both wings of the labor movement; in the tenancy movement; in the Organization of Women's Consumer Unions (Fujin Shōhi Kumai Kyō-

60. Kon Wajirō (ed.), *Shinban dai Tōkyō annai*, 281–82, 291–92.

61. Margit Nagy's essay in this volume (chap. 9) documents the entry of married women into the work force in the 1920s. For the monthly expenditures and income of the average salaryman, see Tsurumi (ed.), *Nihon no hyakunen*, vol. 5: Imai, *Shinsai ni yuragu*, 156–58. The consumption of the salaried worker must be placed in this context of depressed food and housing prices that were part of the overall crisis of Japanese capitalism. When the world depression hit in 1929, the economy had not recovered from the shocks of the post–World War I depression, the aftereffects of the earthquake of 1923, the run on banks during the panic of 1927, or the recession following the panic. By 1931, when Japan went off the gold standard, the country was in the midst of a severe depression.

62. Kano, *Senzen. "Ie" no shisō*, 112–15.

63. The words are from the title of a critique by Oku Mumeo written in 1923, cited in *Nihon fujin mondai shiryō shūsei*, vol. 5: Yuzawa (ed.), *Kazoku mondai*, 28. Murakami goes in this direction when he notes the contradiction between the emphasis on love and romance in the Taishō era and the reality of the legal system that was challenged by women's new engagement in education and work; see Murakami Nobuhiko, *Taishō joseishi* (Rironsha, 1982), 1–4.

64. For excellent documentation of the debate regarding revision of the code and the discourse surrounding the debate, see Nagy, " 'How Shall We Live?' " 198–219, 255. See also *Nihon fujin mondai shiryō shūsei*, vol. 5: Yuzawa (ed.), *Kazoku mondai*. For an article from 1924 on the destruction of the family which listed the end of the family as an economic unit, the power of the state, and the extension of individualism as three reasons for the collapse of the patriarchal system, see Kawada Shirō, "Kachōsei kazoku soshiki no hōkai Kazoku seido hōkai no kiun," in ibid., 438–53.

65. Sharon Nolte, "Women's Rights and Society's Needs: Japan's 1931 Suffrage Bill," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 28, no. 1 (October 1986): 18–19. While Murakami has argued that education and the increase in number of Working Women, more than their organized protest movements, served to liberate women from the family system enshrined in the Civil Code, the role of the widespread organization of women in a variety of political interest groups in changing the attitudes of women and men cannot be ignored; see Murakami, *Taishō joseishi*, 2. For a use of the term *fūfu sōgi*, see Kitamura, "Kaiteisō," 137.

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kai), established in 1928; and in such professional organizations as the Association of Typists (Taipusuto Kyōkai); the Society of Working Women (Shokugyō Fujinsha), which began publishing its own journal, *Working Woman* (*Shokugyō fujin*), within months of the establishment of the society; the Mannequin Club, organized by Yamano Chieko in 1929, six years after the opening of her beauty parlor in the Marunouchi Building; and the militant Federation of Café Waitresses (Jokyū Dōmei), which had chapters in major cities.[66]

The struggle of these women was as multifaceted as the Modern Girl's many guises. The political work of organized women during the 1920s encompassed the journalistic endeavors of activist leaders such as Yamakawa and Hiratsuka, the organization of lecture series, the lobbying of state officials, the formation of study groups dedicated to women's issues and of labor schools to educate proletarian women, and the use of leafletting and tea parties to influence politics. Women workers also took organized action over such issues as the woman worker's freedom to leave her dormitory to go out into the streets. By the end of 1928, 12,010 women had joined the labor movement, were solely responsible for 21 actions, and had participated in 138 of the 397 labor struggles of the year. The Tōyō Muslin Strike of 1930 was one of 329 instances of labor strife where women were active participants, and the Florida Dance Hall strike of the same year, one of the 38 strikes organized solely by women, illustrates how class conflict took place not only on the factory floor, but also in the places of play where working women served consumers.[67]

CONCLUSION: WHY THE MODERN GIRL DID WHAT SHE DID

The Modern Girl is rescued from her free-floating and depoliticized state when her willful image is placed alongside the history of working, militant Japanese women. Then the obsessive contouring of the Modern Girl as promiscuous and apolitical (and later, as apolitical and nonworking) begins to emerge as a means of displacing the very real militancy of Japanese women (just as the real labor of the American woman during the 1920s was denied by trivializing the work of the glamorized flapper). But whereas the American woman worker by the mid-1920s had allowed herself to be depoliticized by a new consumerism, the modern Japanese woman of the 1920s was truly militant. Her militancy was articulated through the adoption of new fashions, through labor in new arenas, and through political activity that consciously challenged social,

66. For an excellent chronology, see *Nihon fujin mondai shiryō shūsei*, vol. 10: *Kindai Nihon fujin mondai nenpyō*, ed. Maruoka Hideko (Domesu Shuppan, 1980).

67. For detailed statistics, see ibid.

economic, and political structures and relationships.[68] The Japanese state's response encompassed attempts to revise the Civil Code, consideration of universal suffrage, organization and expansion of groups such as the Women's Alliance (Fujin Dōshikai) and the nationwide network of *shojokai* (associations of young girls), censorship, and imprisonment of leaders. The media responded by producing the Modern Girl.

Yet the Modern Girl must have represented even more, for the determination that talk about the Modern Girl displaced serious concern about the radical nature of women's activity does not fully address her multivalence (figs. 11.1–11.4). Why, in other words, was she Japanese *and* Western, intellectual *and* worker, deviant *and* admirable?[69] An answer is suggested by Natalie Davis in "Women on Top," which argues that the "unruly woman" in early-modern Europe, who whored, tricked, and traded, served both to reinforce social structure and to incite women to militant action in public and in private.[70] The culturally constructed figure of the Japanese Modern Girl certainly meets these two

68. Lois Banner notes that the flapper sent a mixed sexual message and makes the important connection between the flapper's play and the experience of the working woman: "The cultural focus on fashion and after hours activities in the lives of these women glamorized the working world for women while trivializing it"; Banner, *American Beauty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 279, 280. See Rayna Rapp and Ellen Ross, "The 1920s: Feminism, Consumerism, and Political Backlash in the United States," in Friedlander et al. (eds.), *Women in Culture and Politics*, 52–61.

69. One way of dealing with the complexity of the contemporary woman's multifaceted image was to liken her to a colorless proteus who has been liberated from the darkness of her household, to take on the hues of its environment; see Kitamura, "Kaiteisō," 135–36. Three historians have looked beyond the stereotype of the modern girl to see a discourse constituted by contradiction. Satō, "Modanizumu," 26, 41–43, who likens the Modern Girl to the flapper, traces a shift from the Modern Girl as emblematic of woman's new customs to the Modern Girl as girl juvenile delinquent. Ueda, "Josei zasshi," 137, notes a multiplicity of definitions in his discussion of the relationship of women's magazines to a Japanese modernism. Hamill, "Josei," 208–25, like Ueda, talks in terms of a discourse, in a wide-ranging essay covering the working woman, women's education, advice columns, and women's magazines. Adopting the term *modan gaaru ron*, she analyzes the coexistence of positive and critical assessments of the Modern Girl. She attributes the pejorative aspects of the discourse to the impact of Marxism on intellectuals who could only see the "Modern Girl" as an expression of faddish mores, and to sensationalism in the mass press. In conclusion, she sides with the position of Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke to emphasize that the Modern Girl signified "the emergence of a new consciousness for women" breaking loose from traditional power relationships.

70. Natalie Zemon Davis, "Women on Top," in *Society and Culture in Early Modern France: Eight Essays* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975), 143–45. While Davis's claim that a topos of sexual inversion placing woman on top in a hierarchy of power relationships was a "resource for private and public life" is far from definitive, and my discussion here has argued that the representation of the Modern Girl followed rather than encouraged political actions, the influence of the media on the actions of Japanese women during the interwar era deserves serious attention.

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Fig. 11.1.
From *Nyonin geijutsu*, July 1929.

Fig. 11.2.
From *Kaizō*, September 1921.

Fig. 11.3.
From *Fujin no tomo*, April 1930.

Fig. 11.4.
From *Nyonin geijutsu*, August 1928.

requirements. Like the disorderly woman on top, the Modern Girl as multivalent symbol questioned relations of order and subordination and at the same time, through her cultural gender play and promiscuity, served "to explore the character of sexuality."[71]

Of course, the Japanese Modern Girl is no more a copy of her premodern European sister than she is of her kinetic American contemporaries, but the term *namaiki*, meaning cheeky, bold, or brazen, which recurs in Sata Ineko's prewar writings and which she still likes to use in mock-critical reference to herself, is a powerful analogue to the notion of woman as "disorderly." The connotations of this word are not violent, but they are certainly aggressive and transgressive: the person who is *namaiki*, like the *moga*, dares to take liberties. The symbol of a *namaiki*, uppity Modern Girl, who crossed gender and class boundaries and transgressed sexually, may indeed have spoken to those who demanded expanded social, sexual, and economic liberation for women and men. In this sense, she was admirable. But conversely, the Modern Girl did what she did because woman's new place in public as worker, intellectual, and political activist threatened the patriarchal family and its ideological support, the deferring woman who was presented in state ideology as the "Good Wife and Wise Mother." Inflected in this fashion, she was a threat. Finally, the Modern Girl, who was both Japanese and Western—or possibly neither—played with the principle of cultural or national difference. Seen in this way, she highlighted the controversy over adoption of non-Japanese customs in everyday life and called into question the essentialism (as opposed to the European physiological determinism) that subordinated the Japanese woman to the Japanese man. This thesis was indeed offered by the feminist Kitamura, who claimed that "labor struggle, tenancy struggle, household struggle, struggle between man and woman" were inevitable and had recently been joined to a new battle: "a struggle over good conduct" that pitted Japanese against Western behavior and used the Modern Girl to work out the struggle.[72]

This, then, is the significance of the Japanese Modern Girl in the broadest context of prewar Japanese history. The Modern Girl stood as the vital symbol of overwhelming "modern" or non-Japanese change instigated by both women and men during an era of economic crisis and social unrest. She stood for change at a time when state authority was attempting to reestablish authority and stability. The Modern Girl of the 1920s and early 1930s thus inverted the role of the Good Wife and Wise Mother. The ideal Meiji woman of the 1870s, 1880s, and 1890s had

71. Ibid., 150. In this way the Japanese Modern Girl is also akin to her American sister, the flapper, for as Paula Fass has shown, young women, even more than men, symbolized disorder and rebellion in the United States during the 1920s; see Fass, *The Damned and the Beautiful* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 6, 22.

72. Kitamura, "Kaiteisō," 137.

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served as a "repository of the past," standing for tradition when men were encouraged to change their way of politics and culture in all ways.[73] In contrast, the Modern Girl served critics who wanted to preserve rather than challenge traditions during a time of sweeping cultural change.

The Modern Girl as un-Japanese and therefore criminal was the real subtext to such press headlines as "Modern Girls Swept out of Ministry of Railroads," and "Conquering the *Moga* and *Mobo*." The sensational press coverage in 1925 of the trial of a "vanguard *moga*" in short hair and Western clothing accused of murdering a delinquent foreigner with whom she had been consorting illustrated both sexual and cultural transgression.[74] This story and others like it served a dual function: they registered unease with non-Japanese customs and at the same time denied the existence of the political activity of Japanese women. The Modern Girl's crime, in other words, was a culturally colored crime of passion; it was not a politically motivated thought crime. Thus, a father in the 1920s could beg his leftist son to become a Modern Boy or even a Modern Girl as long as he did not "go red."[75]

The most graphic example of the Modern Girl as cultural transgressor, one that signaled an end to her ubiquitous presence, was presented in a series of ink drawings constituting a history of Japanese mores during the modern era, published in the pages of *Chūō kōron* in 1932. In the first image, a reference to Meiji society, two women in kimono gossip under a parasol as men in Western military garb drive behind them in a horse and carriage. The following five sketches (with only one small exception) elaborate on the demure figure in kimono. Only in the image standing for 1932 does one of four figures wear Western dress; a second reclines decadently on a lounge, and a third sits undemurely with her legs spread and her elbows exposed. It is, however, the illustration accompanying the title of this piece of image-journalism that reveals the intensity with which tradition was being defended by the early 1930s. Alongside the painterly calligraphy of the title is a woman in kimono sheathed in fur; above her head is a large gun, pointed at the characters for "modern traditions" (fig. 11.5).[76]

The Modern Girl stood for a contemporary woman, but, like Naomi,

73. Sharon Sievers, *Flowers in Salt: The Beginnings of Feminist Consciousness in Modern Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1983), 17, quoting Hanna Papanek's theory.

74. Satō, "Modanizumu," 41–42. I do not agree with Satō's notion of a two-stage development of the term "Modern Girl," which would have her stand first for Western customs and then later for criminal actions. The positive and pejorative connotations of her transgressions from the mid-1920s into the 1930s must, I think, be further explored.

75. Ichikawa Koichi, "Ryūkōka ni miru modanizumu to ero guro nansensu," in Minami (ed.), *Nihon modanizumu*, 267.

76. Itō Shunsui, "Jidai fūzoku e toki," *Chūō kōron*, April 1932.

Fig. 11.5. From *Chūō kōron*, April 1932.

she was also an emblem for threats to tradition, just as the Good Wife and Wise Mother had stood for its endurance: To talk about the Modern Girl was to talk about Modernity. During the 1920s, her defenders, who saw her at the vanguard of a new imperial reign—the Shōwa era—were optimistic. One, who placed her appearance at 1926, saw her evolving toward complete fulfillment. This journalist predicted that future historians writing the history of prewar men and women in Japan would call the year when the term *modan gaaru* appeared in magazines and newspapers "1 A.D."[77] But such forecasts did not prove true. By the outset of the Pacific War, boundaries reifying gender and culture (and denying class) were imposed as women were legally forbidden to dress in men's clothing, women's magazines were placed under tight controls, all vestiges of Western decadence, including permanent waves, were outlawed, and intellectuals expounded on "the overcoming of modernity."

Only further research will show to what extent the Modern Girl, whose identity in our historical representations has been split into the dual images of a Working Woman and a middle-class adolescent at play, expressed a new set of gestures. Such work could explicate how Japanese men and women during the 1920s and 1930s translated expressions and actions experienced in such sites as the Hollywood movie into their own class cultures in the course of their daily lives. For now we can conclude that confusions and fantasies about class, gender, and culture were projected onto the Modern Girl before she was displaced by yet another embodiment of the Good Wife and Wise Mother, characterized by renewed ties of filiation with "tradition," state, and patriarchy.

77. Kitamura, "Raiteisō," 139, used the term completion (*kansei*) to connote fulfillment. Regarding the notion of periodization see Kiyosawa, "Modan gaaru no kenkyū," 158.

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TWELVE

Doubling Expectations: Motherhood and Women's Factory Work Under State Management in Japan in the 1930s and 1940s

Yoshiko Miyake

Why did the Japanese government resist mobilizing women for war work despite the acute labor shortage that resulted when male workers were drafted during the Pacific War? It was not until August 1944, when a scarcity of raw materials and a series of air raids had already interrupted production, that the wartime cabinet decided to implement compulsory conscription of women for the munitions industry. Even then, the conscription ordinance applied only to widows and unmarried women between the ages of twelve and forty and specifically excluded those women "pivotal [*konjiku*] to a family"[1]—that is, women in their procreative years whose roles as housewives and mothers were indispensable for family cohesion. The mobilization of Japanese women for war work, while "greater than in the case of Germany . . . [was] far less than the strenuous effort in Britain."[2]

1. "Joshi kinrōdōin no sokushin ni kansuruken" (Jikankaigi kettei) (September 13, 1943), in *Nihon fujin mondai shiryō shūsei*, vol. 3: *Rōdō*, ed. Akamatsu Ryōko (Domesu Shuppan, 1977), 478–80.

2. Jerome Cohen, *Japan's Economy in War and Reconstruction* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1949), 272. Mobilization of women in Great Britain was more comprehensive than in any other belligerent country except Soviet Russia. Under the mandatory registration of women between the ages of eighteen and fifty, women were required to work at least part time. To facilitate the mobilization of married women, the government took such major steps as the relocation of war factories to areas where labor reserves were available, the establishment of day-care facilities, the provision of canteen services, and the elimination of the requirement that professional women retire upon marriage. As a result, out of a total of 17.25 million women between fourteen and sixty-four years of age, about 7.3 million worked either in paid employment or were drafted

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