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IMAGINING A HOME FOR US: REPRESENTATIONS OF QUEER FAMILIES IN
CONTEMPORARY JAPANESE LITERATURE

A Thesis Presented

By

PATRICK JAMES CARLAND

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

May 2019

Japanese

IMAGINING A HOME FOR US: REPRESENTATIONS OF QUEER FAMILIES IN
CONTEMPORARY JAPANESE LITERATURE

A Thesis Presented

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis has been made possible by the immeasurable other help people have lent to me in researching and writing it. I would like to thank a few of those people who here. I want to thank my advisors, Professors Stephen Miller and Amanda Seaman, for their guidance, critique and feedback at every step of this process, and for being truly inspirational mentors to me throughout my time here at UMass Amherst. I'd also like to extend my kindest thanks to our East Asian Librarian Sharon Dormier, who gave me invaluable guidance in finding and obtaining the research materials I needed, and our office manager, Marc Cameron, for always finding the time to help me with paperwork and to stop and chat with me during the day. Our graduate program director Bruce Baird was crucial in securing the funds that allowed me to present part of this research at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and I would like to extend my warmest thanks to him. I'd also like to thank my Japanese professors Yuki Yoshimura and Reiko Sono for their help with translations, as well as my colleagues Sayako Niwa, Michiko Nakada and Kei Yamaguchi. Finally, I would like to thank my family, my mother Maureen, my father James, and my siblings Corinne and Shaun for believing in me and supporting me throughout this entire process, as well as my irreplaceable partner, Gregory Echavarria. The countless evenings spent discussing this thesis with him for the past year and a half, and the guidance, support, love, and advice he has given me throughout are the foundation of this thesis. Thank you again, to everyone.

ABSTRACT

IMAGINING A HOME FOR US: REPRESENTATIONS OF QUEER FAMILIES IN
CONTEMPORARY JAPANESE LITERATURE

MAY 2019

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This thesis addresses popular works of fiction written or produced near or after 1989 in Japan, and examines the roles that sexual orientation, gender and 20th century social and discursive history have had on the conceptualization of familial relations in postwar Japan. This thesis will analyze the means by which writers and artists during the 1980s and 1990s have engaged discourses of family in their works and will argue that these writers explicitly use queer (hereby defined as non-heterosexual and/or non-gender conforming) individuals and narratives to question, reshape and propose alternatives to culturally received images of heterosexual marriage and the nuclear family model. In Japan, the earliest legal model of family was the *ie* or house system, which codified earlier social structures that had existed amongst the samurai class of the Edo period (1600-1868) and enshrined the concept of male primogeniture into law. This was changed after World War II, when the *Ie* system was abolished and replaced by a model of conjugal (nuclear) familial relations. This new model of household organization was promoted by the Allied Occupation, major businesses and corporations, and the postwar Japanese government, and its attendant gendered division of labor was the foundation upon which Japan recovered economically in the postwar period and remade itself as an export-driven, capitalist country in the 1960s and 1970s. This model of family, however, has come under increased

socioeconomic pressure as a result of the 1990 real estate market bubble bursting and subsequent economic contraction, as well as by continuing demographic trends that indicate a long-term, decreasing population. This thesis will argue that the model of familial relations propagated during the postwar period, particularly during the 1960s and 1970s is ideologically rooted in a historically contingent model of sanctioned heterosexual relations, and that through examining depictions of those precluded from these sanctioned relations, a better understanding of the operation of gender, sexuality and familial relations as they operate in the Japanese popular and cultural spheres can be achieved.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“It's the sort of thing you read about, it's an old homo trick. You can't have a real family, so you attach yourself to someone else's. And I suppose after a while you just couldn't bear it, you must have been very envious I think of everything we have, and coming from your background too perhaps....you've wrecked some pretty awful revenge on us as a result.”

-Alan Hollinghurst, *The Line of Beauty*

1.1 Family, Marriage, and the Politics of Reproduction in Postwar Japan

In the summer of 2018, Sugita Mio, a lawmaker in the House of Representatives with Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party (*Jimintō*, hereafter LDP), penned an article in the August edition of the literary magazine *Shinchō 45* arguing against the extension of legal protections to Japan's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community. In the article, titled “The level of support for ‘LGBT’ is excessive,” ([LGBT] *shien no do ga sugiru*), Sugita questions whether LGBT individuals experience a significant degree of discrimination in society and suggests that to extend taxpayer money to help LGBT couples would be tantamount to endorsing their lifestyles.¹ Sugita further argues that such recognition and use of money would be misplaced because LGBT couples lack what she terms “productivity,” in other words, they do not procreate (*karera kanojora wa kodomo wo tsukuranai, tsumari 'seisansei' ga nai no desu*).² Upon its initial publication, Sugita's article generated a large public backlash, with protests being organized and held outside in Tokyo on July 27th and August 5th, 2018 demanding her ouster

¹ Sugita Mio 杉田水脈. “‘LGBT’ no shien no do ga sugiru,” LGBT の度が過ぎる [The level of LGBT support is excessive]. In *Shinchō 45* 37(8), August 2018, pp. 57-60: 58.

² Ibid, 59.

from the LDP.³ Yet Sugita’s comments, examined in relation to recent Japanese political discourse, are neither extraordinary nor unique; in the past few years, a number of politicians with the LDP have made similarly dismissive comments regarding Japan’s LGBT population. Furthermore, these comments have often been made in direct juxtaposition to heterosexuality, which they rhetorically position as more inherently productive than other forms of sexuality and gender identity. For example, in the same month that Sugita’s article was published, fellow Lower House LDP politician Tom Tanigawa called homosexuality “akin to a hobby,” (*shumi mitai na mono*).⁴ During a television interview in 2015, another LDP lawmaker, Shibayama Masahiko, suggested that legalizing same-sex marriage would be tantamount to encouraging population decline.⁵ These arguments draw on a similar logic, conceptually linking the possibility of legal recognition of LGBT individuals, and a concomitant promise of state welfare and support, with the spectre of further demographic contraction and economic recession. What is striking, however, is the backlash that the most recent of these comments have engendered; unlike a few years ago when Shibayama dismissed the possibility of same-sex marriage, there has been a vocal outcry against Sugita and the *Shinchō* 45 article amongst both LGBT and non-LGBT Japanese people, with members of Sugita’s own party distancing themselves from her remarks and calling on her to resign. Opposition party lawmaker Tamaki Yūichirō charged that Sugita’s comments “are compatible with Nazi eugenics thinking,” (*Nachizu no yūsenhikō ni mo*

³ *Asahi Shimbun*. “Sugita Mio giin no hatsugen 'sabestsu da' 'mazu shazai wo' kōgi demo,” 杉田水脈議員の発言「差別だ」「まず謝罪を」抗議デモ [“It’s discrimination” “Apologize first” protest against Sugita Mio’s comments] <https://www.asahi.com/articles/ASL8555T0L85UTIL00Z.html>, August 5, 2018.

⁴ *Asahi Shimbun*. ‘Doseiai 'shumi' mitai na mono' jimin tanigawa tomu shuin giin’ 「同性愛『趣味』みたいなもの」 自民・谷川とむ衆院議員 [Homosexuality is ‘like a hobby’: LDP Lower House Member Tanigawa Tom] <https://www.asahi.com/articles/ASL822VCPL82UBQU002.html>, August 2, 2018.

⁵ *J-Cast News*. “Dōseikon ga shoshika ni hakusha kakeru' giin no TV hatsugen, takoku no rei de wa dou na no ka,” 「同性婚が少子化に拍車かける」 議員の TV 発言、他国の例ではどうなのか [‘Same-sex marriage will spur on population decline’ a representative’s TV comments, what about the examples of other countries], <https://www.j-cast.com/2015/03/06229582.html?p=all>, March 6, 2015.

tsūjiru)⁶, while fellow LDP lawmaker Takei Shunsuke condemned her comments as “simply hate,” (*tannaru heito*).⁷ The LDP itself was forced to clarify in a statement that Sugita’s comments represented her “personal views” (*kojintekina kenkai*) and not those of the party as whole, and stated that she had been given ‘sufficient warning’ about the issue.⁸ The outcry against Ms. Sugita’s article suggests that the political terrain has rapidly shifted on the issue of LGBT rights in Japanese society. It also suggests an ongoing reconceptualization of the role the state in the formation and support of families in contemporary Japan. The backlash against Sugita is, of course, the result of decades of organizing and consciousness raising by Japanese LGBT and feminist groups; as James Welker notes, since the mid-2010s, LGBT people, groups and issues have rapidly become more visible and widely discussed in mass media and popular culture alike.⁹ Yet it is also the result of a loss of hegemony on the part of the state: as this thesis will argue, the ongoing reconceptualization of the role of the family in popular and political discourse, and the shifting relationship of non-heterosexual individuals to it, is the result of a rapidly changing socioeconomic situation in Japan that has been changing since the early 1990s and which has resulted in a shift away from state sanctioned models of the so-called normative family (*kihantekina kazoku*) and reproduction towards a new, potentially more fluid, modular, and non-heteronormative conceptions of family.

⁶ *Jiji Press*. “LGBT 'seisansei nashi' = jimin sugita shi tōkō ni hihan funshutsu,” LGBT 「生産性なし=自民杉田氏投稿に批判噴出 [LGBT have no reproductive potential = an eruption of criticism towards LDP and Sugita Mio’s post] <https://www.jiji.com/jc/article?k=2018072400923&g=pol> July 24, 2018.

⁷ Shunsuke Takei 武井俊輔. Twitter Post. July 18, 2018, 7:10 PM. https://twitter.com/syunsuke_takei/status/1019766421578903552

⁸ *Tokyo Shimbun* 東京新聞. “LGBT ni [seisansei nai] jimin, sugita giin wo shidō,” LGBTに「生産性ない」自民、杉田議員を指導 [LGBT ‘have no reproductivity’ LDP gives guidance to Representative Sugita] <http://www.tokyo-np.co.jp/article/politics/list/201808/CK20180802000274.html> August 2nd, 2018.

⁹ James Welker. “From Women’s Liberation to Lesbian Feminism in Japan: Rezubian Feminizumu within and beyond the Ūman Ribū Movement in the 1970s and 1980s.” in *Rethinking Japanese Feminisms*, Ed(s). Julia C. Bullock, Ayako Kano, James Welker, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2018), pp. 50-67: 50.



Figure 1: A poster from the August 5th, 2018 demonstration against Sugita Mio’s comments in the magazine *Shinchō 45*. The larger text reads “Don’t discriminate using reproductiveness” (*seisansei de sabetsu wo suru na*), while the pink text says “Hate speech against any minority group is a crime!” (*arayuru mainoritei he no heito supichi wo yurusanai*)



Figure 2: Lesbian activist Suzuki Natose speaks during the Shibuya August 5th, 2018 demonstrations against Sugita Mio and Tanigawa Tom. “We don’t live for the sake of reproduction, and homosexuality isn’t a hobby!” © Mainichi Shimbun

Sugita’s objection to granting LGBT couples legal recognition stems from what she terms their lack of ‘productivity’ (*seisansei*). In her article, Sugita links this primarily to childbirth and procreation, and states that because LGBT couples cannot ‘create’ children, they are not productive. It is this suggestion in particular that has generated criticism towards Sugita, not only on the basis that her comments implicitly accuse elderly and infertile couples of being ‘unproductive’, but also, as the lesbian activist Suzuki Natose noted in her August 5th

demonstration response, because they privilege a reproductive centered definition of ‘productivity’ to the exclusion of all other reasons for wanting to form families. In implying a connection between Japan’s demographic woes and lending support to LGBT couples, Sugita is rearticulating a conceptual relationship between reproduction and Japanese family-planning that has been fostered for decades in Japanese discourse through alliances between corporate, governmental and social organizations and institutions during the postwar period. According to this paradigm, the state must take an active role in shaping and managing the population, even at the expense of individual choice. It is the link between biological reproduction and marriage that has both informed both state family-planning demarcated the parameters of what ‘can’ constitutes a family. The idea that marriage should be predicated on procreation and childbirth, Hiroyuki Taniguchi notes, has historically been the basis for conservative arguments against legal recognition of same-sex couples, despite the readily apparent fallacy of this assertion when it comes into contact with infertile, childless and elderly heterosexual married couples.¹⁰ The sociologist Senda Yuki, terming this ideology “romantic ideology,” (*romantikku ideorogi*) argues that it was through the intermediary of heterosexual marriage itself that the Japanese state was historically able to codify and unify sexuality, conjugal notions of love, and reproduction.¹¹

¹⁰ Hiroyuki Taniguchi. “The Legal Situation Facing Sexual Minorities in Japan,” In *Intersections: Gender & Sexuality in Asia & the Pacific*, Issue 12, January 2006: unpaginated.

¹¹ Senda Yuki 千田有紀. *Nihongata kindai kazoku doko kara kite doko he iku no ka* 日本型近代家族どこから来てどこへ行くのか [The model Japanese family: where did it come from, where is it going?]. Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 2011: 16.

Table 2.2
Trends in Population (as of October 1)

Year	Population (1,000)		Age composition (%)			Rate of population change (%)	Population density (per km ²)
	Males		0-14 years	15-64	65 and over		
1872 ¹⁾	34,806	17,666	91
1900 ¹⁾	43,847	22,051	33.9	60.7	5.4	0.83	115
1910 ¹⁾	49,184	24,650	36.0	58.8	5.2	1.16	129
1920	55,963	28,044	36.5	58.3	5.3	1.30	147
1930	64,450	32,390	36.6	58.7	4.8	1.42	169
1940	71,933	35,387	36.7	58.5	4.8	1.10	188
1950	84,115	41,241	35.4	59.6	4.9	1.58	226
1955	90,077	44,243	33.4	61.2	5.3	1.38	242
1960	94,302	46,300	30.2	64.1	5.7	0.92	254
1965	99,209	48,692	25.7	68.0	6.3	1.02	267
1970	104,665	51,369	24.0	68.9	7.1	1.08	281
1975	111,940	55,091	24.3	67.7	7.9	1.35	301
1980	117,060	57,594	23.5	67.4	9.1	0.90	314
1985	121,049	59,497	21.5	68.2	10.3	0.67	325
1990	123,611	60,697	18.2	69.7	12.1	0.42	332
1995	125,570	61,574	16.0	69.5	14.6	0.31	337
2000	126,926	62,111	14.6	68.1	17.4	0.21	340
2005	127,768	62,349	13.8	66.1	20.2	0.13	343
2010	128,057	62,328	13.2	63.8	23.0	0.05	343
2015	127,095	61,842	12.6	60.7	26.6	-0.15	341
2016	126,933	61,766	12.4	60.3	27.3	-0.13	340
(Projection, 2017)							
2020	125,325	60,897	12.0	59.1	28.9	-0.32	336
2030	119,125	57,697	11.1	57.7	31.2	-0.51	319
2040	110,919	53,595	10.8	53.9	35.4	-0.71	297
2050	101,923	49,257	10.6	51.8	37.7	-0.84	273

Figure 3: Trends in Population, 1872-2050. Note the projected population numbers after 2017. Source: Statistics Bureau, MIC; Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare; Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism.

The changing nature of the Japanese family in recent decades, furthermore, has not necessarily caused these ideas to be abandoned: conversely, as the fourth chapter of this thesis will argue, in the face of ongoing demographic change it has in some cases strengthened them by adding a new sense of urgency to the debate. Arresting Japan’s population loss, which can be traced to a decline in fertility that has been ongoing since the 1970s, has been a central goal almost all Japanese Prime Ministers and politicians since the 1990s. The Prime Minister as of 2019, Abe Shinzō, has implemented a number of measures aimed at stemming and even reversing current demographic trends, including increasing the number of child-care facilities and curbing excessive overtime worked, yet these have not had the desired effect of raising or stabilizing the childbirth rate.¹² After hitting a high of 128 million people in 2010, the population of Japan was estimated to have shrunk by nearly 1 million to 127 million people by 2015.

¹² Isabela Reynolds. “Japan’s Shrinking Population,” *Bloomberg*, <https://www.bloomberg.com/quicktake/japan-s-shrinking-population> May 16, 2017. Accessed August 1, 2018.

Furthermore, a 2012 report by the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research in Japan indicates that the population is expected to decline by nearly a third to 87 million individuals by 2060.¹³

Perceptions of this demographic decline, coupled with slow to anemic economic growth since the collapse of the real-estate bubble in the early 1990s, have produced what Ochiai Emiko and Merry White have termed a ‘sense of crisis’ in Japanese society. Ochiai traces the origins of this crisis to phrases as ‘the dissolution of the family’ and ‘the breakdown of the family’, (*kazoku no hōkai*) which became common refrains in the media during the late 1970s, a period that saw the completion of Japan’s transition from a war torn nation into a developed, export-driven and industrialized country with the second largest economy in the world.¹⁴ Since the 1970s, and accelerating in the 1990s, predictions of the ‘demise’ of the family have continued unabated in Japanese mass media, while a variety of groups, subcultures and lifestyles have been blamed and attacked for their ostensible roles in furthering the crisis. In 1999, the sociologist Masahiro Yamada coined the pejorative term “parasite single” (*Parasaito shinguru*) to describe young Japanese women that he claimed prioritized their careers over their love lives and refused to get married and have children. In the late 2000s, another neologism, “herbivore men” (*Sōshokukei danshi*) was similarly coined to refer to young men more interested in their personal hobbies than marriage or starting a family.¹⁵ Also part of this vocabulary is the term *hikikomori*, used to describe the phenomenon of young people refusing to leave their homes or socialize, which

¹³ National Institute of Population and Social Security Research. *Population Projections for Japan (January 2012): 2011-2060*. http://www.ipss.go.jp/site-ad/index_english/esuikei/gh2401e.asp.

¹⁴ Ochiai Emiko. *The Japanese Family In Translation: A Sociology Analysis of Family Change in Postwar Japan* (Tokyo: LTCB International Library Foundation, 1997), 5.

¹⁵ **Morioka Masahiro** 森岡正博, “‘Sōshokukei danshi’ no genshōgakuteki kōsatsu,” 「草食系男子」の現象学的考察[A phenomenological consideration of ‘herbivore men’] *The Review of Life Studies*, Vol. 1 (October 2011) pp. 13–28: 13.

began to disseminate in Japanese media in the early 2000s and which subsequently spread to international media, becoming a loanword in its own right. In each of these rhetorical formations; it is individuals and groups of individuals, rather than the state, upon which the onus to change or reform is placed upon. Specifically, it is idea of family itself which is central to the function of these descriptors; each denigrative name indicates a disconnect from prescribed familial roles in Japanese society, which in turn is presented as evidence of the social failures of the individual in question. This rhetorical positioning of individuals as non-productive because they are unable to meet the expectations imposed on them by the state, it is important to note, is not limited to non-heterosexual people. It is rather a flexible and modular rhetorical mode that has been utilized to criticize a wide variety of non-normative practices and identities as disruptive and unwelcome. As Ayako Kano notes in her analysis of the gender politics of the 2011 Fukushima disaster, when certain conservative factions blamed feminism and working women for the subsequent economic downturn, crises both real and perceived have often been instrumental in the retrenchment of normative ideals and images in Japanese discourse.¹⁶ In his 2015 television comments, the LDP politician Shibayama made this conceptual connection explicit. In arguing against the adoption of same-sex marriage, he abandons his earlier claims of wanting to discourage childbirth decline and explicitly invokes the idea of a “traditional Japanese family system” (*Nihon no dentōteki na kazoku seido*), consisting of a man and woman raising a child together, arguing that upholding this system was a “duty of the tax and legal systems,” (*Zeisei ya hōritsujō no dōi gimu wo kashiteiru*).¹⁷

¹⁶ Ayako Kano. “The Future of Gender in Japan: Work/Life Balance and Relations between the Sexes.” in *Japan: The Precarious Future*, eds. Frank Baldwin and Anne Allison (New York: NYU Press, 2015); pp. 87-109: 87.

¹⁷ J-Cast News, 'Dōseikon'.

1.2 The Emergence of ‘Family’ in Japanese Discourse

Here, it is necessary to critically examine the terms “traditional family system,” and “reproductivity,” as each has been deployed by politicians to oppose the possibility of state support for LGBT and same-sex couples. The sociologist Masahiro Yamada writes definitively that “it is impossible to identify a traditional Japanese family system,” as a result of the diversity of family systems that have existed throughout Japanese history based on time period, social class and region.¹⁸ This has not, however, stopped Japanese policymakers from the Meiji Period (1868-1912) onward from attempting to do so. According to Hisaya Nonomiya, the first legal family system promulgated by the Japanese government was known as the *ie*, or house, system (*ie seido*) which was codified into law in 1898. Nonomiya describes the *ie* system as a “patrilineal stem family system,” that gave the eldest son in a family exclusive inheritance rights, was modeled after the family structures of the *samurai* class during the previous Edo Period (1600-1868), and institutionalized during the Meiji Period as the normative model for all Japanese families, despite the former *samurai* class only consisting of approximately 10 percent of Japan’s population.¹⁹ This shift occurred during the period of political reorganization and economic and industrial development of the early Meiji Period, during which Japanese politicians and policy-makers sought to emulate the social, political and economic models and structures of Europe and North America. According to Nishikawa Yūko, the newly promulgated definition of family under the *ie* system resulted in the establishment of the concepts of *ie*, which was used to indicate in the broadest sense the family relationships of a household’s patriarch, and

¹⁸ Yamada Masahiro 山田正弘 *Meisō suru kazoku: sengo kazoku moderu no keisei to rittai* 迷走する家族：戦後家族モデルの形成と立体 [Runaway Family: Declining of Postwar Family Model in Japan] (Tokyo: Yuhikaku Publishing, 2005), 93.

¹⁹ Hisaya Nonomiya. "The Family and Family Sociology in Japan." In *The American Sociologist* 31, no. 3 (2000), pp. 27-41: 27.

katei, or household, which came to be used to describe smaller households, primarily those of married couples and their immediate children.²⁰ This polysemy, Nishikawa argues, was systematic: it simultaneously codified the state goal of instituting emperor worship by conceptually linking patriarchal and imperial authority and allowed for the development of smaller, modular family units that could productively engage in the emerging industrialization and transition to capitalism occurring in the cities.²¹

The legal situation of the Japanese family changed after World War II, when Japan was defeated and occupied by the United States, which in turn remade the Japanese state into a democratic, capitalist nation through the promulgation of a new constitution. According to Merry White, “The attempts at wholesale change during the seven years of the Occupation - in an unprecedented moral, political, and social overhaul of a whole nation - represented a zealous new kind of social engineering. The Allied reformers hoped to create a democratic, peaceful society out of a country that in war they had characterized as its opposite: fascistic, authoritarian, and demonically destructive.”²² The 1947 constitution abolished the *ie* system and ended the system of male primogeniture, permanently altering the foundation of the normative family in Japan. It also granted women the right to divorce and to inherit property. In the postwar period, particularly during the height of the Japanese postwar family system which Ochiai identifies as occurring between 1955 and 1975, the multigenerational family represented by the *ie* system came to be gradually replaced with a model of family analogous to the nuclear family,

²⁰ Nishikawa Yūko 西川祐子. “Nihongata kindai kazoku to sumai no henshen,” 日本型近代家族と住まいの変遷[A history of the Japanese modern family and housing] In *Ritsumeikan Studies in Language and Culture* 6(1), July 1994, pp. 25-63: 29-30.

²¹ Nishikawa Yūko 西川裕子. *Kindai kokka to kazoku moderu* 近代国家と家族モデル [The modern nation state and models of family]. Tokyo: Yoshikawa Bunkan, 2000, 18-19.

²² Merry White. *Perfectly Japanese*, 67.

characterized by Masahiro Yamada as predicated on economic growth, a gendered division of labor equating husbands with outside work and women with household work and child-rearing (*Otto wa shigoto, tsuma wa kaji/ko wo sodatete*), and the goal of the development of material prosperity for one's descendants.²³ Thus, Shibayama's assertion that there is a "traditional" Japanese family system, bulwarked and protected by the legal and financial institutions of modern Japan, is mired in ambiguities. Does 'traditional' refer to a historical model of family, or one that is biologically or deterministically 'normative' in nature? The family sociologist Jon Bernardes rejects the idea of a normative family altogether, arguing that it denotes a 'universalization' of family models that obscures the lived experiences of actual families. He writes that "if 'the family' is assumed to be universal, researchers will tend to assume that is natural or biological in origin. These kinds of arguments have enabled all sorts of groups...to claim that one sort of 'the family' is natural and that other living arrangements are somehow 'unnatural'."²⁴

Sugita's use of the term productivity is telling in the same way that Shibayama's comments regarding the traditional family are; each exposes an implicit assumption about the nature of families and their relationship to the state on the part of the speaker. By making reproductivity the litmus test for an individual or couples' eligibility for legal support, Sugita makes an explicit connection between reproduction and the function of the nation-state. In his work *The History of Sexuality*, the French philosopher Michel Foucault uses the term 'biopower' to describe the ways in which governments regulate, control and police the public body of their respective populations. Describing biopower as the "numerous and diverse techniques for

²³ Yamada Masahiro, *Meisō suru kazoku*, 118.

²⁴ Jon Bernardes. *Family Studies: An Introduction* (London: Routledge Press, 1997), 6.

achieving the subjugations of bodies and the control of populations,” in a given society, Foucault argues that a primary effect of modernity has been the emergence of institutions designed to regulate the production and circulation of knowledges, which in turn extends to populations.²⁵

In his book *The Policing of Families*, the sociologist Jacques Donzelot extends Foucault’s theorization of biopower and applies it to the family to argue that the modern family “is not so much an institution as a mechanism,” that “enables the social body to deal with marginality through a near-total dispossession of private rights, and to encourage positive integration, the renunciation of the question of the political right, through the private pursuit of well-being.”²⁶ Tracing the historical development of what he calls the modern ‘liberal family’ in France from the *ancien régime* to the 20th century, Donzelot argues that the family, rather than existing as a transcendent social unit or structure through history, is “a moving resultant, an uncertain form whose intelligibility can only come from studying the system of relations it maintains with the sociopolitical level.”²⁷ Analyzing the discursive and historical interplay of political, medical and legal regimes in 18th and 19th century France, Donzelot demonstrates that modern conceptions of family were the product of medical and educative regimes of the 18th and 19th century, operating on the basis of a ‘regime of alliances’ with the incipient *petit bourgeoisie* class in order to produce a socially and politically privileged conception of family. He describes this alliance as a form of ‘tactical collusion’, and argues that the nuclear family model it helped to produce had a dual function of exclusion and surveillance. Not only did the modern family help to protect the middle classes by creating a privileged social category that excluded lower

²⁵ Michel Foucault. *The History of Sexuality, Volume I*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), 139.

²⁶ Jacques Donzelot. *The Policing of Families*. trans. Robert Hurley (Pantheon Books: New York, 1979), 94.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, XXV.

classes and ‘castoffs’ marginalized by the legal institutions of the 19th century, it also served the state as a means of surveillance and policing those marginalized populations. As he writes, “from the standpoint of the state, individuals who were rejected by the law of alliances became a source of danger through their vagabondage and indigence,” and thus needed to be in turn regulated by the medical and legal institutions of the state, which was primarily concerned with expanding its economic and political authority over individuals.²⁸ This was accomplished, according to Donzelot, through the production of entire new branches of knowledge relating to public health, hygiene, and sexuality, and through the legal creation of family courts and the establishment of the state as an arbiter in inter-family relationships and disputes.

Drawing on Foucault’s notion of biopower and Donzelot’s theorization of family, Hiroko Takeda defines reproduction as an institutional process which unfolds over three dimensions: economic reproduction, referring to the production and consumption of goods to “ensure the continuity and maintenance of the economic process,”; biological reproduction, and social and political reproduction, which she states is “required to transmit the normative values and the multitudes of skills in society from generation to generation.”²⁹ Arguing that “reproduction has been a primary concern of the modern Japanese government in order to achieve national development,” Takeda traces the development of the Japanese state in the prewar and postwar periods to show that, through the expansion of what she terms “governmentality,” successive Japanese governments have utilized a variety of social and political tools and policies to exercise control over the national population.³⁰ Tracing the beginnings of postwar family planning policy

²⁸ Ibid., 24.

²⁹ Takeda Hiroko. *The Political Economy of Reproduction in Japan: Between Nation-State and Everyday Life* (London: Routledge, 2005), 8-9.

³⁰ Ibid., 30.

to the 1948 implementation of the Eugenics Protection Law (*Yūsei Hogo Hō*) legalizing abortion and birth control for health related reasons, she states that family planning (*kazoku keikaku*) emerged in the postwar period as a discrete area of government policy from the fields of eugenics and birth control.³¹ As family planning was integrated into the Japanese public health administration in the 1950s, the American Occupation's policies, increasingly oriented towards the nascent Cold War and containment of the Soviet Union, helped to foment what Takeda terms a "revival of conservative forces in Japanese politics."³² Family planning was increasingly guided by these conservative politics, which sought to align government, corporate and Occupational interests for the purpose of shaping a population that would rebuild the nation into a modern and capitalist state. The New Life Movement (*Shin seikatsu undō*), which Andrew Gordon characterizes as "a set of loosely connected initiatives of government ministries and women's organizations," beginning in the 1940s, served to link government and corporate interests as they made a blueprint for the postwar corporate family.³³ Through the 1950s, numerous Japanese corporations began adopting suggestions made by the New Life Movement as it "involved corporations directly in professionalizing the urban housewife's role as a part of a broader drive by businesses to rationalize the economy and raise productivity."³⁴ This shift towards a corporatization of the family was paralleled by the establishment of a variety of new laws and governmental institutions regulating families in the 1950s and 1960s, including the formation of the Japanese Planned Parenthood Federation in 1954, the Mother and Child Law of 1965, and the implementation of the "Prevention of the Birth of 'Unhappy Children'" policy.

³¹ Ibid., 86-87, 106.

³² Ibid., 109.

³³ Andrew Gordon. "Managing the Japanese Household: The New Life Movement in Postwar Japan." *Gendering Modern Japanese History*, Ed(s). Kathleen Uno, Barbara Molony (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2005), 424.

³⁴ Ibid., 432.

Through this heterogeneous process, Takeda writes that “the postwar family system, which is a nuclear family composed of a couple and their two children, with a strict a strict sexual division of labour...became dominant, both statistically and ideologically, among the Japanese people.”³⁵

Anne Allison, terming this complex network of relations the ‘corporate family system’, writes that “in terms of Japanese welfare, Japanese management style, and a peripheral labor force—the family constituted an important asset to the postwar capitalistic state.”³⁶

The critical works emerging from the nascent *ūman ribu* (women’s liberation) feminist movement in the 1970s provided some of the first and most forceful critiques of the heterosexual nuclear family in postwar discourse. Setsu Shigematsu writes that *ūman ribu* activists “critiqued the family system as a microcosm of Japan’s male-centered (*dansei-chūshin*) discriminatory capitalist order,” and that their “politics around giving birth and abortion expressed the movement’s aims to liberate sex from the confines of this order.”³⁷ Such structural critiques of the normative family became more prominent by the early 1990s, when the Japanese family became an increasingly salient subject of inquiry within academia. Ueno Chizuko’s 1991 *Kindai kazoku no seiritsu to shuen* (The rise and fall of the modern family), Nishikawa Yūko’s 1991 *Kindai kokka to kazoku moderu* (The modern state and the family model) and Yamada Masahiro’s 1994 *Kindai kazoku no yukue* (The whereabouts of the modern family) all demonstrated that the vast majority of existing Japanese families did not actually cohere to state mediated images of family in virtually any respect. Ueno’s study accomplishes this by demonstrating the interpellative function of the idea of family itself, as well as its inherent

³⁵ Ibid., 125.

³⁶ Anne Allison. “Precarity and Hope: Social Connectedness in Postcapitalist Japan,” in *Japan: The Precarious Future*, eds. Frank Baldwin and Anne Allison (New York: NYU Press, 2015) pp. 36-57: 40.

³⁷ Setsu Shigematsu. *Scream from the Shadows: The Women's Liberation Movement in Japan* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012): 4.

ambiguities and contradictions. Interviewing several dozen Japanese individuals in various familial situations, Ueno asks her subjects how they define their own interpersonal and kinship relationships, and thereby shows that functional definitions of family in Japan are extremely heterogeneous and include households such as divorced single parents and children, unmarried couples, guardians and their biologically unrelated children, and same-sex couples. Ueno goes on to argue that “the Meiji government artificially created the *ie* system so that family ethics would be subject to national ethics,” and that rather than representing a definitive break from the *ie* system, the postwar model of nuclear family has served as a vehicle for the continued propagation of those ethics, alongside new ones proceeding from the logic of the postwar reconstruction of the state.³⁸ She ultimately suggests that the prewar *ie* system and the postwar nuclear family share a similar foundation predicated on the management of reproduction itself by the state.

One of the major differences between the prewar and postwar models of family is what Ochiai Emiko has termed the ‘housewifization’ of domestic labor, which she states led to the creation of the ‘professional housewife’ (*sengyō shufu*) as an ideal social position for women in postwar Japan. Noting that the majority of Japanese households of all social classes had largely ceased employing maids and housekeepers by the 1960s, Ochiai terms housework “the name given to that labor which is not incorporate into the market system,” and argues that it was through “the dissemination of an idealized image of the home,” that the category of housewife was actively constructed in postwar discourse.³⁹ Romit Dasgupta ties the emergence of the housewife in the postwar nuclear family to its heterosexual counterpart, the white-collar

³⁸ Chizuko Ueno. *The Modern Family: Its Rise and Fall*, trans. Ayako Kano (Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2009) 67.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 27-29.

‘salaryman’ (*sararīman*), a term used to describe white-collar government and corporate workers that emerged in the Taishō period (1912-1926) and which became the standard model of middle-class maleness during Japan’s economic growth and transformation in the postwar period.⁴⁰ As he writes, “this gendered discourse of the salaryman/*senkyō shufu* was also closely intertwined with the socio-political and economic ideology of the post-war Japanese state, specifically the ‘Japan Inc.’ partnership between the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, private industry and the bureaucracy that, until its fragmentation from the 1990s, provided the framework for the political economy of the nation.”⁴¹ The distinction in postwar Japanese corporations between full-time track employees (*Sōgō shoku*) and part-time (*Ippan shoku*), with the former requiring a commitment from employees consenting to be moved around from workplace to workplace, is one of the means by which ‘Japan Inc.’, so to speak, has enacted its socio-political and economic program. According to data released by the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, as of 2014, only approximately 22% of *sōgō shoku* positions in Japanese companies are occupied by women, nearly three decades after Japan signed its first Equal Employment Opportunity Law in 1986.⁴² This gendered division of labor, accomplished through the formation of the concept of ‘housework’ as categorically distinct from other labor and through the lifetime employment system employed by major Japanese corporations in the postwar period, operated to create a

⁴⁰ Ibid., 31-32.

⁴¹ Romit Dasgupta. “Re-imagining the ‘post-bubble’ family in *Tokyo Sonata* and *Hush!*” In *Configurations of Family in Contemporary Japan*, ed(s). Tomoko Aoyama, Laura Dales and Romit Dasgupta (London: Nissan Institute/Routledge Japanese Studies Series, 2015), 9. For more on the construction of the salaryman in postwar Japanese discourse, see Dasgupta, *Re-reading the Salaryman in Japan: Crafting Masculinities* (Routledge: 2012).

⁴² **Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare** 厚生労働省. *Heisei 26 nendo kosu betsukanri seido no jissen shidō jōkyō (kakuōban) wo kōhyō shimasu* 平成 26 年度コース別雇用管理制度の実施・指導状況 (確報版) を公表します [Publicly announcing the leading situation/implementation of the dual career ladder system fiscal year 2015 (certified edition)], 2015: 3.

privileged heterosexual dynamic that Merry White has termed “the bedrock of national prosperity in the post-war years.”⁴³

The American philosopher Judith Butler has used the term ‘heterosexual matrix’ to refer to historically, socially and historically discrete conceptions of heterosexuality that operate to determine normative gender roles and sexual orientations. Describing this matrix as “a hegemonic discursive/epistemic model of gender intelligibility that assumes that for bodies to cohere and make sense there must be a stable gender...that is oppositionally and hierarchically defined through the compulsory practice of heterosexuality,” Butler argues that rather than existing as an independent, culturally transcendent orientation, heterosexualities are historically, socially and culturally bound contingencies which correlate to existing hierarchies and networks of sociopolitical power.⁴⁴ In 1991, the year after Butler’s seminal work *Gender Trouble* was published in English, the openly gay writer Fushimi Noriaki published the book *Puraibēto gei raifu* (Private gay life), where he articulated a similar theorization of what he terms a “hetero-system” predicated on the social circulation of gendered images. Katsuhiko Suganuma writes that according to Fushimi, these gendered images “are social artefacts that are arbitrarily constructed in order to preserve the normalcy of 'hetero-sexualism'.”⁴⁵ According to Fushimi, these images give coherence to sexual relations and thereby function to reinforce the hegemony of heteronormativity itself. The dynamic of the salaryman/housewife, insofar as it constitutes a culturally and historically particular manifestation of heterosexuality, neatly aligns with the

⁴³ Merry White. *Perfectly Japanese: Making Families in an Era of Upheaval* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 8.

⁴⁴ Judith Butler. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 151.

⁴⁵ Katsuhiko Suganuma. “Enduring Voices: Fushimi Noriaki and Kakefuda Hiroko's Continuing Relevance to Japanese Lesbian and Gay Studies and Activism,” In *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context*, Issue 14, November 2006: Unpaginated.

ascendant commercial forces and economic transformation of Japanese society after World War II. The postwar marketing ideology of “my home-ism” (*maihomushūgi*), as White notes, served to link the single-family, nuclear household to media images of consumption of high-tech and expensive consumer goods, served to consecrate the conceptual links, or in Donzelot’s terms, *regimes*, between the Japanese state, corporate interests, and a new ethos of family that linked consumerism, economic prosperity, a new schema of gender relations actualized through the establishment of the modern notion of household (*katei*).⁴⁶

Alongside the proliferation of neologisms for categories of “unproductive” people in Japanese society, LGBT people have often been uniquely positioned in popular discourse as antithetical to the heterosexual nuclear family. This exclusion is a legally imposed one: with the exceptions of a few municipalities and cities, Japan does not recognize same-sex marriage, and there is no system in place for same-sex couples to legally adopt. Furthermore, Japanese law explicitly genders marriage, as the Civil Code sections regarding marriage use the terms ‘husband’ (*ototo*) and ‘wife’ (*tsuma*) to refer to spouses.⁴⁷ It is also social and structural, and shares similarities with the structural forces of heteronormativity found throughout the world. Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner define heteronormativity as “the institutions, structures of orientation, and practical orientations that make sexuality coherent - that is organized as a sexuality - but also privileged.”⁴⁸ Rather than ascribing it to fixed sexual categories, they suggest that heterosexuality functions in the public sphere so as to “organize a national public around sex.”⁴⁹ Drawing on this theorization, Kazama Takashi argues that heteronormativity (*iseiaikihan*)

⁴⁶ Merry White. *Perfectly Japanese*, 78-79.

⁴⁷ Taniguchi. *Legal Situation*.

⁴⁸ Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner. “Sex in Public” In *Critical Inquiry* Vol. 24, No. 2 (Winter, 1996), 547-566: 548.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, P. 550.

functions in Japanese society to render non-heterosexual and homosexual subjects invisible in both public and private spaces (*Dōseiasha wo kō/shi no izurekara mo haijo suru yō kinō suru*).⁵⁰ Through the heterosexual gendering of public and private spaces and modes of labor, as well as through the legal construction of family, he argues that “Homosexuals are not only excluded from the family predicated on heteronormativity, but the opportunity to form their own families is taken away from them.”⁵¹

1.3 Demographic Threats and Queer Possibilities in the Family

In light of this statement, it would seem that the modern Japanese family, as it has been established in the postwar period, is a closed system, held in place by corporate and governmental hegemonic relations, which categorically reject non-heterosexual lifestyles and sexualities. But the strains of demography and the slowdown of the Japanese economy beginning in the 1990s have severely impacted the viability of the normative family model in recent years. The sharp rise in part time and flexible labor since the Nikkei stock index crash of 1990 undercut the stability previously associated with lifetime employment, and by extension the nuclear family. The 1990s, long termed the “Lost Decade” (*Ushinawareta jūnen*) by the Japanese media, saw a rise in youth unemployment, as well as a proliferation of mass panics in the media about the state of Japanese youth in the 2000s. Signalling an end to the alliance between the family and corporate and governmental systems, the LDP has since the 1990s pursued a policy of labor deregulation and privatization of social services as part of a broader move towards a “flexibilization” of the economy.⁵² The result has been a shift in the conceptualization of family

⁵⁰ Kazama Takashi. *Dōseikon no poritikkusu* 同性婚のポリティックス [The politics of same sex marriage]. In *Kazoku shakaigaku kenkyu*, 14 (2), 2003: 32-42. 34.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Anne Allison. *Precarity and Hope*, 41-42.

since the 1990s, as the bipolarity (*nikyokuka*) between those families capable of actualizing the postwar family model and those unable, for economic or other reasons, to do so, continues to grow.⁵³ Yamada Masahiro goes as far to suggest that in contemporary Japan, forming a family has moved from a form of protections against economic and political risks to a fundamentally risky venture in itself.⁵⁴

Yet a period of dissolution is also a period of opportunity. While legal and political institutions may move at glacial paces, there is a long history of engagement in Japanese media, particularly in film and literature, with the shifting category of family. Keisuke Kinoshita's film *Nihon no higeki* (Tragedy of Japan, 1953), Yasuoka Shotaro's novel *Kaihen no kōkei* (The view of the seashore, 1959), and Kojima Nobuo's novel *Hōyō kazoku* (Embracing family, 1965) all constitute popular works produced during the early postwar period of high economic growth that critically examine and critique then-contemporary notions of family. The international success of Morita Yoshimitsu's film *Kazoku gemu* (Family game, 1983), as well its adaptation into a television drama in 2013 attest to the continued salience of the family as a dramatic theme in Japanese fiction. The decline of the corporate-family system, the rise of feminist and LGBT movements since the 1970s, and the shift from a privileged heterosexual matrix between the salaryman/housewife to a more precarious and unstable economic situation have created new room and urgency for alternative representations of family in media and culture. Hiromi Tsuchiya Dollase writes that by the 1990s, a new generation of female writers, raised in the 1960s during the the economic boom, emerged on the Japanese literary scene, their works disparate but unified by a shared "playful attitude towards social systems - particularly gender

⁵³ Yamada Masahiro. *Meisō suru kazoku*, 219-220.

⁵⁴ Yamada Masahiro. *Kazoku to iu risuku* 家族というリスク [Risk of the so-called family], (Tokyo: Keiso Shobō, 2001), 23.

and family systems," and that in their works they sought to "deconstruct various social systems, recreating them into new ones."⁵⁵ In 1988, one of these women, the writer Yoshimoto Banana, became a literary sensation with her debut novel *Kichin*, a novel about a young Japanese woman named Mikage, her friend Yuuichi, and Yuuichi's transgender mother Eriko. The novel was a literary sensation, selling around six million copies and going through fifty printings within two years of publication.⁵⁶ While the novel was derided by some in the Japanese literary establishment as shallow and emblematic of consumer culture, Yoshimoto's style and themes proved immediately influential with young Japanese writers.⁵⁷ Three years later, the novel *Kira Kira Hikaru* (Twinkle Twinkle, 1991) by the author Ekuni Kaori, about a straight woman and gay man married to one another, presented an irreverent take on marriage, presenting to the larger reading public a married couple outside the traditional schema of marriage. This period coincided with the formation of some of Japan's earliest LGBT rights organizations, including the Japanese chapter of the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA) in 1985 and the group OCCUR (*Ugoku gei to rezubian no kai*, organization for moving gays and lesbians) in 1986.⁵⁸ In a landmark 1997 case, the Tokyo District Court ruling in favor of OCCUR in its lawsuit against the Tokyo Metropolitan Board of Education, which had excluded it from usage of a government run hostel, was heralded as the first case in which homophobia was recognized as a form of discrimination by the Japanese legal system.⁵⁹ Just as LGBT identifying individuals came to a greater degree of prominence in Japanese society, the economic and social hegemonies

⁵⁵ Hiromi Tsuchiya Dollase. "Choosing Your Family: Reconfiguring Gender and Familial Relationships in Japanese Popular Fiction." *The Journal of Popular Culture*, Vol. 44, No. 3, 2011, 755-772: 755.

⁵⁶ John Whittier Treat. *The Rise and Fall of Modern Japanese Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 226.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 227.

⁵⁸ Mark McLelland. *Queer Japan from the Pacific War to the Internet Age* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 175-176.

⁵⁹ Taniguchi, *Legal Situation*, unpaginated.

undergirding the postwar family model were already wavering under the pressures of recession and anemic economic growth. These trends have only accelerated in the 21st century: Japan's economy has long been displaced as the 2nd largest by China, and it now adds the long term effects of demographic contraction to its list of anxieties.

In his essay "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy," Arjun Appaduradi notes the hybrid function of the modern family as a locus of cultural reproduction: it is both the site where knowledge is produced through genealogical heritage, and where it is generated in responses to shifts in cultural economies. He observes a disjuncture between these two functions; because the family exists as a contingent social unit embedded in the cultural and economic flow of global capital between nations and groups, "the sort of transgenerational stability of knowledge that was pre-supposed in most theories of enculturation...can no longer be assumed."⁶⁰ Thus, the family emerges in the context of what Appaduradi terms "disorganized capitalism," not as a safeguard for certain values or relations to be passed down through tradition, but rather as a site of contention and contestation where "new commodity patterns are negotiated, debts and obligations are recalibrated, and rumors and fantasies...are maneuvered into existing repertoire of knowledge and practice."⁶¹ In short, Appaduradi argues that the modern family, as the site of cultural reproduction, is inherently deterritorialized and unstable, subject to the contradictions and disjunctures that result from the flow global capital itself. The resulting cultural and social liminal space that we term the family, he argues, functions "as an arena for

⁶⁰ Arjun Appaduradi. "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy," in *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 43.

⁶¹ Ibid.

conscious choice, justification, and representation, the latter often to multiple and spatially dislocated audiences."⁶²

This thesis, drawing on Appaduradi's theorization of family as both a site of cultural reproduction and as a constructed representation mediated through received images, argues that just as the real state of the Japanese family has shifted in response to social, economic and political changes, so too have reproductions of family in popular and literary discourse. It will seek to answer the questions implicitly posed by the comments of many recent LDP members: what is the relationship between heteronormativity and the Japanese state? To what extent does the logic of reproduction shape conceptualizations of the family, and how have these conceptualizations impacted Japanese families and the non-heterosexual members in them? My use of literature in general, and of fiction (*shōsetsu*) in particular as a means of answering these sociohistorical questions is informed by John Treat's declaration that "The history of modern Japanese literature is coordinate with how the exercise of power - on behalf of the state and against it - was woven in ways both Japanese and generically modern."⁶³ Since its inception as an intellectual arm of the Meiji state in the 19th century, literature (*bungaku*) has served as an instrument through which modernity and the nation state are produced and reproduced, alongside the public circulation of images, ideologies and imperatives that lay the foundations for the modern Japanese state.⁶⁴ If the goal of literature is, as Roland Barthes says, "to appreciate what plural constitutes it," then this thesis takes the position that fiction exists as a discursive space of pluralities and contradictions, through which certain fictions are maintained, dismantled or

⁶² Ibid., 43-44.

⁶³ John Whitter Treat. *Rise and Fall*, 21.

⁶⁴ For more on this, see *Inventing the Classics: Modernity, National Identity, and Japanese Literature*, ed(s) Haruo Shirane and Tomi Suzuki (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002).

reformulated in an ongoing process of cultural bricolage. Corinna Genschel suggests that heteronormative hegemonies unfold over three modalities: domination through cultural intelligibility, the privileging heterosexual desire, and regulating practices that make use of coercion and naturalization.⁶⁵ While the latter two of these categories exist and unfold in the social and political realms, it is through the discursive movement of the first that heteronormativity gains its coherence and hegemonic dominance. It is also this category that is by definition the most provisional and unstable, and the most affected by counter-hegemonic challenges. Warner and Berlant write that queer culture is engaged in a project of ‘world-building’, or the formation of what they term counterpublic spaces and discourses that resist the invisible coding of heterosexual intimacies that spring from daily social life. These counterpublics, they write, are marked by their mobility, fluidity and a relationship towards the heteronormative public that is both derivative and oppositional. “Queer culture,” they write, “has almost no institutional matrix for its counterintimacies. In the absence of marriage and the rituals that organize life around matrimony, improvisation is always necessary for the speech act of pledging, or the narrative practice of dating, or for such apparently noneconomic economies as joint checking.”⁶⁶ Drawing on Judith Butler’s conception of performativity, they suggest that queer culture, and in turn queer politics, emerge not through the emulation of heterosexual forms but via their intentional destabilization: through imitation, parody and affect, queer politics hold the potential to expose the fault lines of heteronormativity and suggest new modes of being.

Can a family be formed through improvisation? It’s a question relevant not only to the LDP politicians and bureaucrats running Japan’s government but to the nation as a whole. The

⁶⁵ Maria do Mar Castro Carela, Nikita Dhawan and Antke Engel. "Introduction." In *Hegemony and Heteronormativity: Revisiting 'The Political' in Queer Politics* (New York: Ashgate Publishing): 2011, 1-25: 14.

⁶⁶ Warner, Berlant. *Sex in Public*, 562.

conceptual relationships between reproduction, nation building, gender and queerness are not arbitrary; conversely, as Rutvica Andrijasevic states, “Sexuality and gender play a constitutive role in the formation and definition of the nation insofar as the reproduction of nationhood and citizenship remain premised on heterosexuality and heteromascularity.”⁶⁷ Following this logic, this thesis suggests that when the state exhausts, in a most literal sense, its ability to reproduce nationhood and citizenship, the need for a new discursive model of citizenship, and by extension family, is not merely necessary but inevitable. Despite the protestations of certain conservative voices, as this thesis will show, the Japanese family has long been engaged in an intertextual dialogue with queerness which has unfolded across various forms of fictional and real representation. Through tracing the development of some of these literary and fictional families, which are marked primarily through their hybridity and ongoing dialogue with queerness, I will argue that, rather than being antithetical to one another, queerness and the family are engaged in a process of discursive reformulation and potential convergence. As the state exhausts its own biopolitical reach and the hegemonic alliances that constitute it falter, it is now clearer than ever that, in Bruce White’s words, “the state-defined ‘family’ is, perhaps unsurprisingly, often out of step with the day-to-day realities that ‘families’ face, in all their diverse configurations.”⁶⁸ To understand the changing, contingent and unfixed nature of these configurations, it is necessary to listen to those concerned, and thereby come to a new understanding of the relationship between queerness and family in postwar, post-bubble Japan.

⁶⁷ Rutvica Andrijasevic. “Sex on the Move: Gender, subjectivity and differential inclusion,” in *Subjectivity*, December 2009, Volume 29, Issue 1, pp 389-406: 390.

⁶⁸ Bruce White, “Reassembling familial intimacy: civil, fringe, and popular youth visions of the Japanese home and family,” In *Home and Family in Japan: Continuity and Transformation*, eds. Richard Ronald and Allison Alexy (London: Routledge, 2011), 25.

CHAPTER 2

THE DISCURSIVE FORMATION OF QUEER SUBJECTIVITIES IN POSTWAR JAPANESE MEDIA

2.1 Outline

The previous chapter of this thesis focused on the historical development of the postwar nuclear family, predicated on the heterosexual dynamic of the salaryman/*sengyō shufu*, and the models of social and economic reproduction upon which it was constructed by political and corporate forces in postwar Japan. This chapter will focus on the role played by this heteronormative model of reproductivity in the historical formation of queer subjectivities in pre and postwar Japanese sexual discourses. It will begin by analyzing the epistemological shift in sexual discourses that began during the Meiji Period (1868-1912), when texts emerging from the Austrian-German psychiatry and sexology movements of the late 19th century would become highly influential amongst Japanese intellectuals in thinking about sexuality. Sexological publications, which became widespread in mass media during the Taishō Period (1912-1926) helped to disseminate new ideas regarding hygiene, public health, and above all, sexuality, to the reading public. These publications were joined by, and often merged with, cheaply produced *hentai zasshi* (perverse magazines) and *fūzoku zasshi* (customs magazines), magazines that presented articles, fiction and art about “grotesque,” and “perverse,” sexual practices for the voyeuristic consuming pleasure of their reading audiences. These processes helped to initiate a broader cultural reconceptualization of sexuality that produced a conceptual distinction between a normative heterosexuality and a range of what Ishida Hitoshi and Murakami Takanori call “marginalized sexualities,” (*shūhenteki sekushuaritei*), most prominent among them

homosexuality.⁶⁹ Concurrent to this shift in sexual discourses was the beginning of what sociologist Senda Yuki has termed the “romantic love revolution,” a period during which marriage became indelibly associated in popular literature with images of love and romance, which were in turn privileged as markers of modernity. While many *hentai zasshi* were forced to cease production during the wartime period of the 1930s and 1940s, the postwar period saw the emergence of a new generation of magazines that took a more proactively pro-homosexual stance, repositioning themselves as safe spaces in which non-heterosexual readers could talk openly about their problems and experiences. The formation of the homosexual *dōjinshi* group Adonis in 1952, in turn, helped to spur on a wave new creative activities by non-heterosexual writers and readers alike in the 1960s, who used a variety of rhetorical, affective and aesthetic strategies to distinguish themselves from the larger heterosexual public and, at times, to critique it. The creation, and subsequent success of the magazine *Barazoku* (Rose tribe, 1971), the first gay interest magazine to be sold in major bookstores in Japan, in many ways marked the “arrival” of a discretely non-heterosexual (or queer) subjectivity in the form of the self-assured gay male, often abbreviated simply as *homo*. But just as the success of such magazines signals a shift away from the ostensible authority of medical and sexological authorities in structuring and regulating sexual discourses, the efficacy of the subjectivity articulated by these magazines in shifting heteronormative culture was limited by their own self-imposed limitation in scope as well as a failure to conceptualize gender inequality in Japanese society.

⁶⁹ Ishida Hitoshi and Murakami Takanori 村上隆則、石田仁. “Sengo nihon no zasshi ni okeru ‘otoko wo sukina otoko,’ to ‘joseika shita otoko’ no hyōsō shi 戦後日本の雑誌における「男を好きな男」と「女性したお男」の表象史(The history of representations of “men who like men,” and “men who become women,” in postwar Japanese magazines). *Sengo nihon josō/dōseiai kenkyū* 戦後日本における女装・同性愛研究 (Studies on postwar Japanese homosexuality/crossdressing). Tokyo: Chūō Daigaku Shuppan Bu, 2006, 519-557: 519.

This chapter will argue that the responses by non-heterosexual readers to the social and political limitations imposed on them by the heteronormative institutions of postwar society, as well as the discursive limitations of spaces such as *hentai zasshi* where they could discuss their own sexual identities, were critical in spurring the formation of explicitly non-heterosexual discursive spaces by the 1950s, which in turn facilitated the emergence of discretely non-heterosexual subjectivities informed by an incipient sense of solidarity (*rentaikan*) with one another. Furthermore, this chapter will argue that while homosexual identified readers were able to construct a positive and affirmative queer identity in the discursive spaces of postwar magazines *vis-à-vis* a range of rhetorical and economical strategies, the impact of such positive representation was limited by the narrow purview of the magazines themselves, as well as by the failure of both the magazines' editorial boards and their largely male readerships to grapple with issues of gender inequality and heteronormativity.

2.2 The Post-Meiji Period Shift in Japanese Sexual Discourse

In order to properly contextualize the field of sexual discourse in Japan, it is first necessary to outline the historical shift in conceptualizations of sex and gender that occurred throughout the world as a result of the intellectual shift towards modernity in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In his seminal work *The History of Sexuality*, Michel Foucault argues that sexual discourses, rather than being reflective of stable cultural or epistemological facts, in truth “form the correlate of exact procedures of power.”⁷⁰ The 19th century, according to Foucault, with its attendant rise of scientific and medical institutions dedicated to the pathologization of the human body and various somatic conditions, saw a discursive “rationalization” of sexuality that

⁷⁰ Foucault. *The History of Sexuality*, 47.

made it possible to speak of holding or possessing an individual sexual identity as an aspect of one's subjectivity. Terming the 19th and 20th centuries an "age of multiplication" that resulted in "a dispersion of sexualities," and "a multiple implantation of perversions," Foucault argues that the sexual categories epistemologically formed by medical and scientific institutions were constituted and made coherent through their discursive exercise of epistemological power, which were in turn "governed by the endeavor to expel from reality the forms of sexuality that were not amenable to the strict economy of reproduction."⁷¹ The byproduct of this rationalization of sexuality, Foucault suggests, is the formation of binaries delineating proper and improper modes of sexual being, the most prominent among them being homosexuality and heterosexuality. The consequence of modernity, therefore, has not been to "reveal," categories of sexuality, but rather to create them, and, through the discursive exercise of power, to organize them on the basis of their rationality, or in other terms, their reproductivity.

It should be pointed out that Foucault's analysis of Western sexual discourses cannot be uncritically imposed as a theoretical model onto the Japanese context. As Mark McLelland has noted, any cross-comparative analysis of queer cultures runs the risk of transcultural reductiveness, which he describes as those methodologies "which locate the sexual cultures and practices of 'other' societies along a continuum of sameness or difference from those of the west."⁷² Nonetheless, it is necessary to trace the historical relationship between sexual discourses and modernity in order to demonstrate that Japanese sexual discourses during the 19th and 20th centuries have not developed in isolation but intertextually *vis-à-vis* Western sexual discourses,

⁷¹ Ibid., 36.

⁷² Mark McLelland. "Japan's Original Gay Boom," in *Popular Culture, Globalization and Japan*, ed(s). Matthew Allen and Rumi Sakamoto (Routledge, 2006), pp. 159-173: 159.

with which they have a deep intertextual relationship. Furthermore, by virtue of their intertextual nature, sexual discourses are also, as Vera Mackie notes, inherently polyglottic, resulting in a vast range of homophonic sexual terms and categories, often originating as loanwords, occurring across languages with highly distinct and culturally-bound meanings. This intertextual relationship only deepens in the postwar period; as Dennis Altman has written, "globalization has helped create an international gay/lesbian identity, which is by no means confined to the western world," and therefore, the various "queer cultures" of the world cannot be analyzed and critically considered in isolation.⁷³ Furthermore, Foucault's model of sexual discourses, rather than implying that discursive exchanges between cultures occur equilaterally, in fact suggests the opposite, that sexual discourses themselves act as correlates of power when examined in a cross-cultural context. As Maria Lugones notes, the processes of colonialism and imperialism have "introduced many genders and gender itself as a colonial concept and mode of organization of relations of production, property relations, of cosmologies and ways of knowing," to colonized peoples, producing discursive genealogies that continue to manifest in contemporary gender and sexual modalities.⁷⁴

Lugones' suggestion that imperialism and the imposition of gender and sexual ideologies are intimately connected is particularly salient in the Japanese context. From the second half of the 19th century onward, Japan, under the threat of Western incursion, embarked on a period of rapid modernization and Westernization, permanently altering pre-modern conceptions of gender and sexuality that had existed in the premodern period. In order to understand Japanese queer

⁷³ Dennis Altman. *Global Sex*. (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2001): 86.

⁷⁴ Maria Lugones, "Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System," *Hypatia*, Vol. 22, No. 1, Writing Against Heterosexism (Winter, 2007), pp. 186-209: 186-87.

cultures in their contemporary state, it is therefore critical to describe the historical processes by which sexual discourses developed in Japan as it self-consciously embarked on a mission to modernize along western lines in the scientific, political and social spheres. With the development of heterosexuality and homosexuality as discrete and coherent sexual identities in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, three sets of conceptual modalities can be seen emerging in prewar Japanese sexual discourse which would serve to concretize the ideological basis for the continued alterity of queer subjects in the postwar period; a purported association between homosexual acts and physical and mental illnesses influenced by Western sexology, a conceptual link between homosexuality and ‘barbarism’ emerging literary discourse from the Meiji period onward, and the creation of a broad range of ‘deviant’ (*hentai*) sexual categories that would be discursively clustered in academic sexological journals as well as in the *hentai zasshi* and *kasutori* (pulp) magazines of the prewar and postwar periods.

In the Edo Period (1600-1868), the rise of *Kabuki* theater and the construction of red-light districts called ‘bad places’ (*akushō*) by the Tokugawa Shogunate to control and manage brothels and gambling led to a thriving male-male sex trade, particularly amongst the wealthy merchant classes. Amorous relationships between brothel workers and their patrons were celebrated in literature and the arts alike, with love suicides (*shinjū*) in particular becoming a hugely popular genre of Kabuki.⁷⁵ A large part of this literature celebrated male-male love (*nanshoku*), with works like the author Ihara Saikaku's *Nanshoku Ōkagami* (The great mirror of male love, 1687) becoming bestsellers among the literate classes.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ For more on this topic, see the introduction in Donald Keene, *Major Plays of Chikamatsu*, translated and introduced by Donald Keene, New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.

⁷⁶ Gary Leupp. *Male Colors: The Construction of Homosexuality in Tokugawa Japan*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995): 100.

With the ending of the policy of national isolation (*sakoku*) in the 1870s, the newly formed Meiji government looked to the legal and political systems of Western countries, particularly Prussia, in creating a framework for the Japanese state. This led to sodomy being criminalized for the first time in 1872; this ban, however, was repealed only a few years later in 1880, to be replaced with a more generalized penal code that criminalized “obscene acts” (*waisetsu no shogyō*) instead.⁷⁷ The beginning of the 20th century witnessed the institutionalization of sexology, a new field of study that took sexuality itself as an object of scientific analysis with much of its formative literature originating in the works of German and Austrian scientists and psychiatrists in the 19th century. As an ostensibly scientific field epistemologically indebted to modernity and its pathologization of sexual practices, sexology exerted an enormous influence over early Japanese thinking about sex. The early sexological movement in Japan was diverse in its methodologies and outlooks; as Sabine Frühstück writes, it consisted of “self-appointed experts from the academic fields of zoology, biology and medicine, as well as from education and the arts,” who “set out to push for the creation and popularization of sexual knowledge, the education of ‘the masses’ about ‘correct’ and ‘normal’ sexual behavior, and the establishment of sexology as a field of knowledge.”⁷⁸ This movement was informed by a new, “scientific” understanding of the body, and was driven by a diverse set of concerns regarding public health and hygiene. It was also ideologically diverse, with individual writers and scientists having wildly different priorities and political positions, resulting in complex debates regarding eugenics, venereal disease, population control, abortion and birth control as

⁷⁷ Gregory Pflugfelder. *Cartographies of Desire: Male-Male Sexuality in Japanese Discourse, 1600–1950*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007): 168.

⁷⁸ Frühstück, Sabine. *Colonizing Sex: Sexology and Social Control in Modern Japan*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003, 8-9.

they unfolded in the Japanese military, in educational facilities, and in medical institutions such as clinics and hospitals. What united many of these new sexologists, however, was a shared desire for, in Frühstück's words, "the liberation of sex in order to shed oppressive traditional beliefs and to unburden sex of mystification." Another trait these writers shared was in their tendency to explicitly invoke Western sources in articulating their theories, both implicitly and explicitly positioning the West as inherently "modern," and pre-Meiji ideas regarding sex as unscientific; as Frühstück writes, "Japanese tradition was denounced as uncivilized, and the authority of Western culture in general and of Western science in particular was emphasized to establish and ensure expert status for these first self-trained Japanese sexologists."⁷⁹ In particular, ideas regarding sexual orientation that came from the sexological discourses emerging in Germany and Austria during the late 19th century were highly influential to Japanese sexologists. This sexological discourse arose from a complex web of epistemologies that included Neo-Malthusian eugenics as well as the psychoanalysis, which posited non-normative (i.e., non-heterosexual) sexualities as reflective of deeper psychological issues. Harry Oosterhuis writes that the works of Austrian-German psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing (1840-1902) and German psychiatrist Albert Moll (1862-1939) represented "a shift from a psychiatric perspective in which deviant sexuality was explained as a derived, episodic and more or less singular symptom of a more fundamental mental disorder, to a consideration of perversion as an integral part of a more general, autonomous and continuous sexual instinct."⁸⁰ This mode of sexology, which considered non-heterosexuality to be an "innate morbid condition," was influenced by ideas of Social Darwinism as well as "deterministic theories of hereditary

⁷⁹ Ibid., 11.

⁸⁰ Harry Oosterhuis. "Sexual Modernity in the Works of Richard von Krafft-Ebing and Albert Moll." *Medical History* 56.2 (2012): 133–155. *PMC*. Web. 8 Oct. 2018.

degeneration and neurophysiological automatism,” that posited deviant sexualities as being both the cause and symptom of various physiological and psychological ailments.⁸¹ These ideas came to be regarded as modern and scientifically valid to much of the nascent Japanese sexological community, which in turn concretized a conceptual link between “healthy,” sexualities with modernity and “unhealthy,” sexualities with a bygone past. This connection, in turn, would be further developed in Meiji and Taishō period literature.

The novelist and physician Mori Ogai (1862-1922), a major figure in the development of Meiji and Taishō period literature, was deeply influenced by the ideas of sexologists such as Krafft-Ebing, and sought to incorporate their ideas into his fiction. His 1909 novel *Vita Sexualis*, its name inspired by Krafft-Ebing’s work *Psychopathia Sexualis*, was one of the first works in Japanese literature to demonstrate what McLelland has termed “the elaboration of a space of sexual interiority.”⁸² The Japanese literary theorist Kōjin Karatani has influentially argued that a critical difference between premodern and modern Japanese literature of the Meiji period lies in the articulation of an authorial interiority, a constructed self within the text itself.⁸³ J. Keith Vincent argues that while Edo period fiction “shaped [readers] understanding of love and sex as practices tempered by a judicious balance of urbanity [*iki*] and genuine feeling [*ninjō*], the literature of the Meiji period, in which “the novel was elevated from a commercialized entertainment to a ‘civilized’ genre charged with the conveyance of truth,” centered representations of interiorized subjects and a logical, orderly, systematic universe modeled after

⁸¹ Ibid., 135.

⁸² Mark McLelland. *Queer Japan From the Pacific War to the Internet Age*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005: 56.

⁸³ See Kōjin Karatani, *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, trans. Brett de Bary (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993).

the so called ‘real’ world.⁸⁴ “One result of this shift,” he writes, “was that in modern Japanese fiction, actual sex was largely replaced by interminable talking about, or, more often, around it.”⁸⁵

Concurrent to the reconceptualization of literature in the early 20th century as a discursive field onto which the author inscribed an interiorized self was what the sociologist Senda Yuki has termed the rise of “romantic ideology” (*romantikku ideorogi*) during the Taishō period. Describing this ideology as “a man and a woman falling in love and marrying for an entire lifetime and successfully producing children,” Senda argues that the Japanese state promoted a modern and “romantic,” model of marriage which allowed for the unification of love, sexuality and reproduction via the intermediary of marriage.⁸⁶ Sonia Ryang, in turn, argues that western concept of love took on a complex significance in post-Meiji literature, as it was posited “as a spiritual relationship that excluded physical union between the individuals involved.”⁸⁷ Love, conventionally translated as *ai* or *ren’ai*, took precedence in popular literature of the early 20th century over other terms for the concept, such as *iro*, which had been used frequently in premodern Japanese literature from the Heian Period onward. As Ryang writes, “*iro* became denigrated as a denominator of unspiritual, un-sacred and base desire, as opposed to *ai* as sacred, spiritual, and noble love.”⁸⁸ Early Meiji period writers were instrumental in spreading this new

⁸⁴ J. Keith Vincent, *Two Timing Modernity: Homosocial Narrative in Modern Japanese Fiction*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012: 16-17.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, P. 17.

⁸⁶ Senda Yukii, *Nihongata* 16.

⁸⁷ Sonia Ryang. *Love in Modern Japan: Its estrangement from self, sex and society*. London: Routledge, 2006: 33.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 33.

conceptualization of love, with poets such as Kitamura Tōkoku calling it “the secret to life,” (*jinsei no hiyaku nari*) in their works.⁸⁹

Romantic love was in turn linked to marriage during the Taishō Period by books such as Kurigawaya Hakuson’s 1922 bestselling book *Kindai no ren'aikan* (Modern views of love), which advocated for sex, love and marriage to be seen, in the words of Kanno Satomi, as “three parts of one whole,” (*Ren'ai to sekkusu to kekkon no sani ittai*).⁹⁰ Writers like Hakuson took love based marriages to be inherently superior to arranged ones, and identified the concept of heterosexual love with modernity itself. Senda writes that as romantic ideology spread through the middle class during the Taishō period, social concerns regarding “blood purity,” fueled by eugenics discourses further established the primacy of the monogamous, romantic marriage model. Conversely, as this model of heterosexual romance came to be elevated in popular literature as metonymic to modernity, non-heterosexual sexual practices were simultaneously positioned as its opposite, a dangerous variety of sexual atavism detached from things as profound emotion or feeling.

Early attempts to frame heterosexuality as a superior and ‘civilized’ mode of sexuality on the basis of its relation to modern love can be clearly seen in works such as Waseda University professor and literary theorist Tsubouchi Shōyō’s early novel *Tōsei Shosei Katagi* (Portraits of contemporary students, 1885). As of the first and most influential Japanese novelists, Tsubouchi explicitly framed male-female love as superior to male-male love in the novel by emphasizing the narrative importance of the former and contrasting it with the barbarity of the latter. As Jim

⁸⁹ Senda Yuki, *Nihongata*, 26.

⁹⁰ Kanno Satomi 菅野里美. *Shōhi sareru ren'ai ron: Taishō chishikijin to sei* 消費される恋愛論—大正知識人と性 [A theory of love consumed: Taishō intellectuals and sex.] Tokyo: Seikyūsha, 2001, 168-69.

Reichert writes, the portrayal of the character Kiriyama in the novel, who serves as the primary advocate for male-male love in the novel, as physically weak, disorganized, aggressive, and obsessed with a Samurai past serves to position men who have sex with men as “sexually atavistic others,” and to privilege heterosexuality as “the most profound expression of human emotion.”⁹¹ Jim Reichert writes that “For Tsubouchi, then, literary modernity manifested itself in the rejection of male-male sexuality and the embrace of male-female love,”⁹² a connection he made clear in other works. In his comprehensive work *Shōsetsu shinzui* (The essence of the novel), Tsubouchi writes explicitly that the depiction of male-female love is the most central feature of civilized literature.⁹³ He does not merely criticize male-male love as inferior to male-female love in his works, but further, as Reichert notes, he actively “pursued a strategy of establishing male-male sexuality as an obscene and barbaric practice that had no place in civilized society, or, by extension, enlightened literature.”⁹⁴ Thus, in both the discursive spaces of literature and the newly inaugurated discipline of sexology, a definitive shift can be seen in the positioning of heterosexuality as an enlightened and desirable “orientation”, with non-heterosexual practices being framed as deviant and uncivilized.

2.3 *Hentai Zasshi* and Early Queer Subjectivities

The establishment of an ideology glorifying heterosexuality and monogamy during the Taishō period, which was in turn juxtaposed with the ostensible atavism and backwardness of

⁹¹ Jim Reichert. *In the Company of Men: Representations of Male-Male Sexuality in Meiji-Period Literature*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006, 71.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 70.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

non-heterosexuality, allowed for the broad sexual categories of normal (*jōtai*) and perverse (*hentai*) to gain coherence in popular discourse. This division was in turn facilitated by the dissemination of journals, publications and magazines published during the Taishō period (1912-26) which focused on sexual practices. Many of these journals were founded by early sexologists, who sought to defend their nascent discipline as purely scientific and modern and to spread their ideas to the wider public. Some, such as the scientist Yamamoto Senji's Birth Control Review (*Sanji Chōsetsu Hyōron*) founded in 1925, had an explicit mission of providing “pure scientific sexual education,” (*jun kagakuteki seikyōiku*) to the masses.⁹⁵ Other publications, however, purposely blurred the lines of science and sensationalism, and focused on the more lurid aspects of sex with a veneer of scientific pedigree. These “perverse” magazines, such as the magazines *Hentai shiryō* (Perverse materials, 1926), *Gurotesuku* (Grotesque, 1928) and *Hentai Seiyoku* (Perverse desires, 1922-1925) came to be known as *hentai zasshi* (perverse magazines) and *fūzoku zasshi* (customs magazines).⁹⁶ They shared a preoccupation with what was considered perverse (*hentai*), and the articles in them often took the form of sex “experts,” answering questions about a wide variety of sexual positions, ideas and acts for a curious reading audience. According to Gregory Pflugfelder, that these magazines “transformed the sexual behavior of others into a spectacle for consumption,” indicating that readers were “clearly more attracted than repelled by the ‘perverse’ nature of their contents.”⁹⁷

More than simply articulate a pre-existing category of sexuality, these magazines were critical in the discursive formation and dissemination of sexual hierarchies based the newly

⁹⁵ Frühstück, *Colonizing Sex*, 84.

⁹⁶ McLelland, *Queer Japan*, 23.

⁹⁷ Pflugfelder. *Cartographies of Desire*, 222.

inaugurated binary of *jōtai/hentai*. Ishida Hitoshi and Takanori Murakami argue that *hentai zasshi* served to give coherence to a new dualistic conception of sex based on perceptions of mutual compatibility between various “perverse” desires. They argue that this binary conception of sex was undergirded by the inauguration of the discursive category of *hentai* itself, which itself served as a repository for those sexual practices no longer considered properly modern. Dualistic categories of sex they cite as recurring in *hentai zasshi* include male/female, sadism/masochism, young/old, and ultimately heterosexuality/homosexuality.⁹⁸ They further emphasize that within the magazine’s discursive space, it was possible for non-heterosexual readers to utilize the dualistic structure of sexual practices so as to articulate their own individuals sexualities. As they write, “Through a discursive process marked by bricolage, various ‘perverse’ desires were related to one another and imbued with meaning based on their internal contiguity and external compatibility with one another.”⁹⁹

While we can trace the establishment of a sexual hierarchies emerging via the sexological publications of the early 20th century, it is more difficult to establish the emergence of what can be termed a “queer subjectivity,” on the part of non-heterosexual people in Japan. That is to say, while we can trace the emergence of sexual discourses in Japanese society, pinpointing when interpellated categories of sex were internalized by a majority, as well as the process by which this internalization occurred, is more difficult. While Ishida and Takanori suggest that the binaries of sex articulated in the magazine are productively utilized by non-heterosexual, they do not give us an account of this process. The author Mizuho Takeuchi, by contrast, analyzing the rhetorical strategies utilized by non-heterosexual readers and contributors to Taishō era *hentai*

⁹⁸ Ishida, Takanori, *Sengo Nihon*, 527

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 528.

zasshi, draws on Judith Butler’s theorization of subjectivation to argue that the process by which queer subjects come to see themselves as such emerges simultaneously from an interpellation towards the prescribed category of queerness as well as a productive desire for the category on the part of the subject themselves. Butler writes that for the queer subject, interpellated by specific epistemological structures that both constrain and make their own subjectivity possible, “the possibility of a critical view of the law is thus limited by what might be understood as a prior desire for the law, a passionate complicity with law, without which no subject can exist.”¹⁰⁰ Takeuchi argues that Butler’s conception of subjectivation can be seen in the desire for a category of “queerness,” on the part of readers of *hentai zasshi* themselves. Building on Butler’s theorization of subjectivity as the result of a “failed interpellation,” by which the subject is unable to positively identify with imposed images of their own subjectivity, Takeuchi states that the limitations imposed by mainstream sexual discourses resulted not in the internalization of the authority of sexological hierarchies by queer readers, but rather in a strengthened desire by queer readers to develop and reflect their own subjectivity (*shūtaika*).¹⁰¹ That is to say, according to Takeuchi and Butler, it was the conditions that produced the inequality of sexual hierarchies that also produced the conditions for self-recognition, and thereby for the formation of subjectivity itself. As our analysis of these magazines in the prewar and postwar period will show, the process of subjectivation emerges from both the constraints placed upon queer reading publics and the desire on their part for a subject position, and that this dynamic has informed the

¹⁰⁰ Judith Butler. "Conscience Doth Make Subjects of Us All," *Yale French Studies*, No. 88, *Depositions: Althusser, Balibar, Macherey, and the Labor of Reading* (1995), pp. 6-26: 7.

¹⁰¹ Takeuchi Mizuho 竹内瑞穂. “Kindai shakai no ‘mendatsusha’ tachi: Taishō ki Nihon no zasshi tōkō kara miru dansei doseiaisha no shūtaika,” 近代社会の「免脱者」たち—大正期日本の雑誌投稿からみる男性同性愛者の主体化 [Deviant of Modern Society: The self-realization of male homosexuals as seen from magazine postings in Taishō Japan]. In *Gender and Sexuality* 03, International Christian University, 2008, 77-94: 89.

development of Japanese sexual discourse from its very earliest articulation in the prewar perverse press and throughout the postwar period.

It was in the reader post (*tōkō ran*) sections of the early *hentai zasshi*, as well as in their roundtable discussions (*zadankai*) that the earliest traces of a discrete and self-proclaimed non-heterosexual identity can be glimpsed. Ishida Hitoshi and Murakami Takanori argue that these sections functioned as “heterogeneous discursive spaces,” (*ishu konkō teki na gensetsu kukan*) that were negotiated between self-proclaimed sexological experts and their non-heterosexual readers and respondents.¹⁰² Maekawa Naoya, in his book *Dansei dōseiaisha no shakaishi* (The social history of male homosexuality) argues persuasively that it was in the sections of these magazines that one can first see the first flickerings of self-identification with recently circulated terms for homosexuality (the most prominent being *dōseiaisha*, which itself only began to circulate during the Taishō period) as well as the beginning of an explicitly non-heterosexual subjectivity. Further, Maekawa’s analysis suggests in particular that male homosexuality became coherent as an identity amongst these magazines’ readers and contributors not merely through a process of self-identification with the perverse, but as a consequence of the pressures placed upon non-heterosexuals by the new discursive regimes of modern romantic love, monogamous marriage and sexology articulated elsewhere in society.

Maekawa, analyzing the correspondence between self-described male homosexuals (*dōseiaisha*) writing in the pages of the Taishō Period magazine *Hentai Seiyoku* (1922-25), notes a disjuncture in the conceptualization of marriage between self-identified homosexual and non-homosexual readers. *Hentai Seiyoku* was published by the Japanese Psychological Association

¹⁰² Ishida, Takanori, *Sengo nihon*, 523.

(*Nihon seishin igaku kai*) and edited by the physician Tanaka Kogai. Tanaka's correspondence with self-proclaimed *dōseiaisha*, as well as correspondence between homosexual and non-homosexual readers in the magazine's pages between 1922 and 1923 exhibit what Maekawa terms a "strategy of compassion," (*Awaremi no senjutsu*), as homosexual readers utilized their own marginality in Japanese society to elicit sympathy from other readers.¹⁰³ Many of the homosexual readers of these magazines, as Takeuchi Mizuho writes, came to identify themselves as homosexual *vis-à-vis* their marginalized relationship to the modern household (*katei*), which she argues formed the ideological basis for the family nation state from the second half of the Meiji Period onward.¹⁰⁴ Many non-homosexual readers complained of pressure put on them to marry by their own parents, and others readers justified their sexualities by stating that they were "innately incapable," (*Sententeki no fugusha*) of entering into romantic heterosexual marriage, and therefore should be seen as victims.¹⁰⁵ These exchanges were often followed by replies from heterosexual readers and from the writers and editors of the magazines themselves, who by virtue of their editing positions held discursive power over non-heterosexual contributors. While the image they present of their incipient sexual identity was one of pitiability and weakness, Takeuchi suggests that it was this rhetorical strategy that helped to displace the magazine's original emphasis on attempting to find a "cure," for homosexuality, shifting the discourse in the

¹⁰³ Naoya Maekawa 直哉前川. *Dansei dōseiaisha no shakaishi* 男性同性愛者の社会史 [The social history of male homosexuality]. Tokyo: Sakuhinsha, 2017, 50.

¹⁰⁴ Mizuho Takeuchi, *Kindai shakai*, 84.

¹⁰⁵ *Hentai Seiyoku* 変態性欲. "Danshi doseiai no ichijitsu rei." (Real examples of male homosexuals). Vol. 1 Issue 5, September 1922.

magazine towards an open dialogue about sexuality beyond the parameters delineated by sexological authorities.¹⁰⁶

Takeuchi notes that that *Hentai Seiyoku*, as well as similar magazines, closed their *tōkō ran* sections by the year 1923 as a result of their editors' inability to control the emerging sexological discourse that was being produced by readers and contributors.¹⁰⁷ Rather than simply adhering to the authoritative discourse on sexuality produced by editors like Tanaka Kogai, the readers of magazines like *Hentai Seiyoku* questioned editorial authority and attempted to articulate their own identities on an individual basis. Another factor in the sudden cessation of sexual discourses in these magazines was the pressure placed on their publishers by governmental authorities, which became far more censorial from the second half of the 1920s onward, as the country built up its military power and went on to invade China in 1931.¹⁰⁸ As Jeffrey Angles writes, by 1941, "nationalism had reached such a fervor that unless authors were willing to cater to the increasingly fascistic demands of the publishing industry and the jingoistic tastes of the public, they found few outlets in which to publish. As paper shortages worsened over the course of the war, there was little space left in publications for overt explorations of sexuality in any form, heteronormative or not."¹⁰⁹ While the vast majority of *hentai zasshi* were shut down or forced to write about topics besides sex during the wartime period, the immediate postwar and Occupation period saw the proliferation of low-grade, *hentai zasshi* that dealt with many of the same issues and themes as their Taishō era counterparts. No longer subject to

¹⁰⁶ Takeuchi, *Kindai shakai*, 85-86.

¹⁰⁷ Maekawa, *Dansei dōseiaisha*, 52.

¹⁰⁸ Maekawa, *Dansei dōseiaisha*, 54-55.

¹⁰⁹ Jeffrey Angles. *Writing the Love of Boys: Origins of Bishōnen Culture in Modernist Japanese Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011): 226.

wartime prescriptions, these magazines were often a mix of reportage, correspondence and pornography, and were usually edited by experts who sought to monopolize the discursive production of sexual knowledge.¹¹⁰

2.4 The Postwar Reclamation of *Hentai Zasshi*

While many of the immediate postwar *hentai zasshi* such as *Ningen Tankyū* (1950-1952), which billed itself as a “A sexological magazine for cultured people” (*Bunkajin no seikagaku shi*) welcomed sexual discussions in their pages, their general editorial stance was towards “other-izing and pathologizing,” homosexuality, with writers and editors often offering readers spurious “cures,” and “treatments,” for their ‘perverse desires’.¹¹¹ Maekawa notes a tendency amongst these magazines’ editors towards simplifying and generalizing their contributors as *dōseiaisha*, despite the fact that many contributors did not consider themselves such or even suggest as much.¹¹² Ironically, it was the perception that so many homosexual readers were suffering from their inability to enter happy marriages or talk about their sexuality to others that led Mitsuki Ryunosuke, an editor for *Ningen Tankyū*, to place an ad in the magazine recruiting homosexual writers to self-produce a magazine of their own.¹¹³ This magazine, which would be called the Adonis (*Adonisu*) and founded in 1952, would be the first publication founded by and for same sex attracted men in postwar Japan history. The magazine and its producing organization, the Adonis Club (*Adonisu kai*), was funded by membership fees rather than advertisements, and put out a self-made magazine (*dōjinshi*) monthly which included a general

¹¹⁰ Maekawa, *Dansei dōseiaisha*, 60.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 66.

¹¹² Ibid., 68.

¹¹³ Ibid., 69.

discussion section called FORUM where members could write to one another and even seek out potential partners. As a discursive space not dominated and policed by self-proclaimed sexological experts, it is hard to overstate the importance of *Adonis* in the formation of queer subjectivities, as well as in the articulation of new critiques of the heteronormative social models of the postwar period from a discretely non-heterosexual perspective. Without the voyeuristic presence of sexological experts regulating discussions of sex and categorizing respondents arbitrarily, members of the *Adonis* club had much greater degree of freedom to articulate their own experiences in a narrative mode far less limited than the confessional structure of earlier *hentai zasshi*. For example, in an article in the inaugural issue titled “Can homosexuality be cured?” (*dōseiai wa naoru ka*), written by Hiki Yuzō, demonstrates the writer’s lack of interest in the question: as he bluntly writes, “I don’t care whether homosexuality can be cured. My bones simply cannot bear this chill of loneliness any longer.”¹¹⁴ He went on to declare that the magazine would serve as an “oasis,” for same-sex attracted readers, saying that it was created for that precise reason. In subsequent issues, Maekawa notes that the readers and producers of *Adonis*, both in their creative productions in the magazine and in their discussions in the FORUM section, seem to perceive a certain commonality with one another, a shared empathy arising from readers’ mutual struggles. Terming this a “consciousness of solidarity,” (*Nakama no ishiki*) he argues that in the pages of *dōjinshi* and other *hentai zasshi* of the 1950s and 1960s, such as *Fūzoku Kagaku* (1953-55) and *Fūzoku Kitan* (1960-75), a shift can be seen away from a strategy of subjectivation based on confessing and arousing sympathy or pity from others towards a rhetorical mode that took homosexuality as simply one mode of sexuality amongst others. This newly affirmative stance was not limited to *Adonis* for very long. The magazine

¹¹⁴ Hiki Yuzō. “*Dōseiai wa naoru ka*,” (Can homosexuality be cured?) *Adonis* アドニス 1, 1952, 14.

Fūzoku Kagaku actively solicited contributions from homosexual readers, terming them *sodomiya*, based on the English word *sodomite*, but without the negative connotations thereof. Rather, Maekawa suggests that the editors of the magazine invoked the term explicitly, to avoid the connotations that had accumulated around other terms for homosexual. While the magazine resisted being called a magazine for homosexuals specifically, it implemented a section for same-sex attracted readers to post and discuss various matters with another, and a personals section called the *fūzoku kenkyū kai* (group for studies on perverse things) for those seeking partners. Despite its name, *Fūzoku Kagaku* had relatively few sexology-related articles compared to competitors, and it took a proactive stance towards its homosexual readers. In a 1954 issue, Saijo Michio, an editor at the magazine, declared “*Sodomiya*. Have confidence in yourself, for you are by no means ‘abnormal’. Let’s join our hands together with joy and confidence and move forward.”¹¹⁵ Analyzing the magazine’s rhetoric, Ishida Hitoshi notes that much of it “could pass as an enlightened slogan in our age of contemporary gay activism.”¹¹⁶ Thus, in magazines like this, a nascent sense of community and subjectivity predicated on a sense of group solidarity, rather than individual suffering, can be seen. This shift, in turn, was enabled by the move away from the highly regulated discursive spaces of prewar *hentai zasshi*.

The distillation of a collective homosexual identity had significant economic implications as well. As readers came to see themselves as a joint group, their collective demands came to have increased sway over the editorial decisions of the magazines they subscribed to. Maekawa, terming this a “strategy of numbers,” (*kazu no senjutsu*) argues that it was critical in making

¹¹⁵ Saijo Michio, *Fūzoku Kagaku* 風俗科学, May 1954, title page.

¹¹⁶ Ishida Hitoshi, “*Otoko ga sukina otokotachi no gentsetsu shi*,” 男が好き男たちの言説史 [The discursive history of men who love men] (Unpublished dissertation, 2006): 91.

explicitly queer media economically viable.¹¹⁷ As an illustration of this strategy, he cites the experience of the hentai zasshi *Fūzoku Kitan*. Originally a general interest *hentai zasshi* that specialized in S&M fetishism, the demands of readers for more images of men specifically, and for more explicit gay content in general, led to the magazine's shift from a broader audience towards a specific focus on same-sex attracted male readership by 1963.¹¹⁸ In actively cultivating a homosexual readership, *Fūzoku Kitan* was able to survive economic hardships that sank other magazines, and allowed to continue publication for a remarkable fourteen years. In 1963, a group of smaller booksellers called the Japanese National Retail Publications Union Organization (*Nihon shuppan mono kōrigyō kumiai zenkoku rengō kai*) published a list of “magazines harmful to adolescents,” which included *Fūzoku Kitan* among others.¹¹⁹ This ban had an immediate deleterious effect on the magazine, forcing it to raise prices from 200 to 300 yen. However, the editors of the magazine declined to change editorial direction, instead writing in an editor's note that the magazine had a “purpose” (*igi*) in providing a space for those who could not discuss their sexualities publicly with others.¹²⁰ This decision resulted in a large volume of responses praising the decision of the magazine and vowing to continue to support it; conversely, in 1966, when the magazine removed pornographic images to conform to a local ordinance passed by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government in 1966, readers responded quickly and vociferously, objecting in harsh terms to the decision.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Maekawa, *Dansei dōseiaisha*, 106-7.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 134.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 148.

¹²⁰ *Fūzoku Kitan* 風俗奇譚. “Henshū noto,” 編集ノ一ト (Editor's note). December 1963, 160.

¹²¹ Maekawa, *dōseiaisha*, 153.

2.5 *Barazoku*, *Rentaikan* and Postwar Affective History

At the same time in the late 1960s, the success of publications on homosexuality was catching the eye of a publisher named Itō Bungaku, manager of the small publishing company *Dai ni Shobō*. Originally founded by his father in 1948 as a publisher of *tanka* poetry collections, by the 1960s it had turned to publishing erotic works to stay economically solvent. After publishing a book on masturbation titled *Hitori bochi no sei seikatsu* (Sex life on one's own) in 1966, the responses from readers confessing their own sexual fantasies of men led him to publish a book explicitly about homosexuality. This book, titled *Homo tekunikku - otoko to otoko no sei seikatsu* (Homo technique: the sex lives of men with men) was published in 1968, and it quickly became the best-selling publication the company had ever produced. This, coupled with a perception that there were relatively few competitors to deal with economically, led Itō to found the magazine *Barazoku* (Rose tribe) in 1971.¹²² While it was not the first magazine that specifically targeted non-heterosexual readers, unlike previous magazines, it was sold in major bookstores and department stores, representing a massive increase in the scope of potential readers it could reach. The first issue was printed in 10,000 copies, of which between 6,000 to 7,000 sold, a number that would only increase the longer the magazine was in circulation. By comparison, Mitsuhashi Junko estimates that at its peak, *Fūzoku Kitan's* newsletter, the *Fūzoku Kitan Kurabu* (FKK) had 500 or so members, while *Adonis'* circulation was even lower, with a 1956 estimate placing it around 200.¹²³

¹²² Itō Bungaku 伊藤文学. “Henshū Chō ‘hiwa’,” 編集長「秘話」 [Secret stories of the lead editors]. Tokyo, Bunshun Nesuko, 2001: 20.

¹²³ Maekawa, *Dansei dōseiaisha*, 92, 102.

The foundation of *Barazoku* has been spoken of in epochal terms by both Itō and other writers of gay Japanese history. Itō himself claimed in recollections that he had a “Distinct sense of purpose,” (*Bakusen de wa nakatta isshu no shimeikan*) to form the magazine as a haven for non-heterosexual readers.¹²⁴ The writer Susumu Ryu goes even further in his characterization, claiming that before *Barazoku*’s publication, sexual minorities were “Wandering lost in a deep fog,” (*Fukai kiri no naka wo samayotteiru*) and “In a state of spiritual starvation,” (*Seishinteki ni wa 'kiga jōtai'*).¹²⁵ Yet as Maekawa notes, it was decades of discursive production in the newsletters and publications of the *hentai zasshi* of the past that created a self-consciously queer consumer audience that the magazine would be able to appeal to. Furthermore, far from being rescued by Ito’s magazine, non-heterosexual readers had by the 1960s already been articulating their own subjectivities both in the discursive spaces of other magazines and newsletters and in new, aesthetic and literary oriented explorations of same-sex love. As Jeffrey Angles writes, even during the prewar period, same-sex love had defenders amongst a number of writers within the Japanese intelligentsia, such as detective fiction writer Edogawa Ranpo (1894-1965) and the writers Inagaki Taruho (1900-1977) and Hamao Shiro (1895-1935). Hamao, in the magazine *Fujin saron* (Women’s Salon) in 1930, is one of the first to argue explicitly for tolerance and understanding of homosexuals, citing the early British homosexual rights advocate Edward Carpenter and suggests that homosexuality itself is variegated and nuanced. Furthermore, Hamao suggests the existence of a natural connection between homosexuality and creativity, citing such

¹²⁴ Ibid., 160.

¹²⁵ Susumu Ryu 超竜. *Otoko ni koisuru otokotachi: dare mo oshiete kurenakatta sekushuaru mainoritei no sekai* オトコに恋するオトコたち—誰も教えてくれなかったセクシュアル・マイノリティの世界 [Men who love men: the untold world of sexual minorities]. Tokyo: Rittōsha, 2015: 98.

disparate writers and artists as William Shakespeare, Michelangelo, and the *haiku* poet Matsuo Basho.¹²⁶ In the postwar period, many of the same the rhetorical strategies used by Hamao would be used by Inagaki Taruho in his work 1968 work *Shōnen'ai no bigaku* (The aesthetics of boy love), in which he “describe[s] the historical, psychological, and metaphysical ramifications of the love of beautiful boys in an eclectic blend of ideas culled from history, Freudianism, pop psychology, and existentialism.”¹²⁷ The postwar homoerotic poetry of openly gay poet Mutsuo Takahashi (1937-), in particularly in collections such as the 1964 *Bara no ki, nise no koibito-tachi* (Rose tree, fake lovers) and the 1971 free form poem *Homeuta* (Ode, 1971) further utilizes the historical aesthetics of disparate cultural motifs, including, Ancient Greek same-sex love, the Japanese pre-modern sexual model of *nanshoku*, and even the Catholic Church in order to articulate a new conceptualization of homosexuality consciously located in a transcultural and transhistorical space of imagined queer history. Carolyn Dinshaw, in her work on queer subjectivities in a Medieval European context titled *Getting Medieval*, notes that queer critics and artists have constantly utilized the imagery of the past in deconstructive ways, so as to constitute new forms of affective history through identification with the past. Calling this a “queer historical impulse,” she describes it as “an impulse toward making connections across time between, on the one hand, lives, texts, and other cultural phenomenon...and on the other hand, those left out of current sexual categories,” and states that “Such an impulse extends the resources for self- and community building into even the distance past.”¹²⁸ In their self-conscious

¹²⁶ Hamao Shirō 濱尾四郎. “Dōseiai Kō,” 同性愛考 [Thoughts on homosexuality]. *Fujin saron*, September 1930, 136-42.

¹²⁷ Jeffrey Angles, *Love of Boys*, 230.

¹²⁸ Carolyn Dinshaw. *Getting Medieval: Sexualities and Communities, Pre- and Postmodern*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1999: 3.

invocation of premodern Japanese sexual configurations as well as those from even more distant cultures, a mode of subjectivation based on an affective self-identification with history can be seen in the works of these writers and poets. Alongside previous strategies of subjectivation, this strategy of affective history, as it can be called, was used by writers and critics to present a model of queerness not historically abject but rather deeply rooted in world culture and history.

Such affective and aesthetic strategies of representation can also be seen in *Barazoku*, particularly in its earliest incarnations. As Jonathan Mackintosh has argued, Itō advocated for “solidarity,” (*rentaikan*) between readers of *Barazoku*, writing in one of the earliest issues that “Through the inauguration of this magazine, it is my cherished desire to drive away your feelings of loneliness, to be able even just a little to give you *rentaikan*.”¹²⁹ This usage of this term shows the degree to which readers of male-male centered publications had come in identifying themselves with a discretely non-heterosexual subjectivity. No longer placed in a position of having to deny or justify their sexual orientations, the readers of magazines like *Barazoku* and the other gay interest magazines that soon followed it such as *Adon* (1974-1996) and *Samson* (1982-) had finally established a discursive space that was unequivocally their own. The limitations of these spaces in affecting large scale shifts in consciousness, however, would soon become apparent in both their rhetorical strategies and approach to the issue of marriage itself.

2.6 The Discursive Limits of ‘Closet Media’

¹²⁹ Quoted in Jonathan Mackintosh, “Itō Bungaku and the Solidarity of the Rose Tribes [Barazoku]: Stirrings of Homo Solidarity in Early 1970s Japan.” *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context*, Issue 12 January 2006: Unpaginated.

Nevertheless, despite the success of some writers in portraying homosexuality positively in mainstream publications and the formation of self-identified queer discursive spaces in the form of various magazines and newsletters, the scope and range of this media was extremely limited. The readers of *Barazoku* in the 1970s, despite the growth of other gay-interest magazines in the interim period, dealt with many of the same problems that readers of *hentai zasshi* in the 1950s, and in turn the 1920s, did; namely, the inability to talk openly with friends and family about their sexuality, difficulties in finding a suitable partner, and the pressure to marry and form families from both their immediate relatives and society at large. The reasons for this limitation of scope are numerous; as Katsuhiko Suganamu notes, however, “it is more precise to state that Japanese queer male culture has been made consistently visible to the gaze of the mainstream Japanese public, to titillate their voyeuristic curiosity.”¹³⁰ This semi-masked state is reflected in the original audiences and orientation of *hentai zasshi*, which were originally intended for heterosexual audiences but partially reclaimed as queer spaces via a process of reclamation and bricolage. Rather, the publications that became the staging ground for new queer subjectivities also functioned to isolate and contain specific configurations of sexuality that in turn functioned as referential “others” to mainstream society. Maekawa, calling this phenomenon “closet media,” (*kurozetto medeia*) argues that the writers and editors of magazines like *Barazoku*, despite their calls for “solidarity,” (*rentaikan*) advocated for individualistic solutions to problems like social discrimination rather than social and collective ones. In the case of *Barazoku*, Jonathan Mackintosh writes that the array of legal and political theories and modalities being constituting the earliest wave of gay liberation, being developed concurrently in

¹³⁰ Katsuhiko Suganamu. *Contact Moments: The Politics of Intercultural Desire in Japanese Male-Queer Cultures*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012.

the United States and elsewhere by an array of gay and lesbian rights organizations in the late 1960s and 1970s, gained little traction in the magazine's pages, something he attributes to Itō himself. As Mackintosh writes, "Gay Liberation was, according to [Itō], irrelevant since Japan was already the kind of 'free and developed country' unconstrained by law and religion that homo in other nations aspired to achieve."¹³¹ Mackintosh argues that this skeptical stance should not be seen as a renegement on the magazine's commitment to gay solidarity, arguing that although *Barazoku* "does appear to have turned away early on from Gay Liberation," by the early 1970s, to "judge the magazine by the goals and standards of this non-Japanese movement is to miss the point."¹³² It is curious, however, that while Mackintosh defends Itō's editorial approach as being informed via his correspondence with same-sex attracted readers, he does not seem to call into question the premise that Itō, as a self-described heterosexual man, could by virtue of editing a gay-focused magazine act as a virtual arbiter of the total reception of gay liberation into Japanese discourse. Furthermore, the limitations of Itō's approach to structural heteronormativity, and of the solutions he offered to his readership, can be seen as rooted in his editorial failure to reckon with the structural and interlocking nature of homophobia and misogyny. T Such limitations are demonstrated in *Barazoku*'s approach to the question of marriage itself. While the readership of *Barazoku* was by no means homogeneous, and a variety of political positions and orientations can be seen in its pages, an analysis of reader correspondence during the decades of the 1970s and 1980s shows a privileging of individualistic solutions to societal issues like marriage, as well as a patriarchal outlook towards both the family and the gendered division of labor inherent to the postwar economic system it formed the base of. As has been previously noted, the vast

¹³¹ Jonathan Mackintosh, *Itō Bungaku*, unpaginated.

¹³² Ibid.

majority of readers of and writers in queer magazines like *Barazoku* were same-sex attracted men. Even before *Barazoku*'s inception, from the mid-1950s onward, the increasing economic clout of same-sex attracted male readers gave them considerable influence over the editorial directions of *hentai zasshi* like *Fuzoku Kagaku* and *Fuzoku Kitan*. However, Maekawa writes that while this made male-male oriented magazines economically viable in the eyes of publishers like Itō, the economic disparity in postwar Japan between men and women meant that lesbian-oriented publications were seen as less than viable for decades.¹³³ The marginalization of female queer voices in these magazines can also be seen in the views on marriage and family espoused within them. As early as 1956, in a special edition of *Adonis* on the issue of marriage, some gay male readers suggested that adultery during marriage with another man is morally more justifiable than with a woman, and thereby recommend marriage on the basis of a “coexistence,” (*ryōritsu*) between their heterosexual marriage and their own, non-heterosexual sex lives.¹³⁴ This perspective was later echoed in a 1973 issue of *Barazoku* also dedicated to marriage, with writers claiming that having a gay sex life won't “make [one's] wife unhappy,” (*Me gimi ga fukō ni nare wake ja nai*).¹³⁵ Such sentiments, Maekawa observes, are predicated on a heteronormative view of marriage in which women are expected to manage the household and bring warmth to the home.¹³⁶ This perspective of marriage was frequently exhibited in gay magazines of the postwar period: while *Barazoku* initiated a column for lesbian readers titled *Yuri Tsushin* (Lily Correspondence) in 1976, its editorial perspective, as well as its readership continued to be

¹³³ Maekawa, *Dōseiai*, 218-19.

¹³⁴ “Daburu tokushū: Dōseiai to kekkon ni tsuite” ダブル特集—同性愛と結婚について [Double special feature: on homosexuality and marriage] *Adonis* 28, 1956, 3.

¹³⁵ “‘Barazoku’ wa kekkon sureba ii,” 「薔薇族」は結婚すればいい [Should ‘Barazoku’ marry?] *Barazoku*, December 1979, 59.

¹³⁶ Maekawa, 196.

dominated by a male perspective. This reality was thrown into a particularly stark contrast in 1981, when Itō proposed a “marriage mixer,” (*Omiiai*) between gay and lesbian readers of *Barazoku* in Tokyo. The idea of tactical marriages between gay men and lesbians had appeared in the magazine as early as 1972, and the mixer was proposed as a way of testing its validity.¹³⁷ Yet on the day of the proposed mixer, while twenty men showed up at the venue, not a single lesbian showed up.¹³⁸ While the precise reasons for this absence are not completely knowable, they attest to the failure of queer-male oriented magazines like *Barazoku* to build meaningful alliances with queer women, the result of what Maekawa terms the failure of gay men to recognize the “asymmetrical,” differences in economic and social power between men and women in the postwar era.¹³⁹ The gendered division of the Japanese economy affected not only the perceived viability of publications for queer women, but further extended to their ability to navigate and organized in physical spaces; as Mark McLelland writes, “Gay men’s privileged economic position and the red-light districts where many *homo* bars were located, gave them much more freedom of association than was available to same-sex-desiring women, who were liable to be tied to the home and to have less time, money or confidence to venture forth in search of like-minded women.”¹⁴⁰ A roundtable discussion between *Barazoku* contributors and the lesbian *dōjinshi* group *Midori no kaneshon* (Green Carnations) in the March 1977 issue of the magazine sharply illuminates the disjuncture in priorities between same-sex desiring men and women during the late 1970s. In the accusation that “to male *homo*, women are simply a tool to

¹³⁷ Ibid., 194-5.

¹³⁸ “Dokusha kokuhaku zagikai doushitemo kekkon shitai,” 読者告白座議会どうしても結婚したい [Readers confession roundtable: no matter what, I want to marry]. *Barazoku*, April 1981, 44-63.

¹³⁹ Maekawa, 219.

¹⁴⁰ McLelland, *Queer Japan*, 168.

leave behind descendants,” the lesbian contributors to the roundtable directly point out the degree to which gay men of the postwar Japanese era internalized the heteronormative conception of marriage premised on heteronormativity.¹⁴¹

By the late 1980s, *Barazoku* had solidified itself as the most prominent voice of the Japanese gay male community, and helped to popularize an ideology of *rentaikan* based on the perceived commonality of their experiences and a shared affective history. In certain respects, its success represented the culmination of gay male readers in articulating their own subjectivity, as well as their collective clout in shifting the orientation of postwar *hentai zasshi* magazines away from a voyeuristic orientation focused on “perverse,” sexualities predicated on the pathologization of sexual orientations derived from earlier sexological research. Simultaneously, the failure of these publications to recognize the interlocking structures of sexism and heteronormativity, and their disinterest in pursuing or advocating for collective action in favor of personalized solutions, limited their impact on mainstream sexual discourses. A survey conducted by the major newspaper the *Asahi Shimbun* in 1998 asking, “Do you agree or disagree with the statement that homosexuality is one way of loving?” found that 65% of respondents said they did not, while only 28% of respondents answered in the affirmative.¹⁴² These figures attest to the lack of penetration of ideas promoted in queer-friendly media in mainstream Japanese society as late as the second half of the 1990s. Conversely, Sugiura Ikuko’s analysis of lesbian related writing in mainstream magazines in the 1970s and 1980s shows the emergence of a much stronger political consciousness that was sharply critical of the heteronormative family among

¹⁴¹ “Dokushin josei zagikai: Onna wo aisanai otokotachi wo onna wa dou miteiru ka?” 独身女性座議会—女を愛さない男たちを女はどう見ているか？ [Single women roundtable: how to women view men who don’t love women?] *Barazoku*, March 1977, 34-43: 36.

¹⁴² Angles, *Love of Boys*, 240.

early lesbian writers and activists. One of the very earliest instances she cites of such a critique is the essay “Homosexuality as free love,” in the December 1972 issue of the magazine *Fujin Kōron* by lesbian writer Komashaku Kimi. In this article, Komashaku explicitly attacks heteronormativity, writing that “The idea that only heterosexuality is natural to humans is a lie.”¹⁴³ Critiques like Komashaku’s, which utilized both a feminist and lesbian lens to analyze heteronormativity, appeared in various publications throughout the 1980s, including an article by one writer declaring that “liberated lesbians reject the one husband one wife marriage system, and in forming relations with other women, they are vigilant not to simply imitate male-female relations.”¹⁴⁴ Nonetheless, while such critiques took much more direct aim at the heteronormativity undergirding social relations in postwar Japan, their scope was limited by their disparate nature and the dismissive attitude taken towards feminism by mainstream Japanese media and intellectuals.¹⁴⁵ The growth and impact of feminist thought on Japanese discourse, as well as the utilization of queer narratives by feminist writers critiquing the institution of the family in the 1980s and 1990s, will be more extensively discussed in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

2.7 Conclusions

¹⁴³ Sugiura Ikuko 杉浦郁子. “1970, 1980 nendai no ippan ni okeru ‘rezubian’ hyōsō: rezubian feminisuto gensetsu no tōjō made,” 1970、1980年代の一般雑誌における「レスビアン」表象：レスビアンフェミニスト言説の登場まで [The image of ‘lesbians’ in general interest magazines in the 1970s and 1980s: until the appearance of lesbian feminist discourse]. *Sengo nihon josō/dōseiai kenkyū* 戦後日本女装・同性愛研究 [Studies on postwar Japanese homosexuality/crossdressing]. Tokyo: Chūō Daigaku Shuppan Bu, 2006, 519-557: 512.

¹⁴⁴ Sugiura Ikuko, *Rezubian*, 513.

¹⁴⁵ For more on the reception of feminism into Japanese discourse, see Ehara Yumiko, “The Politics of Teasing,” in *Contemporary Japanese Thought* (2005) and Saito Masami, “‘Uman ribu to media’ ‘ribu to joseigaku’ no danzetsu o saikō suru: 1970-nen aki *Asahi shinbun* tonai-ban no ribu hōdō o kiten toshite,” [Rethinking the split between uman ribu and the media, and ribu and women’s studies: Starting with reports in the *Asahi Shimbun* Tokyo edition in autumn 1970] in *Joseigaku Nenpō* 2003 24: 1-20.

While male-male oriented magazines succeeded in articulating a positive and affirmative vision of homosexuality that resisted the primacy of sexological epistemologies, their reticence to expand their reach and provide a systematic critique of heteronormative marriage meant that their scope was significantly curtailed from the start. Furthermore, as Suganuma has written, these magazines were purposefully positioned as semi-open spaces within Japanese media, so that they could be accessed for the reading pleasure of heterosexual audiences. The semi-opaque nature of postwar queer sexual discourses both enabled their longevity and limited their impact by positioning them as anterior and other to heterosexuality, which was economically and socially privileged in the postwar family system.

Conversely, the relative accessibility of queer texts in postwar Japan, particularly from the 1960s onward, allowed for creative experimentations and collaborations seldom seen in other media environments. The manga artist Takemiya Keiko (1950-), for example, was heavily influenced by the aesthetic-romantic ideals articulated by Inagaki Taruho in his 1968 work *Shōnen'ai no Bigaku*.¹⁴⁶ As an early artist of *shōjo* (young women's) manga, Takemiya became famous for her works depicting love between young men in works such as *Kaze to ki no uta* (The song of the wind and trees, 1976-84), which self-consciously made use of the aesthetic dimensions and symbols of Inagaki's work to articulate a new aesthetic of male-male love and affection. Her story "In the sunroom," published in the 1970 issue of the magazine *Bessatsu Shōjo Komikku*, is believed to have depicted the first kiss between boys in a mainstream manga publication. By the beginning of the 1980s, numerous female writers would be working in the genre Takemiya pioneered, including Moto Hagio, Ikeda Ryoko and Toshie Kihara, all of whom

¹⁴⁶ Angles, *Love of Boys*, 234-5.

wrote and illustrated *manga* with queer romantic themes including *Tōma no Shinzō* (The Heart of Thomas, 1974), *Berusaiyu no Bara* (The Rose of Versailles, 1972-73), and *Mari to Shingo* (Mari and Shingo, 1979-84). Chizuko Ueno suggests that female writers utilized the images of gay men in Boy's Love (BL) or *shōnen-ai* manga constituted a means by which alternatives to heteronormativity could be imagined; commenting on the rise of the genre, she writes that "These beautiful boys are 'the idealized self-image of girls, and they are neither male nor female. They belong to a 'third sex.'"¹⁴⁷ While Mark McLelland argues that such depictions of gay men in women's media "tell us little about those men in Japan who primarily experience sexual desire directed towards other men and rather more about Japanese women's problematic relationship with traditional images of masculinity,"¹⁴⁸ their very appearance in Japanese media suggests that images of queerness in postwar Japanese discourse were effectively utilized by *shōjo* writers to critique marriage and its underlying premise of heteronormativity. Furthermore, while the queer narratives presented by these works were initially limited to *manga* and LGBT publications, as the next chapter of this thesis will show, by the late 1980s they had entered the literary mainstream, and just as the Japanese economy began its fateful slowdown in the early 1990s, queerness and its relation to marriage would become a prominent topic in popular and academic discourse alike.

¹⁴⁷ Ueno Chizuko 上野千鶴子. *Hatsujō sōchi: erosu no shinario* 発情装置—エロスのシナリオ [The mechanisms of excitement: Erotic scenarios]. Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1998: 131.

¹⁴⁸ Mark McLelland. "Male Homosexuality and Popular Culture in Modern Japan." *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context* Issue 3, January 2000: Unpaginated.

CHAPTER 3

IMAGINING A HOME FOR US: QUEER CONFIGURATIONS OF FAMILY IN YOSHIMOTO BANANA'S KITCHEN, EKUNI KAORI'S TWINKLE TWINKLE, AND HASHIGUCHI RYŌSUKE'S HUSH!

3.1 Outline

The previous chapter of this thesis explored the postwar development of uniquely non-heterosexual subjectivities amongst primarily same-sex attracted men vis-à-vis the circulation of so-called *fūzoku* and *hentai zasshi*, and group-made, self-published magazines (*dōjinshi*), and mass market publications such as *Barazoku*. The end of that chapter explored divergences in

conceptualizations of marriage and family between same-sex loving men and women, as well as the shifting depictions and utilizations of same-sex imagery in women's fiction of the 1970s. This chapter will pick up on this history and begins by exploring the ways that Japanese women writers and feminist intellectuals shifted the parameters of debate regarding both the role of women in the Japanese workplace as well as the position of "women's literature," (*joryū bungaku*) within the context of the postwar canon of Japanese literature. The first section explores the changing modes of representing male-male sexuality in Japanese fiction, as well as the broader politicization of these representations within the genre of *shōjo manga*. The next section provides context to the changing debates regarding both women in Japanese literature and the ongoing changes in conceptualizations of women in the workplace at the state level during the 1970s and 1980s as a result of the intervention of feminist discourses into the mainstream discursive construction of the nuclear family. This section argues that while Japanese feminists were successful in destabilizing the normative ideal of the nuclear family, they noticeably diverged as to what the ideal shape or configuration of the post-nuclear family might be. Furthermore, a relative disinterest in the experiences of queer Japanese people amongst many active in the feminist movement hindered the movement's capacity for considering non-heteronormative modes of family as an alternative to the nuclear family. The third section then analyzes three seminal works written between the late 1980s and the early 2000s that opposed the nuclear model of family and helped to shift the parameters of this debate and bring non-heteronormative family configurations to the forefront of mainstream Japanese discourse for the first time. Through an analysis of Yoshimoto Banana's *Kitchen* (*Kicchin*, 1987), Ekuni Kaori's *Twinkle Twinkle* (*Kira kira hikaru*, 1992), and Hashiguchi Ryōsuke's film *Hush!* (*Hasshu!*, 2001) this chapter argues that queer and female writers helped to definitively shift the normative

parameters of family in Japanese discourse by exploring and presenting alternative modes of family not predicated on hierarchical and heteronormative relations. Ultimately, this chapter suggests that within the vernacular space of literature, Japanese writers and artists were able to bring queer and feminist critiques of the family together in order to present alternatives to the nuclear family model, which they subsequently identified as a source of their own marginality and alterity.

3.2 The Emergence of Male-Male Sexuality in *Shōjo* Fiction in the 1970s and 1980s

The previous chapter of thesis focused on the discursive formation of queer male identities in postwar Japan as they unfolded vis-à-vis mutually constitutive and at times contentious relationships with publications that simultaneously othered them and sought their financial support. As the conclusion of that chapter noted, the establishment of mainstream, for-profit magazines aimed at queer men in the late 1970s and 1980s, including *Barazoku*, *ADON*, and *Samson*, coincided with the appearance of depictions of male-male romance, often termed boy's love (*Shōnen ai*, hereafter BL) in girls (*shōjo*) manga, particularly in the works of artists including Takemiya Keiko Moto Hagio, and Oshima Yumiko. Tomoko Aoyama traces the earliest examples of male-male sexuality being used as a narrative device in women's fiction to the author Mori Mari, (1903-1987), who was one of the first Japanese writers to write novels about openly non-heterosexual characters. Mori's use of aestheticized European characters and settings, as well as an emphasis on age-structured relationships between older and younger males, were very influential to early *shōjo* BL authors. With the founding of the *manga* festival Comiket in 1975, and the establishment of the earliest magazine dedicated to serializing BL manga, *June*, BL manga became increasingly widespread in Japanese popular media, and became popular with young female consumers from all walks of life. It can be argued that to a

large extent, this new media, focused on romantic and sexual aspects of male-male love, was simply meeting the needs of female consumers in a publishing market that had seldom acknowledged them. As Osaka Rie notes, while there were numerous manga publications catering to heterosexual men by the 1970s and early 1980s, extremely few catered to women.¹⁴⁹ Early BL works positioned themselves as narrative spaces in which sexuality could be expressed in non-heteronormative terms.

Tomoko Aoyama identifies a number of visual and literary techniques used by early BL artists in depicting male-male sexuality, including the frequent utilization of “Western classical or mythological figures,” “anti-realist,” visuals and an “amoral,” aesthetic in which “beauty and fantasy were emphasized over reality,” and a “tendency to keep a good distance from reality,” can be seen.¹⁵⁰ According to Aoyama, the tendency towards an anti-realist aesthetic was markedly pronounced in the first BL manga series of the 1970s, and anti-realism was used to justify depictions of male-male sexuality as fantastical, transgressive, and even violent and forceful. As she writes, “Because these female pioneers of homosexual stories had a strong aesthetic tendency to keep a good distance from reality, their works hardly shared anything with those written by Mishima or by modern American writers such as Tennessee Williams, Truman Capote and James Baldwin. Homosexuality was such a perfect aesthetic sphere for these women writers that they would never allow anything ugly or grotesque to creep into it. None of the residents of the idealized world feels guilty about being a homosexual, or has to seek his identity

¹⁴⁹ Osaka Rie 大坂理恵. 'Fujoshi' no shakaishi: josei ni yoru josei no tame no dansei doseiai no shakaishi, “腐女子」の社会史—女性による女性のための男性同性愛の社会史[The social history of ‘rotten girls’ the social history of male homosexuality by and for women.] (Unpublished dissertation, Keio University School of Economics, 2009): 13.

¹⁵⁰ Tomoko Aoyama. “Male Homosexuality as treated by Japanese women writers.” In *The Japanese Trajectory: Modernization and Beyond*, by Yoshio Sugimoto and Gavan McCormack, pages 186-204: 194.

as did the residents of James Baldwin's *Another Country*. Even the sadomasochistic scenes found in the works by Mori, Hagio, and Takemiya are presented according to the highly formalized and conventional aesthetic codes."¹⁵¹ The depictions of male-male sexuality in these works were primarily oriented towards a female gaze, and their readers by and large did not conceive of them as mimetic representations of male-male sexuality in Japan, as indicated by their specular usage of Western aesthetics and motifs. As the famous *manga* artist Takemiya Keiko stated in an interview with the magazine CREA in 1991 that her works were she said that her works were "unrelated," to contemporary gay issues, and therefore "naturally different," from works depicting actual gay relationships (*gei wo happyō shita mono to wa onozuto chigau*).¹⁵² She states that she was motivated in such works as her breakthrough serialized BL manga *Kaze no ki to uta* (The song of the wind and trees, 1976-1984) to depict young men in place of young women in her stories as a means of overcoming the existing restrictions in the world of *shōjo* manga on depicting sexuality, particularly female sexuality.

Nonetheless, even as Takemiya stresses that her works are not meant to be taken "realistically," her comments that she had to use male characters to overcome restrictions on depicting sexuality in *shōjo* manga attest to the inherently gendered politics of the genre of *shōjo* itself. Furthermore, they indicate that early BL works were in fact actively political, and were used by authors to challenge and change existing sexual frameworks. As Aoyama notes, *shōjo* manga before the 1970s was dominated by male editors and tended towards formulaic and heteronormative plots, many of which were "persistent variations on the Cinderella theme."¹⁵³

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 196.

¹⁵² CREA クレア, March 1991.

¹⁵³ Aoyama, *Homosexuality*, 194.

The largely male editors of the magazines in which these manga were published resisted the inclusion of sexuality of any kind in their narratives, male or female. The usage of male-male sexuality, therefore, became a means by which heteronormativity was contested by female writers, and through which alternative and non-heteronormative modes of female sexuality could be explored. Satō Masaki argues that female *shōjo* authors of the 1970s and 80s utilized BL narratives in order to depict sexual relations that were not based on pre-existing models of male-female relations, in which “gender roles were predetermined,” (*yakuwari tantō ga kimarikitte*).¹⁵⁴ The establishment of conceptual distance between the sexuality expressed in the text and the presumed sexuality of the reader, achieved through the use of male rather than female protagonists as well as through the focalization of homosexuality via a Western-inflected and non-realist aesthetics, allowed for these works to explore modes of sexuality that could not be expressed through conventional heteronormative plots or conventions.

As Satō’s argument and Takemiya’s comments suggest, BL was from the outset a politicized form of narrative. Furthermore, while BL was primarily made by women and positioned as external and apart from queer discourses, others have argued that these works reframed conceptualizations of queerness in the broader public imagination and disseminated negative images of queer men into the mainstream. Satō argues that by using male-male narratives without consideration of the heteronormative world in which they are produced, circulated and consumed, *shōjo* BL authors help to perpetuate homophobic ideas and images in society by depicting male-male sexuality as violent and grotesque. As they write, “In this

¹⁵⁴ Satō Masaki 佐藤雅樹. “Shōjo manga to homofobia,”少女漫画とホモフォビア [*Shōjo* manga and homophobia.] in *Kuia sutadiizu* ’96 クイアスタディーズ(’96) [Queer studies ’96] edited by Kuia sutadiizu henshū iinkai クイアスタディーズ編集委員会. (Tokyo: Nanatsu Mori Shokan, 1996), pp. 161-9: 162.

[heteronormative society], whether or not works depicting male-male love intend to or not, they become intermingled with depictions of homosexuality itself. Therefore, it is impossible to think that depictions of male-male love can be separated from actual homosexual people.”¹⁵⁵ In Takemiya’s *Kaze no ki to uta*, for example, Satō notes that genuine homosexual love is depicted alongside extreme sexual acts such as incest and rape, thus implying equivalence between the former and latter.¹⁵⁶ In this sense, early *shōjo* BL authors, while seeking to express new modes of sexuality beyond the heteronormative parameters imposed on them by publishers, consequently had a significant impact on the formation of queer discourses in mainstream Japanese discourse, and in certain ways reified conceptual linkages between homosexuality and other “perverse,” sexualities seen in both pre and postwar *hentai zasshi*.

Other scholars of BL, however, emphasize the non-mimetic aspects of the genre and point to its historical role in constituting new discursive spaces in which female writers and readers could explore a variety of sexual themes. James Welker, for instance, writes that “Researchers and critics alike have long argued that “boys’ love” appeals to its readers because it is situated outside local heteronormative discourse and, as a consequence, liberates readers to vicariously experiment with gender and sexuality.”¹⁵⁷ Citing the case of Mizoguchi Akiyo, a lesbian academic and activist who has stated she “‘became’ a lesbian via reception, in [her] adolescence, of the ‘beautiful boy’ comics of the 1970s,” Welker argues that the default reader of BL manga has been erroneously positioned as heterosexual and female, precluding the

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 167.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 162.

¹⁵⁷ James Welker. “Lilies of the Margin: Beautiful Boys and Queer Female Identities in Japan.” In *AsiaPacifiQueer: Rethinking Genders and Sexualities*, edited by Fran Martin, Peter Jackson, Mark McLelland and Audrey Yue. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008, 46-66: 46.

possibility of non-heteronormative modes of consuming and engaging works in the genre. Furthermore, as Tomoko Aoyama notes, the parameters of the genre itself are too broad to classify them on the basis of its earliest writers, and she notes an increasing engagement with social and political themes relating to sexuality in the genre as it continued to develop. In Yoshida Akimi's 1978 manga *Karifornia monogatari* (California story), for example, "homosexuality is by no means a mere aesthetic symbol: it is treated as part of life's reality together with other social issues such as divorce, drug abuse, male prostitution, abortion, violence, robbery, police and naval corruption, and the like."¹⁵⁸ Osaka Rie's analysis of the magazine *June* further attests to the active presence of lesbian, gay, and transgender readers and consumers of BL, many of whom used the genre as a refuge from the discrimination of the world.¹⁵⁹ And finally, it is important to note, as Aoyama has written, the diversification of BL overlapped with and was in many ways coterminous with a conceptual shift in depictions of homosexuality in Japanese women's writing in the 1980s.

3.3 Feminist Challenges to Postwar Discourse in the 1970s and 1980s

Much like the world of *shōjo* manga, the literary production of female writers in postwar Japan occurred largely in highly regulated, patriarchal discursive spaces. According to Amanda Seaman, the emergence of women's magazines during the Meiji Period opened up space for the emergence of distinctly female literature, and that in its earliest iterations it was, "shaped by and expressive of women's experiences and aspirations."¹⁶⁰ As she notes, sexuality, pregnancy and motherhood were some of the central experiences Japanese women writers of the early 20th

¹⁵⁸ Aoyama, *Homosexuality*, 197.

¹⁵⁹ Osaka Rie, *Fujoshi*, 16-17.

¹⁶⁰ Amanda Seaman. *Writing Pregnancy in Low-Fertility Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2017): 7.

century explored and tried to reconceptualize in their work. During the early 20th century, writers like Yosano Akiko and Okamoto Kanoko wrote about their experiences of pregnancy and childbirth in strikingly personal terms, and utilized imagery from traditional Shinto and Buddhist religion to critique and reverse premodern conceptualizations of pregnancy as inherently unclean.¹⁶¹ Furthermore, publications like the journal *Seitō* (Bluestockings) became an important discursive site for female intellectuals attempting to retheorize the social and personal significance of motherhood and female sexuality. Many of these writers wrote explicitly against the ideology of *ryōsai kenbo* (good wife, wise mother), a Meiji Period slogan that encouraged women “to be educated so that they could help support and strengthen the family in order to create a modern nation.”¹⁶² Much of this initial literary experimentation, however, was quickly circumscribed and regulated by government authorities from the 1930s onward, which sought to promote women as primarily mother and reproductive agents, resources to be utilized by the state. In the postwar period, the ideology of the postwar nuclear family had the effect of reinforcing this conceptualization of women as primarily mothers and caregivers, even as the postwar constitution expanded their rights and access to education, inheritance and divorce. As Vera Mackie notes, “it is one of the paradoxes of [the postwar period] that the force of political economy and familial ideology increasingly pushed women into an identification with the domestic sphere as housewives, while the legal changes of that time removed official obstacles to their activities as citizens in the public, political sphere.”¹⁶³ According to Seaman, the ideologically constructed image of women as full time homemakers and housewives characteristic of the postwar family model “is echoed in the pages of women’s literature in the

¹⁶¹ Ibid, 9.

¹⁶² Ibid., 10.

¹⁶³ Vera Mackie. *Feminism in Modern Japan: Citizenship, Embodiment and Sexuality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003: 122-3.

postwar period, where pregnancy and childbirth barely make an appearance, and where explicit descriptions of women's sexuality were equally rare."¹⁶⁴

By the early 1970s, however, a new wave of women's writing, corresponding to the initial emergence of feminism in Japan, challenged the parameters that had been regulated the literary production of women. According to Vera Mackie, the growth of New Left organizations in Japan during the 1960s in response to the renewal of the American-Japan Security Treaty (*Ampo*) as well as the Vietnam War, helped to form the impetus for some of the earliest feminist and *ūman ribu* (women's liberation) organizations by the early 1970s.¹⁶⁵ In a short period in the 1970s, a flurry of new journals such as *Onna Erosu* (Woman: Eros), direct action groups the Group of Fighting Women (*Guruppu tatakau onnatachi*) and the Union of Women for Choice and Free Use of the Birth Control Pill (*Chū pi ren*),¹⁶⁶ and publishers such as Femintern Press appeared and gave female writers a platform to critique conceptualizations of womanhood that had been hegemonic throughout the postwar period. Sharalyn Orbaugh delineates three discursive strategies that feminist writers of the 1970s and 1980s employed to critique patriarchal conceptualizations of women in literature and society; (a) "to maintain and describe the current configurations of power, exposing the harm done through them"; (b) "to maintain and describe the current configurations of power, but to invert the hierarchy of value, to valorize the object/passive side of the equation"; and (c) "to maintain the current binary configurations of

¹⁶⁴ Seaman, *Writing Pregnancy*, 13.

¹⁶⁵ Vera Mackie, *Feminism*, 147-8.

¹⁶⁶ *Chū pi ren* is a common abbreviation used by the group, whose full name is *Chūzetsu kinshi hō ni hantaishi piru kaikin wo yōkyū suru josei kaihō rengō* (Organization of women against the prohibition on abortion and demanding the legalization of the pill).

power, but to reverse the gender coding of the hierarchical power roles."¹⁶⁷ Takahashi Takako (1932-2013) in works such as took direct aim at the notion of motherhood as a sacred female vocation by portraying female protagonists who displayed “a conspicuous fear and hostility toward the sex that gives birth,” and depicted childbirth and pregnancy as unsettling, disorienting and at times detestable conditions.¹⁶⁸ As Julia Bullock writes, “Takahashi sees motherhood as an ideology that confines women to the realm of the quotidian, forcing them to subsume their own transcendent potential to the roles of ordinary wives and mothers, and she (and her characters) appear to want none of that, thank you very much.”¹⁶⁹ The author Tsushima Yūko (1947-2016), in works such as *Choji* (*Child of fortune*, 1978) and (*Yama o hashiru onna*, 1980) moved in an opposite direction, choosing to “focus upon women who choose to give birth and raise their children alone—a socially frowned upon decision in 1970s Japan.”¹⁷⁰ According to Nakayama Kazuko, women writers of the 1970s and 1980s sought to dismantle “the man-made myth of motherhood,” by attempting “to contemplate from a woman’s perspective the actually lived circumstances of women.”¹⁷¹ Other writers attempted to systemically critique the marginal position of women’s writing within the canonical framework of Japanese literature. In a 1974 essay titled “Is fiction inherently the realm of women?” (*Shōsetsu wa honshitsuteki ni josei no mono ka?*) the feminist writer Okuno Takeo wrote polemically that the “masculinist principles,” upon which postwar Japan had been founded had “collapsed,” with the result that male writers,

¹⁶⁷ Sharalyn Orbaugh, "The Body in Contemporary Japanese Women's Fiction," in Paul Gordon Schalow and Janet A. Walker, eds., *The Woman's Hand: Gender and Theory in Japanese Women's Writing* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), p. 123.

¹⁶⁸ Seaman, *Writing Pregnancy*, 26-7.

¹⁶⁹ Julia Bullock. *The Other Women's Lib: Gender and Body in Japanese Women's Fiction* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2010): 47.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 53.

¹⁷¹ Nakayama Kazuko. "The Subject of Women's Literature and the Transformation of Its Consciousness," Translated by Joan E. Ericson and Yoshiko Nagaoka in *Woman Critiqued*, 145-152: 149.

“having no masculinist principles upon which to base their work...are reduced to merely writing psychological novels of the everyday based on fantasy.”¹⁷² Within Okuno’s framework, the marginalization of women’s literature is reversed, with male writing becoming particularized and women’s writing becoming universalized as truly representative of Japan’s future trajectory. Furthermore, the genre category of *joryū bungaku* (women’s literature) and its accompanying description of female writers as *joryū sakka* (women writers) came under increased scrutiny; as Amanda Seaman notes, “From the beginning of modern Japanese women’s literary studies, the debate was whether Japanese women writers were *joryū sakka* or *josei sakka*- terms equivalent to the distinction between “women writers” and “women writers.”¹⁷³ Rebecca Copeland further argues that under the hegemony of this literary category, “women from all walks of life, with all manner of educational backgrounds and political or social interests, were believed to share quintessential and irrefutable feminine qualities that were manifest in their subsequent literary productions.”¹⁷⁴ By the 1980s, this term came to be replaced by *josei*, a development that was facilitated by the emergence of women’s studies (*joseigaku*) as an academic discipline in the late 1980s within Japanese academia as well as the increasing influence of feminism in journalism and government. As Yumiko Ehara, Yanagida Eino and Paula Long write, feminism underwent a period of diversification and institutionalization in Japanese society during the 1980s as it

¹⁷² Okuno Takeo. "Is Fiction Inherently the Realm of Women?" Translated by Barbara Hartley in *Woman Critiqued*, 66-72: 71.

¹⁷³ Amanda Seaman. "Women Writing, Writing Women: Essays in Memory of Professor Satoko Kan," In *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal*, No. 43 (2012), pp. 3-10: 4.

¹⁷⁴ Rebecca Copeland "A Century of Reading Women's Writing in Japan: An Introduction," in *Woman Critiqued: Translated Essays on Japanese Women's Writing*, ed. Rebecca Copeland (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006) pp. 1-20: 14.

became mainstreamed.¹⁷⁵ Academics, journalists and critics including Ueno Chizuko, Ochiai Emiko, Ogura Chikako and Mizuta Noriko helped to bring feminist ideas regarding family law, labor, economics, and the environment into mainstream thought through their public engagement, writing, publishing, and conferences. It was during this period that the Japanese government, influenced by the feminist movement, attempted some reforms of the gendered division of labor inherent to the national economy, most notably passing the Equal Employment Opportunity Law in 1986. The passage of this law reflected the changing Japanese economy as well as shifting labor patterns within the family. One of the most significant of these shifts was the growth of what the media termed *kengyô shufu* (part-time working wives) as women began to increasingly work in auxiliary, part time jobs outside the household during the 1970s. As Ueno Chizuko notes, “throughout the phase of ‘rapid economic growth’, Japanese industry continuously suffered from a labour shortage, especially at the bottom of the labour hierarchy,” a problem the Japanese government sought to remedy by bringing more women into the economy.¹⁷⁶ By 1981, more than 51 percent of married women were employed in some kind of work outside the home, a dramatic shift in labor patterns from the 1950s and 1960s. While this law was intended to provide women protections in the workplace and prohibit discriminatory hiring practices, many feminists have argued that it was severely limited in efficacy by its lack of legal enforcement mechanisms.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵ Ehara Yumiko, Yanagida Eino and Paula Long. “Japanese Feminism in the 1970s and 1980s.” *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal English Supplement* No. 4 (1993), pp. 49-69: 49.

¹⁷⁶ Ueno Chizuko. “The Japanese women’s movement: the counter-values to industrialism.” in *The Japanese Trajectory: Modernization and Beyond*, edited by Gavan McCormack and Yoshio Sugimoto, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, pp. 167-185: 175.

¹⁷⁷ Joyce Gelb. “Tradition and Change in Japan: The Case of Equal Employment Opportunity Law.” *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal, English Supplement*, No. 1 (1991), pp. 48-75: 59.

Even as the feminist movement in Japan helped to definitively shift the discursive parameters around motherhood, women's labor and women's literature, numerous ideological divides existed between individual feminist writers and thinkers regarding the heteronormativity of postwar Japanese society as well as the nature of the nuclear family model itself. As Ehara, Eino and Long note, feminist analyses of gender and sexuality in the 1970s and 1980s often "precluded assessment of such modern phenomena as homosexuality or childless couples, who do not necessarily have reproductive ability."¹⁷⁸ Lesbian activists such as Kakefuda Hiroko were critical of the mainstream feminist movement, which they noted was primarily "oriented toward issues related to heterosexual women."¹⁷⁹ James Welker further notes that the lack of attention to lesbian issues was reflected in the practices of early groups of feminist translators, who often omitted references to lesbianism in their translations of works by American feminists. Noting that "translations of writing from the United States and Europe also played a key early role in some areas, particularly in regard to women's health and sexuality," for Japanese feminists, Welker writes that the first Japanese translations of the seminal American feminist anthologies *Women's Liberation: Blueprint for the Future* (1970) and *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (1973), "omitted chapters focused on the place of lesbians within society in general and within feminism specifically."¹⁸⁰ In a foreword to the latter translation, the translators state that they omitted certain chapters because they "decided to concentrate on what they felt to be the 'topics of greatest urgency' to women in Japan: women's bodies, birth control, pregnancy, and childbirth,"

¹⁷⁸ Ehara, Eino, Long, *Feminism*, 59.

¹⁷⁹ Chalmers, *Lesbian Voices*, 34.

¹⁸⁰ James Welker. "From Women's Liberation to Lesbian Feminism in Japan: Rezubian Feminizumu within and beyond the Ūman Ribū Movement in the 1970s and 1980s." In *Rethinking Japanese Feminisms*, edited by Julia Bullock, Ayako Kano and James Welker (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2018): pp. 50-67: 53-4.

underscoring the sentiment that the needs and concerns of non-heterosexual women within the movement were subordinate to heterosexual ones.¹⁸¹

The diversity of approaches to the family among feminist thinkers was also apparent from the movement's outset. As Welker notes, some of the activists of the *uman ribu* movement attempted to form communes together to raise children outside of the nuclear family structure.¹⁸² Other feminist thinkers, such as Ueno Chizuko, tie the construction of the nuclear family to the construction of the "myth of motherhood," but suggested few alternative social arrangements beyond heterosexual marriage. A March 1989 conference hosted by the National Women's Education Center in Saitama Prefecture on the theme of "Women and the Family," illustrates the diversity of thought amongst feminist thinkers regarding the family, as well as contradictions therein. At the end of the conference, held over three days, was a symposium and roundtable of Japanese and American feminist academics including Tomioka Taeko, Ueno Chizuko, Mizuta Noriko and Miriam Johnson on the topic of "post-family alternatives." The participants of the symposium came from a diverse set of professional backgrounds, including literature, academia and journalism, and engaged in spirited debate as to how the shape and nature of the normative family may come to change as women became more independent within Japanese society. The writer Mizuta Noriko said during the conference that the nuclear family had not been the "means toward self-realization that women had hoped for," but was rather an institution that "fettered women, trapping them in the private sphere of the household and in the role of housewife."¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 55.

¹⁸² Welker, *Lesbian Feminism*, 61.

¹⁸³ Taeko Tomioka, Chizuko Ueno, Noriko Mizuta, Miriam M. Johnson, Myra Strober, Miho Ogino, Akira Ishida and Julianne Dvorak. "Symposium: Women and the Family: Post-Family Alternatives. Review of Japanese Culture and Society, Vol. 3, No. 1, Women and the Family (DECEMBER 1989), pp. 79-96: 82.

Unlike Ueno, who expressed the sentiment that the Japanese nuclear family was “resistant to destruction,” participants like Mizuta saw its destruction as imminent, yet displayed a profound ambivalence may come to succeed the normative nuclear family, and even whether a post-nuclear family was even desirable. Mizuta went on to suggest that modern female subjectivity itself was indelibly bound up with the modern construction of nuclear family, which was the contradictory site of both “fantasies of individuality,” as well as of romantic love and lifelong matrimony. She argued that although some women “could flee the nightmare of the nuclear family, [they] were not able to escape the nightmare of their ambivalent desires for individuality or a couple relationship, and these conflicts were tearing them apart.”¹⁸⁴ Even as the nuclear family dissolves, Mizuta stated that the fantasies it once sustained regarding individuality and romance will have to be completely rewritten by individuals.

Another participant at the conference, Tomioka Taeko, took a different approach to the issue of family than Ueno or Mizuta, and her comments are worth analyzing for their prescience. Tomioka critiques the nuclear family as centering on the concept of *reproduction*, and therefore suggests the need for a new model of family "not based on sexual relations between men and women."¹⁸⁵ Citing the experiences of *Kabuki* troupes in pre-modern Japan, film crews (*gumi*) that formed spontaneously to create and dismantle film sets, and Korean *namsadang* theater groups, Tomioka argues that that “groups which gather together when necessity arises and disband when that necessity disappear,” themselves constituted a differing model of family, one based not on reproduction or continuity. Stating that “that which up until the present we have thought of as the normal family or parent-child relationship is dogged by the obsession with

¹⁸⁴ Tomioka, Ueno et al., *Women and the Family*, 82.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 80.

continuity in many forms,” she concludes her discussion by proposing that “it would be good for the family to exist in a variety of forms.”¹⁸⁶

Tomioka’s suggestion that new family forms should move beyond the constraints imposed by the reproductive logic of the nuclear family would turn out to be remarkably prescient in the 1990s, as the so-called gay boom (*gei būmu*) began and the lives of LGBT Japanese came to mainstream prominence.¹⁸⁷ The following section will argue that new, non-heteronormative forms of family became prominent in the media discourse of the late 1980s and 1990s, a period when feminism was ascendant, the LGBT Japanese community was becoming increasingly visible to mainstream society, and the postwar model of family came under unprecedented economic and demographic strain. The emergence of queer themes within the BL manga helping to popularize alternative forms of sexuality in the 1970s and 1980s, and the reconfiguration of women’s literature towards a critique of the nuclear family, laid the groundwork for new sites of critique and reconceptualization to emerge in Japanese literature by the 1990s. The shared feminist and queer desires to escape from the heteronormative constraints of marriage and to achieve autonomy and self-actualization manifested in the depiction of explicitly queer family configurations in the literature of the 1990s, as writers attempted to find new models of family not predicated on the need for continuity and reproduction. Through an analysis of the types of family presented in three major works produced between the end of the

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 81.

¹⁸⁷ For more on the history of the gay boom, as well as the potential problematics of this term, see Wakamatsu Takeshi 若松孝司, “LGBT Konjaku: 1990 nendai gei būmu saikō” LGBT 今昔 : 1990 年代ゲイ・ブームを再考 [LGBT then and now: reconsidering the gay boom of the 1990s] In *Aichi Shukutoku Daigaku Ronshū Kōryū Bunkagaku Hen* No. 8, March 2018, pp. 115-127.

1980s and the beginning of the 2000s, Yoshimoto Banana's novel *Kitchen* (*Kicchin*, 1987), Ekuni Kaori's novel *Twinkle Twinkle* (*Kira kira hikaru*, 1992), and Hashiguchi Ryōsuke's film *Hush!* (*Hasshu!*, 2001) the following section argues that the queer models of family emerging in literature and media in the 1990s, drawing on both the political and narrative devices utilized by female *shōjo* authors as well as the critique of the nuclear family developed within queer discursive spaces, ultimately helped to shift normative ideas of what constituted a family in new directions during the 1990s and early 2000s, away from the postwar nuclear family model and towards a variety of new, non-heteronormative configurations.

3.4 Queer Family as Inversion: Yoshimoto Banana's *Kitchen* and the dissolution of gendered boundaries

Yoshimoto Banana was born in Tokyo in 1964. Her father, Yoshimoto Takaaki (1924-2012) was a leading writer, literary critic and left-wing intellectual throughout much of the postwar period. In 1987, when she was only 23 years old, her debut novel, *Kitchen* (*Kicchin*), won the 6th Kaein Newcomer Writers Prize, and within only a few years became a literary sensation, selling millions of copies and going through more than fifty printings.¹⁸⁸ The initial publication of the novel was described by John Treat as “a milestone event, both in its commercial success and in the dumbfounded costernation it occasioned among critics.”¹⁸⁹ The novel, and Yoshimoto herself, subsequently attracted both praise and criticism from the Japanese literary world as embodying a new, modern form of Japanese literature, distinct from the ‘pure’ literature (*junbungaku*) that characterized much of the postwar period and representative of a

¹⁸⁸ John Treat, *Rise and Fall*, 226.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 227.

new generation of writers born after World War II. This reputation as a ‘modern’ writer has to a large degree extent defined Yoshimoto’s critical reputation, and as Amanda Seaman has noted, her reputation and popularity “has subjected her to attacks from many literary critics in Japan and elsewhere, who have derided her as a mass producer of ‘mass’ literature.”¹⁹⁰ The immediate critical and commercial success of *Kitchen* both in Japan and throughout Europe, Asia and the United States helped to cement her critical reputation as one of Japan’s leading new literary voices, as well as to solidify her image as a writer whose works, in the words of Ōe Kenzaburo “convey the experience of a youth politically uninvolved or disaffected, content to exist within a late adolescent or post adolescent subculture.”¹⁹¹

The protagonist of *Kitchen* is a young woman named Mikage, an orphan who at the beginning of the novel has just lost her grandmother, her last living blood relative. From the beginning of the story, she is shown to have an unusual affinity for kitchens, and they are shown to be the only place where she can sleep soundly. Early in the novel, she encounters a former classmate at university, Yūichi, who invites her to come live with him and his mother, Eriko. In their first encounter, Mikage is immediately struck by Eriko, describing her as beautiful and an “overwhelming,” presence, even stating she even seems “like she isn’t human,” (*ningen janai mitai*).¹⁹² Later, when Yūichi and Mikage are alone, Yūichi tells Mikage that Eriko is “male,” to which Mikage, surprised, states, “Don’t you call them mother?” (*Hahaoya tte itte ja nai*), to which he replies “If it were you, could you call them father?” (*Kimi nara are wo oto san tte*

¹⁹⁰ Amanda Seaman. “Women Writers and Alternative Critiques,” In *Woman Critiqued*, 155.

¹⁹¹ Kenzaburo Ōe. “On Modern and Contemporary Japanese Literature.” In *Japan, the Ambiguous, and Myself: The Nobel Prize Speech and Other Lectures*. Tokyo: Kodansha, 1995: 50.

¹⁹² Yoshimoto Banana 吉本ばなな. *Kicchin* キッチン. Tokyo: Benesse Corporation, 1988. Translated as *Kitchen* by Meghan Backus. New York: Vertical Press, Inc. 1993. All translations mine except noted. Page numbers are listed first in English, then with the corresponding page for the quoted passage in the Japanese.

yoberu) (13; 23). Yūichi proceeds to explain that Eriko once lived as a man, and during that period married a woman he was raised alongside with and who gave birth to Yūichi. When Eriko's wife died, Yūichi states that Eriko "decided to become a woman," abandoning her previous job and opening up a gay bar with her remaining money. While Mikage initially does not know if she can trust Yūichi and Eriko, she ultimately decides that she can "trust in [their] kitchen," and begins to live with them. While she at first insists on paying rent and says that she will only stay with them until she can find a new apartment, Eriko insists otherwise, telling her to stay as long as she likes and only suggesting in exchange that she occasionally cook for them, since her food is "much more delicious than Yūichi's," (20; 33). Slowly but surely, Mikage, who has always lived with the knowledge that her entire family consists of a single person, begins to come to terms with her grandmother's passing, and under the nurturing protection of Eriko and Yūichi, works towards becoming independent and self-sufficient. Eriko increasingly acts as a motherly figure for Mikage, giving her advice on how to make her way in the world, and the two even commiserating about the difficulties of being women in Japanese society. During their last conversation, Eriko suggests to Mikage that she will only truly learn to be self-sufficient (*hitoritachi*) when she learns to take care of another living being; doing so, according to Eriko, will not only teach her her limits, but the struggle it entails will teach her what is truly important and enjoyable in her life.

For the first half of the novel, Eriko, Mikage and Yūichi live together, and the relations they form with one another parallel familial relationships in striking and contradictory ways. Despite Mikage's initial surprise and uncertainty towards Eriko's identity as a queer transgender woman, the two quickly become close, and Mikage begins to look towards Eriko as both a mother and a big sister figure at the same time. Mikage's relationship with Yūichi is similarly

ambiguous, occupying multiple overlapping categories. It is notable that they are initially connected by Mikage's grandmother, who used to frequent the shop Yūichi worked at, and during their first meeting, they are again connected via Eriko, Yūichi's mother and a quick confidante of Mikage.

The establishment and subsequent concretization of Yūichi and Mikage's relationship under the aegis of the maternal figures of Mikage's grandmother and Yūichi's mother is significant as it establishes that the primary foundation for their relationship is not sexual but familial. This relationality is emphasized throughout the novel; after Mikage has settled into Yūichi and Eriko's home, she has an encounter with her boyfriend, Sotarō, who informs her that Yūichi's girlfriend broke up with him over Mikage moving in. When Sotarō guesses that Mikage and Yūichi are living alone together, Mikage replies by stating Yūichi's mother lives there too, to which Sotarō calls her a liar (25: 41). The complexity and ambiguity of their relationships, and by extension Mikage's entire living situation, is shown by her difficulty in describing it to Sotarō, as well as his subsequent disbelief. She thinks to herself that "What I needed now was the Tanabes' strange cheerfulness, their tranquility, and I didn't even try to explain that to him." (26: 43) Later on, she thinks to herself that she can understand Yūichi's girlfriend's feelings "because I'm not in love with Yūichi," (*Yūichi ni koi shite inai no de*) (29: 48), reflecting the non-romantic intimacy of their relationship. The relationships formed by Mikage and the Tanabe family through the first half the novel are not predicated on the expectation of romantic love, and they are not based on kinship ties. Furthermore, the gendered division of mother/father are destabilized in the narrative of *Kitchen*; while Eriko's role as a mother is continually emphasized and she is shown to be a maternal presence, the terms on which Yūichi introduces her allows her to occupy an ambiguously gendered position, being neither biologically Yūichi or Mikage's

mother but acting as both. Furthermore, each of these three characters is estranged from any living biological family. When Eriko first married Yūichi's biological mother, she says that she "severed relations," (*en kirarete*) (52; 84) with her adoptive family, and Mikage, who never knew her parents, reflects that although she was raised "with love," she was "always lonely," (*Aisarete sodatta no ni, itsumo sabishikatta*) (21; 34). Each is thus discretely placed outside the sanctioned parameters of the Japanese family. Yet it is their shared marginality that allows for them to form relationships beyond normative parameters, and to constitute a family on a fundamentally different basis than the reproductive imperative upon which the postwar Japanese family has been constructed. As John Treat observes, given the terms upon which their family is formed, "Mikage can be neither 'sister' nor 'daughter.' The family is 'assembled' just as Mikage is 'found.' Blood ties and genealogy are less important than circumstance and simple human affinity."¹⁹³

Murakami Fuminobu has suggested that the relationship between Yūichi and Mikage actively incorporates incestuous elements as well as familial ones. Writing that "sexual desire is subsumed by food desire" within the novel, he suggests that through the appearance and consumption of food, Yoshimoto attempts "a metaphor of restructuring the current existing discourse," surrounding sex by subverting the boundary between erotic desire and the consumption of food.¹⁹⁴ In doing so, he argues that Yoshimoto undermines the dichotomies between food/sex, family/stranger, and incestuous/familial love, thereby destabilizing the

¹⁹³ John Whittier Treat. "Yoshimoto Banana Writes Home: Shōjo Culture and the Nostalgic Subject." *The Journal of Japanese Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (Summer, 1993), pp. 353-387: 369.

¹⁹⁴ Murakami Fuminobu. *Postmodern, Feminist and Postcolonial Currents in Contemporary Japanese Culture: A Reading of Murakami Haruki, Yoshimoto Banana, Yoshimoto Takaaki and Karatani Kōjin*. Routledge/Asian Studies Association of Australia, 2009: 62.

ontological basis of both inter-family relations and sexual relations and opening up new possibilities within each. This thesis is supported by the circumstances of Eriko's own 'family'; in order to marry her wife, she had to go against her own adopted parents, suggesting a transgression that inaugurates the ambiguity the new family she creates. Both through her relationship history and gendered positionality, Eriko serves to inaugurate a form of family in which incestuous, interpersonal and romantic forms of intimacy are freely mixed and dissolved into one another. Murakami writes, "by deconstructing the sexual and food desires, and the bedroom and the kitchen, the structure of Banana's *Kitchen* subverts the modernist binary oppositions of the self/stranger, self/family, and heterogeneity and homogeneity ideologies. The significance of this subversion of binary formulation is that, in Banana's fiction, it neither transfers the former items to the latter sphere, nor does it suggest conflict between them but, instead, it incessantly keeps reconfiguring the borderlines of these binaries and ceaselessly makes something new appear."¹⁹⁵

Murakami's reading goes on to suggest that Yoshimoto's drive to construct new forms of human relationships results in the destruction of the binary oppositions through which the erotic is constructed. This is partially made possible through the purposeful crossing and recrossing of the boundaries between familial, sexual incestuous desire within the text, which in turn reinscribes the basis of the family. According to John Treat, "incestuous impulses are distributed liberally throughout Banana's work - as liberally as the theme of the troubled family," which in turn suggests that "they are parallel or even integral phenomena, and are further linked to the construction of a contestatory, non-familial identity for the *shōjo*. This identity repudiates the

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 63.

shōjo exchange value in the kinship economy of the family, and produces in its stead a non-circulating narcissistic "small space," a space no longer a momentary "phase" en route to an adult heterosexuality but a site of potential resistance to it."¹⁹⁶ He thus links this temporal aspect of the text to its inheritance to the genre of *shōjo* itself, which he describes as "a category of being more discursive than material, an adolescent 'space' without substantive or fixed subjective content, a 'point' in the commodity loop that exists only to consume."¹⁹⁷ His critique of *shōjo*, and *Kitchen*'s literary debt to that genre, is predicated on the emergence of a *nostalgic subject*, which he terms a "subject produced in and by contemporary Japanese socio-cultural discourses," that is "recognized by its equivocal accommodation with "everyday life" through a retreat into the past and by its resistance to that same life through its longing for another sort of life, one that never actually 'was' because no such life ever 'is.'"¹⁹⁸ The critic Akira Asada similarly sees the novel as both indebted to and inhibited by *shōjo*, simultaneously striving towards new representational forms of family yet always compromised by its own structure; in his own review, he writes that Yoshimoto "skillfully utilizes the [manga artist] Oshima Yumiko-like empty feeling shared by her story's dysfunctional family members, but in the end she makes them develop a lukewarm pseudo-family unity and brings her story to a happy end...in short, Banana betrays the girls' comic writers' effort to dismantle the institution of family. As a good little girl, she sentimentally reconstructs the institution."¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁶ John Whittier Treat, *Shōjo Culture*, 374-5.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 382.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 384.

¹⁹⁹ Asada Akira. "Asada Akira no chō janarizumu gemu dai roku go Yoshimoto Banana wa shōjo manga wo honyō dakede, bungaku wa nan no kankei nai shiro nanda," [Akira Asada's extreme journalism game, number six: just by cheapening shōjo manga, Banana Yoshimoto works have no relation to literature]. *GORO Magazine*, March 9, 1989.

Critiques such as those made by Asada and Treat identify the family form found in *Kitchen* with a generalized, constructed nostalgia that undergirds the “fantasy,” of family in the narrative. In this formulation, nostalgia becomes a means by which memory passes into affect and is “produced” through the reading of the text itself. The nostalgia for the nonexistent ideal nuclear family, in this critique, is fundamentally an affective desire that becomes the impetus for the improvised family of the text, which is itself both imitative and new. In short, nostalgia provides the desire for family without necessarily linking that desire to normative or heteronormative structures. Yet such critiques assume both a singular and normative experience of family in postwar Japan that in turn rests on a unproblematic heteronormative conceptualization of family. The nostalgia for the ‘ideal’ family which Asada and Treat suggest informs Yoshimoto’s text presupposes access to the material and societal benefits provided by the normative family model in Japan, but this reading does not account for discretely non-heteronormative conceptualizations of family, nor does it allow for the possibility of queer readings of the text itself. Murakami, however, notes the possibility of a queer reading of the text, writing that “it seems clear that homosexuality has the potential to subvert the differentiation between familiar and strange...by eroding the homogeneous/heterogeneous opposition,” of the two.²⁰⁰ For Murakami, it is through the distinction between heterogeneity and homogeneity, in other words, through the conceptual differentiation of family and the other, the externalized eroticism of the former and the internalized affection of the former, that the heteronormative family becomes coherent. The nostalgia for the “ideal” family, which is itself detached from any normative model, becomes a driving force not for the reconstitution of the nuclear family, but for complete new iterations of family predicated not on any reproductive

²⁰⁰ Murakami Fuminobu, *Postmodern*, 88.

basis, but on the affective basis of the ‘imaginary’ family itself. Eriko, as mother, father and sister, Yūichi as son, brother and lover, and Mikage as outsider cum insider serve as ciphers upon which overlapping and contradictory familial relationship markers are superimposed. The relations between them, as a result, are hybrid and not coherent within the circumscribed positions of the heteronormative family. Rather, their relations self-consciously contradict one another yet become coherent only through the superimposition of “family” itself. The family in *Kitchen*, thus, is in many ways a rereading of family, an attempt to redefine it on contradictory and self-consciously queer terms. The result is a family that can neither be reduced to nostalgia nor encapsulated within the heteronormative parameters of the postwar nuclear family.

Yet even as Yoshimoto seems to open up the potential for a variety of different forms of family through the flexible relationships between Eriko, Yūichi, and Mikage that she presents, these possibilities are foreclosed by the text.. The alternative family that Mikage and the Tanabes construct in the first half of the novel is violently ruptured when Eriko is murdered by an unknown assailant at the beginning of the second half of the novel, titled *Mangetsu* (Full moon). In this part of the novel, Mikage has obtained a job as a chef’s assistant and move into her own apartment, and the particulars of Eriko’s death are only related to her indirectly. Eriko, we learn, was the victim of a crazed man who begins to stalk her, writing long letters to her and frequently showing up at her workplace. When she treats this stalker coldly one night, we learn, he stabs Eriko, only for her to, in turn, kill him with a dumbbell before bleeding out, stating that they are now “even” before they both die. Yamasaki Makiko reads this scene as the violent imposition of normative gender and sexual roles by the stalker; as she writes, the stalker, who we learn also has a wife and children, is under a “delusion of heterosexuality,” (*iseiai gensō*) and his “internal gender and sexual identities are thrown into chaos,” (*mizukara ga zokushiteiru jenda wo konran*

saseteshimau).²⁰¹ Threatened by his own attraction to Eriko, Okada states that the cisgendered, heterosexual stalker attempts to cling to a “framework of heterosexuality,” that he perceives her as a threat to.²⁰² Okada Yukata, expanding on Yamasaki’s characterization, writes that this scene can be read as the stalker’s attempt to reimpose a heteronormative logic on Eriko, and that in murdering Eriko the stalker seeks to “remove an existence that deconstructs male and female gender roles, and thereby reinforce those very gender roles,” (*Dansei to josei no isa wo tsukusu sonzai wo joko shi, sono isa wo kyōka suru*).²⁰³

Eriko’s death is a critical turning point in the narrative, not only as it destroys the family shared between her, Yūichi and Mikage, but also insofar as it redefines Yūichi and Mikage’s relationship. According to Okada, after Eriko’s death the familial intimacy shared between Yūichi and Mikage disappears, and their relationship becomes one of “cultivated indecision,” (*hagumareta tsukazu hanarezu*) based on the mutual establishment of personal distance.²⁰⁴ Yūichi initially hesitates for weeks before informing Mikage of Eriko’s death, and when they finally do see one another in person, he asks her to move back in with him. Mikage then asks him with Eriko gone whether she would be moving in “as a woman,” (*onna toshite*) or “as a friend,” (*tomodachi toshite*) to which Yūichi replies “I don’t know myself,” (*jibun de mo wakaranai*) (65; 102). As Okada argues, while Eriko’s presence and intimate relationship with

²⁰¹ Yamasaki Makiko 山崎真紀子. "Yoshimoto Banana" 'kicchin' 'mangetsu' Ron - Eriko san no shi," 吉本ばなな『キッチン』『満月』論—えり子さんの死— [On Yoshimoto Banana’s ‘Kitchen’ ‘Mangetsu’ - Eriko’s death]. In *Bunkenronshū* 文研論集, March 1994: 3.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Okata Yukata 岡田豊. "Yoshimoto Banana 'kicchin' 'mangetsu' he no isshiten: tayo na sei, yuragu kankei," 吉本ばなな「キッチン」「満月」への一視点—多様な性、揺らぐ関係[A view on Banana Yoshimoto’s “Kitchen” “Mangetsu”: diverse sexualities, fluctuating relationships]. In *Komazawa kokubun* 駒沢国文 No. 4 Vol. 2, February 2015, pp. 71-90: 73.

²⁰⁴ Okata Yukata, *Yoshimoto Banana*, 82.

Mikage allows him to conceptualize their relationship in familial terms, with her absence, he becomes unable to conceive of her in new relational terms, and the question of how they will go about reconstructing their relationship in a post-Eriko world becomes problematic.²⁰⁵ The ambiguity of their relationship is emphasized when a classmate of Yūichi who has a crush on him, a woman named Okuno, angrily confronts Mikage at her workplace. Stating that Mikage is “eschewing all responsibility as a lover,” (*koibito toshite sekinin wo zenbu nogareteru*) Okuno accuses Mikage of leaving Yūichi in a “half baked state,” (*chūto hanpa na katachi*) by continuously loitering around him “as a woman,” and finally begs her to leave Yūichi alone completely (71-2; 113-4). Okada states that it is in Okuno’s criticisms that allow Mikage to realize that her relationship with Yūichi cannot be encapsulated within a heteronormative framework, and that attempts to do so are always insufficient. As Okada writes, it is in her conversation with Okuno that Mikage clarifies that she must seek out a new form of relationship that goes beyond both the normative heterosexual love and is not dependent on the framework provided by Eriko herself. Mikage, contemplating the complexities of their relationship, reflects that even as she and Yūichi “try and try to create a peaceful space,” for themselves, Eriko was ultimately “the sparkling sun that illuminated the place.” (87; 136)

Ultimately, Mikage and Yūichi are able to reconcile at the end of the novel when Mikage seeks him out at a hotel he is staying at and shares a *katsudon* meal with him. When Yūichi leaves Tokyo to try to gain a sense of clarity, Eriko’s former coworker Chika, convinced that he and Mikage are lovers, gives Mikage his address and encourages her to seek him out. She ultimately does so, climbing a sheer rock cliff with a meal in her backpack to reach him in the

²⁰⁵ Okada, *Yoshimoto Banana*, 79-80.

process. When she finally reaches Yūichi and they share their meal, he asks her why everything he eats that she makes is delicious. When Mikage jokingly suggests it is because he is “simultaneously satisfying lust and hunger,” (*shokuyoku to seiyoku ga doji ni mitasareru*), Yūichi disagrees by saying “it’s because we’re family,” (*kitto, kazoku dakara*) (101; 157), signifying a final return to the form of relationship they shared before Eriko’s death. The use of food as a means of connection in the novel has been considered by many critics to reflect Yoshimoto’s attempts to construct a basis for new forms of intimacy, and by extension, new forms of family. Ueno argues that this replacement of sexual with food amounts to a replacement of the “bed scene,” with the “kitchen table scene,” and writes that “This expanded model of family, which goes beyond blood relations, can effectively be called a food-bonding family (*shokuken kazoku*)...in Yoshimoto's Banana's novels, is used as a means to avoid sex.”²⁰⁶ Conversely, Kondo Hiroko emphasizes the active/passive roles of Mikage and Yūichi in the final part of the novel, when Mikage climbs rocks to reach a despondent Yūichi at his hotel to share a meal with him. According to Kondo, it is the precisely because of the absence of sex and Mikage’s active role that “that the story is totally different from the normative and constant pattern of heterosexual love stories.”²⁰⁷ Okada concurs with this view, and interprets Yūichi’s statement that he wishes he had been “more manly,” (*motto otokorashii*) (101; 158) when he and Mikage reunited, to which she jokingly suggests he try to rip up a phone book or lift a car for her. Okada writes that while Yūichi is initially referring to courage when he talks about being “manly,” he and Mikage’s ability to make light of this demonstration that “he does not need to be

²⁰⁶ Ueno Chizuko. “Midnight Call,” ミッドナイトコール [Midnight Call]. *Asahi Shimbun* 朝日新聞, June 4, 1989.

²⁰⁷ Kondo Hiroko. *Rinshō bungaku ron - Kawabata Yasunari kara Yoshimoto Banana made* [Clinical literature: from Kawabata Yasunari to Yoshimoto Banana.] Tokyo: Sairyūsha, 2003.

trapped in a normative image of maleness,” and that in this way, Mikage “invites Yūichi into a relationship that is not trapped in a normative form.”²⁰⁸

Since its initial publication, and as a consequence of its success, *Kitchen* has attracted a great deal of commentary and criticism in both Japan and internationally, particularly regarding the ‘new,’ forms of intimacy and family it depicts. Saito Minako, for example, argues that the family depicted in *Kitchen* is what she metaphorically terms “old alcohol in a new container,” (*Atarashii kawabukuro ni ireta furui sake*), new in appearance while nonetheless adhering to old conventions.²⁰⁹ According to Izutani Shun, the family depicted in *Kitchen* appears new because it presents “intimacy not predicated on blood relations and heterosexuality,” but that nonetheless it fulfills what he terms a “functionalist,” (*kinōteki*) definition of family. Using the sociologist Kubota Hiroyuki’s model of family of three overlapping functionalist spheres based on “mutual care,” (*kea en*), “shared living,” (*seikatsuen*) and “intimacy,” (*shinmitsuen*), Izutani argues it is important not only to examine how the family is constructed, but also how different roles and functions within it are partitioned and distributed (*bunsetsuka*). According to him, as long as the prescribed roles within each of these functional spheres of family remain coherent and differentiated, the family is a *functionally* normative one, which is how he describes the model of family in *Kitchen*.²¹⁰ For example, Izutani argues that Eriko’s queerness is subordinate vis-à-vis the configuration of the family to her *functional* role; insofar as she acts in a “guardian,”

²⁰⁸ Okada, *Yoshimoto*, 85-6.

²⁰⁹ Saito Minako 斎藤美奈子. "Yoshimoto Banana shōjo karucha no suimyaku," 吉本ばなな少女カルチャーの水脈[Yoshimoto Banana and girl culture] in *Bundan aiduro ron 文壇アイドル論*[Idols of the literary world]. (Tokyo: Iwanami shōten, 2002) pp. 60-90: 61.

²¹⁰ Izutani Shun 泉谷瞬. "Koshoku no kōkei: Yoshimoto Banana 'Kicchin' no kazoku," 個食の光景—吉本ばなな「キッチン」の家族 [The spectacle of eating alone: the family in Yoshimoto Banana’s *Kitchen*]. *Ronkyu Nihongogaku* 106, May 2017, pp. 17-33: pp. 19.

(*hogosha*) role to Yūichi and Mikage, the prescribed roles based on this relationality (to care for and to receive care, respectively) continue to be reinforced.²¹¹ Thus, Izutani argues that while Yoshimoto has changed to an extent the gender and sexuality based divisions in the modern family, he has left the divisions of roles and their respective functions within the family intact. Iizawa Kōtarō's analysis, in turn, supports Izutani's argument by arguing that while the representations of family in *Kitchen* were novel and radical during the end of the 1980s, changes in the actual composition of families meant that its 'newness' was already lost by the 2000s.²¹²

Nonetheless, it is clear that Yoshimoto's family in *Kitchen* attempts to find new modes of family and interpersonal intimacy that are neither predicated on blood relationships or heterosexual desire. In the first half of the novel, this is accomplished through the figure of Eriko, whose queer presence problematizes the relationships between Mikage, Yūichi and herself. When Eriko is killed in the second half of the novel, Yūichi and Mikage find themselves interpolated by others towards a heteronormative relationship neither actively desires. Ultimately, it is through a connection shared by food that they are able to form a relationship that is founded on neither sexual intimacy nor prescribed familial roles; Kondo Hiroko, fittingly, has termed their relationship at the end of the novel a "relationship of deliciousness," (*oishii kankei*).²¹³ Nonetheless, as Izutani's analysis has shown, *Kitchen* as a text at times uncritically reproduces functions of the family that are themselves predicated on heteronormativity and a

²¹¹ Izutani Shun, *Koshoku*, 22.

²¹² 飯沢耕太郎. *Sengo minshūshugi to shōjo manga 戦後民主主義と少女漫画* [Postwar democracy and shōjo manga]. Tokyo: PHP Shinsho, 2009: 12.

²¹³ Kondo Hiroko 近藤裕子. *Rinshō Bungaku Ron - Kawabata Yasunari kara Yoshimoto Banana made* 臨床文学論—川端康成から吉本ばななへ [Clinical literature: from Kawabata Yasunari to Yoshimoto Banana]. Tokyo: Sairyūsha, 2003: 120.

gendered division of labor. As our analysis will further show, other Japanese authors, in attempting to reconstruct the family on queer terms, run into similar challenges as Yoshimoto in constructing a family that diverges from both the form and function of the normative family. As I will argue, these authors deal with this issue in different ways than Yoshimoto by hybridizing the constituent roles in the family and repositioning its center, queering it and moving it in new directions.

3.5 The Hybridized Family: Ekuni Kaori's *Twinkle Twinkle* and Polyvalent Visions of Family

Soon after *Kitchen*'s publication and remarkable success, the writer Ekuni Kaori (1954-) won the prestigious Murasaki Shikibu prize for her novel *Twinkle Twinkle* (*Kira kira hikaru*, 1992). The novel follows the life of a married couple, an Italian translator named Shōko and her doctor husband, Mutsuki, as well as Mutsuki's male boyfriend Kon. The two are married in an arranged marriage (*omiai*) approved by both of their parents. Mutsuki is identified as openly gay early on, while Shōko's sexuality goes relatively uncommented on, although she is implied to be asexual. When the novel begins, they have only been married for ten days, and neither is interested in entering into a sexual or romantic relationship. Rather, they have only married to appease external pressure placed on them by their families and by outside society. As Shōko sardonically describes their Mutsuki's relationship to her mother early in the novel, "Alcoholic wife and gay husband - real partners in crime!" (*mattaku sune ni kizu dōshi*).²¹⁴

²¹⁴ Ekuni Kaori 江國香織. *Kira kira hikaru* きらきらひかる. [Sparkling light]. Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1992: pp. 14. Translated as *Twinkle Twinkle* by Emi Shimokawa, New York: Vertical, Inc., 2003: pp. 5. I have largely followed the translation provided by Shimokawa; any translations from the Japanese done by the author will be noted accordingly. Page numbers first list the English edition, then where the corresponding text appears in the Japanese.

Mutsuki's homosexuality and desire to appease his parents is presented as his primary reason for wanting to enter into a marriage, while Shōko has a number of reasons for marrying. She is shown to struggle with alcoholism and her mental health throughout the novel, and her parents view her marriage to Mutsuki as a means of "curing," her of her alcoholism and mental illness. As her mother tells her, "You're going to get better, my dear, living with a doctor." (*oishasama nara anshin janai no*) (5; 14) For her part, Shōko considers her marriage ideal because it is "without desires, without aspirations, without loss, without fear," (*Nan ni mo motomenai, nan ni mo nozomanai, nan ni mo nakusanai, nan ni mo kowakunai*). She is initially told to get married by her therapist, who tells her that her "emotional instability" (*jōcho fuantei*) would be cured if she did (66; 82). Further complicating matters are their relationships with their respective families; while Shōko's family is unaware of her husband's sexuality, while Mutsuki's family is unaware of Shōko's history of mental illness.

Over the course of the novel, Mutsuki and Shōko's marriage is presented as a means of social and interpersonal protection for each of them, particularly their other family members and friends. Furthermore, while Mutsuki and Shōko are shown to have genuine affection for one another, their personalities clash throughout the novel. At an early point in the novel, Mutsuki attempts to stop Shōko from drinking alcohol straight from the bottle. This prompts Shōko to begin hurling objects at him and to break down crying. Later on, when Shōko finds that Mutsuki has already left for work one morning, she feels intense panic and goes straight to his workplace in a frenzy to see him. This pattern continues throughout the novel, with Shōko's interactions with Mutsuki character as a combination of dependence and resentment, while Mutsuki's attempts to help Shōko through her difficulties often end up exacerbating them in the process. Their marriage, rather than acting as an foundation for their relationship, in fact compounds its

complexity and ambiguity. Because theirs is a marriage without, as Shōko states, desires or fears, it is empty, and functions only as a refuge for her and Mutsuki, a means of alleviating societal and familial pressures. As a result of their differing visions of marriage, when Mutsuki attempts to encourage Shōko to rekindle a relationship with an ex-boyfriend, she is infuriated and insulted, while Shōko's attempts to connect with Mutsuki's coworkers as a friend are met with visible discomfort by him. As Okada Yutaka notes, the marriage between Shōko and Mutsuki is unstable because “there is nothing that ensures its stable continuity,” (*anteiteki ni jizoku suru hoshō nado nai*).²¹⁵ Without an external basis upon which to structure their relationship, Shōko and Mutsuki struggle relate to one another, and at times regress into a quasi parent-child dynamic that is reinforced by Mutsuki's excessive concern for Shōko and Shōko's feelings of being oppressed by Mutsuki. Kubo Shōko writes that the apartment they share continuously feels oppressive to Shōko, particularly when Mutsuki is not there, a reflection of her fear that she will be ‘dissolved’ (*kaishō*) into Mutsuki by their marriage. At the beginning of the novel, Mutsuki's father says being married to Mutsuki must be “like embracing water,” a sentiment Shōko shares later on when she reflects that their marriage is “like being in a cage of water.” (*marude mizu no ori*) (99; 117)

A potential stabilizing basis for their marriage emerges in the novel when Shōko's close friend, Mizuho, suggests that they have a child as a way to fix their marriage. Describing her own marriage, she tells Shōko that “if you have a baby everything will be fine,” (*kodomo tsukureba ochitsuku*) and that it would be both unfair to her parents and to Mutsuki (*kawaiisou*) for her to refuse. (63; 79) This spurs Shōko to begin exploring the idea of artificial insemination,

²¹⁵ Okada Yutaka. “Ekuni Kaori ‘Gōkyū suru junbi dekiteita’ to sono shūhen,” 江國香織「号泣する準備できていた」とその周辺「[Ekuni Kaori's ‘I’ve prepared to wail’ and its surroundings]». In *Komazawa kokubun* 駒沢国文 No. 4 Vol. 2, February 2015, pp. 21-45: 22.

which leads to her visiting a hospital and briefly stopping in a nursing ward housed in it. Here, she is disturbed by scenes of elderly patients being treated in a dehumanizing way by the nurses, who are indifferent to their needs:

“For every obedient old man opening his mouth as he was told, there was an old woman weakly shaking her head and refusing her food. And for every old woman asking for pickled radishes or more tea, there was an old man yelling in a robust voice that he wasn’t ready to eat yet. Still the nurses’ cheerful tone never faltered.

“Here we go, open wide. Hmm, isn’t that delicious? O-pen w-ide.”

We stood in the doorway and stared in disbelief at the scene before our eyes.

(*Twinkle Twinkle*, 121; *Kira kira hikaru*, 143)

This scene of dehumanization, alongside the previous insistence that Shōko and Mutsuki’s marriage would be fixed if they had a child, remind Shōko of the stakes of not conforming to marriage and the family. While their marriage may protect them from certain social and interpersonal pressures, the nursing room scene, presented right before Shōko has a consultation on artificial insemination with a doctor, implicitly raises the threat that if she and Mutsuki fail to adhere to the reproductive imperative of the family, they too will end up in a nursing home like this dehumanized and stripped of their dignity by smiling nurses and faceless institutions. Thus, the institution of marriage, rather than protecting Shōko and Mutsuki as they had hoped, ends up entrapping them in a complex web of obligations and responsibilities neither is equipped for, with the omnipresent threat of aging alone and without children to care for them foregrounded by the text.

A theme that is continuously emphasized in *Twinkle Twinkle* is social alterity and the inability, socially, psychologically or spiritually to fit into normative families and society.

Midway in the novel, Shōko brings up a legend she has heard about so-called silver lions (*gin no raion*), which are described as rare lions born inherently different from regular ones. According to her, they are “magic lions,” that don’t eat meat and leave their own packs to form their own living groups (*kyōdōtai*) “They’re not very strong to begin with, and they never really eat very much, so they die off really easily. From the heat or the cold, even. They live up in the rocks, and when you see their manes blow in the wind they look more silver than white. It’s supposed to be really beautiful.” (104; 123) Shōko proceeds to tell Mutsuki that he and Kon remind her of silver lions, something Mutsuki repeats later to his father. The metaphor of silver lions, who are born distinctly different from their counterparts and ultimately unable to conform to their lifestyle, focalizes Mutsuki’s queerness and Shōko’s mental health and places them as outside the sanctioned parameters of society, as socially and metaphorically marginal.

This is further emphasized during a later scene when Mutsuki and Shōko’s parents learn of their in-laws’ respective ‘conditions’, and use them as a pretext to attack each other. Shōko’s father accuses Mutsuki of ‘not being a real man,’ (*otoko onna da*) and fumes that people like him have no ‘qualifications’ (*shikaku*) to marry, to which Mutsuki’s mother retorts that while homosexuality is a preference (*kojinteki na shikō*), mental illness is ‘hereditary.’ (*denshin suru*) (137; 162) Shōko and Mutsuki are then forced to present, respectively, a mental-health certificate and the negative results of an AIDS test, in order to appease their parents. Yet it is precisely in moments of shared vulnerability that Shoko and Mutsuki are able to come together, if only fleetingly, and establish interpersonal intimacy with one another. The shared humiliation of having to show such things to their in-laws serves to temporarily stabilize their relationship; after, Mutsuki tells their parents that they actually enjoy their relationship as it is, and Shoko agrees to this, despite the fact that their marriage was previously on the verge of collapse. While

shared alterity is not enough to forge a fully functioning relationship, Ekuni suggests with this scene that in moments of shared pain, a transient but meaningful connection can emerge, something she builds upon in the conclusion.

At the conclusion of the novel, Mutsuki's boyfriend Kon pretends to leave Mutsuki and move away, only to return in a surprise party arranged by Shōko and announce that he will be moving into the same apartment building as the two of them. Kon, rather than a child, thus becomes the nucleus of their relationship, which self-consciously takes on a hybridized form in which individual gender roles are subsumed and made ambiguous. This is reinforced when it is revealed that Shōko desires to have both Kon and Mutsuki's sperm together during artificial insemination, and thereby have a baby with both or neither of them; as the doctor informs Mutsuki, "that way the baby would belong to all three of you." (164; 194) Thus, Ekuni attempts to subvert the indeterminacy of their inter-relationships by imposing on them a condition of absolute indeterminacy. By positioning the role of father in their tripartite relationship as inherently unknowable, Ekuni suggests a new form of marriage defined by its ambiguity and its openness. In this, Ekuni playfully attempts to subvert the roles of production and reproduction within the family itself. She also suggests that shared vulnerability, rather than sexual or biological relationship, can serve both as a means of resisting the heteronormative family as well as for imagining alternatives to it. Mutsuki, Kon, and Shōko's and Kon's mutual affection create a foundation upon which the three of them can form stable relationships with one another and form an alternative form of family, complete with the promise of continuity, without adhering to heteronormativity or giving in to the reproductive logic of the heteronormative family suggested by Mizuho.

Kubo Shōko argues that Kon and Shōko’s ability to coexist with Mutsuki in the “shadow,” of his apartment in the end represents a “metaphorical happy end,” (*inyuteki happi endo*) in which they are able to overcome the contradictions of their relationship without being dissolved into one another.²¹⁶ Okada, however, takes a more pessimistic view, noting that the characters are only barely able to construct tentative relationships (*ayau kankei*) and thus only barely survive the pressure they are placed under.²¹⁷ Yet just as in *Kitchen*, *Twinkle Twinkle* attempts to redefine the family in relation to the immediate needs of its members. Also similarly to *Kitchen*, this involves the use of queer characters, whose queerness is both positioned oppositionally to the normative family and presented as an alternative to it. The question of reproduction, and the implicit threat it imposes on those who fail to adhere to the gender and sexual boundaries of marriage and family, however, is a vector that is absent from *Kitchen*. While Mikage and Yūichi are too young to think about having children, for older queer characters, the pressure to produce children, and the organizing role of the child itself within the family are far more central concerns. Many of the themes found in *Kitchen* and *Twinkle Twinkle*, including incoherent familial relationships, sexual and gender ambiguity, the solidarity of differently marginalized groups and the oppressiveness of the modern family were further explored in the 2001 film *Hush!*, directed by the openly gay director Hashiguchi Ryōsuke. As this analysis will show, while *Hush!* expands upon many of the themes of alternative family presented elsewhere, while also bringing to the forefront new critiques of the heteronormative family as a desolate and moribund institution.

²¹⁶ Kubo Shōko 久保翔子. “Ekuni Kaori ‘Kira kira hikaru’ kara miru fūfu to ren’ ai,” 江國香織「きらきらひかる」から見る夫婦と恋愛 [Love between couples in Ekuni Kaori’s *Kira kira hikaru*]. In *Nagano Kokubun* 長野国文 17, March 2009, 63-80: 78.

²¹⁷ Okada Yutaka, *Gōkyū*, 23.

3.6: Constructing Intimacy in Hashiguchi Ryōsuke's "Hush!"

Hashiguchi Ryōsuke (1962-) is one of the most prominent openly queer filmmakers in contemporary Japan. He initially came to prominence with the film *Hatachi no binetsu* (Slight fever of a twenty year old, 1993), a film depicting a pair of male hustlers living in Tokyo. *Hatachi no binetsu*, alongside *Twinkle Twinkle*, the film *Okoge* (1992) and the television program *Dōsōkai* (1993) are cited by Mark McLelland as representative works of the “gay boom” (*gei būmu*) of the early 1990s that helped to spur initial public interest in homosexuality and other alternative sexualities and lifestyles.²¹⁸ As a director, he became known during this period for his focus on marginalized groups within Japanese society, including working class people, the mentally ill and non-heterosexual individuals. With the film *Hush!* (*Hasshu!*, 2001), he turned his attention explicitly to the nuclear family and its impact on both Japanese women and same-sex attracted men.

Unlike the novels previously analyzed, *Hush!* was released in 2001, in the aftermath of a decade of economic stagnation that has been termed the “lost decade” (*ushinawareta jūnen*) by Japanese economists and commentators. Initially triggered by the burst of the Japanese real estate bubble and the subsequent collapse of the Nikkei Stock Index at the end of high-growth period of the 1980s, the 1990s, as Romit Dasgupta writes, “saw a dramatic turnaround in the economic climate, symbolised by the string of high-profile corporate bankruptcies of the previously solid banks and financial institutions,” which in turn had “significant ramifications for the institutions of practices of marriage and family.”²¹⁹ The middle-class, nuclear model of

²¹⁸ Mark McLelland. *Male Homosexuality in Modern Japan: Cultural Myths and Social Realities*. Routledge: London, 2005: 29.

²¹⁹ Romit Dasgupta, *Re-imagining*, 10.

family that had characterized much of the postwar period became increasingly less stable during this decade, as its economic basis, the lifetime employment system, became less and less accessible to families. Jeff Kingston and Machiko Osawa write that Japanese companies responded to foreign competition by “reducing the number of full-time jobs and progressively abandoning corporate paternalism in an effort to offset the cost disadvantages of an aging and more expensive workforce,” while the government embarked on a period of deregulation and “revised employment laws to enable wider use of temporary, contract, and dispatched workers hired by firms through intermediary agencies.”²²⁰ This sudden rise of unemployed former lifetime employees, many of them middle-aged men who were the previous ‘pillars’ (*daikokubashira*) for their immediate families, helped to spur what Dasugpta describes as “a collective socio-cultural consciousness dominated by anxieties and moral panics,” during the 1990s.²²¹ *Hush!* reflects the sensibilities of this social and economic context and it in turn furthers a distinctly queer critique of the postwar nuclear family as a fundamentally unstable social unit that which regulates and limits the economic lives and potential of both heterosexual and queer people alike. By explicitly identifying the nuclear family as a source of policing and regulating populations as well as the economy, the film presents non-heteronormative modes of family as an alternative basis for social, economic and biological reproduction, and critiques the hitherto hegemonic mode of family as socially and affectively barren.

The three protagonists of *Hush!* are a gay couple named Katsuhiro and Naoya and a woman named Asako. They are all young adult inhabitants of early 21st century Tokyo. Naoya, a

²²⁰ Jeff Kingston and Machiko Osawa, “Risk and Consequences: The Changing Japanese Employment Paradigm.” in *Japan: The Precarious Future*, edited by Frank Baldwin and Anne Allison, New York: NYU Press, 2015, 58-86: 59.

²²¹ Romit Dasgupta, *Re-imagining*, 15.

sarcastic and feminine pet groomer, is openly gay with his family and coworkers, while his partner Katsuhiko, an engineer at a large company, remains closeted for the sake of maintaining face and his career. Asako is a misanthropic, heterosexual woman who has frequent sexual relationships that are absent of intimacy. At one point, her doctor goes as far as to suggest she undergo a hysterectomy, given her apparent lack of interest in a family. Asako, Katsuhiko and Naoya have a chance encounter leaving a *soba* restaurant, when Katsuhiko lends Asako an umbrella after she loses her own. Asako, becomes unexpectedly fascinated with Katsuhiko, and attempts to seek him out, going as far as to visit his workplace. When she finds Katsuhiko, she tells him that his eyes “look like a father’s,” and asks him if he would be interested in making a child with her. She clarifies that she knows that he is gay, and that she would not be asking him to break up with his partner or for emotional or sexual intimacy. Despite his shock, Katsuhiko, whose childhood was haunted by his own father’s abuse and mistreatment of him and his mother, finds himself strangely intrigued by the idea, and brings it up to Naoya. Naoya is initially opposed to the idea, having no interest in starting a family, but through Katsuhiko’s insistence, he meets Asako in person, and as they contemplate the idea, the three of them begin spending time together and form nascent bonds of friendship and affection with one another.

In his own novelization of the film (*Shosetsu hasshu!*, 2002), Hashiguchi explores the underlying psychological and emotional states of his protagonists in depth, using the metaphor of “starting lines” (*sutāto rain*) in their lives. In their own ways, Hashiguchi suggests, all three main characters’ have had their lives’ trajectory impeded in some way, and thus find themselves unable to connect with one another and on the verge of giving up. Naoya, bullied for his femininity and treated as disposable by a boy he once loved in school, withdraws from broader heterosexual society as an adult; as Hashiguchi writes, he “changes his surroundings to suit

himself,” rather than the other way around, working in the gay friendly world of pet hair grooming and surrounding himself primarily with gay friends.²²² Furthermore, he implicitly equates his own gay identity with not being able to have children or a family, and thus fundamentally distances any desire he feels for either of those things from himself. Katsuhiro, by contrast, has been closeted so long that he has become implicitly ashamed of his own homosexuality, and in turn “comes to mistake the expectations he receives from others for his own desires.”²²³ Working in a high pressure job at a major engineering firm and with no support from his family, Katsuhiro can neither accept the limitations that come with being openly gay in modern Japan like Naoya, nor can he make himself conform perfectly to the expectations of others. Asako, while not directly under pressure from a homophobic society, is shown to be a victim of misogyny, ableism and heteronormativity throughout her upbringing. Initially branded as a ‘wild child’ from an early age after biting a classmate, Hashiguchi states that Asako is abused by her mother and branded as ‘easy’ or ‘loose’ by her male classmates from middle school onwards. When she has her heart broken in an affair, she decides to live her life alone, and forbids herself from even hoping for the expectation of intimacy or love.²²⁴ It is in this context that Hashiguchi presents his protagonists as characters who have been prevented from fully actualizing themselves for various reasons, and as a result incapable of moving on from the “starting lines,” of their current lives. Yet when they begin to get to know one another over time, they slowly but gradually become capable of the interpersonal support and intimacy each was once alienated from. As Asako becomes a closer friend to them, Katsuhiro and Naoya, in turn,

²²² Ryōsuke Hashiguchi 橋口亮輔. *Shōsetsu Hasshu!* 小説ハッシュ！ [Hush! Novelization]. (Tokyo: Atisuto hausu, 2002): 116.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 134-5.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 126.

become able to open up to one another more deeply as well, strengthening both their relationship with one another and to her. The tripartite intimacy shared by the three, in turn, is juxtaposed with the regulation of intimacy within the heteronormative family unit, as exemplified by Katsuhiko's brother and his family. When Katsuhiko goes to visit them midway through the film, he finds their lives tightly regulated by social conventions, with his brother visibly acting as a patriarch wielding authority over the actions of his wife and daughter. Katsuhiko, as a result of his family's history, is particularly traumatized by this kind of patriarchal dominance; when he and his brother discuss their family privately in a later scene, Katsuhiko admits to having once poured ink into their family well, and expresses his long-latent guilt and fear that he accidentally killed his own father. Both as a result of his own sexuality and relationship to patriarchy expressed by the father, Katsuhiko is doubly-alienated from the position of fatherhood and finds himself unable to relate to the normative model of family patriarch exemplified by his brother. Within the context of his relationship with Naoya and Asako, however, such gendered divisions become unnecessary, and intimacy conducted on an egalitarian basis becomes possible. This intimacy, however, is itself a threat to the symbolic order of the heteronormative family, however, something that becomes apparent when Katsuhiko's coworker, Emi, reveals the details of Asako, Naoya and Katsuhiko's unusual relationship, including their joint desire for a baby, to Katsuhiko's family and Naoya's mother. Having been spurred by Katsuhiko, Emi becomes obsessed with both him and Asako, who she believes he is in a relationship with, and she steals documents that record Asako's previous abortions and suicide attempts. When they receive this information from her, the families, namely Naoya's mother and Katsuhiko's family, attempt to stage an "intervention," for the three of them to break up the relationship and force them to return to their previous lives.

Hashiguchi uses this “intervention” scene as a means of juxtaposing the ontological differences in family as it is conceptualized within the social framework of heteronormativity and as it is articulated by Asako, Katsuhiko and Naoya. When Katsuhiko’s sister in law demands that Asako explain herself, accusing her of deceiving Katsuhiko, Asako slowly states that she had in truth given up on human relationships before meeting Naoya and Katsuhiko. Through her interactions with them, through “eating meals together, laughing and holding hands,” she says that she was slowly able to come to see the world more positively, and ultimately, she declares that “I wanted to choose my own family, the way you choose lovers and friends.” In response to this, Naoya’s mother immediately dismisses the idea of family affection, and implicitly articulates the ontological position of family in a heteronormative, nuclear framework: “You don’t choose your family. They’re just there.”

Katsuhiko’s sister-in-law, in turn, calls Asako selfish, and states that the beauty of having a child is that one cannot decide how they will turn out. She cites her own difficulty having a son, saying her failure to do so made her feel worthless, but that she ultimately overcame this. Hashiguchi emphasizes the ironic distance between the sister-in-law’s ideas and her actual actions by having her both insist that families be fundamentally free of external expectations while also insisting that Asako, Katsuhiko and Naoya’s family is fundamentally invalid. The intervention eventually breaks down completely when Asako, after having been insulted, attacks Katsuhiko’s sister-in-law, and in the ensuing argument and commotion, Katsuhiko’s brother in law slaps his own wife across the face. With this expression of misogynistic violence, Hashiguchi makes clear that it is the heteronormative and nuclear family that is violent, controlling and unhealthy, rather than the dynamic shared by Asako, Naoya and Katsuhiko. Such a family, as Naoya’s mother notes, finds its basis not in intimacy but in sexual

and biological proximity, and it is ultimately maintained through regulation, exclusion and violence. The basis of their family is revealed to be not only violent, but inherently unstable, as represented by Katsuhiko's brothers' sudden heart attack and death shortly after the intervention. At the subsequent funeral, his brother's wife and child do not even appear, signifying the complete dissolution of their family, while Katsuhiko is accompanied by Asako and Naoya. Finally able to come to terms with his own identity, Katsuhiko breaks down and sobs, comforted without words or judgement by his found family of Asako and Naoya. The final scene of the film depicts the three of them moving into a new apartment, and Asako revealing that she intends to have *both* their children, because, in her words, "it's lonely being an only child."

Like *Twinkle Twinkle, Hush!* suggests that in their mutual struggles regarding the nuclear family, queer men and cisgender women marginalized by intersecting prejudices including their mental health, age and social position, are uniquely able to move away from this configuration of family and find new modes of intimacy and relationality. Unlike the former novel, however, *Hush!* demonstrates a fundamentally negative view of the institution of marriage itself, portraying it as a framework through which gendered, interpersonal violence and domination is continuously perpetuated. While Shōko and Mutsuki enter into a marriage for the mutual support it lends them, only later coming into a unique form of intimacy with one another, the family unit formed by Naoya, Asako and Katsuhiko is from the outset marked by its alterity, its lack of official sanction by both their families and society at large. By refusing to cohere to the expectations imposed on them and choosing to live as a single family unit, the configuration of family presented by Hashiguchi is in certain ways more fundamentally radical in its implications than that articulated in *Twinkle Twinkle*. This difference, in turn, is reflective of the changes that occurred in the normative family during the 1990s, and represents both a more pessimistic

outlook towards the nuclear family as a model of intimacy, as well as a renewed desire to use queerness to explore new sites of intimacy and family outside of its limited framework.

Even as the film ends on an optimistic note, it is worth considering the case of Emi, Katsuhiko's coworker and desperate admirer. Emi's attraction to Katsuhiko is shown to be obsessive, while she is shown to be unstable, manic, and ultimately pitiful. She is shown to be happiest when Katsuhiko tells her that she isn't "useless," yet becomes irrational and even violent when he does not return her affections. It is possible that Emi is a commentary by Hashiguchi on the double bind heteronormativity places women in. Her desire to be loved motivates her to nearly destroy the bonds between Katsuhiko, Naoya and Emi, and yet it is clear that she is a figure to be pitied. In her final scene, she clings desperately to Katsuhiko even as Naoya tries to pull her off. Katsuhiko, torn between wanting to comfort her and unable to fulfill her desires towards him, is placed in a literal impasse, both the source of Emi's anguish and unable to end it. In this sense, the relationship between Emi and Katsuhiko can be seen as critiquing the parameters of heteronormativity itself, which strictly regulates intimacy itself. In short, Katsuhiko's inability to help Emi, and her inability to move forward on her own, reflects the failure of heteronormativity to allow alternative modes of intimacy and connection to emerge between individuals. The multilateral relationship between Naoya, Katsuhiko and Asako, by contrast, has no such restriction. Similar to the family of *Kitchen*, the family unit in *Hush!* continually shifts gendered and sexual divisions, reconceptualizing the family as a polymorphous, hybrid entity. Furthermore, just as in *Twinkle Twinkle*, the family in *Hush!* reconceives of reproduction as a shared effort without gendered positions, a fundamentally *social* undertaking rather than an economic one.

3.7 Conclusions

The beginning of this chapter outlined narrative techniques pioneered by female authors of BL and *shōjo* manga of the 1970s and 1980s, particularly the utilization of queer and gay male stories and characters by to explore non-heteronormative modes of intimacy. While the actual relationship of these works to the lives of actual gay men has been shown by Aoyama, Satō and others to be dubious at best, their impact on representations of sexuality and intimacy in Japanese literature, particularly by women writers, has been significant, particularly insofar as they helped to open up new conceptual terrain in exploring the role and function of heteronormativity in the social organization of postwar Japan. Furthermore, feminist writers, academics and journalists of the 1970s and 1980s, including Ueno Chizuko, Mizuta Noriko, Tomioka Taeko and others, outlined critiques of the nuclear family that explicitly called for alternative bases of family formation and intimacy, positioning the nuclear family as a regressive, patriarchal, and moribund institution. From the late 1980s onward, these critiques of the nuclear family as inherently limiting converged with the use of queer narratives to explore alternative sexualities in earlier women's literature and *manga* in a number of commercially successful and critically influential novels and films. In Yoshimoto Banana's *Kitchen*, a model of family based on convergent and mutually contradictory dynamics can be seen, exemplified by the transgender character Eriko, who acts as a matriarch of sorts for the ambiguous, constantly shifting family unit shared by her, Yūichi and Mikage. *Kira kira hikaru*, by contrast, shows heterosexual marriage to be a social institution devoid of meaning, functioning simply as a legal framework in which alternative intimacies and relationships can be embedded, and thus fundamentally open to reinterpretation and play. *Hush!*, in turn, uses an alternative model of family to critique the heteronormative nuclear family itself, suggesting that it precludes the potential for true intimacy as a result of its emphasis on hierarchized, patriarchal relationships.

While each of these works articulates distinctly unique preoccupations, narrative structures, and social-historical positions, it is important to note the number of narrative rhetorical techniques they share, as well as their shared target of critique. Each of these works takes up the problem of the nuclear family in late 20th century Japan, and each presents an alternative to it based on non-heterosexual and non-heteronormative modes of intimacy. As Okada notes, Eriko's employment at a gay bar is metaphorical of her own inability to exist elsewhere, and in *Kitchen* and elsewhere, queer space is presented not as an unknown site of titillation and voyeurism, but rather as an escape from the pressures of normative gender and sexual relations.²²⁵ In this respect, the critique levelled at some works of the *gei būmu* by Mark McLelland, who says they "were not, in fact, about gay men at all," but rather "media fantasies which used the popularity of male homosexuality with young women to increase numbers at the box-office," seems to elide the fact that these films identify isomorphisms in the shared alterity by women and LGBT individuals in postwar Japan.²²⁶ Within the discursive space of literature, distinct yet interrelated critiques of the nuclear family are brought together, and potential alternatives to them established. By distinctly linking the experiences of heterosexual women within a patriarchal framework of marriage with the alterity of LGBT people and exclusion from it, a view of nuclear marriage as a fundamentally *heteronormative* institution that privileges a gendered conceptualization of social and economic reproduction, these works suggest the possibility of a broadly non-heteronormative critique of the family itself that draws from both queer and feminist discourses. In doing so, these texts suggest the potential for overcoming the

²²⁵ Okada, *Yoshimoto*, 25.

²²⁶ McLelland, *Male Homosexuality in Modern Japan*, 29.

previous limitations of critiques of the family, and ultimately present new modalities through which intimacy and sexuality can be expressed on individual rather than gendered terms.

In her analysis of the use of male-male sexuality in women's comics, Tomoko Aoyama argues that these images became slowly politicized over the course of the 1970s and 1980s as artists increasingly used male-male sexual narratives to respond to existing social pressures and expectations placed on women in postwar Japanese society. Furthermore, as the previous chapter of this thesis has shown, the 1970s and 1980s saw the emergence of a distinctly non-heterosexual consciousness in the magazines and publications of gay Japanese communities, which culminated in a surge of public visibility towards queer identities termed the 'gay boom' (*gei būmu*) by the Japanese media.²²⁷ The robust and diverse feminist critiques of the family that can be traced to the 1960s made a significant impact on mainstream conceptualizations of the normative family and the role of women within it by the 1980s.²²⁸ The critiques furthered by these groups were often overlapping and contradictory with one another, and developed with different philosophies, strategies, and in different discursive sites. This can be seen in the centering, as Naoya Maekawa notes, of a gay male subjectivity within mainstream gay magazines of the 1970s and 1980s, as well as in the early dismissals of lesbian feminist concerns within early feminist organizing as detailed by James Welker. In the discursive space of popular culture, however, the separately developed critiques of the family derived from queer and feminist perspectives have utilized to find new model of familial intimacy and relationality that are fundamentally non-heteronormative in nature. *Kitchen* attempts this through the purposeful

²²⁷ Wakamatsu Takashi. *LGBT Konjaku*, 120.

²²⁸ Ayako Kano. *Japanese Feminist Debates: A Century of Contention on Sex, Love and Labor*. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2016) pp. 132-4.

obfuscation of gendered familial roles, which it accomplishes through the conceptual queering of the gendered and familial borderlines between its major characters. In *Kira kira hikaru*, a radically empty form of marriage, and subsequently family, emerges, one which prioritizes not the social and economic drive towards reproduction, but rather the shared alterity and vulnerability of its constituent members, thus bringing a shared solidarity between women and queer men based on marginalization from the family to the forefront of the text. *Hush!*, directed by an openly gay male director, explicitly connects the struggles of queer people, women and the mentally ill to articulate a pointed criticism of the nuclear family as an inherently hierarchical and violent institution, and the heteronormative undergirding it as effectively precluding genuine affection.

Each of the texts discussed primarily features as protagonists people 'disqualified' from the institutions of family and marriage, yet who find themselves pressured towards marriage and nuclear families by their own family members, their workplaces and by society at large. As Ekuni and Hashiguchi emphasize through their respective metaphors of silver lions and starting lines, their protagonists are uniquely incapable of actualizing any kind normative family, and thus find themselves socially and interpersonally alienated as a result. In seeking to form new kinds of intimacy not predicated on reproduction, they in turn suggest the possibility for new forms of family founded on a different conceptual basis, and thus the potential for new forms of intimacy altogether. These forms of intimacy, in turn, are predicated on the shared social vulnerabilities of women, the mentally ill, and queer individuals in Japanese society, and utilize this shared alterity to articulate new means of sharing intimacy with others and within families in a post nuclear family Japan.

CHAPTER 4

BACKLASH, RETRENCHMENT, AND THE JAPANESE FAMILY'S FUTURE TRAJECTORIES

4.1: Backlash, Reaction, Rationalization: The 21st Century Japanese Family in Political Discourse

Much of the discourse regarding the 1990s in Japan has emphasized the discontinuity of the decade in relation to the previous high growth period and presented it as a fragmentary, unstable period that was, as Tomiko Yoda writes, “the site of an imploding national economic system, a disintegrating social order, and the virtual absence of ethical and competent leadership.”²²⁹ More recent scholarship, however, has attempted to contextualize the period in relation to ongoing and continuous social and cultural shifts both in Japan and in the world at large. The collapse of the so-called Iron Triangle, described by postwar historians as the mutually reinforcing structures of large Japanese business groups (*keiretsu*), the bureaucracy and the Liberal Democratic Party (*Jimintō*) that formed the basis of the postwar economy, and the

²²⁹ Tomiko Yoda. “A Roadmap to Millennial Japan.” In *Japan after Japan: Social and Cultural Life from the Recessionary 1990s to the Present*, edited by Tomiko Yoda and Harry Harootunian (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006) pp. 16-54: 22.

subsequent economic slowdown it caused has had complex and contradictory social, political and cultural effects on Japanese society, particularly on the family. Two of the most significant political developments beginning in the 1990s and continuing into the 2000s have been the simultaneous drive towards a neo-liberalization and rationalization of the Japanese economy and the resurgence of a socially conservative strain of nationalism amongst right-wing intellectuals and citizen groups.

As the previous chapter outlined, the crises of Japanese society during the 1990s opened up the potential for alternative socioeconomic arrangements to gain currency in mainstream discourse. Ayako Kano argues that while the 1990s have been described as economic lost decade, “for women it seemed like a boom time,” with new laws being passed that eased access to child care and elder care services, explicitly defined certain forms of stalking and domestic violence as criminal, and gave women’s groups stronger legal protections.²³⁰ In 1995, the Office for Gender Equality and the Council For Gender Equality were established as sections of the Prime Minister’s office, and in 1999, the Basic Law for a Gender Equal Society (*Danjo kyōdō sankaku kihon hō*), was passed by the Diet on the recommendation of this office, a landmark victory for feminist and women’s groups.²³¹ Furthermore, as the last chapter noted, the 1990s were also a period when the lives and experiences of LGBT Japanese people became more prominent in popular media, the press and popular culture at large during this decade. Mark McLelland writes that “the early 1990s saw a rapid proliferation of reporting about gay and lesbian issues in the mainstream media,” with such publications as the women’s magazine CREA

²³⁰ Ayako Kano. *Japanese Feminist Debates*, 141.

²³¹ Tomomi Yamaguchi. “Gender Free” Feminism in Japan: A Story of Mainstreaming and Backlash,” *Feminist Studies* Vol. 40, No. 3 (2014), pp. 541-572: 544-5.

dedicating an entire issue to LGBT issues titled “gay renaissance,” (*Gei runessansu*) in February 1991.²³² In 1992, the International Lesbian and Gay Association of Japan (ILGA) held the first Tokyo International Lesbian and Gay Film Festival, and in 1994, the first Tokyo Pride Parade (then called Tokyo Gay and Lesbian Parade was held.²³³ According to Stephen Miller, the male-male centered 1993 TV drama *Dōsōkai* (Reunion), one of the first of its kind, “presented on prime time television a world that had never been seen by the majority of the Japanese viewers,” and was an instant success, capturing more than 20% of prime time viewers by the time of its sixth week of airing.²³⁴ Romit Dasgupta argues that while the 1990s did indeed see an extended economic downturn, “[they] may also be conceptualised, not in terms of loss and anxiety, but rather in terms of renewal,” marked by the emergence of new NGOs and citizens’ groups, increasing social and ethnic diversity, and a wider variety of representations in mass media.²³⁵

At the same time that Japanese society seemed to be expanding to include more types of families and living styles, however, signs of a backlash were apparent. In 1997, in response to a suggestion by the government’s advisory council that the Civil Code be revised to allow married individuals to keep their own surnames (*fūfu bessei*), conservative groups and individuals opposed to the change formed a grassroots group called the Japan Conference (*Nippon Kaigi*).²³⁶ Arguing that legalizing different surnames would lead to the “collapse of the family,” Japan

²³² Mark McLelland, *Queer Japan*, 177.

²³³ *The Japan Times*. "Tokyo gets double dose of gay pride for 2012." <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/community/2012/04/24/issues/tokyo-gets-double-dose-of-gay-pride-for-2012/#.Vx4wLqOLSAw> Last updated April 24, 2012. Accessed March 15, 2019.

²³⁴ Stephen Miller. “The (Temporary?) Queering of Japanese TV,” In *Journal of Homosexuality*, Volume 39 Numbers 3/4, 2000, pp. 83-111; 87; 107.

²³⁵ Romit Dasgupta, *Post-Bubble Family*, 13.

²³⁶ Kano, *Feminist Debates*, 156

Conference rapidly expanded after 1997 and became active in a variety of nationalistic and anti-feminist causes, eventually become the largest conservative organization in Japan. An initial impetus for the group's growth came from the textbook revisionist controversies of 2001, when they began to forge institutional links with another conservative group called the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform (*Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho o tsukuru kai*), which sought revisions to history textbooks to deemphasize Japanese's role as an aggressor of other Asian nations in the Second World War.²³⁷ While this effort failed, many of the same conservative groups and individuals involved in the effort soon turned their attention to what they regarded as the dangers of a "gender free," (*jendā-furī*) society. This term, as Tomomi Yamaguchi and others have noted, was used repeatedly by the Japanese right to attack various aspects of the Gender Equality Law, as well as the "male-female participation planning centers," (*danjo kyōdō sankaku senta*) that promoted gender equality and integration.²³⁸ According to Yamaguchi, "although the term first signaled positive support for the mainstreaming of feminism in Japan, it quickly became a symbol, too, of the backlash against that trend," and from the early 2000s onward, it was used extensively by the mass media and commentators to describe and criticize proposed changes to sex education and society at large.²³⁹ Kanai Yoshiko further notes that while many of the groups broadly opposed to the Basic Law for a Gender-Equal Society, their reasons for doing so for were various, with some opposing it on the grounds of surname change, some on the grounds of nationalism, while others opposed the possibility of taxation and pension changes for

²³⁷ Kano, *Feminist Debates*, 155-6.

²³⁸ As Ayako Kano notes, *danjo kyōdō sankaku* is itself an unusual construction in Japanese. While it is translated as 'gender equality', the Japanese term means "joint male-female participation planning." Citing Osawa Mari, Kano writes that the phrase *sankaku* was intentionally used in place of the word 'equality' (*byōdō*) so as to not raise alarms with conservative politicians. See Kano, *Japanese Feminist Debates*, pp. 142-3.

²³⁹ Kano, *Japanese Feminist Debates*, 144.

full-time housewives. The Gender Equality law, however, cut across these lines and acted as a unifying force for various conservative, religious and nationalistic groups, and these views were heavily promoted by the *Sankei* news group during the 2000s.²⁴⁰ In 2002, conservative groups and LDP politicians began attacking proposed supplementary educational materials for sexual education classes that they said promoted “gender free” education and sought to destroy gender roles, signaling the beginning of a broader cultural campaign against supposed gender-free ideology.²⁴¹ In 2005, the LDP’s Project Team For Investigating the State of Radical Sex Education and Gender Free Education (*Kageki na seikyoiku - jendā-furī kyōku jittai chōsa purojekuto chimu*), headed by LDP member and future Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, submitted its recommendation in a report that the term “gender free,” be dropped altogether and that the government scale back its commitments to implementing the law.²⁴² Kanai Yoshiko argues that the 2000s backlash to “gender-free,” ideology was successful not only in impeding the implementation of the Basic Law on Gender Equality, but also in spurring previously apolitical groups and individuals, including college students and housewives, towards political activism. It did so, she suggests, by allowing them to make feminism the external target of their own political fears and anxieties, and thereby reaffirm their own “normalcy”.²⁴³

²⁴⁰ Kanai Yoshiko 金井淑子. *Jenda Bakkurasshu no Kouzu to Naimen* ジェンダーバックラッシュの構図とバックラッシュ [The Construction and Nature of the Gender Backlash]. In *Ajia taiheiyo ni okeru jenda to heiwigaku* アジア太平洋におけるジェンダーと平和学 [Gender and peace studies in Asia and the Pacific], edited by Yokoyama Masaki, (Tokyo: Ferris Women’s University, 2005) pp. 159-174: 164.

²⁴¹ Masami Saitō 正美斎藤. “Bakkurashu to kansei konkatsu no renzokusei.” バックラッシュと官製婚活の連続性 [The continuity of the backlash and government-sponsored marriage activities.] In *Maboroshi no ‘nihonteki kazoku’* まぼろし「日本的家族」 [The illusionary Japanese family], edited by Hayakawa Tadanori. (Tokyo: Aokyūsha, 2018) pp. 79-116: 80.

²⁴² Saitō, *Bakkurashu*, 80-1.

²⁴³ Kanai Yoshiko, *Jenda*, 169-70.

Tomiko Yoda proposes a useful framework for understanding the political discourse of the late 1990s and 2000s by framing the period as a site of contention between neo-nationalist and neoliberal ideologies. She suggests that these two factions, which had been aligned throughout much of the long postwar period on the basis of their shared interest in the reconstruction of the Japanese state on conservative lines, split in the 1990s as a result of differing diagnoses for the country's malaise. She writes that "The Japanese government's massive bailout of failing banks in the 1990s galvanized a surge of neoliberal criticism of government intervention," and that neoliberal critics attacked both the Japanese state as well as Japanese corporate governance as "risk-averse, complacent, and insular."²⁴⁴ They advocated for increased globalization and "market-driven reform," in the economy, which they framed as necessary for the revival of the country. According to Yoda, "Their prescription for the Japanese economy and people to swallow the bitter pill of liberalization and rationalization is typically packaged under the familiar call to endure hardship for the sake of building national strength."²⁴⁵ Conversely, the rise of neo-nationalism in the 1990s, which Yoda describes as "charading as a new, provocative challenge to the status quo," was initially aided by both the textbook controversies as well opposition to the Basic Gender Equality Law. Growing "as a reactionary and defensive responses to...growing pressures on the Japanese state and people," neo-nationalists have utilized fears about Japan's diminishing economic and political centrality in a post Cold War geopolitical schema to popularize, in Yoda's words, "the campaign to overcome postwar Japan's disavowal of its wartime past and restore a 'real' military to the nation," a goal

²⁴⁴ Tomiko Yoda, *Roadmap*, 22.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 24-5.

for conservatives since the 1980s.²⁴⁶ One of the major issues that neo-nationalist activists and politicians have advocated for is revising the 1947 constitution (*kenpō kaisei*). While their most obvious target for revision has been Article 9 of the constitution, which states that “the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes,”²⁴⁷ constitutional revision has been ideologically connected to family planning in the form through activism to change Article 24, which outlines the role of the family in the Japanese state.

In April 2012, the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan presented a bill of proposed amendments to the country’s postwar constitution (*Nihon kenpō kaisei sōan*), made through consultation with conservative groups including Japan Conference.²⁴⁸ Among the proposed changes to the constitution were two new additional lines regarding Article 24, the article of the constitution dealing with family. The proposed additions to the article are as follows: “The family is esteemed as the natural foundational unit of society. Families must work to aid one another.”²⁴⁹ Under the aegis of constitutional reform, the LDP has effectively linked long-term goals for national remilitarization with a variety of diverse ideological goals, with one of the most conspicuous being family reform. While neoliberal and neo-nationalist critics may have split in the 1990s their diagnoses of Japan’s crisis and their subsequent responses to it, the family

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 27.

²⁴⁷ Japanese Constitution. Government of Japan, https://japan.kantei.go.jp/constitution_and_government_of_japan/constitution_e.html. Accessed March 15, 2019.

²⁴⁸ Hayakawa Tadanori 早川タダノリ. “Hajime ni,” 初めに [Introduction]. In *Maboroshi no ‘nihontek kazoku* pp. 9-17: 9.

²⁴⁹ Liberal Democratic Party of Japan 自由民主党. *Nihon kenpō kaisei sōan genkō kenpō taishō* 日本憲法改正草案原稿憲法対象 [Japanese constitutional amendment bill comparison to the original]. Tokyo: Jiyū minshū tō, April 27, 2012: pp. 8.

has itself become a site of both ideological and political convergence between these groups, as represented by the efforts of the current Prime Minister, Abe Shinzo, to unite them under his administration. Since his party's resounding victory in the 2013 national elections, Abe, the LDP and their conservative allies have made constitutional reform a central plank of their ideological campaign. In 2016, the conservative journal *Seiron*, run by the *Sankei* media group, began a public promotional campaign in favor of constitution revision, with a special issue on the subject published in September declaring it to be "The autumn of constitutional revision," (*Kenpō kaisei no aki*).²⁵⁰ They have been aided, in turn, by more recent grassroots conservative groups such as The Citizens Association for the Creation of a Beautiful Japanese Constitution (*Utsukushii nihon no kenpō wo tsukuru kokumin no kai*, hereafter ACBC), which promotes natalist policies as well as revisions to Article 24 of the 1947 constitution. This group, founded in 2014 by former heads of Japan Conference Miyoshi Tooru and Takubo Tadae as well as the journalist Sakurai Yoshiko, have been active in campaigning for changes to the constitution, holding demonstrations, petition campaigns and working with high profile celebrities, journalists and politicians to further their aims.²⁵¹ They argue that the current Japanese constitution has led to "the destruction of the family," (*kazoku hōkai*), and that only through the restoration of 'prewar' family ideals can it be restored. In a 2016 assembly at the Nihon Budōkan in Tokyo, the celebrity TV host and host of the TV program *Iron Chef* Hattori Yukio, one of the group's most prominent supporters, laid out the ideological basis of their program. In his address, Hattori states that the postwar constitution caused what he terms the "destruction of the family dining table,"

²⁵⁰ Nōgawa Motokazu 能川元一. "Uyoha no 'ni jū yon jō' 'kazoku' gensetsu o yomu," 右派の「二十四条」「家族」言説を読む [Reading right-wing discourse on 'Article 24' and 'Family'.] In *Maboroshi no 'nihonteki kazoku'*, pp. 48-79: 49.

²⁵¹ Hayakawa Tadanori, *Hajime*, 17.

(*shokutaku no hōkai*) and led to the dissolution of family bonds in contemporary Japanese society. He laments that the postwar constitution, which he states was “written in one week by 21 people,” features the words ‘rights’ (*kenri*) and ‘freedom’ (*jiyū*), multiple times, but hardly references the words ‘responsibility’ (*sekinin*) and ‘duty’ (*gimu*).²⁵² As a result, he writes that the “everyone has become an individual,” in modern Japan and the family itself has been lost. The solution, he suggests, is to change Article 24 of the constitution in order to ‘safeguard’ (*hogo*) the Japanese family.²⁵³ It is clear, however, that the rise of individualism is not the only motivation for supporters of ACBC’s efforts to change Article 24 of the constitution. As Nōgawa notes, right-wing supporters of family law reform have been motivated by social shifts represented by several recent cases brought before the Japanese Supreme Court. In 2013, the court ruled that a transgender man whose wife had conceived a child via sperm donation was the legal father of their child, a ruling that caused an outcry amongst some social conservatives. In a 2013 issue of the conservative magazine *Seiron* dedicated to the recent cases titled “The creeping of the family destroyers” (*Shundo suru kazoku hakai shugu tachi*), conservative critics Nishibe Susumu and Yagi Hidetsugu lament the ruling, with Hidetsugu suggesting that the result will lead to cases where parents simply use a “borrowed stomach,” to have their children, and that this logic will be used to support same sex marriage.²⁵⁴ Connecting these issues to other court cases in the 2010s, including those relating to children born out of wedlock, Hidetsugu emphasizes that

²⁵² Utsukushii nihon no kenpō wo tsukuru kokumin no kai 美しい日本の憲法を創る国民の会 [Citizen’s association for a beautiful Japanese constitution,] *Shokutaku no hōkai wa nihon kenpō no ari* 食卓の崩壊は日本の憲法であり [The Japanese constitution is the destruction of the family dining table.] Facebook post, <https://www.facebook.com/kenpou1000/photos/a.1540048682875064/1671072279772703/?type=3&theater>, October 26, 2015. Accessed March 15, 2019.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Nōgawa, *Uyoha*, 65.

genetics and biology are the foundation of families, and that under the current constitution, both are being disregarded. Furthermore, in 2015, after Shibuya Ward passed the first bill to legalize same-sex partnerships, Hidetsugu wrote in a 2015 special issue of *Seiron* titled “The Day Meiji Shrine becomes a Holy Ground for Same Sex Marriage,” that “we must prioritize male-female marriage, which holds the ability to give life to the next generation, over other forms of relationships.”²⁵⁵ Groups ideologically aligned with ACBC and Japan Conference have also been influential in actively promoting a normative, reproductive-centered model of parent-child relationships in popular discourse since the 2000s. In 2006, after revisions were passed to the Basic Education Law instituting patriotic and “moral” education as part of the national curriculum, Takahashi Shirō, a professor at Meisei University and a member of Japan Conference’s Committee on Government Policy, formed the Association for the Promotion Parent Learning (*Shingaku suishin kyōkai*) to promote his newly articulated concept of “parent learning” (*Shingaku*, also *oyagaku*).²⁵⁶ Describing it as a form of learning that would enlighten individuals as to “the roles of mothers and fathers,” (*Chichioya to hahaoya no yakuwari o jikaku sase*), Takahashi has led training workshops, presentations and conferences on *shingaku* to audiences across Japan, and his techniques have been adopted by prefectural governments as well as promoted by the Abe administration.²⁵⁷ According to Horiuchi Kyōko, *Shingaku* seminars have been held across the country since the 2010s, and interested parents who undergo

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 69.

²⁵⁶ Horiuchi Kyōko 堀内京子. 税制と教育をつなぐもの[The thing that connects the tax system and education.] In *Maboroshi no 'nihonteki kazoku'*, 117-140: 125.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 125-6.

proper training can receive the qualification of “*shingaku* advisor,” which allows them to, in turn, host their own *shingaku* seminars and lectures at future PTA meetings.²⁵⁸

The promotion of heteronormative, ‘traditional’, and sanctioned forms of family in recent discourse is not limited to neo-nationalist groups and organizations. Neoliberal economic reforms undertaken by the LDP have sought to rationalize and promote specific models of family as a means of reversing demographic decline. The LDP has formed numerous working groups dedicated to family policy, such as the Special Committee to Protect Family Bonds (*Kazoku no kizuna wo mamoru tokumei iinkai*) formed in 2013 in response to a Supreme Court ruling expanding the rights of inheritance for children born out wedlock in order to, in its own words, “protect the shape of the traditional family,” (*Dentoteki na kazoku no katachi wo mamoru*).²⁵⁹ Since 2013, the Abe administration has implemented local initiatives to help couples find partners, including through dating events, seminars and public events across the country. They have also implemented various schemes to support young mothers, including making financial support for childbirth and early childcare more widely available at the local and prefectural level. Many of the proposals both considered and implemented by the Abe administration have served to reinforce at the policy level a normative and reproductive model of family over other social and living arrangement. One such policy, implemented in 2016, gave tax subsidies to homes designated “three generation households,” based on the number of kitchens, bathrooms and entryways they were equipped with.²⁶⁰ In 2018, an extension of the existing tax subsidy for married couples (*Tokubetsu haigusha kōjo*) was implemented to allow jointly-working married

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 126.

²⁵⁹ Mainichi Shimbun 毎日新聞. January 8, 2013.

²⁶⁰ Horiuchi, *Zeisei*, 122.

couples tiered tax exemptions based on their income.²⁶¹ Yet as Saito Masami points out, such initiatives are largely limited to women under 30 and implicitly marginalize older women as well as those incapable of having children as “unproductive.”²⁶²

Furthermore, Saito suggests that the ideological impetus for these reforms emerged from a rejection of more flexible forms of family and sexuality promulgated during the 1990s the early 2000s. Tracing the conceptualization of recent natalists policies back to the “gender free” backlash of the early 2000s, she cites the case of a sexual education textbook titled “Love and Body Book” (*Rabu & bodei BOOK*), published in 2001 under the aegis of the Basic Gender Equality Law, which dealt with such issues as HIV/AIDS, unwanted pregnancies and birth control, rape and sexual assault, and told young readers they had the right to choose their sexuality and whether they have children.²⁶³ In 2002, the conservative Diet politician Yamatani Eriko, a member of Japan Conference, declared the book “unsuitable for middle school students,” while the *Sankei Shimbun* newspaper stated in alarmist terms that it was “advocating the pill,” (*piru no susume*) to middle school students.”²⁶⁴ By 2005, at the recommendations of the LDP’s Project Team For Investigating the State of Radical Sex Education and Gender Free Education, the book was removed from classrooms, and as Saito argues, its replacement, the 2015 textbook “For a healthy lifestyle,” (*Kenkō na seikatsu no tame ni*) textbook is explicitly

²⁶¹ Yuu Kuri Lab 優クリー LAB. "Zeisei kaisei," 2018 nen kara 'Haigūsha kōjo' 'Haigūsha tokubetsu kōjo' ga kawarimasu! 【税制改正】2018 年から「配偶者控除」「配偶者特別控除」が変わります! http://www.y-create.co.jp/forcreator/dependent_6th/?fbclid=IwAR2SBzdRY_dELmV17N9w4gfE51Wzoqs8obFQLY3lnDaj6776tKeTvTVfkD0. Last updated January 23, 2018. Accessed March 18, 2019.

²⁶² Saitō, *Bakkurashu*, 81-2.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 93.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 96.

marketed as countermeasure against childbirth decline and heavily emphasizes the importance and value of pregnancy, childbirth and motherhood over the individual desires of readers.²⁶⁵

Horiuchi Kyōko writes that “in the past ten or so years, the image of the Japanese family has lost its diversity,” (*Tayōsei o ushinatta*) as a result of the the policies of successive LDP governments in the 21st century.^{266 267} Connecting recent changes to family tax policy as well as efforts made to promote natalist family policies in education, she writes that even as recent reforms are presented by conservatives as “something everybody wants,” (*minna ga motometeiru mono*), they are simultaneously predicated on rejecting the diversity of actually existing families.²⁶⁸ Nōgawa Motokazu further argues that the model of family articulated by conservatives and nationalists is one fundamentally predicated on exclusion - of same sex couples, transgender couples, couples who desire different surnames, and couples without children. As he writes, “All of these groups, according to the logic of the Article 24 revisionists, are undeserving of the protections afforded by [the category of] ‘family’.”²⁶⁹

Having examined the developments of the past two decades in Japan, it is clear that LDP politician Sugita Mio’s comments that LGBT couples lack “productivity,” (*seisansei*) as detailed in the first chapter, did not emerge *ex nihilo*, but are rather isomorphic to conservative and nationalist discourses that have emerged since the 2000s. As an illustration of the ideological

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 104-5.

²⁶⁶ Horiuchi, *Zeisei*, 134.

²⁶⁷ The first Abe administration lasted between 2006 and 2007, during which his government passed the revisions to the Basic Education Law that declared “Cultivating Patriotism” (*Aikokushin kanyo*) as a goal of the national curriculum. Between 2009 and 2013, the country was governed by a coalition headed by the former Democratic Party of Japan (*Minshintō*). The second Abe administration began in 2013, when the LDP successfully defeated the DPJ in the general election that year, and has been in power since.

²⁶⁸ Horiuchi, *Zeisei*, 135.

²⁶⁹ Nōgawa, *Uyoha*, 70.

links between promoters of the ‘traditional’ Japanese family and recent homophobic discourse, consider the comments made in March 2015, after Shibuya Ward announced a system for recognizing same sex couples, by members of the LDP’s Special Committee to Protect Family Bonds, one of whom told the press that “just thinking about [same sex partnerships] is disgusting,” to laughter and agreement.²⁷⁰ While Yoda has argued neoliberal and neo-nationalists were distinct ideological groups that operated separately in the 1990s, we can see an increasing ideological convergence between them regarding the family, particularly since the 2010s. The discursive logic of homophobia has helped to reinforce this convergence by positioning sexual orientations in a productive/non-productive dichotomy. The rhetoric of the ‘destruction’ of gender roles and the family has been used since 1990s by both neoliberal and neo-nationalist critics to justify constitutional revision, changes to education, and to mobilize disparate ideological groups against the spectre of a “gender free” society. The backlash against “gender free,” in turn, has been used as the basis on which a strictly functionalist, heteronormative and natalist model of family that has been constructed by conservative policymakers, organizations and the LDP. Prime Minister Abe himself has effectively bridged the gaps between economically-oriented conservatives and nationalists with his dedication both to economic liberalization policies as well as to constitutional revision and the promotion of the ‘traditional’ family. Furthermore, as Nōgawa notes, he has successfully brought together ideologically disparate groups by emphasizing their common interest in reforming the family. By positioning the family as the “natural,” foundation of society, the normative family, even in the midst of change and diversification, is tautologically reinforced. To overcome the exhaustion of the

²⁷⁰ Asahi Shimbun 朝日新聞. *LGBT Jimin ashi fuma*e LGBT 自民足踏まえ [LDP takes a step towards LGBT]. November 20, 2016, p. 4.

postwar, nuclear model of family, the Japanese right has redefined the concept of family via a negative heuristic, by positioning all other living arrangements beyond the heterosexual, nuclear family as “non-reproductive” and utilizing that exclusion as its ontological basis. The biopolitical logic of (re)productivity, in turn, is preserved as the family has been rendered as an essentially functionalist institution via its rationalization and the exclusion of groups including single women, the infertile, older people, and of course, LGBT individuals and couples. Horiuchi has called this strategic tying of economic/demographic reforms to the family “The family-industrial bond” (*Kazoku no kizuna gyōkai*), connecting the narrowing of ‘acceptable’ family forms to an increasingly authoritarian social system in which individuals are rewarded or penalized based on their prescribed (re)productivity.²⁷¹ Despite the claims of groups like ACBC, the twenty-first century Japanese family, as articulated by the LDP and conservative groups, is remarkably consistent with the postwar nuclear family, insofar as each centers biological-economic (re)productivity as its *raison d’être*. If anything, it is the former, more recent model, deeply influenced by reactionary ideologies that romanticize the prewar period, that is the more strictly and ideology normative of the two.

4.2 Conclusions: Queerness, (Re)productivity, and the the (Future) Japanese Family

Given the ideological retrenchment of the normative family on a reproductive basis since the 2010s, it is necessary to re-examine alternative models of family previously explored in this thesis. It is also necessary to examine countervailing political and ideological discourses in the 21st century to those of the conservative-nationalist right, and to examine their discursive impact. Since 2015, when Shibuya Ward granted legal recognition to same-sex couples, five

²⁷¹ Horiuchi, *Zeisei* 118.

other municipalities have similarly offered a form of legal recognition, including Setagaya Ward, Takarazuka, and Sapporo.²⁷² Furthermore, Wakamatsu Takeshi writes that since 2017, textbooks being developed for high school classes including world history, home economics, and ethics have begun to include information about LGBT people and alternative sexualities. Textbooks in sociology and ethics published by the publisher Shimizu include information about same-sex marriage in other countries, as well as same-sex partnerships in Japan, while a world history textbook by the publisher Teikoku presents sexual preference as a “human right,” (*jinken*).²⁷³ In 2017, the Japanese Business Federation released a document titled “For the Implementation of a Diverse and Inclusive Society” (*Daibashitei inkurujon shakai no jitsugen o mukete*), in which it implored member organizations and companies to provide support to LGBT employees, calling them an “invisible minority.”²⁷⁴ Some members of the LDP, furthermore, have been more supportive of the possibility of recognizing LGBT issues, such as the Lower House member Inada Tomoru, who announced her support for LGBT rights after a visit to San Francisco in 2015 and founded the Special Committee On Sexual Preference and Gender Identity (*Seiteki shikō/sei jinin ni kansuru tokumei iinkai*) in 2016.²⁷⁵ Nonetheless, even given these changes at the governmental and educational level, it is easy to overstate the amount of legal and social progress sexual minorities have made in the past few years. As Wakamatsu notes, as of 2018, of the constituent members of the Japanese Business Federation, only 3.6% have implemented any sort of accommodations or programs for sexual minority employees. Furthermore, the Special Committee On Sexual Preference and Gender Identity is headed not by Inada, but rather by the

²⁷² Wakamatsu Takeshi, *LGBT Konjaku*, 119.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 118.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 119.

²⁷⁵ *Asahi*, *LGBT*, 4.

close Abe ally Furuya Keiji, an appointment the *Asahi* describes as designed to “control the oppositional faction,” of the LDP. Furuya’s report to the Prime Minister in September of 2016, which simply stated that work was needed to “increase understanding,” of LGBT people within the LDP without making any specific policy recommendations, effectively indicates the committee’s marginal status within the LDP itself.

In response to the committee’s formation in 2015, Yagi Hidetsugu, a member of *Utsukushii Nihon*, called the decision “reckless,” and stated that heterosexuality was “the foundation of society.”²⁷⁶ In such statements, Yagi, however bluntly or inarticulately, points out that the essentially unchanged foundation of the family throughout its discursive history has been heteronormativity. As Judith Butler has noted, heterosexuality, like any other form of sexuality, is a historically contingent and shifting phenomenon that takes on particular forms of political, economic and cultural significance. Within the Japanese context, the family has been defined as a fundamentally *heteronormative* and *reproductive* unit, one which is vested with the authority as well as the responsibility to reproduce the imagined nation. This model of family was legally promulgated as a result of changes to the 1947 constitution that ended exclusive male primogeniture. Postwar policies and alliances made between Japanese business, the LDP, and grassroots citizens organizations helped to foster the historically specific salaryman/*senkyō shufu* dynamic that was predominant between the 1950s and 1970s, and which served to position Japanese women in the domestic sphere and erase their labor from the marketplace. Thus alienated from the family, both feminists LGBT writers fostered their own literary and social subcultures outside of mainstream culture, through magazines, self-produced *dōjinshi*, and early

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

forms of activism. These movements, in turn, came to have a significant impact on how the family was discursively positioned beginning the late 1980s, when Japan's booming postwar began to slow inexorably. Throughout the 1990s, writers such as Yoshimoto Banana and Ekuni Kaori and directors such as Hashiguchi Ryōsuke were able to draw from queer and feminist narratives to articulate radically different versions of the family that neither centered heteronormativity or reproductivity. By reimagining the family as a site of queered intimate practices, they challenged the logic that connected heterosexuality, intimacy and productivity within the postwar discursive construction of family, and were able to offer alternative configurations.

At the political level, the past two decades have seen an aggressive backlash to efforts to expand conceptions of gender, sexuality and family. The backlash to “gender free” education of the early 2000s laid the groundwork for decentralized ideological alliances between Japanese nationalists, social conservatives and neoliberals, who have been active in forming educational and political organizations to promote specific images of family and marriage. They have been aided, in turn, by the administrations of Abe Shinzo, whose party has introduced a range of initiative and tax breaks to married couples and large families. By encouraging and incentivizing these forms of family, writers such as Horiuchi suggest that the family in Japan has actually been *less* diverse in its normative configuration than even fifteen years ago. In these and other efforts, the Japanese right-wing, previously fractured over disputes regarding emphasis and praxis, has been united in its efforts to promulgate a specifically heteronormative and reproductive model of family. And, as we have seen, even as such a model of family makes the occasional paean to LGBT rights or empowering women, such gestures remain subordinate to the LDP's goal of

revitalizing the Japanese economy and the Japanese state through the promotion of the heteronormative (although, as it should be noted, not necessarily nuclear) family.

In consideration of these changes to the family in the 21st century, it is necessary to critically re-examine the potential for a queer politics of disruption with regards to it. The logic of (re)productivity, as we have shown, has been discursively linked to the family vis a vis heteronormativity, it is important to note that it is not necessarily dependent on it. In an interview with the magazine *Tokyo Graffiti* in April 2015, Hasebe Ken, then-mayor of Shibuya Ward, explains his decision to support LGBT partnerships not in terms of equality, but rather in terms of creativity. Comparing LGBT people to rockabillys and cosplayers who have flocked to Shibuya's youth culture in the past, Hasebe declares his goal to be making Shibuya "the most creative city in the most creative country in the world." Saying that many LGBT people are creative, Hasebe then goes on to state that "they are people critical for the diversity we aim to create."²⁷⁷ As Takeuchi Aya notes, however, this rhetoric prioritizes the supposed creativity of LGBT people, and presents the issue of LGBT rights and partnership as not a legal or social problem, but rather one of 'diversity'.²⁷⁸ Kuroiwa Yuichi ties this rhetoric to an ongoing neoliberalization of LGBT discourse in contemporary Japan, through which LGBT issues are focalized via their relation to the market and to their perceived productivity and profitability. He cites the case of the weekly magazines *Shūkan Tōyō Keizai* and *Shūkan Daiyamondo*, which 2012 ran special issues in 2012 on Japan's LGBT community called "The LGBT Marketplace," (*LGBT ichijō*). These articles, which describes LGBT people as having ample disposable and

²⁷⁷ Kuroiwa Yūichi 黒岩裕市. *Gei no kashika wo yomu: gendai bungaku ni egakareru 'sei no tayōsei'? ゲイの可視化を読む—現代文学における<性の多様性>.* [Reading the visibility of gayness: a 'diversity of sex' depicted in modern literature?]. Tokyo: Kōyo Shobō, 2016: 9.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 10.

presents the “LGBT marketplace,” in Japan as being potentially worth more than 5.7 trillion yen, are cited by Kuroiwa to argue that the acceptance and embrace of LGBT people in Japanese discourse has been frequently tied to the logic of the marketplace itself.²⁷⁹ Based on this analysis, it is clear that rather than being inimical to the notion of productivity, LGBT people have been re-configured within the neoliberal discourse of 21st century Japan as uniquely possessing creativity and diversity, yet as Kuroiwa notes, this creativity is always-already predicated on its potential contribution to the marketplace.²⁸⁰

Future challenges to the normative family, thus, cannot merely be dependent on using queer and LGBT characters to disrupt its logic and configuration. Instead, they must find new ways by which to approach and critique the (re)productivity the normative family is predicated upon and seek to redefine the nature of that (re)productivity itself. The postwar nuclear family, as Hiroko Takeda notes, was constructed during the mid-20th century, when there was a far greater faith in the ability of the state to manage both markets and populations. The latter half of the 20th century and the 21st century has seen the rise of neoliberalism, which David Harvey describes as “a theory of political economic practices proposing that human well-being can best be advanced by the maximization of entrepreneurial freedoms within an institutional framework characterized by private property rights, individual liberty, unencumbered markets and free trade.”²⁸¹ The conditional relationships between the state and the market that allowed for the creation of the salaryman/*sengyō shufu* dynamic no longer exist in contemporary Japan. In its

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 11.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 13.

²⁸¹ David Harvey. “Neoliberalism as Creative Destruction.” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 610, NAFTA and Beyond: Alternative Perspectives in the Study of Global Trade and Development (Mar., 2007), pp. 22-44: 22.

absence, conservative policy-makers and ideologues have attempted to reconstitute a new form family on a nationalist, exclusionary basis, while LGBT rights, where they have broken through in public discourse, have been presented in essentially neoliberal terms, as primarily benefiting local economies and markets rather than the individuals in question. Given these aggressive efforts to rationalize both queer and heteronormative relationships on a functionalist basis, it has become very difficult to imagine relationships between individuals as more than transactional within the contemporary Japanese family.

This is the challenge that presents itself to contemporary queer and feminist authors in contemporary Japan. In order to re-imagine the relationships within the family, it will be necessary to distort, invert and reverse the role that (re)productivity plays within them. Queerness, as an epistemological concept signifying fundamentally non-reproductive relations, will continue to be critical to this form of deconstruction. In such works as Murata Sayaka's (1979-) *Satsujin shussan* (2014) and *Konbini ningen* (2018) as well as Kamatani Yuhki's *Shimanami tasogare* (2017-2019), a shift towards a new critical heuristic of reproductivity within recent Japanese literature can be seen. While Murata makes reproduction, biological and economic alike, an object of satire and critique, Kamatani's work attempts to articulate a discretely queer reproductivity that is communal, cooperative and voluntary rather than hierarchical and mechanistic. Both authors, however, share in their critiques an attempt to redefine the biological, economic and social manifestations of reproduction and their operant role in regulating sexuality and family in Japanese society. In doing so, they suggest the possibility for new, non-reproductive and truly queer forms of family. But whether the families they imagine can exist as a coherent network of individuals apropos of a reproductive imperative, or even be called families whatsoever, remains to be seen. This will be the goal of

further research; to determine how Japanese authors are able to redefine reproductivity on a non-heteronormative basis, and how they articulate the family as a site of new intimacies and relationships. It is clear, however, that the family, rather than being a stable, historically transcendent form of social organization, has acted as a site of contention and resistance for much of Japan's postwar history, and continues to exist as such. In time, and given enough literary and discursive intervention, it may emerge in the future, paradoxically, as a site of queer liberation.

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