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5 Aging, Gender, and Sexuality in Japanese Popular Cultural Discourse

Pornographer Sachi Hamano and Her Rebellious Film *Lily Festival* (*Yurisai*)

Hikari Hori

THIS CHAPTER DISCUSSES aging and the aged from the perspective of gender and sexuality as represented in the feature-length dramatic independent film *Lily Festival* (*Yurisai*, 2001), directed by the female film director Sachi Hamano (b. 1948). The film, which Hamano says is about “elderly women’s sex and love” (Hamano 2005, 83–85), narrates episodes revolving around the lives of seven women and one man who range in age from 69 to 91 years old. It is a comedy largely based on an award-winning contemporary novel of the same title, written by Hōko Momotani (b. 1955). The outline of the story is reminiscent of the eleventh-century Japanese classic *The Tale of Genji*, written by the female writer Murasaki Shikibu, describing the life of the attractive protagonist Genji and his numerous lovers. If any analogy is to be drawn between the movie and the classic novel, the film’s narrative might be seen as a subversive version of the literary work.

The film is distinctive in its departure from the stereotypical characterization of the aged as recipients of caregiving, as often seen in contemporary Japanese media and films. This unusual portrayal was made possible by the career experience of Sachi Hamano, who has worked for over 30 years in the film industry as a producer and director of porn films. Hamano’s directorship, with contribution from her longstanding collaborator, scriptwriter Kuninori Yamazaki, created a provocative cinematic narrative that undoes the centrality of the male hero of the modern novel from which the film is adapted.¹

This chapter explores the politics of representation—in other words, it examines the problem of stereotypical images of aging and the aged in contemporary Japan. The representation of aging and the aged is a set of images created,



Figure 5.1. Themes of gender and sexuality in the independent feature-length film *Lily Festival* represent a departure from stereotypical depictions of the elderly. Still photograph from *Yurisai* (2001). © Tantansha

circulated, and reconstructed in society. It is constructed from multilayered discourses associated with political, educational, and cultural institutions, including the popular media. In turn, it shapes the views of members of society.² There are no definite ages, backgrounds, inherent physical characteristics, or specific financial situations that determine the category of “elderly people.” In

fact, health conditions, work-related productivity, personal experience, appearance, and many other elements socially attributed to aging and the aged vary according to the individual and her or his class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and other factors. Nevertheless, in media portrayals, the category is very often treated as existing a priori and is associated with social “problems,” revolving around the issues of pensions and retirement, taxation, public assistance, long-term care insurance (*kaigo hoken*), multigenerational family housing, co-residence, introduction of foreign caregivers, changing family values, and even low birth rates. This problem-oriented category of “elderly people” is socially and culturally constructed; it is similar to notions of gender and ethnicity (for instance, women are normatively associated with domesticity, biological reproduction, and a gentle and caring “nature,” while ethnic minority communities are often seen as volatile, traditional, or improperly socialized). In particular, I would stress that the image of aging is gendered. As Gee and Kimball (1987, 99) point out, for example, there is a double standard for aging, in that women are viewed as aging sooner and being less attractive than men at older ages. On the other hand, a positive image of the elderly—as sacred, possessing wisdom, solemnity, and serenity—is often associated with old men in Japanese classics (Wada 1995, 56).

Aging is a transitional process that proceeds day by day, and one that everyone faces at some point. Like the notions of gender, ethnicity, and other social identities, the aged are not a fixed, stable category. The lives of “elderly people” vary according to their individual situations and depend on their social positions, including gender, health conditions, and financial circumstances. Nevertheless, the term “elderly people” is often taken to indicate a fixed category of people who have inherent bodily and mental characteristics that make them different from “us.” It is not only public policymaking, the welfare system, and circulating statistics, but also popular cultural stereotypes that operate in concert to create and re-create social views on aging and the aged. There is an urgent need to examine representations of aging and the aged from the perspective of gender and sexuality. Thus, the task in this chapter is twofold: first, to show examples of well-known conceptions associated with aging and the aged in contemporary Japanese culture in order to identify problematic representations of gender relations and the sexualized body. Second, to search for subversive images—in this case, those presented in the film *Lily Festival*—that, conversely, reveal the problems of mainstream images.

Therefore, instead of examining the more commonly discussed aspects of aging and the aged in society and media coverage, such as issues of insurance,

pensions, the welfare system, and an unbalanced demography, this chapter centers on recent representations in Japanese popular media discourse and film to explore how aging and the aged are portrayed. As a point of departure for my analysis of such cultural representations, the central questions are: In the process of the construction, circulation, and reconstruction of images of aging and the aged, who creates and distributes such images? Which kinds of images are beneficial to which groups? What are deviant images and how do they challenge the norms?

I begin by locating widely distributed stereotypical characterizations from the past two decades in Japan, and examine how they are gendered and mobilized in contemporary popular cultural discourse. Second, I provide an overview of recent Japanese films on aging and the aged. Such films are mostly made by women, predominantly consumed by women, and discussed in light of women's issues, which empowers Japanese women. They have, however, highly effeminized and ghettoized the image of women's aging. Third, I discuss the film *Lily Festival* to see how it challenges popular discourse, as well as these recent films. I also examine the film from the perspective of the unusual career of Sachi Hamano, a director of both commercial porn films and independent feminist films, an aspect I believe to be essential to the film's representations of gender and sexuality.

Politics of Representation: "Elderly People" and Gendered Popular Discourse in Japan

Three compelling examples characterize the dominant gender stereotypes of elderly people that circulated widely in Japanese society from the 1990s up until 2001—right around the time that *Lily Festival* was produced—thereby providing a context for the subversive film. These examples from popular cultural discourse are: "grandpa" (*jitchan*), a term for elderly men used repeatedly by the comic (*manga*) artist Yoshinori Kobayashi (b. 1953) in the late 1990s; "wet fallen leaves" (*nure ochiba*), a popular figurative expression referring to retired men, which has been common in colloquial Japanese since the 1990s; and "old bats" (*babā*) and related derogatory remarks about postmenopausal elderly women made by Tokyo Metropolitan Governor Shintarō Ishihara (b. 1932) in the fall of 2001.

A series of socially critical comics by Yoshinori Kobayashi attracted a huge audience among young adults, especially in the early 1990s. His works have addressed controversial topics, including AIDS activism by hemophiliac patients infected by blood transfusions. Kobayashi was already an established comic art-

ist who had been regularly published in boys' comic magazines (*shōnen manga*) when he began to explore social criticism in comics printed in magazines targeted at older readers during the 1990s.³ After concentrating on the topic of AIDS cases caused by the negligence of governmental bodies and pharmaceutical companies, he shifted his interest to Japanese war responsibility. In the comic *New Manifesto of Arrogance* (*Shin Gōmanizumu sengen*), serialized in the bi-weekly magazine *SAPIO*, he insisted that the state of Japan is not accountable for aggression during the Asia Pacific War (1931–1945); he denied the existence of "comfort women" and belittled their suffering; and he emphasized that Japanese people should be patriotic instead of having a "masochistic" perspective on their own history.⁴ A key term here, used by him repeatedly, was "grandpas." For him, it was "our grandpas" who served the country during the war and offered their lives to protect "us." To criticize Japan's past is, according to Kobayashi, to criticize and disgrace ordinary, good, innocent "grandpas"—Japanese males who experienced many hardships. In this rhetoric, elderly men are seen as having laid the cornerstone of the nation by enduring much suffering, and their criminal acts, including colonialism, invasion, and rape (though Kobayashi does not recognize these as crimes) are justified or ignored and displaced by attention to their hard work and national achievements. The term "grandpa" conveys a masculinized image of nation building and related ordeals, while also suggesting a strong sense of the common people, filial emotion, intimacy, and ordinariness. In Kobayashi's work, this image of elderly men is deployed to transform the historical conflicts perpetrated in Asia by the state of Japan into sweet and patriotic sentiments.

A second, contrasting example offers another interesting image of elderly men: the figurative term "wet fallen leaves," which has been used to refer to retired men since the 1990s. It is said that a housewife came up with the term, which was publicized by a feminist intellectual and soon became a popular new coinage.⁵ It joined a similar, preexisting expression that referred to retired husbands as bulky garbage (*sodai gomi*), suggesting that they are useless and annoying, unable to do any household chores, and get in the way of housewives who are enjoying their later lives by meeting friends, going on trips, or taking continuing education classes. The new coinage refers to these men wanting to follow their wives wherever they go, sticking to them as if they were wet fallen leaves on the street, which are difficult to scrape off the pavement.

The third example comes from highly problematic remarks made by Tokyo Metropolitan Governor Shintarō Ishihara and known as the so-called "old bat

comments" (*babā hatsugen*). Ishihara debuted as a novelist in 1956 and has been involved in politics since he was first elected to the House of Representatives in 1968. He has long been infamous among Japanese feminist and human rights activists for his numerous and varied racist and ultranationalist remarks. He said in a November 6, 2001, interview in the women's magazine *Weekly Women* (*Shūkan josei*), "I've heard that old bats are the worst, most harmful creation of civilization. . . . Men are reproductively active even at the age of 80 or 90, but women are not able to bear children after menopause. If such non-reproductive beings live as long as Kin and Gin,⁶ they are a great bane of the earth. . . . Such a civilization [that allows such people to live long] will destroy the planet." Even after these remarks were denounced as sexist and ageist by feminist and human rights activists, Ishihara further insisted that he understood the legendary practice of abandoning old mothers in the wilderness because, in his view, the existence of elderly women is oppressive compared to the lives of other organisms (Regular Meeting at Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly, December 11, 2001). In this context, the role of women is limited to reproducing the next generation, and elderly women are seen as a serious threat to society because they are "useless." In addition to this image of harmful and useless elderly women, two other gendered connotations are implicit in these remarks: the meaning of one's life is found in one's reproductive ability, and women's longer life span is widely recognized as an important social phenomenon that somehow creates anxiety. Though Ishihara's remarks were reported in newspapers and other media, his political leadership as governor of Tokyo was not questioned by the general public.⁷

These three examples illustrate the range of gendered popular conceptions of the aged, which include gentle and ordinary elderly males who were former soldiers, dependent pathetic elderly men (who belong to a slightly younger generation than the former), and overemphasized nonreproductivity as a sin of elderly women. Notions of the "grandpa" and the useless "old bat" were popularized by public figures with considerable access to the media, and both cases went largely unchallenged by readers and voters. Interestingly, "wet fallen leaves" is the creation of an anonymous person, almost certainly a woman, and it is derived from the female view of men's later life by focusing on the male inability to contribute to the household and to a matrimonial partnership. In this sense, the coinage is clearly a projection of female critical views. However, "wet fallen leaves" has also a tone of women's resignation and tolerance rather than the note of condemnation and outright hatred of the other gender like

that expressed by Ishihara. In addition, the superficial harmlessness of the term resonates with Kobayashi's "grandpas," which attempts to conceal the atrocities committed by ordinary individuals that were not limited to political leaders. (It should be sufficient to note that the historical narrative presented by Kobayashi and his advocates undermines the accountability of the wartime state of Japan, though further discussion is beyond the scope of this chapter.)

Male-related terms re-create a wide range of imagery, providing various imaginative narratives that locate elderly males individually and socially by emphasizing the wartime heroism of ordinary people, evaluating individual lives in the broader historical context, and lionizing the contributions of post-war hardworking corporate employees who were deprived of private pleasures. Their sexual or reproductive bodies are not the subject of debate but are implicitly interwoven into their individual life stories. The contrast is clear: the emphasis on female reproductive ability leads to a constructed notion of elderly females as entities that are useless to society and associates their bodies with norms of asexuality. How should women reclaim their life stories, bodies, social positions, and sexuality?

One answer to this question is provided by the film *Lily Festival*.⁸ It ignores both reproductive lovemaking and the association of nationalist sentiments with the elderly male, while endorsing the view that overdependent men are no fun for women, even though there are fewer men as objects of love in an aging society. But before further discussing *Lily Festival* itself, I will turn to recent Japanese films on the theme of aging and the aged to locate *Lily Festival* not only in the context of Japanese popular discourse but also in terms of contemporary women's filmmaking.

Images of Aging and the Aged in Contemporary Films by Japanese Female Directors

Recent films focused on aging and the aged have been directed mostly by women, despite the very limited number of female film directors in Japan.⁹ Since 1994, when the number of people over 65 reached 14 percent of the Japanese population (it is expected to reach 25 percent by 2015), aging has become a much-discussed topic in the media (Inoue et al. 1999). Accordingly, some Japanese films have begun to take up the topic not in the form of literary, allegorical drama, but through more urgent, commonplace depictions of daily life and struggles.¹⁰ For the reasons discussed below, this seems to be a specialty of female directors. An overview of several contemporary documentary

and dramatic films on this theme will further clarify representational issues of aging, gender, and sexuality.

Documentary filmmaker Sumiko Haneda (b. 1926) has directed both films and videos on the aged and elderly care, and is currently preparing a new film on this theme. She is the second female film director to emerge in the postwar period, her first film being *A Women's Class in a Village* (*Mura no fujin gakkū*, Iwanami Productions, 1957).¹¹ Haneda's works on aging and the aged include *The World of Dementia* (*Chihōsei rōjin no sekai*, 1986), *How to Prepare for Your Aging* (*Anshin shite oiru tame ni*, 1990), *Welfare System Chosen by Residents in a Township* (*Jūmin ga sentaku shita machi no fukushi*, 1997), and its sequel *Welfare System Chosen by Residents in a Township 2: The Task Is What Lies Ahead* (*Mondai wa kore kara desu, jūmin ga sentaku shita machi no fukushi 2*, 1999). With the help of her husband, volunteers, and caregivers and services provided by the local government, Haneda herself looked after her elderly mother at home until she passed away around the time of the completion of the first *Welfare System Chosen by Residents in a Township*.

The World of Dementia was originally sponsored by a pharmaceutical company and commissioned by Iwanami Productions to educate caregivers and medical professionals, but it reached a much wider audience than expected. The film introduced the various conditions seen in elderly people with dementia, which had not been fully revealed in public at the time of the film's production in 1986, and screenings provided a chance for viewers to talk openly about the difficulty of caregiving at home and to share their experiences with others (Haneda 2002, 178–179). This groundbreaking documentary was screened nationwide at more than 1,200 sites and reached 300,000 viewers (Haneda 2005). Haneda explored issues related to the social welfare system for elderly people in her ensuing independent films, providing comparative perspectives from Sweden and Denmark, exploring local politics in Akita Prefecture related to the founding of a nursing home, and following up on the issue in Akita in the context of the newly implemented national long-term care insurance system. Her films report on the various conditions of dementia and provide perspectives on both Japanese and European nursing homes, as well as on the policy-making aspect of elder care, while stressing the importance of proactive involvement and intervention in the welfare system by taxpayers and local government officials.

In another example, Hisako Matsui (b. 1946), who was a TV producer for dramas and documentaries, has presented a different mode for narrating elder care. Her first fictional dramatic feature film, *Yukie* (1998), is about a Japanese

woman who married an American military serviceman more than forty years ago. Having confronted racism, family problems, and other difficulties presented by interracial marriage, she now lives in the United States. The film portrays her marriage and her relationship with her children, her deteriorating health and memory problems caused by Alzheimer's, and her husband's caregiving. The film, set in the United States, is a utopian fantasy of Western culture seen from the point of view of a Japanese audience, as it shows a mutual partnership between a husband and wife that extends to the husband's caring for his wife.

Matsui's second dramatic feature film was the 2001 *Broken Plum* (*Oriume*). Based on an autobiographical essay by Motoko Kosuga, *Even If You Forget, You Can Be Still Happy* (*Wasurete mo, shiawase*, Nippon Hyōronsha, 1998), the film portrays housewife and part-time worker Tomoe as she struggles to care for her mother-in-law Masako, who lives with her family and has developed Alzheimer's. Tomoe had hoped to work full-time but gives up the idea when she decides to care for Masako at home rather than having her admitted to a nursing home. Through her care, Masako becomes more mentally stable and reveals a hidden artistic talent through painting, finally winning an award. For an independent production, the film was a great commercial success. It was first screened in Tokyo in a commercial theater for eleven weeks before being shown nationwide, ultimately reaching one million viewers. Local screenings were organized by area women's groups and attracted mostly women viewers (Matsui 2004). This sentimental film, which was enthusiastically received by Japanese housewives, shows positive prospects for an individual woman's dedication, which is presented as the solution to the problems of caregiving. This, I believe, is an idealized view of caregiving for the aged. The film emphasizes the woman's sacrifice of her career, the positive aspects of caregiving at home (as an initiative taken by a housewife), and its rewards, as in the discovery of her mother-in-law's artistic talent.

The melodramatic narratives of both of Matsui's films present family struggles and pivot around an old woman's confession or statement, made when she has temporarily come back to her senses, which becomes the point at which a family member decides to look after her at home. In both films, the families find the solution to their dilemma by wrestling with their own emotional and physical burdens. In other words, Matsui's fictional films present an idealized model in which the care of elderly parents depends on the ability of their children's—often daughters'—strong emotional commitment to overcome the insufficiency of familial and societal resources. For many Japanese women, in

fact, caregiving very often becomes a personal struggle, and in the course of caregiving, they confront moral and financial choices about whether or not to look after aged parents or in-laws at home. This is precisely the reason the films found a large number of supporters among housewives in Japan. However, the central place in these films is occupied not by the aging persons themselves but by the caregivers. The voice of the aged accentuates the narrative or changes the course of the plot, but their lives themselves are curiously abstract compared to those of younger family members.

In contrast with Matsui's emphasis on family commitment to caregiving, Tazuko Makitsubo (b. 1940) provided different views in her two dramatic features. Makitsubo directed them from a wheelchair because of chronic rheumatoid arthritis while looking after her mother, who was suffering from worsening Alzheimer's.¹² Makitsubo worked as a continuity person for film and TV productions for eighteen years, and made her directorial debut in 1986 with a dramatic film about sex education in elementary school. Her recent dramatic features on caregiving are *Elderly Parents* (*Rōshin*, 2000), which is based on autobiographical essays by Haruko Kadono (b. 1937), and *The Place Where Mother Lives* (*Haha no iru basho*, 2003), which is based on a nonfiction book of the same title by the prominent writer Megumi Hisada (b. 1947). The director and the writers of the original works are all women who had personal experience with caregiving. The film *Elderly Parents* focuses on a housewife who provides care for her in-laws at home before getting a divorce to become a working woman. In *The Place Where Mother Lives*, the protagonist is a single working mother who struggles with caregiving at home. She has her elderly mother admitted to a nursing home, where her mother finds a peaceful, enjoyable, and dignified life. The film depicts a care system that benefits both the residents and their families, portraying a unique nursing home that provides not only medical care but also a liberated setting where residents can enjoy drinking, smoking, and courting. Both of Makitsubo's works address the emotional commitment and everyday struggle of elders' family members, as well as the welfare system that assists them.

Despite differences in the modes of presentation as well as in approaches to the theme of aging and the aged, these recent works have common features: the filmmakers and the writers of the original works are women; the films circulated widely but outside the commercialized distribution system and were well received among viewers, most of whom were women;¹³ the films are independent low-budget productions (except Haneda's commissioned *The World*

of Dementia), meaning there was more freedom to express views independent of sponsors such as pharmaceutical companies; and the elderly protagonists portrayed in the films are very often women. In other words, the theme is one that concerns women, both filmmakers and viewers. Likewise, issues related to aging and the aged in Japanese society are largely regarded as women's issues, as women have a longer life span and women are mostly responsible for caregiving. This explains why films on this theme tend to be about women, for women, and by women. On the one hand, the benefit is that these films open issues of later life to the general public, instead of treating them as personal and taboo. In fact, the screenings are often organized by local community activists, held at community centers, and accompanied by discussions with the film crews and producers, lectures by social workers, and/or question-and-answer sessions. Thus, unlike TV programs which provide a one-way flow of information, these film screenings create a space for gathering, education, outreach, and an exchange of experiences and information among viewers. This suggests that these films function as an interactive medium for discussing issues of both a private and a societal nature. On the other hand, these films and the issues they address are ghettoized and effeminized, as their themes are shared and discussed predominantly among women, who more urgently confront them in their everyday lives.

Lily Festival: Gender, Sexualized Aging, and Hamano's Directorship

The representation of gender difference and sexuality in *Lily Festival* contrasts with the centrality of caregiving in other contemporary Japanese films on aging and the aged. Other films focus on dementia and on the families' viewpoints rather than those of the elderly themselves, which reduces representations of aging to sickness and the related problems that younger family members must deal with. Contrastingly, *Lily Festival* is a lively and straightforward portrayal of the sexuality and desire of elderly people. It focuses on stories of individual elderly characters and directly addresses the positive aspects of their aging. The narrative could be criticized for paying little attention to social factors (the story is about more or less healthy, financially independent people), but this gives the film freedom to emphasize unconventional views of the gendered and the sexual experiences of its protagonists. In this section, I address the following questions: To what extent does *Lily Festival* challenge the societal treatment and stereotypes of elderly people in contemporary Japanese culture? How is the film

different from other Japanese films about the aged and aging? What is the significance of Hamano's directorship in introducing and representing this theme?

The narrative first depicts the collective life of seven women in the Mariko Apartment. It then shifts to the female protagonists' competition to attract the sole male tenant Terujirō Miyoshi (75 years old). Finally, it closes with an exploration of an intimate relationship between two women, Rie Miyano (73 years old) and Renako Yokota (75 years old), that develops into a female-to-female sexual experience. Miyano had spent decades as an obedient housewife but is now enjoying life after the passing of her husband, who had committed infidelities.¹⁴ Though she has health complaints and frequently goes to the doctor's office to receive treatment for high blood pressure and other ailments, she prefers living by herself to co-residing with her son's family. Yokota ran a bar until she retired at the age of 70, and she remains proud of her profession, which has connotations of sexual promiscuity and even prostitution. Her second husband, ten years her junior, died three years ago. She still wears makeup, fancy Western dresses, jewelry, and red nail polish, and her look conveys seductive charm toward men. The other protagonists are: Atsuko Namiki (76 years old), Teruko Satoyama (69 years old), Umeka Mariko (77 years old), Yoshi Kitayama (91 years old), and Nene Totsuka (81 years old).¹⁵ Totsuka, a close friend of Miyano, is found dead in her room at the very beginning of the film, and her voice is occasionally heard as a narrator from beyond the grave. These women represent patterns of women's experience and of the life course of the older generation, such as marriage to an unfaithful husband, the confined life of a housewife, the problems of co-habitation with the younger generation, and living and dying alone in later life.

The story opens as Miyoshi moves into their building as the sole male tenant. Utterly unlike a typically reticent Japanese man, he charms the women with graceful gestures and eloquent rhetoric. All of them are flattered, become attracted to him, and dote on him, even the "man-hater" Namiki. Miyoshi's appearance, sporting leather pants, a stylish hat and jacket, and a ponytail, as well as his positive, entertaining, and cheerful conversation impress the women even more when they visit his room together. He states that he doesn't envy the young because he believes in being alive, and that, in his view, it is fun to live. Miyano had been the first of the tenants to meet him when she encountered his mover's truck lost on the road near the apartment and gave directions to the driver while Miyoshi sat next to him in the cab. After he has settled in, Miyoshi visits Miyano's room one afternoon and they make love in front of a Buddhist altar

devoted to her late husband. Miyoshi then promises Miyano that she is the only person with whom he has such a relationship. Later, Satoyama finds out that Miyoshi is in fact married but was kicked out by his wife when she discovered that he had a long-standing relationship with another woman. Then, on the night that all of the women are throwing a formal welcome party for him, they find out that he has been simultaneously involved in relationships with four of them: Mariko, Namiki, Miyano, and Yokota.

In the final development of the story, Yokota and Miyano sit together one night, gazing at each other curiously, and talking about their experiences of Miyoshi and his "thing." The last sequence of the film portrays these two women enjoying a trip together, holding hands after spending an intimate night, and concludes with a serene shot of Miyano from a distance, with overlapped narration by the deceased Totsuka. In this final shot, Miyano reveals that she and Yokota did something "naughty" the previous night, and the film ends with Totsuka's voice, unheard by the living protagonists, announcing that she witnessed them together, and that she will continue to watch over all the women of the apartment building.

The party is the turning point of the narrative, as it redirects the narrative from hetero-normativity to possibilities of female-to-female relationship. The women angrily accuse Miyoshi of promiscuity and deception, but they also acknowledge that there are fewer available men as they age, because of the longer life span of women, while sexy, attractive, and fun men like him are even scarcer. The party scene is followed by several concluding sequences that celebrate women's sexual activity in a heterosexual community. They also introduce the spectrum of women's intimate relations from friendship to homosexuality: a notion suggested by Adrienne Rich (1986) in her use of the term "lesbian continuum." After the revelation of Miyoshi's promiscuity, the women in the apartment building accept it, and three of them continue to fuss over him. Mariko and Namiki continue to enjoy sexual relations with him and even seem to enjoy competing with each other—in a reversal of Sedgwick's model of homosociality, in which two men appear to be competing for a woman's love but are in fact reinforcing male bonding (Sedgwick 1985).

The film stresses that aging involves both transition and continuity by providing narration from the dead person's perspective, and by placing her death at the very beginning of the film and emphasizing her continued presence, rather than treating death as a form of resolution. It also embraces aging, independent thinking, sexual desire, female same-sex relationships, and trans-

gression of gender identities, some of which are celebrated in Miyoshi's lines in the film. During the pivotal party scene he proclaims, "From the viewpoint of my younger self, this is the future. We can't return to yesterday, but we can live on into tomorrow." This reinforces earlier statements he had made in response to Namiki's pessimistic views on aging. She had decried sexism against elderly women in general, but he contradicted her by emphasizing diminished gender boundaries: "I think getting old is fantastic. . . . The older you get, the less distinctions between men and women matter. The important thing is what you think and feel as an individual." This perspective is further emphasized by the several significant ways the film departs from the original novel. Issues of gender and sexuality are raised by the following three components of the film narrative: a transgender fantasy enjoyed by Miyano, a female-to-female sexual relationship, and the cinematic style used to portray sexual relations.

A fantasy of reversed male-female roles occurs to Miyano when she first visits Miyoshi's apartment together with the other women, and all eye him admiringly. At this point, the image of Miyoshi as Snow White and the six women as dwarfs surrounding the princess is presented. Although this fantasy of reversed gender roles does appear in the novel, in the film its subversive quality is further stressed by the insertion of a color drawing in the style of a girl's comic (*shōjo manga*), as well as a live-action portrayal of Miyoshi as Snow White and the female characters as the dwarfs. Together with the effeminized drawing, this scene fully conveys a sense of lighthearted and comical gender reversal. The combination of one male princess and several female dwarf-admirers suggests the reality that there are more elderly women than men in Japan, as men's life expectancy is shorter, and that women might compete over scarce men in heterosexual communities.¹⁶ However, this fantasy not only emphasizes imbalance in the gender ratio of one man to seven women; it also implies that aged men are socially de-masculinized in that they become bereft of status, physical strength, health, and often sexual potency. Therefore, the film's portrayal of Miyoshi as Snow White is a visualization of a de-masculinized man, reinforced by the evening gown, wig, and makeup that enable him to pass as the princess. But in fact, Miyoshi hereby escapes the very negative stereotype of retired men as wet fallen leaves, as this de-masculinization is part of his presentation as someone who is very attractive and deserving of the dwarfs' attention.

Second, the film treats Miyano, who is the subject of the gender-reversal dream, as the main protagonist. Its central story is her pursuit of sexual pleasure, which departs from the novel, in which the lily of the title represents Miyoshi, a

strong stem that supports several flowers and provides the flowers with a source of energy and sexual pleasure. Following the revelation of Miyoshi's multiple affairs, the film's focus on Miyano creates a deviant and challenging narrative. The novel, conversely, ends with Miyoshi's confession about a woman he was once in love with. He deserted her in 1946 during the chaos of the immediate postwar era and later read in a newspaper article that she had starved to death. Since then, he has been compulsively having affairs with women. Yokota analyzes his behavior as a quest for redemption: he needs to feel in love, and the feeling alleviates his sense of guilt (Momotani 2000, 184). Thus, the novel takes the form of Miyoshi's journey: the women's past and present and their daily lives at the apartment converge with his past relationship, and are integrated into *his* story. The film, however, removes this confession and replaces it with his positive statements on aging and his upbeat, self-serving insistence that he likes everyone equally.

After the night of Miyoshi's party, Miyano and Yokota have a drink together in Yokota's apartment, begin spending time with each other, and eventually go off on an overnight trip together. Under more typical circumstances, these two women would not have ended up together, according to social norms of femininity which draw distinctions among women. Miyano, the virtuous domestic woman, stands in sharp contrast to Yokota, the bar owner, who is, in fact, the kind of a woman with whom Miyano's husband might have had an affair. The contrast between their roles echoes the dichotomy between monogamy and promiscuity, the housewife and the working woman. Their clothing symbolizes their opposing positions as well: Miyano wears a kimono, while Yokota pairs a Western dress with red nail polish.

In the apartment scene, Yokota makes a drink for Miyano, who carefully sips it, and they share fond reminiscences of the softness of Miyoshi's flaccid penis. This memory turns Miyano's attention to Yokota's soft earlobe.¹⁷ This time a female-to-female bond is obvious, unlike the implicit rivalry between Mariko and Namiki. Later, when they set out on a trip and have a drink together on a tour boat, Miyano tells Yokota about her fantasy of Miyoshi as Snow White and the women as the Seven Dwarfs. They conclude this conversation by saying to each other, "At our age, the distinction between men and women doesn't matter"; "Anything goes!" This leads to a scene of the two women embracing each other in their hotel room. This same-sex relationship is foreshadowed by a pair of dolls, made by the late Totsuka, which stand close together and are gazed at adoringly by Miyano several times throughout the film. Although Miyoshi's

affairs bring Miyano and Yokota together, they still maintain their own lifestyles and accept each other's values, as suggested by scenes in which Miyano in kimono wears dark sunglasses like Yokota, while Yokota in her Western dress goes to a kimono exhibition with Miyano (Tsukamoto 2001, 16–17).

Third, the cinematic presentation of the sexual relations between Miyano and Miyoshi interestingly downplays the novel's cruel portrayal of his physical frailty. The novel describes him caressing Miyano's breasts and genitals, but at the same time it associates his kisses with his weak lungs: "He needed to breathe many times because of his deteriorated lung capacity" (Momotani 2000, 98). It also emphasizes his impotence: "It [his penis] was completely soft"; "There was no sign that it [his penis] would harden" (102–103).¹⁸ The novel probes the male sexual body, relentlessly uncovering Miyoshi's physical frailness due to age-related deterioration, and foregrounding his desperate efforts to make love. However, the film takes a different tone in describing the lovemaking of Miyano and Miyoshi. It deploys a style of portrayal conventional in the genre of soft-core porn filmmaking: the camera focuses on Miyano's bare legs emerging from her kimono, her smiling face ecstatic with restrained pleasure, and her gasps. This stands in stark contrast to the novel's strong emphasis on depicting Miyoshi's age-related impotence and frail health, which disrupts its description of the intercourse itself. Though women's facial expressions, responses, and body are a visual site onto which men's sexual ability and libido are projected in typical commercial pornography, the major difference in *Lily Festival* is the film's quiet acknowledgment of Miyoshi's impotence, inability to achieve penetration, and earnestness. Miyoshi whispers to Miyano, "It's soft; is that all right?" but her pleasure is not affected by his dysfunction. Thus, the cinematic style of depicting intercourse appears conventional, but the narrative subverts the stylized male sexuality seen in pornographic genre conventions, which include aggressiveness, penetration, and pistonlike movement.

This subversion is further emphasized by the film's objectification of male sexuality in a different sequence, in which Kitagawa grabs Miyoshi's penis through his trousers. Ninety-one-year-old Kitagawa, the oldest tenant of the apartment, is clearly differentiated from the other women in the film. While she names her three cats after popular male figures in Japanese culture, she refers to male tenants as "master" regardless of their actual names.¹⁹ Furthermore, her "hobby" is to put her hands onto the crotches of new male tenants to briefly fondle their genitals through their trousers. Her indifference to human male individuality, raw interest in male genitals, and habit of emitting sudden, apparently unmo-

tivated shrieks symbolize unsocialized, deviant female sexuality. In one scene, Kitagawa, holding her cat, approaches Miyoshi in front of the building and summarily grabs his crotch. He appears mortified, while she tightly closes her eyes as if concentrating on her sense of touch. A second later, her cat meows loudly as if it spoke for her satisfied, triumphant sigh, or for Miyoshi's silent shock. Then she moves away from him, leaving him puzzled and motionless. The sequence highlights the way in which a man's body is tangible, vulnerable, and available to satisfy a woman's sexual curiosity. Kitagawa's "hobby" of grabbing men's genitals through their trousers is understood among the other tenants as an initiation rite for all new male tenants in the apartment building. Evaluating men's sexual organs in such a way seems to be allowed only for very old women, thus suggesting that aging might liberate women from normative feminine demeanor.

The unique and subversive qualities of *Lily Festival*, in contrast to other works of contemporary Japanese cinema, are made especially apparent when the film is viewed in the context of director Sachi Hamano's career as a female filmmaker.²⁰ The aforementioned directors—Haneda, Matsui, and Makitsubo—all started in the educational documentary film or TV industries, not as directors but as scenario writers, producers, or continuity people, which are not unusual career paths for aspiring women in those industries. In contrast, Hamano has had quite an unusual career for a female director in Japan. She entered the film industry in 1968 after graduating from high school, as an assistant director in low-budget 35mm pornographic filmmaking—a genre called pink film (*pinku eiga*) in Japan.²¹ This is a subgenre of sexually explicit films that dramatically expanded in the mid-1960s, borne by numerous small independent film productions. These productions had low budgets, short shooting schedules, and small crews.²² Since her debut as a director in 1971, Hamano has made more than 300 theatrical porn films, most of them commercially successful. She founded her own production company, Tantansha, in 1984 and has made films as both producer and director, teamed with screenwriter Kuninori Yamazaki, who shares her interest in presenting subversive female sexual practices.²³ After the advent of the VCR in the late 1980s, her films were often reformatted for video rentals after their distribution in theaters. Though there have been several women directors in porn filmmaking, no one else has managed to keep directing for long, and Hamano is the only woman who has regularly produced films with such commercial success.

Together with Yamazaki, Hamano has produced several adult films that celebrate women's sexuality, which can be interpreted as deviant in the context of

the industry.²⁴ Such works include *Samejima Nao: Confinement* (*Samejima Nao: Kankin*, 1988), *Girls' High School Reunion: We Like It* (*Joshikō dōsōkai: Are ga suki*, 1991), and *Abe Sada in the Heisei Era: I Want You* (*Heiseiban Abe Sada: Anta ga hoshii*, 1999). In particular, her early 1990s series, *Reverse Massage Parlor* (*Gyaku sōpu*, 1992–1994), in which women receive superb services from good-looking young men, was said to be an underground hit among women (Kitahara 2000, 162–163). Her mid-1990s *Middle-Aged Woman* (*Obasan*) series, in which she employed a 54-year-old actress, also sold well, though it was taboo to use middle-aged actresses in the industry (Matsumoto 1996, 109). According to Hamano, the series attracted a middle-aged male audience. Though her films were mainly targeted at men and shown in adult film theaters,²⁵ a common feature of the aforementioned works is their emphasis on women gaining freedom from spatial and psychological confinement through sexual practices. While they contain nudity, caresses, and copulation in keeping with the conventions of pink films, the women in these films take revenge on men, make alliances with same-sex friends, and purchase men's sexual services. In this sense, Hamano's films succeed in "making a woman the hero-subject of the sexual narrative without . . . making her a victim-hero" (Williams 1999, 257),²⁶ which, in my view, means that her works display an interesting and deviant voice in the Japanese porn film industry.

In the past decade, while continuing her commercial porn filmmaking, Hamano has embarked on nonporn independent film productions. *Lily Festival* was preceded by *In Search of a Lost Writer* (*Dainana kankai hōkō: Ozaki Midori o sagashite*, 1998), the making of which mobilized more than 12,000 women supporters, fundraisers, and feminist activists and was widely endorsed by Japanese feminist communities. This film is an introduction to the forgotten female writer Midori Ozaki (1896–1971) as framed by a young lesbian couple's rediscovery of her life and work. Midori Ozaki was a writer whose works started to gain critics' attention in the 1920s and 1930s, but her literary career was disrupted after she went back to her hometown in Tottori Prefecture because of mental instability. The film reinterprets Ozaki's life, seeing her not as a bitterly disappointed author who gives up writing, as literary critics believed, but as a woman who continues to live her life with dignity, taking care of her sister's children, surviving the wartime period, and enjoying her life as it is. The film also touches on women's aging not as a one-dimensional development but as a complicated continuity interacting with the artistic creativity of the writer and her responsibilities toward her family members, as the conflicts between being an artistic creator and a responsible caregiver for family members are

very often acutely experienced by women. In mosaic fashion, it integrates a cinematic realization of the writer's masterpiece *Wandering in the Realm of the Seventh Sense* (*Dainana kankai hōkō*),²⁷ experimental insertions of commentaries by feminist film and literary critics, and dramatic reconstructions of the writer's life. *Lily Festival* carried over several issues that *In Search of a Lost Writer* addressed but did not completely explore: the life paths of various women and their aging, the hetero-normative sexuality of later life, and female-to-female eroticized relationships. These issues of aging intersecting with gender difference and sexuality are presented in *Lily Festival* in a way unlike anything else found in other films on the aged. Their presentation can also be examined from the perspective of women's filmmaking in the porn film industry. In other words, such issues were approached and reinterpreted through Hamano's perspective on women's sexuality as a porn film director.

Being a female director in the porn industry is highly exceptional.²⁸ The hierarchy of the film crews is highly gendered, as directors and directors of photography are predominantly male. The genre is basically run by men (film crews, theater owners, and distributors), for men (viewers), and is about men's projection of sexual desire; women are subjugated to male sexual fantasy, youth is their absolute value, masculinity is reduced to strong sexual drive and penetration, violence is directed against women, and heterosexuality is the norm. Hamano has recollected her on-site experiences as an assistant director. She recounts being referred to as "mom," being expected to take up domestic chores including laundry and cooking, being teased about her breasts, and experiencing the inconvenience of her menstrual period. She states that she wanted to work as a man, and to become a man (Hamano 2005, 16). This is not an unusual experience for women who enter male-centered workplaces in general.²⁹ Because female workers are treated differently and expected to be different, they often hope to identify themselves with men. After first acknowledging their difference, they may attempt to overcome it by assimilating into the existing structure of gendered power relations. In doing so, the dominant norm is reinforced. In addition, women are not necessarily ready to help or ally with one another in such a male-oriented environment. However, Hamano established alliances with some female co-workers. One of them is Kazuko Shirakawa, who played Yokota in *Lily Festival* and Midori's younger sister in *In Search of a Lost Writer*. She is a former 1970s porn star whom Hamano came to know through her work. She supported Hamano in those days, and later fulfilled her promise to Hamano to appear in Hamano's own films.

As noted above, many of the conventions of porn and nonporn filmmaking are challenged in Hamano's works, especially in *Lily Festival*. This feminist female pornographer, who continues to direct both pink and nonporn features, challenges the dominant images of Japanese women and women's filmmaking.³⁰

Conclusion

This chapter first introduced three highly gendered elements of popular cultural depictions of the aged: patriotic elderly men, overly dependent men leaning on their wives, and the "uselessness" of nonreproductive elderly women. It then provided a brief overview of contemporary Japanese films that focus on the issues of aging and the aged predominantly from the perspective of caregiving. Juxtaposing *Lily Festival* with the three popular cultural images of the aged, as well as other contemporary films, reveals the film's subversive approach to gender and sexuality. First, it provides lively, powerful female models of sexual desire often ignored in contemporary popular cultural discourse. Second, in contrast with other films' references to dementia as the primary theme or key to their plots, *Lily Festival* presents everyday life with trivial and familial conflicts, lies and deceptions, and varied relationships in a world where dementia and its care are not the center of the narrative. Rather, the center is occupied by sexuality, which is often denied of "elderly people" except in the context of nonreproductivity, as Governor Ishihara's comments suggest. The film challenges the norms of elderly female sexuality. There is a strong societal expectation of asexuality in women's aging, while paradoxically, their inability to reproduce is problematized. *Lily Festival* criticizes society's treatment of those who find themselves in the doubly discriminated position of "getting old" and "being a woman." In spite of its hetero-normativity, the film presents a set of unconventional narratives about and perspectives on sexual desire in elderly women, the failure of virility, an alliance between a "good wife" and a "fallen woman," and the lesbian continuum. While the issues related to women's aging are more often scrutinized, pathologized, and even mocked than men's issues, the film questions gender dichotomies and celebrates female sexual desire.

Finally, Sachi Hamano's directorship also serves as an arena for feminist negotiation of the politics of gender and sexuality, and the film can be seen as intertwined with her career experiences as a working and "aging" woman, and her history of subversive pornography making. *Lily Festival* relocates issues of aging and the aged in the context of popular discourse, contemporary Japanese

cinema, and women's creativity by challenging social norms and stereotypes with its playful, deviant narrative.

Notes

1. The film was shown worldwide at film festivals, nonprofit screenings, and commercial theaters in Tokyo, Montreal, Turin, Hong Kong, London, New York, Paris, and other cities. The film won the Second Grand Prix award at the Ninth International Women's Film Festival (Turin, 2002); Best Feature Film (Lesbian Section) at the International Gay & Lesbian Film Festival (Philadelphia, 2003); and Best Feature Film at the Mix Brasil 11 Festival (2003).

2. There are a few studies that address cultural representations of the aging and the aged; see especially Featherstone and Wernick 1995, 1–15.

3. Kobayashi debuted in 1975. His best-known work, "Straight to Tokyo University" (*Tōdai icchoku sen*), is a representative work of the 1970s genre of nonsense comics (*gyagu manga*) that was serialized in a weekly comic magazine targeted at male youth.

4. The series was later published in multiple volumes by the Shogakukan publishing house. Numerous works of his containing social criticism are available in both comic and prose formats.

5. The term was chosen to represent the most expressive new word of the year in 1989, when it was awarded the "Grand Prix of Popular Coinage" (*Ryūkōgo taishō*). The award is bestowed by a selection committee after words are nominated in *Basic Knowledge of Modern Popular Usage of Words* (*Gendai yōgo no kiso chishiki*), published annually by Jiyūkokuminsha. The award-winning terms are reported in major media and gain wide recognition.

6. Kin Narita (1892–2000) and Gin Kani'e (1892–2001) were identical twin sisters. They became widely known after appearing in a TV commercial in 1991, serving as pleasant and auspicious symbols of longevity. They were frequently featured in the Japanese mass media during the 1990s.

7. Feminist and human rights activists sued Ishihara for his discriminatory remarks in 2003. The Tokyo District Court acknowledged that the remarks were sexist but dismissed the plaintiffs' demand for compensation and a public apology in February 2005. The plaintiffs appealed to the Tokyo High Court, but it upheld the District Court's decision in September 2005. Ishihara was reelected for a third term as governor in April 2007.

8. It is noteworthy that a popular weekly magazine comic strip by Machiko Hasegawa, *Obnoxious Old Woman* (*Ijiwaru baasan*, 1966–1971), could be seen as an excellent popularized image of a positive, strong elderly woman. The work has been occasionally adapted for television as a live-action drama and an animated series.

9. Two exceptions are the dramatic feature films *A Last Note* (*Gogo no yuigonjō*,

1995) and *I Want to Live (Ikitai, 1999)*, both directed by Kaneto Shindō. Born in 1912, prominent postwar film director Shindō made these films at the ages of 83 and 87, respectively. The former introduces several days of vacation that an aging renowned stage actress spends in her summer house. A series of incidents forces her to ponder her own life as well as her friends' and late husband's lives. The latter film is about an elderly widower who is looked after by his daughter while his other two children ignore him. Also, while representations of the aged are found in their settings rather than in their central narratives, the following two contemporary films are noteworthy: *La Maison de Himiko (Mezon do Himiko, 2005)* directed by Isshin Inudō, and *The Mourning Forest (Mogari no mori, 2007)* directed by Naomi Kawase. The former introduces a nursing home for gay men, though the story focuses on a young woman and her relationship with her gay father. The latter explores the personal trauma of a female protagonist and a man and is set in a small assisted living institution for patients in the early stages of Alzheimer's. The latter film was directed by a female director who won awards at the Cannes Film Festival in 1997 and in 2007 (for *The Mourning Forest*).

10. Earlier cinematic presentations of the aged in dramatic films have oscillated from a demonic, dehumanized old woman, for example, in *Onibaba* (directed by Kaneto Shindō, 1964), to a self-sacrificial old woman determined to take her own life for the sake of her son's family in *The Ballad of Narayama (Narayama bushi kō, 1958)* directed by Keisuke Kinoshita, remade by Shōhei Imamura, 1983), to the reserved, asexual, sagelike old father played by actor Chishū Ryū (1904–1993) in *Tokyo Story (Tōkyō monogatari, 1953)*, directed by Yasujiro Ozu, which became a symbol of fatherhood in Japanese cinema.

11. Iwanami Productions is a prominent documentary film studio associated with a prestigious publishing company of the same name. Toshie Tokieda (b. 1929) joined the studio in 1951 as its first female director, and she debuted in 1953 (Tokieda 2003, 3–4). Haneda began working in the photographic publication section at Iwanami before assisting in filmmaking. The first Japanese woman director of a dramatic feature was Tazuko Sakane (1904–1975), who was active as a director in the 1930s and 1940s. When women started to make films in the postwar era, they first made documentaries instead of dramatic features, because documentaries have lower budgets and their status in the industry is hierarchically lower than dramas, making them more open to women's employment. Still, the number of female directors in the industry has been very limited.

12. For a summary of her career and works, see Makitsubo's website www.pao-jp.com.

13. I am not able to provide the gender ratios of viewers at screenings, but anecdotally it is apparent that many more women came to the screenings and supported the films, reflecting the fact that, in most cases, it is women who look after elderly family members in Japan, as in other societies.

14. The ages of some characters of the film differ from those in the novel. This chapter refers to the ages used in the film.

15. The actors' ages varied from 54 to 75 years old in 2001, the year of the film's production. Their birth years are as follows: Kazuko Yoshiyuki (Miyano) was born in 1935; Kazuko Shirakawa (Yokota) in 1947; Chisako Hara (Namiki) in 1936; Sanae Nakahara (Satoyama) in 1935; Utae Shōji (Mariko) in 1929; Sachiko Meguro (Totsuka) in 1926; Hisako Okata (Kitagawa) in 1939; and Mickey Curtis (Miyoshi) in 1938.

16. The Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare announced that in 2004 Japanese women's average life span was 85.59 years, while men's was 78.64 (Mainichi Newspaper, July 23, 2005).

17. Mizoguchi questions this simplistic association between softness and lesbian sex, as it may stereotypically portray lesbian sexual practices as gentle. She also correctly points out that the film portrays Miyano and Miyoshi's sex more explicitly than lesbian sex. Unlike the heterosexual couple's sex, Miyano and Yokota's "naughtiness" is implied by showing only their kiss (Mizoguchi 2001, 18–19).

18. Additionally, the novel sarcastically describes his determination: "He looked as serious and determined as if he were about to jump off from a height to kill himself"; "Miyano became gradually moved by his seriousness" (Momotani 2000, 102). By stressing his struggle, the novel emphasizes his deteriorating health.

19. The cats' names are Haruki, Tomokazu, and Yūjirō—respectively, the novelist Haruki Murakami; Tomokazu Miura, an actor known for his charming portrayals of youth in 1970s films; and the late Yūjirō Ishihara, a 1950s youth film star.

20. For her career path, see Hamano 2005, 7–42, and her website www.h3.dion.ne.jp/~tantan-s/prof.html.

21. In Japan, it is not unusual for aspiring directors who are young and male to first enter the adult film industry to gain professional filmmaking experience since the declining studios no longer offer training or promotions to directorship, and then move on to mainstream filmmaking, as did Masayuki Suō, the director of *Shall We Dance? (Shall we dansu? 1996)*, and Yōjirō Takita, who directed *Departures (Okuribito, 2008)*.

22. Pink films are different from the Nikkatsu Roman Porno series (1971–1988), another subgenre of porn film, which was launched by Nikkatsu, one of the major Japanese film studios with much higher budgets. Another distinct subgenre, contemporary adult video (nowadays often digitally produced and released on DVD) requires an even shorter shooting schedule and fewer staff. These are often shot within one day by handheld camcorder and have no story and poor editing. Production costs vary, starting around 100,000 yen (US\$1,200). In contrast, pink films involve 35mm film (which requires more skill at directing, shooting, and editing), more crew members, a longer shooting schedule (though usually only three days), a strong scenario, and a greater cost, at around 4,000,000 yen (US\$33,000). For the Nikkatsu series and some information on pink films, see Matsushima 2000.

23. Yamazaki Kuninori occasionally writes and directs gay porn films as well.
24. The images of these deviant women are often co-opted into conventional images of sexually active women that appeal to men, a phenomenon Hamano terms a “happy misunderstanding” on the part of theater owners and viewers (Hamano 2005, 41).
25. Some of her porn films have been shown at screenings exclusively for women at film festivals. They were also screened for the general public at the retrospective “An Overview of the Works of Film Director Sachi Hamano” (*Eiga kantoku Hamano Sachi no zenbō*, Kobe Art Village Center, August 2 and 3, 2008).
26. Williams introduces American feminist porn director Candida Royalle and discusses how her Femme Production films reenvision pornography. Though Royalle and Hamano target different audiences, both directors stand out in that they challenge the dominant narratives of the genre. See Williams 1999, 246–24, and Royalle 1993.
27. The novel, originally published in 1931, combines mock-botanical discussion of moss romance, female-to-female friendships, the protagonist Machiko’s unrequited love, and an amusing depiction of her life looking after household chores for her eccentric brothers and their male cousin (Ozaki 1991). Judging from the names of the characters, the plot (a household of students who came to Tokyo from the countryside), and other components, the novel also reads as a parody of *Sanshirō* by Natsume Sōseki (1908).
28. Japanese women directors in dramatic features, too, are rare and work in a male-oriented workplace. The registered members of the Director’s Guild of Japan include 580 males versus 23 females (Hamano 2005, 193). Moreover, the number of women registered includes those who directed only a few times.
29. The first Japanese female director of dramatic features, Tazuko Sakane, wore trousers and had her hair cut short, so that she was called a cross-dresser (*dansō*). She also attempted to work and act like a man so that she could assimilate into the workplace. For an overview of her life and career, see Hori 2005 and Ikegawa 2005.
30. In addition to producing several porn films a year, Hamano directed and produced a new nonporn film, *Cricket Girl* (*Kōrogi jō*), an adaptation of another Ozaki story, in 2006.

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Understanding and Misunderstanding
the Verbal Behavior of the Elderly

Faces of Aging

The Lived Experiences of the Elderly in Japan

Edited by Yoshiko Matsumoto

Stanford University Press
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*To the memory of my father,
and the strength and cheerfulness of my mother*

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